



Central Queensland
UNIVERSITY

Brokering changes: A study of power and identity through discourses

*Brokering changes to the knowledge base of twenty-three
members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central
Queensland*

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Central Queensland University
Faculty of Education and Creative Arts

October 2002

Abstract

Brokering Changes refers to the ways in which teachers broker their compliance with a new literacy knowledge base for adults. This thesis reports a study of twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers working in regional, rural and remote communities throughout Central Queensland from 1996 to 2001. It details the performance and recognition work that these teachers did as they negotiated their way through a large curriculum reform as literacy was redefined from something that was negotiated as useful for the learner to something that is named and mandated by the state.

The theoretical framework engages with interrelated notions of power, discourse and identity with supporting conceptualisations of ideology, work and pedagogy in the production and exercise of disciplinary power as understood through the thinking of Michel Foucault (1984). The methodological approach deploys James Gee's (1991, 1992, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1999) particular socio-cultural theory of D/discourse. Spoken, written and observed data are analysed using Gee's (1993, 1999) interrelated linguistic system's analysis method.

The major finding is that these teachers actively broker the effects of these changes through their professional practices. This study is an important contribution to the literature concerning the professional lives of teachers of adults in an era of fast capital and performance-based government. Significantly, the research provides important insights into the problems faced by teachers who are confronted with the implementation of major curriculum reforms while living far removed from the networks and activities of the system in which they worked.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Professor Colin Lankshear and Associate Professor Michele Knobel have been my supervisors for the latter years of this study. I thank them both for challenging and clarifying my thinking. I also wish to acknowledge their strategic and discerning leadership and management of my ongoing learning throughout this period.

Professor Michael Singh was my supervisor for the early years of this study. From Professor Singh I learned much about doing fieldwork and managing a research project. I thank him most sincerely for his patience, astute scaffolding of my emergent thinking and continuing professional collaborations.

In particular, I want to acknowledge Dr Patrick Danaher for his steadfast faith in our shared learning and his inspirational professional insights throughout the journey. I will always value his extensive feedback, together with his incisive questioning at the very moments when I needed it most.

Thank you to Ms Phyllida Coombes and other colleagues in our CQU writing team who provide peer reviews par excellence for our ongoing collaborative research efforts.

Dr Geoff Danaher most kindly shared his extensive knowledge and understanding of Foucault and Bourdieu. He also took the time to peruse and provide feedback upon developing drafts of my theoretical framework, and I am most grateful to him for this.

As well as providing thoughtful, sage advice and feedback on my emergent thinking, Dr Mairin Kenny gave freely of her time and intellect to scaffold my thinking and writing throughout the thesis development. Her empathic understanding of the PhD study process has always been enlivened with the unique Irish storytelling wit and humour.

To my colleagues in the Adult Literacy Teaching field in Central Queensland, I extend a most heartfelt gratitude for sharing so freely of their time and their thinking during our professional development sessions, and in their interviews and assignments. My memories of the ‘flight lounge’ will be treasured forever.

I wish to acknowledge the most generous, ongoing professional advice and assistance that I have received throughout the years from my colleagues in the Faculty of Education and Creative Arts at Central Queensland University.

On a personal note, I wish to acknowledge the people in my immediate family who have provided emotional sustenance throughout this study. Thank you to the three magnificent men in my life who have always believed that the thesis would be finished: Koos, Stuart and David. For so many years, Koos and the boys have been a private oasis and source of strength in a sometimes tumultuous professional life. I have also been blessed with a wonderful sister, Paula, from whom I continue to learn insightful understandings of human nature.

DECLARATION

I declare that the main text of this thesis is entirely my own work and that such work has not been previously submitted as a requirement for the award of a degree at Central Queensland University or any other institution of higher education.

Roberta Elizabeth Harreveld
24 October 2002

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One constant that adult literacy teachers have always been able to rely upon is the fact that they will be working with change. Change comes through encounters with the people with whom they work as students, colleagues, administrators and managers. Change also comes from the institutionalised powers of their employing organisations and the systems within which they operate. Change is endemic in the forces of globalisation that have enmeshed new and old technologies, language and power in marketised integrations of economic, social, cultural and political aspects of daily life throughout the world (Beck, 2000; Prakash & Hart, 2000).

In this thesis, I investigate changes in the professional lives of twenty-three adult literacy teachers working in Central Queensland between 1996 and 2001. This research study is significant for two key reasons. First, literacy (like numeracy) has become a crucial social resource that private and public organisations have used to facilitate unremitting restructuring, repositioning and reformations within globally focused marketplaces. Second, the effects of change on the labour market regulations of the teaching profession are consequences of the positioning of education as a business, and of naming 'learning' as the product of that business.

In Australia, these changes have meant that:

Literacy and numeracy have moved from being marginalised to being a mainstream component of policy. The training reform agenda, through such initiatives as competition in VET, user choice and training packages, has led to emerging new roles for VET teachers. The integration of literacy and numeracy into mainstream delivery has resulted in a blurring of roles between the literacy and numeracy specialists and VET content specialists. Uncertainty about these roles has been further exacerbated by the development of work-based training. (Watson, Nicholson & Sharpin, 2001, p. 1)

Watson, Nicholson and Sharpin's (2001) summary of the research literature on literacy and numeracy provision in vocational education and training (VET) confirms the major aspects of change with which this study is concerned. The major effects of a nationally focused training reform agenda in this context have been:

- the establishment of the notion of 'vocational education and training';
- competition amongst education providers;
- competency based education (training packages);
- formal training on-site in workplaces;
- the movement of adult literacy (and numeracy) policy from the margin to the mainstream of education policy initiatives;
- the teaching of literacy (and numeracy) integrated into the 'mainstream' of formally organised and recognised adult education; with
- indistinct role definitions for adult literacy teachers.

As policy shifted the notion of ‘literacy’ from the margins and positioned teachers within a mainstream vocational education and training focus, it has subjected these teachers to the same uncertainties and insecurities experienced by their colleagues in both private and public sector provision of vocational education and training in this country.

In her article examining “Learning down on the farm: Rural literacy issues”, Pam Lambert (1997) identified the challenges these changes have posed for adult literacy teachers:

How do we balance the requirements of the Federal Government push for literacy to lead to “real jobs” with the ethos that language, literacy and numeracy are a means to enrich lifelong learning? How do we meet the requirements of a political agenda in order to access funding, while maintaining an ethical obligation to adult students to maintain equity and access to a broad range of language, literacy and numeracy opportunities that enable them to meet their ever-changing needs as adults? (p. 1)

Lambert’s questions illustrate the dilemma in which teachers found themselves as they worked with what seemed to be opposing expectations of governments on the one hand and ‘the ever-changing needs of adults’ on the other. During the period of this study, these questions have remained current, while at the time of writing this thesis the effects of this change are being even more keenly felt.

In a far-reaching research project into Technical and Further Education (TAFE) teachers who have been facing the challenge of these changes¹, the Australian Education Union claimed that, in the public sector at least, vocational education and training is under-funded for the job it is expected to do. In her introduction to this research report, Pat Forward, federal president of the TAFE Division of the Australian Education Union, argues a correlation between the nature of funding and the nature of teachers' employment conditions.

One of the most pernicious effects of under-funding has been the growth in casualisation in employment in the system. Casualisation directly impacts on the work of permanent teachers, but its impact on casual teachers themselves is devastating. Forced, in the words of one respondent to the AEU survey, to work 200% harder to prove that they are worthy of further work, they are often forced to live a dislocated and lonely existence on the periphery of the colleges' professional life (or what is left of it). (Forward, cited in Kronemann, 2001, p. vi)

This linking of the casualisation of the teaching workforce to under-funding of the public sector provider would no doubt be challenged by State, Territory and Commonwealth government departments charged with funding of the TAFE sector. In a comparison of total national investment in education and training from 1991-92 to 1996-97, the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows government outlays during this period to have increased from \$A19.9 billion to \$A24.5 billion (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). However the proportion of total public expenditure on vocational

¹ In Section 1.2, The Significance of the Problem, this relationship between TAFE and VET is explained in more detail.

education and training is at 13.4%, the lowest of the three sectors; with primary and secondary schooling receiving 62.1% and higher education claiming 24.5% of all government outlays during 1996-97 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

While statistics can be used to bolster and counter many points of view, these figures do lend substance to Kronemann's (2001) research findings. Yet it is the 'other' story that Forward's words are telling that is of direct importance to this thesis. There is a human story unfolding here in which people's lives are being destabilised by employment practices that are resulting in overwhelming workloads, job insecurity and an erosion of professional life. "Teachers want to be heard, and far too many see the system they work for as not listening. This must change" (Kronemann, 2001, p. 89). Significantly, these research findings suggest further change is necessary if the more socially debilitating effects of the last decade's competition policies, inadequate physical and technological resourcing, casualisation of the teaching workforce and increased complexities of teachers' roles are to be addressed.

My thesis is a study of such change and twenty-three teachers' responses to the effects of particular aspects of this change in their professional lives. In this introductory chapter, I will initially outline the specific problem from which this research has emerged. In the first section, I will also sketch the boundaries of the problem that will be further delineated in the following chapters. In the second section, the significance of the problem within its context of concern will be addressed. The research questions are formulated in the third section. In the fourth

section, I will provide a personal note of my position within this study. The fifth and final section of the chapter provides an overview of each chapter in the thesis.

1.1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS BOUNDARIES

In this thesis I am concerned with structural changes in people's work that appear to have had the power to shift the knowledge bases they rely on to do their work, and the consequent effects of this shift on these people's identities as professional educators. Thus the problem is framed as a question:

What do changes to the knowledge base of literacy mean for adult literacy teachers?

To investigate this problem, I have chosen a qualitative approach deploying discourses. Adult literacy teachers are the focus of the study, which concentrates on the ways in which discourses that express their professional identities are produced.

From this statement of the problem, the contextual and conceptual boundaries of this thesis are identified. I use the term 'context' in a manner similar to Sandra Acker (1999) in her ethnographic research into "The realities of teachers' work".

I allow context to be a very wide term . . . encompassing current and past influences at the societal level (including politics, economics, demographics and ideologies); influences at the institutional level; and influences at the biographical and personal level. (Acker, 1999, pp. 17-18)

In a contextual sense, this thesis engages with specific aspects of the professional lives of twenty-three adult literacy teachers who each participated in an eighty-hour professional development course in adult literacy teaching, while working in regional, rural and remote communities throughout Central Queensland from 1996 to 2001. The reasons for their participation reflect the situational elements of the research study reported in this thesis. These situational elements contribute to the contextual boundaries of the thesis that encompasses current and past influences of politics, economics, demographics, ideologies and influences at organizational and personal levels.

Conceptually, the thesis engages with discourses as theoretical spaces. The words that these adult literacy teachers use to interpret their worlds of work are made known and shared through social conversations. In a theoretical sense, discourses enable the utterances of words to be mapped against the social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts that give them meaning. This in turn brings me to the particular aspects of discourse with which this thesis is concerned.

The co-ordinations of power and constructions of identity mobilised through discourses are my initial focus in drawing the conceptual boundaries in Chapter Three. I then consider a particular theoretical understanding of discourses and the framing of 'literacy' within that understanding. Gee's (1991, 1992, 1993, 1996a&b, 1997, 1999, 2001) notion of 'big D/little d' D/discourse theory explicitly blends theories of language-in-use from the fields of linguistics and semiotics. With my strong reliance on a foregrounding of both context and concepts in this thesis, this

theoretical position facilitates a focal lens on the iterative relationships between discourses and literacy.

‘Literacy’ is a concept that frames these teachers’ identities while at the same time it has been constructed as a disciplinary knowledge that they teach. This is indicative of a peculiarity of teachers’ identities in general, because, within their own communities of practice, they use one or both of two key signifiers as professional identity markers: (1) the discipline/s they teach; and/or (2) the educational sector, system or level in which they are or have been employed. Thus teachers’ identities are inextricably intertwined with, and dependent on, their worlds of work.

In view of the contextual considerations that are brought to the investigation of this problem, three concepts are used as primary resources for the conceptual boundaries of the thesis: discourses, power and identity. Secondary conceptual resources are: ideology, work and pedagogy. When investigating this problem, I have construed these concepts as interrelated.

1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The significance of the problem lies in my premise that the teachers participating in this study had no voice at the nexus of power that generated the policy documents and legislatively legitimised changes to technical and further education. This is significant because, in the last decade of the twentieth century, policy-engineered changes took place in the provision of Australia’s publicly funded technical and further education.

Governments at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels led this strategic revolution that was designed to support an economically driven international repositioning of Australia's industries and big businesses in a globally competitive marketplace.

As part of a multi-faceted approach to changing the way Australia does business, the non-university, post-compulsory, technical and further education sector was yoked into the service of a "new work order", characterized by a new "fast capitalism" (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, pp. 24-47; see also Gee & Lankshear, 1997). This new fast capitalism has reflected the pace at which global capital is being continually reconfigured. The focus of my problem demonstrates that this reconfiguration is occurring in all facets of social life, including the workings of governments which are embroiled in the competitive internationalised marketplaces of trade and investment. Benton (1999) argues that:

the economies of the industrialised countries are more open to international competition and capital flows...because their governments have designed international trading and investment regimes for that purpose. (p. 47)

In this new work order, discipline configurations of knowledge have been challenged, changed and mutated because new fast capitalism has required multi-skilled, flexible workers who can service changing niche markets by designing, producing and marketing customised products for customers (Edwards, 1997; Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999; Brown & Lauder, 1999).

Built as it was upon Fordist principles and technologies of both labour and production, the technical education system in Australia was perhaps inevitably a prime site in which such rapid changes were most apparent because it was here that reform agendas were worked out as (initially) large industries sought new technologies based upon creative, innovative, flexible knowledges and skills of production (Dawkins & Holding, 1987; Deveson, 1990). This was but one indicator of an information age that was accompanied by a worldwide revolution every bit as pervasive in daily life and living as the industrial revolution which ushered in the previous century's technologies of labour and production (Delors, 1996; Robinson, 2000a).

Teachers' work was now reconfigured within what Clive Chappell (2001, p. 24) called "discourses of change", because teachers were expected to:

...have different understandings of their role in education, to have different relationships with students, to conceptualise their educational and vocational knowledge differently, to change their understanding of who they are in vocational education and training. (p. 24)

In effect, he argued, "they are being asked to change their identity" (Chappell, 2001, p. 24). This means that the work of teaching in what used to be separate entities of 'technical' and then 'further' adult education was reconfigured as new discourses of change came to be co-ordinated through a national system known as vocational education and training (VET). In its legislative and institutional organisation, the VET system challenged and eventually reconstructed the sectoral binaries of formal

technical and further education (TAFE) together with informal adult education (also known as adult and community education, or ACE).

This thesis continues Chappell's (2001) discursive approach to identity formation of teachers within the VET system. However it has a specific focus on adult literacy teachers working for a range of registered training organisations (which includes TAFE, private training providers and non-government organisations). Adult literacy teachers were initially positioned on the periphery or margins of the TAFE system – in the continuing or 'further education' part of that system that was established during the 1970s (Kangan, 1974; Richardson, 1975; Fleming, 1978). There was a resonance with their colleagues in the informal adult and community education sector who were also doing the work of adult literacy teaching, albeit without an identity co-ordinated through professional recognition or financial recompense as 'teachers'. Indeed adult literacy teaching began within this latter informal community education sector and it was only later in the 1980s in Queensland that this sector affiliated itself with the formality of 'further education' within the TAFE system (Searle, 1999a; Doig & Gunn, 1999).

With the publication of Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991), literacy was defined by the state as:

The ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately,
in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding,
to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society.

Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text...Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime. (p. 9)

This conceptualisation of literacy became the basis for the development of policy at the State and Territory levels. Thus by the time the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Policy (Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, 1994) was developed, concepts of 'literacy' were officially appropriated by the system and positioned within its discourses of change.

These policies and their historical positioning are but a snapshot of one nation state's response to change from within a paradigm of education and training. In his keynote address "Learning Cities for a Learning Community" at a recent international lifelong learning conference, Norman Longworth (2002) contrasted this education and training paradigm with that of lifelong learning, noting that it meant a paradigmatic change from:

...the concept of education for those who need it provided by those who deliver it, to the principle of continuous education for everyone controlled by individuals themselves, and mediated within the group of learners. (p. 10)

This paradigm shift and its conceptualisation are significant because adult literacy education in Australia was initially based upon the principles of continuous education that was controlled by the learners themselves and mediated within the learning group. In other words, adult literacy education was originally premised upon the principles of lifelong learning, which in European Union parlance has now been extended to encompass the notion of ‘lifewide’ learning (Dymock, 1993a; Commission of the European Union, 2000). Longworth (2002) interpreted the Commission’s term ‘lifewide’ to connote learning “which can take place across the full range of our lives at any one stage in our lives” (p. 22). This suggests an understanding of adult education as learning by the learners and for the learners.

In historical terms, the establishment of Australia’s adult community education–technical and further education alliance typified its social, economic and political times. However, it proved not robust enough to scaffold the changes of this information age from within what was in effect an ideological tower of Babel with multitudinous discourses. Rather than engage with this multitude and justify its existence within each one, this terrain in post-compulsory education itself was promptly renamed ‘vocational education and training’ with emphasis on the use of its acronym, VET, as a brand name for a new product. Throughout the 1990s, a new bureaucratic system known as the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established to manage and deliver this new VET through State government departments and peak industry bodies as its agents. As the bureaucracies of each part of the system matured, they functioned as an institution to produce discourses that embodied language, power and identity constructions for both teachers and students.

Of all the people who worked within this system, this thesis is concerned with these people known as teachers and students; specifically with those teachers who taught something called ‘literacy’ to ‘adults’. The work of adult literacy teaching encapsulated discipline knowledge about notions of ‘literacy’ and ‘adults-as-learners’. This study’s particular focus is the power co-ordinations and identity constructions of adult literacy teachers as they go about their work and everyday lives.

For my research purposes, this adult literacy teaching work is framed as a site of discursive struggle, a “contested terrain where disjuncture, rupture, contradiction, harmony and control meet as knowledge”; it is a site where “meaning and power relations are discursively located, constructed and acted” (Allen, 2000, p. 16). In the collaborative setting of professional development sessions, adult literacy teachers articulate their critical reflections and social constructions of what it means to be an adult literacy teacher and undertake the work of adult literacy teaching within the VET system’s policy agendas.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In framing questions to address the problem outlined above, I had also to consider the ways in which language has been used to reify the discipline knowledge of ‘literacy’ and its social practices that made not only these teachers, but also their adult students, visible within the vocational education and training system. Added to this consideration of the problem is the identification of the ways in which adult literacy

teachers may engage with, acquiesce, resist or even potentially transform their professional identities while working within this system.

Two research questions have been framed:

1. *How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?*
2. *What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?*

These questions have been posed in terms of understanding more effectively four key areas of this study's research endeavour:

- (1) the operations of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system and its interactions with people's everyday lived experiences;
- (2) understandings of 'literacy' as a conceptually and contextually contingent construct;
- (3) discursive configurations of teacher identity; and
- (4) cultural models of teaching as pedagogical work.

Therefore the first question asks, *How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?* The significance of

this question lies in its potential for naming the system's discourses of power that control what counts as knowledge in adult literacy teaching. This question encourages an analysis of both the system's institutionalised structures through which its power is co-ordinated, and the teachers' engagements with this power as they work with discursive constructions of the notion of literacy itself.

The second question asks, *What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?* It acknowledges that, in their engagements with the system, teachers are constructing their identities as they are positioned to 'be' particular types of knowledge workers using particular technologies of language and power in their interactions with people who are positioned as their students.

Both questions are equally significant. They are developed iteratively and recursively throughout this thesis.

1.4 A PERSONAL NOTE

As will become evident in the presentation of the study research design in Chapter Four, this thesis is a result of personal research interests in the areas of adult learning, literacy and professional education together with a conceptual commitment to notions of discourses, power and identity. These research interests have emerged from a combination of lived experiences and ongoing studies while working as a teacher within the VET system from 1988 to 1998.

This research interest emerged from a curiosity to understand not only the changing worlds of work all around me, but also why those discourses of change had such apparent power to change my professional life in ways over which I seemed to have no control. I soon realized that, while there were many ways in which teachers could engage with these changes, there were two areas in particular over which we appeared to have no control: (1) our employers' human resource requirements for particular professional qualifications; and (2) the legal documents with which we had to teach (curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents, which later came to include training packages).

Professional education opportunities for teachers focused on official policies and pre-determined operational procedures for their implementation. For teachers living in regional, rural or remote communities, decisions that were made in the metropolitan and south-eastern area of Queensland, as well as other capital cities, had enormous impacts on their daily lives because they determined the terms and conditions of their work. As employing institutions sought to position themselves for economic and political survival in this new VET system, teachers were potentially ripe for losing the very sense of self-worth, purpose and pleasure that caused them to enter the profession in the first place (McWilliam, 1996).

When the opportunity arose to facilitate the first Queensland non-metropolitan professional development course in adult literacy teaching that could satisfy one of the mandatory requirements for teaching in the area, the possibility of combining this course with a research study for this thesis became a reality. In 1997, my colleagues

and I undertook a funded research project which investigated complementary issues related to adult literacy teaching in regional, rural and remote communities throughout Central Queensland (Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997; Singh & Harreveld, 1997). Yet it was to the adult literacy teachers that I constantly returned as the focus of my own research because, on a pragmatic level, the professional development courses continued to be offered and the syllabus documents continued to evolve as they incorporated the competency based curriculum frameworks of the system. Also, it continued to be the teachers who were pivotal in the learning taking place at the policy–practice interface of the VET system.

It is these events, together with professional and personal considerations, that have influenced the design of this research study that is detailed in Chapter Four. In Chapter Seven, I return to these considerations when the findings from this research study are interpreted.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised in seven chapters. This first chapter has provided an overview of the problem and its significance and has elaborated the study's research questions.

Chapter Two presents a review of the changes that have situated this study within its contextual boundaries. In situating this research in both time and place, the chapter investigates:

- the structure of the vocational education and training (VET) system and the place of adult literacy teaching within that system;
- this system's contextually constructed conceptualisation of literacy at the policy–practice interface;
- professional development of adult literacy teaching; and
- previous research studies of adult literacy teaching communities of practice in Central Queensland.

With the contextualised background to the questions in place, I then return to the research questions for identification and discussion of their conceptual underpinnings.

In Chapter Three, I build a theoretical framework that brings conceptual resources to my investigation of the problem underpinning this study. From within this contextualised political, educational, geographical and temporal terrain, the notions of discourse, power and identity that have been embedded in the two research questions are explored. Specifically, this means that articulations of power in discourses are presented first. Following this, one particular understanding of discourse is used to forge the power–knowledge construct in relation to the disciplinary knowledge of 'literacy' within the vocational education and training system. It is here that I frame the concept of discourse from a joint disciplinary power–knowledge axis of linguistics and semiotics using Jim Gee's (1993, 1996a&b, 1997, 1999, 2001) socio-cultural 'big D/little d' D/discourse theory.

Embedded in the 'big D' element of his theory is the notion of 'identity kits' that are constructed from co-ordinations of language, beliefs, values, actions, objects and so

on in people's social lives. One particular facet of these teachers' lives is their work. Therefore, to finish building the study's theoretical framework, the relationship between identity and work is explored. Together with three other contributing concepts of ideology, work and pedagogy, the theoretical framework scaffolds these conceptual understandings which are then used to inform the methodological framing of the research.

In Chapter Four I provide a detailed explanation of the study's research design. Here I set out and justify my methodological approach, the data collection methods and the data analysis strategy. This chapter describes a qualitative study designed to link the study's concept–context interface methodologically. Based upon what counts as data, the data collections methods are identified. Details of a specific analysis strategy used by Gee (1993, 1999) with data as text are provided, together with my justification for its use. In addition, the chapter states the measures undertaken to maximise confidence in the conduct of the study. Included in this section are the ethical and political considerations of my research.

Chapters Five and Six are the data analysis chapters. In both chapters, I have embedded the detailed text analysis within narratives that tell the stories of teachers' values, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations and perceptions of themselves and of others. These data were identified from the teachers' conversations during professional development sessions and their written communications in assignments. Gee's (1993, 1999) five interrelated linguistic systems of discourse analysis are used

with selected text. This text includes syllabus extracts and transcripts of small and medium sized ‘chunks’ of oral and written language.

The data analysed in Chapter Five specifically address the first research question. Here the complex productions of the VET system’s power co-ordinations as enacted through discourses are identified, compared and contrasted as the teachers position themselves in relation not only to the system, but also to their students’, local communities’ and their own expectations of themselves as professional educators. In keeping with its focus on the second research question, Chapter Six identifies and analyses teachers’ identity constructions through these data as text.

In Chapter Seven, the findings are synthesised and interpreted in relation to the two key research questions. I then explore the implications of these findings for the conceptual, methodological and empirical significance of this study. The thesis concludes in this chapter with the future challenges emanating from changes to the knowledge base of literacy and the curriculum frameworks established to deliver that literacy to people in their local and regional communities.

CHAPTER TWO: SITUATING THE STUDY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this second chapter I situate the study within the contextual terrain in which changes to the knowledge base of ‘literacy’ were enacted. In Chapters Five and Six, this contextual terrain is situated more precisely in the words of particular teachers and the local Central Queensland communities in which they live and work.

The topics to be covered in this chapter situate both research questions within the contextual boundaries of the study. The first question asks:

How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system’s institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of ‘literacy’ and the work of adult literacy teaching?

To map these boundaries, I will investigate the Australian vocational education and training system’s structural contexts of influence. This positions the thesis for later data analysis of both the system’s and the teachers’ discursive productions of power as they work for organisations operating within the system’s structures.

The concept of literacy is also embedded in this first question because it too is contextualised by the VET system’s structural contexts of influence. The final part of the first question is concerned with the work of adult literacy teaching and here this work is situated at the policy–practice interface within the system’s structures.

This begins the second section of the chapter which establishes contextual boundaries for the second question:

What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

In this section I present the language of learning that has been adopted by the system for the provision of adult literacy teaching. The language represents the changing meanings and purposes of learning endorsed by the VET system. The way is then prepared for the later analysis of teachers' identity constructions as they work with the system's particular conceptualisations of 'literacy' and the curriculum frameworks established to infuse that literacy throughout the system. The language used to inscribe this 'literacy' is made known through not only particular curriculum frameworks but also syllabus documents that have been developed from these frameworks.

The work of adult literacy teaching requires knowledge of these frameworks and syllabus documents. One way in which teachers can gain this knowledge is to engage in professional development courses that are recognised by the VET system. An overview of such professional development courses in adult literacy teaching is presented in the final part of this section.

The chapter concludes with an examination of previous research focusing on the provision of adult literacy within Central Queensland throughout the period of my research for this thesis. Accordingly, the selection of topics is directly linked to the research questions through the following sequence:

- the structure of the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system and the place of adult literacy education within that system;
- the system's contextually constructed conceptualisation of literacy at its policy–practice interface;
- professional development of adult literacy teaching; and
- previous research studies of adult literacy teaching communities of practice in Central Queensland.

2.1 THE AUSTRALIAN VET SYSTEM

After a generation of legislative and policy changes in Australia, new structures for vocational education and training supplanted the old structures of the technical and further education (TAFE) era. While enhancing the importance of 'technical' education for our country's future, the structures of the TAFE era also legitimised the concept of 'further education' as worthy of public funding. This move was in concert with international thinking on the state's role in fostering access to continuing, lifelong education for all citizens (Kangan, 1974; Fleming, 1978; Dymock, 1993a&b; Chappell, 1999).

Peter Karmel's (1982) challenge to the TAFE system positioned the operations of its organisations as secondary to events unfolding in the worlds of work and education:

The TAFE role is cast nearer to the interface between education and the workforce than those of the other sectors of education. The future of TAFE must therefore be discussed in the context of what is happening both in the world of work and in the world of education. Priorities in

TAFE must be conceived not in terms of what seems sensible or good for TAFE institutions as such, but in relation to the total education and employment situation of young people. (p. 3)

It is perhaps only in hindsight that the significance of Karmel's words can be appreciated. His prescient warning not to lose sight of TAFE's primary purpose for existence foreshadowed the massive changes to both "the world of work" and the "world of education" that subsequently occurred.

Karmel's warning signalled the potentiality of a new era in which the system and its organisations were closely related, but need not necessarily be one and the same. If the TAFE system did not do what it was set up to do, then its organisation of colleges and their attendant bureaucracies could be uncoupled from the system and a new system established. Through policies and enactment of legislation at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels, that is exactly what has been happening from the late 1980s to the present day.

Peter Kell (1998a) identified four 'policy epochs' that not only influenced policy development and implementation processes, but also reflected significant global tendencies during this period:

- the poor cousin epoch: technical education and the emergence of TAFE (1900-1974);
- the Kangan epoch: participation and equity (1974-1988);
- the open training market and seamless web epoch (1988-1992);
- the epoch of user choice (1992-1998). (pp. 8-16)

The epochs suddenly speed up exponentially. A five to seven year ‘epoch’ might seem a strange notion. Yet as Kell (1998a) argues, this is representative of the rate of global changes occurring during these time periods.

The opening training market and seamless web epoch paved the way for private training providers to enter a VET ‘market’ that was ‘open’ to competition amongst public and private providers “with the objective of integrating training more coherently with the needs of industry” (Kell, 1998a, p. 10). The notion of a ‘seamless web’ refers to the introduction of integrated on-the-job and off-the-job competency based training within a framework that facilitated portability of accredited qualifications from registered providers throughout the country. During this third epoch, there was “a move away from learning models which isolated literacy as a ‘reading’ activity to the demonstration of communications competence in varied workplace settings” (Kell, 1998a, p. 10).

While the policies of the third epoch continued to be implemented, the fourth epoch heralded the introduction of ‘user choice’. This meant that employers were positioned as consumers with a choice of training providers. It was upon this basis that funding was distributed to training providers. Thus private and public providers had a very real incentive to be the preferred provider of choice for employers.

Kell’s (1998a) explanation is useful because it highlights that it was the movement of funds from the public provider to an open training market that was the mechanism by which user choice could operate. Through the creation of this open training market of

user choice, the state operationalised the VET system's tendering processes. The effects of these policies and processes have had significant impact on teachers' work.

In the adult language, literacy and numeracy field where training organisations have to bid for funds that are tied to the achievement of particular pre-specified social and/or labour market outcomes, 'user choice' is characterised by an illusion of choice. Significantly, in his commentary on challenges for VET teaching, Kell (1998b) argued that this had direct implications for adult literacy teaching in the VET system because:

...the competitive training market reshapes teaching and learning into a more commodified exchange relationship and brings with it the danger of neglecting the social and cultural role of VET teaching. (p. 1)

Competition brings with it changing expectations of teachers. They are expected to incorporate the language, actions, values and beliefs of the marketplace in a changed work environment that is characterized by competitive tendering processes under the policy dictates of 'user choice'. Yet, as Kell acknowledges, there is a "social and cultural role of VET teaching" that has been threatened by the system's policies that are dependent upon notions of competition and illusory choices as the sole determinants of its direction and purpose for adult (literacy) education.

In a newsletter to registered training organisations, the Queensland Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Council (1998a) confirmed:

There are different 'buckets' of money from Commonwealth and state government – each with a particular purpose to meet policy goals. You need to make sure you are applying for the right funds to meet the needs

of your clients: workers, community groups, jobseekers, migrants and people with special needs. (p. 8)

In this policy epoch of user choice, the operational processes of competitive tendering in adult English language, literacy and numeracy provision for non-metropolitan communities in particular are illusory in three respects.

First, the client groups are predetermined and “the right funds” with pre-specified outcomes have to match “the needs” of these clients. This matching is important for all registered training organisations. If they get the match wrong, then the outcomes may not be achieved and the organisation’s continued registration, not to mention its financial survival, is at risk. In a worst case scenario, the full tendered funds may not be received; or, as a face-saving outcome, the registered training organisation (RTO) may be monitored closely by the Commonwealth or particular state training authority that awarded the tender.

Second, the illusory nature of the choice is compounded when the demographics of a community are such that there are not enough people for a particular ‘client’ group of sufficient numbers to break even with delivery costs.

Third, ‘competitive tendering’ will work only when there is actual competition. This means that organisations have actually to want the vocational education and training work on offer through purchasing branches of State and Commonwealth governments.

However, if registered training organisations (of which TAFE was but one among many) wished to receive public funding, then they had to comply with the VET system's policy directives. During the decade of the 1990s, construction of a 'market' for vocational education and training, and in particular adult literacy education, was predicated upon findings from government commissioned research which accompanied the National Training Reform Agenda (Deveson, 1990).

Research findings from the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research, indicated that there were three key system transitions during this period:

- from TAFE to VET;
- from 'supply side' to 'demand driven' provision of vocational education and training; and
- from a single, publicly funded provider with no competition to multiple providers in competition with one another. (Robinson, 2000b)

The first transition has already been discussed at the beginning of this section, namely the transition from TAFE to VET. Robinson stated that this transition saw "12% of the entire Australian working-age population (aged 15-64 years) enroll in a publicly funded VET program each year" across all providers, with the result that "this kind of coverage is achieved rarely elsewhere in the world" (Robinson, 2000b, p. 12).

Transitions numbers two and three are pertinent to this section's discussion because it is these transitions that have had a direct impact on the system's structural contexts of influence. In the second transition, Australia's VET system had been transformed from the old 'supply side' provision that was deemed to have been driven by training authorities and TAFE Colleges/Institutes, to the new 'demand driven', industry led

system that would make vocational education and training more relevant to industry controlled workplaces (Robinson, 2000b, p. 12). Robinson (2000b) perceived the third transition that brought competition into the VET marketplace as “controversial but necessary”, although he did not advocate unilateral continuation of this industry-dominated VET system, with its ongoing reliance on competition. In fact, he argued that:

On the contrary, we need to be very careful not to erode the underlying strengths of the TAFE system through competition...

While private providers do offer new and innovative choices, it is through a well-resourced public system that vital long-term skill formation capacity is developed. (p. 12)

Lessons learned from the last decade’s experiences resonate through Robinson’s two portentous messages here. First, competition is useful if “new and innovative choices” are needed. Private providers have a place in this first scenario because private enterprise is established for the purpose of presumably short-term, user-choice, competitive education and training environments. Second, it would appear that this first scenario is not necessarily the one that will deliver “vital long-term skill formation capacity” in the community. Robinson was foreshadowing a second alternative scenario in which the commitment of the state is needed to ensure society has this capacity for the long-term.

These changes have to be interpreted in concert with changing demographics of population ebbs and flows, work opportunities and economic, social and cultural life

throughout Central Queensland communities in this study. This problematic situation is reflected in Robinson's (2000a&b) further identification of three 'big picture issues' that have emerged from research undertaken by the National Centre of Vocational Education and Research since the inception of the VET system:

- the impact of the changing nature of work;
- demand by learners for far more customisation in training provision; and
- the impact of rapid ageing of our population and what this means for learning strategies and the re-thinking of how we go about providing VET.

These 'big picture issues' are actually local and immediate issues for people who wish to live and work in such communities. It is this other transition, from the 'big picture' of national and global trends in VET provision to the local, immediate and particular concerns of people living in these communities, with which this thesis is specifically concerned.

The bureaucratic structures within which these changes will continue to be played out continue to evolve. The following sub-section presents an interpretative analysis of the VET system. Given this study's focus on adult literacy teachers, my interpretation reflects a system's structure through the lens of teachers working in their local and professional communities throughout the Central Queensland region.

2.1.1 Structural contexts of influence

In its design and implementation, the vocational education and training (VET) system in Australia is inextricably linked to ongoing national and international social, economic and political events, policies and priorities. At the same time, the VET system is responding to these same influences operating within communities throughout the country.

The figure below (Figure 2.1 *The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*) maps the VET system's structural contexts of influence for the delivery of adult language, literacy and numeracy in regional, rural and remote communities.

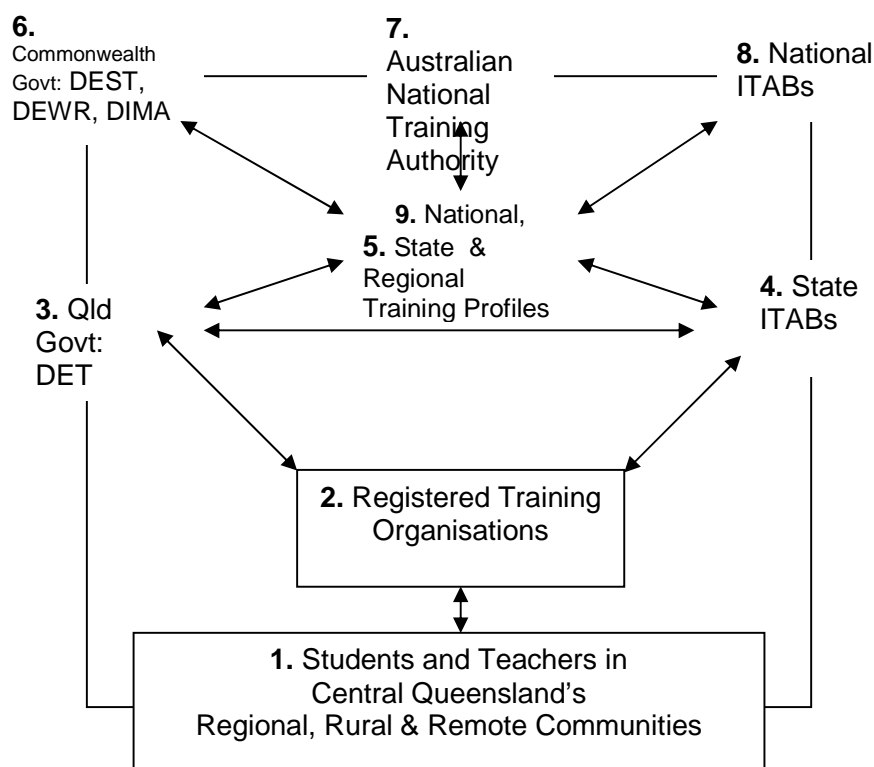


Figure 2.1: *The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*

While I could have drawn this figure (*Figure 2.1: The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*) from many perspectives, I have chosen to highlight the system's structures that have a direct impact on the work of adult literacy teaching in regional, rural and remote communities in Central Queensland. This is a teacher's perspective and it presents those aspects of the system with which teachers have the most contact, and which have the most direct influence on their employment terms and conditions.

This diagram (*Figure 2.1 The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*) is my interpretation of the status quo following the transition from the Kangan era (1974-1988) policies of "participation and equity" to "open training market" and "user choice" policies of the last decade (Kell, 1998a, pp. 8-16). In this diagram, I not only identify key structural components of the system, but I also begin the process of mapping the contexts within which the system's power is co-ordinated. These structural components have been numbered from 1 to 9, with number 1 having the most immediate direct influence and number 9 having the least direct influence on the work of adult literacy teaching. Each will now be discussed in turn.

1. Adults as teachers and students in communities

Adults who were positioned as teachers and students in their local communities have their first and ongoing contacts with the VET system through a registered training organisation (RTO). These organisations compete with one another for funding to deliver vocational education and training. The double-headed arrow indicates a reciprocal relationship with component number 2. These registered training

organisations employ the adult literacy teachers, enrol the students and issue awards upon successful completion of studies.

The terms ‘regional’, ‘rural’ and ‘remote’ denote non-metropolitan communities’ geographical, social, economic and cultural relationships with the metropolitan area of Queensland, which is centred around the capital city, Brisbane. I am aware that there is an extensive and growing literature on what might be termed ‘space theory’ (see for example Harvey, 1989; Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996; Barcan & Buchanan, 1999; Usher & Edwards, 2000). I am interested in deploying selected elements of that literature – specifically, Mercer (1997) and Rowe (1997) – for the particular purpose of framing and facilitating my later engagement with Gee’s (1996b, 1999) D/discourse theory in relation to power co-ordinations and identity constructions among the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland.

From that perspective, Mercer (1997) addresses the issues of space theory through a framing of Australia’s regional cultures. His thinking encapsulates the complexity and complementarity of the notions of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in considerations of the Central Queensland ‘region’ as I am positioning it in this study.

There is the region as *administrative* space delimited by political indicators such as Local Government Areas (LGAs). There is the region as *geographic* space delimited by physical indicators such as mountains, plains and ocean. There is the region as *economic* space delimited by patterns of commuting, employment characteristics and retailing - a *functional* region, that is, defined as a Local Labour Market Area (LLMA)

in UK terms. There is, finally and sadly, in terms of current definition, the region as a *social* space defined normatively and in deficit terms as 'non-metropolitan'. All of these definitions have partial merit. None will suffice on their own terms. (Mercer, 1997, p. 6; emphasis in original)

The space a region occupies is understood in administrative, geographical, economic, functional and social terms. The pejorative sense of a 'non-metropolitan' social space is identified in terms of deficit or lack of social life in comparison to the social space of a metropolitan region. Each of these spaces has its merits for defining a 'region'. In *Figure 2.1: The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*, the system's bureaucracy governs through the notion of the (Central Queensland) region.

The region can also be defined by the people who live there in perceptual terms, that is, as a cultural space. I turn to Mercer (1997) again for the perceptions of cultural affinity:

If you *feel* like a central, northern or western Queenslander or, crossing State boundaries, as a Riverina or Mallee or Central Australian or Desert or Long Grass person, and there is sufficient evidence that there are others who would identify in this way, and there is a culture of exchanges, traditions, rituals and common artefacts to support this feeling, then you have a region. This is an imagined community. But it is a *really* imagined community and that, after all, is the basis of our nations and polities. (p. 8; emphasis in original)

Here the 'region' is defined through relationships that embody people's feelings and perceptions of shared cultural exchanges, traditions, rituals and artefacts of daily life,

together with the social interactions of daily life as both individuals and members of groups.

The inclusion of 'rural' and 'remote' with the 'regional' to denote communities in which these teachers live reflects the cultural and social affiliations of people living in this Central Queensland region. At the same time it acknowledges the administrative, geographical, economic and functional spaces through which it is defined (see Appendix 1: The Central Queensland Region).

South-west from Rockhampton, the Dawson Valley towns of Biloela, Theodore and Moura have retained their globally restructured agricultural and pastoral industries throughout the sometimes intermittent development of the coal mines surrounding Moura township. Since the opening up of coal mines throughout the whole Bowen basin further north in the Central Highlands, communities such as Emerald, Clermont, Dysart, Moranbah, Middlemount and Blackwater are also known as 'mining towns' in the centre of agricultural and pastoral industries from surrounding properties. North on the coast, Mackay has retained its major sugar cane production industry base (with ongoing exposure to global market fluctuations), while it is also becoming known as a coastal tourist gateway to the Great Barrier Reef as well as a dormitory, rest and recreation town for mine workers of the Central Highlands.

In the far west, Longreach functions as a remote yet regional community hub for pastoral and service industries operating through smaller, geographically remote townships of this area. Located almost in a direct line to the east of Longreach, and

close to rapidly growing coastal industries, Gladstone and Rockhampton function similarly as regional communities. There are nearby townships considered 'remote' not necessarily in a geographical sense, but in the people's social and/or economic and/or cultural distances from access to employment opportunities.

In these last few paragraphs, I have also sketched the notion of 'place' in which this study is located. This notion of place is significant because it strengthens understandings of 'region' – the region has both space and place. The term 'community' is used advisedly to denote people's self-identifications as belonging to particular groups of people with common interests and shared histories. Regional communities in this study are considered to be not only regional, but also rural and remote. They embody Rowe's (1997) understanding of the region as space and place which:

...mediates between minutely localised and extensively globalised conceptions of space and place in which people and settlements are seen to be linked in various ways by propinquity, distance from metropolitan capitals, culture, history, political affiliation, economic interest and, not uncommonly, bureaucratic taxonomy. (p. 17)

I now investigate registered training organisations as one aspect of a "bureaucratic taxonomy".

2. Registered Training Organisations

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are also known as ‘training providers’. Essentially, there are six types of businesses that may be RTOs: (1) TAFE Institutes; (2) Skills Centres and Group Training Schemes; (3) private commercially structured training organisations; (4) high schools; (5) community organisations and local government agencies; and (6) commercial divisions of universities. Under the Australian Quality Training Framework, formerly the Australian Recognition Framework (Australian National Training Authority, 2001) all organisations that wish to receive public training funds and issue awards under the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board, 1998) must be registered with their particular State Training Authority (STA).

In Queensland this is now called the Training and Employment Board¹, and was known as the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission at the time this research began. In this study, the teachers were working for small non-government organisations (NGO), private providers that were registered training organisations, and the TAFE Colleges throughout the Central Queensland region.

3. Queensland Department of Employment and Training

Queensland’s Department of Employment and Training (DET) is the bureaucracy that operationalises the system’s policies at a state level across six regions. Officers of the Department collate the Regional Training Profile on an annual basis. Even though the Queensland Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Council was

¹ The Training and Employment Board and the Training Recognition Council were set up under new legislation passed in 2000, the Employment and Training Act (Retrieved 1February, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.det.qld.gov.au>).

disbanded as a Standing Committee of the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Council with the promulgation of the new Education and Training Act in 2001, one of these departmental officers continues to be nominated as the Queensland Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy programs' officer (Heinemann, 2001, 2002). This officer works closely with registered training organisations that tender for language, literacy and/or numeracy funds. S/he also provides advice and subsidises the provision of professional development courses for teachers and tutors. As an officer of the department, this person also works to foster and maintain relationships with regional and metropolitan-based representatives of Industry Training Advisory Bodies.

The Central Queensland regional DET office disburses funds for:

- Community Literacy Programs (using ANTA Recurrent Literacy funds designated especially for this provision);
- Adult Community Education/Vocational Education and Training (ACE/VET); and
- Regional Language and Literacy Priority funding also known as 'Responsive Funding' (state-based funds to meet unforeseen, unmet needs not accounted for in the regional training profile). (QAELLN Council, 1998a, pp. 3-10)

At the State level, DET disburses funds to the TAFE Institutes. In the literacy programs area, these funds include:

- TAFE Language Programs (negotiated as English as a Second Language Provision);
- TAFE Literacy Programs; and

- Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Recurrent Literacy funds. (QAELLN Council, 1998a, pp. 3-10)

Other Commonwealth government funded programs are administered by the Department of Employment and Training at the state level and tendered for by registered training organisations:

- Community Jobs Plan (CJP);
- Community Employment Assistance Program (CEAP); and
- Community Training Partnerships Program (CTP). (Heinemann, 2001)

A peculiarity of the Queensland VET system is its political separation of powers. There are separate government departments with separate bureaucracies and ministers. In this thesis, I will refer to the most recent names of these two bureaucracies: Education Queensland and the aforementioned Department of Employment and Training. Each State and Territory has its own portfolio packaging with its own language that reflects changing strategic policy and political alliances.

4. State Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs)

State based Industry Training Advisory Bodies are representative of the main vocational training areas, such as construction, metals and engineering, and community and human services. There is no state ITAB that represents 'adult English language, literacy and numeracy'. The issue of language, literacy and numeracy is addressed by the ITABs as it concerns their particular vocational training areas. In all competency based industry specific Training Packages, language, literacy and numeracy workplace performance requirements are to be found embedded in the elements of competency as

well as the Mayer (1992) key competency levels. The Queensland ITAB representatives provide advice and other services to the national ITABs that endorse the Training Packages.

At the local level, ITABs exert considerable power in the sense that, if a registered training organisation wished to be registered to offer a particular course and award level, ITAB endorsement is necessary if it is to be considered by the Queensland Training Recognition Council. Here the situation with language, literacy and numeracy is different from other training areas, because there is no ITAB. The regional QAELLN programs officer therefore takes a major role in supporting applications for registration from training organisations that wish to offer a course from a language, literacy or numeracy specific syllabus.

5. State and Regional Training Profiles

As previously stated, the regional training profiles are collated annually into the state training profiles, which in turn inform the national training profiles. The regional training profile gives a picture of current and future employment trends within Central Queensland. It identifies current and future industry driven growth, stagnation and potential which is significant for the teachers in this study because their employment is dependent upon needs identified in such training profiles. Not only is the profile built from face-to-face discussions with community groups, business and industry groups around the region, but it is also informed by data from other government governments and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The state and regional training profiles are the mechanism by which public funding is provided for vocational education and training in Central Queensland. The power of the profiles is considerable because they are used to determine the amount per student contact hour that the purchasing branch of the Department will spend on vocational education and training, which includes language, literacy and numeracy provision either as a separate entity or embedded within other provision.

6. Commonwealth Departments of Education, Science and Training; Employment and Workplace Reform; and Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
Together with the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), the Department of Employment and Workplace Reform (DEWR) and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) also fund vocational education and training on behalf of the Commonwealth. In the adult literacy field in particular, these government departments have considerable power because some funding is tendered for directly by registered training organisations (RTOs), thus bypassing the Queensland state government bureaucracy. An example is provided below:

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs -

- Adult Migrant English Program; and
- Advanced English for Migrants Program;

Department of Education, Science and Training –

- Literacy and Numeracy Training (LANT) for Jobseekers; and
- Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program. (QAELLN Council, 1998a, pp. 3-10)

7. Australian National Training Authority

While the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has had a powerful influence within the VET system's structure, in its operations it is far removed from the daily work of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland. This Commonwealth Statutory Authority has its own Board, chief executive officer and staff. ANTA functions to: (1) develop national policy; (2) administer funding; (3) co-ordinate the operations of the national training system; and (4) co-ordinate the development of national training packages. In turn, ANTA itself is overseen by a Ministerial Council (MINCO) that is representative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Training Ministers who are accountable to State and Commonwealth parliaments for the operations of ANTA and its expenditure of funds.

The Ministerial Council (MINCO), while it oversees ANTA and covers accountability reporting for 'training', does not co-ordinate the various Ministerial portfolios of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments that address issues related not only to training and employment, but also to education and youth affairs. For this purpose, another Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) was constituted with Ministers from all these portfolios as members. Their job is to ensure policies are co-ordinated at the national level, with reporting arrangements, collaborative use of resources and negotiation of nationally agreed upon outcomes and interests.

8. National Industry Training Advisory Bodies

In recent years, the work of national ITABs has been focused on overseeing the development of the national Training Packages. Here the national ITABs work closely with their state counterparts at all stages to document units of competency for specific

work performances in particular industries. The industry representatives on the national ITABs provide advice to ANTA and to State and Territory statutory training authorities such as Queensland's Training and Employment Board. They are also involved in the development of the national training profiles and members are represented on the National Training Framework Committee (NTFC), which is a subcommittee of the ANTA Board that is responsible for the endorsement of national Training Packages.

9. National Training Profiles

These national training profiles have already been mentioned. On the surface, they are perhaps the least important to a teacher working in a regional and remote community such as Longreach. However, the compilation of local, state and national profiles is clearly complicit in power relations between the state and private enterprises in all communities.

In summary, there is a complexity to this VET system's structures of influence that renders much of it obscure and potentially confusing for people both 'inside' and 'outside' the system. The consequences of this for teachers' work are: (1) a threat of deprofessionalisation of teachers in general, and, in the context of this thesis, adult literacy teachers in particular; and (2) potentially new roles emerging for adult literacy teachers (Wickert, 1997; McKenna, 1997; Kell, 1998b; Chappell, 1999).

The ways in which adult literacy teachers coped with these changes were "almost entirely dependent on the clarity with which teachers understand their new roles and are able to convert this to practice in a variety of settings" (Kell, 1998b, p. 25). In turn, these new roles were dependent upon the system's structuring of the concept of

‘literacy’. The following section explores these structural contexts of influence on literacy that have framed the work of adult literacy teaching in a variety of settings in Central Queensland.

2.1.2 Structural influences on literacy

The policies that established the system and its structures for the delivery of publicly funded VET exist for the purpose of producing human capital that will contribute to society’s economic well being (Foley, 2000). The Queensland government’s State Infrastructure Plan (Queensland Department of State Development, 2001) identified skills, training and education as one of seven infrastructure issues to be addressed in the Central region’s action/implementation plan. The other issues related to: innovation and technology of new and existing industries; telecommunications infrastructure needs; water resource developments; road and rail transport requirements; regional waste management facilities; and potential industrial land areas to support current expansions and future industry needs (Queensland Department of State Development, 2001). Here the ‘hard’ infrastructure of small and large-scale physical resources were policy-mixed with the ‘soft’ human and social infrastructures of communities with the intention of facilitating the ongoing lifelong learning that is considered necessary for business survival in a competitive, global market.

Crucially, this signals the encouragement of training providers to work in partnership not only with “industry”, but also with one another; so as “to develop appropriate training arrangements to support the requirements of local industry” (Queensland Department of State Development, 2001, p. 222). It is this paradox that was embedded

in Robinson's (2000b) synthesis of research findings discussed earlier in this chapter. On the one hand, registered training organisations are authorised by the VET system to tender for training funds in a competitive environment of 'user choice'. On the other hand, these same organisations are being exhorted to establish partnerships with their competitors so that economic goals are achieved and industry competitiveness is maintained.

In regional, rural and remote communities, this situation calls for leadership from within local communities because, with its current policies, the system can facilitate partnerships, but it cannot deliver them. Together with his colleagues, Ian Falk's research into the role of the vocational education and training organisations in the establishment and sustainability of regional learning communities suggested that community-based local learning partnerships facilitated by proactive, shared and even visionary leadership processes provided a counter-balance to a cult of competitiveness engendered by the VET system (Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, 2000; Falk & Mulford, 2001; Kilpatrick, Falk & Johns, 2002).

Internationally, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2001a&b) reports have suggested that it is the learning capacity of local communities, regions and nations that has to be harnessed for the "production and distribution of knowledge" in the development of a "learning economy" (OECD, 2001a, p. 7; see also Queensland Department of State Development, 2001). From all these research findings, the establishment and maintenance of non-competitive, inter- and intra-systemic partnerships have been considered fundamental to the capacity building of learning

economies within regional, rural and remote communities, and literacy is considered integral to such capacity building.

The differing structural relationships among Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, schools and tertiary education systems, professional associations, industry representatives and special interest groups within this country are constituted such that they have the potential to conspire actively against such partnerships. At the level of the local and the particular, these relationships still have to be negotiated and continually renegotiated amongst people living and working in communities.

In its ongoing repositioning of adult literacy teachers in these continuing negotiations of relationships within communities, the VET system's restructuring of work practices and consequent underpinning of teacher knowledge was achieved through a curriculum orientation towards 'competence' in which there were ongoing "complex adaptations" of a "competence paradigm as it passes through multi-layered terrains from policy making to practice" (Bates, 1999, p. 116). The conceptual alignment of 'literacy' and 'competency' is yet another paradox engendered via this system's structural influences which are played out at the interface of policy and practice.

In this sub-section, I will identify the VET system's concept of 'literacy'. Then I will investigate the notion of 'contextualised literacies' that has permeated the development of literacy focused curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents.

Literacy

From the previously quoted national policy definition of 'literacy', (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991), the Queensland VET system (initially in 1994²), defined 'literacy' as:

...the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking. It includes the cultural knowledge enabling a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. (Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations, 1998, p. 8)

Literacy is acknowledged to be an 'integrated' construct of socially and culturally appropriate language-in-use in different contexts. This policy's goal was designed to "enhance effective participation by all Queensland adults in vocational education and training, in the workplace and the community" (Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations, 1998, p. 6). In their evaluation of the first version of the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Policy, Kell, Cope, Hill and Howard (1997) found that it:

...was established around a series of related policy documents including the Review of Adult Literacy 1991; Active Literacy: The Queensland Government Literacy Strategy 1992-1995; the Queensland Department of Education's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 1994-1998; Federal government's National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy. (p. 4)

² Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education Training and Industrial Relations (1994).

From its stated goal, and the rationale linking it to these other system's policies and strategies, it is clear that governments were committed to assigning funds to provide access for the learning of 'literacy' as just defined. In this context, the key purpose of literacy alluded to previously is reflected in the Australian National Training Authority's (1994) published national strategy for vocational education and training that stated:

High priority will be given to increasing provision of English language, literacy and numeracy skills as part of mainstream vocational education and training programs and workplace skills development. (p. 23)

The Australian National Training Authority's (ANTA) national strategy for 1998-2003 continues to embed the integration of language, literacy and numeracy into its 'mainstream' vocational education and training products that were an outcome of its stated objective of 'workplace skills development' and enhanced mobility in the labour market (Australian National Training Authority, 1998, p. 14). This labour market demands more than the trade-training certainties of the old technical education system could offer. Developing technological knowledge structures has meant that this concept of literacy has to resonate with, and be taught through, the ever-changing, multiple literacies of workplaces and communities (Green, Hodgins & Luke, 1994; Luke, O'Brien & Comber, 1994; Cope & Kalantzis, 1995; LoBianco & Freebody, 1997; Hodgins, 1994; Lepani, 1998).

Contextualised literacies

During the period of this study from 1996 to 2001, ‘literacy’ has been positioned as but one of the ways in which a new work order that would deliver economic well-being within a global marketplace was to be achieved (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Gee & Lankshear, 1997; McKenna, 1997; Wickert, 1997, 1998; Kell, 1998a&b; Castleton with Ovens & Ralston, 1999; Searle, 1999b; Castleton, 2000). These aforementioned authors and researchers have supported the view of literacy as multiple, contextualised social practices.

The changing nature of work as we have known it, together with its fast capitalist texts of production (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996), has meant that a socially and culturally contextualised understanding of literacy was most suitable for the architects of the VET system. Literacy could be directly linked to what Street (1984, p. 1) called the “social practices of reading and writing” that gain meaning only when embedded as part of work practices-in-context. The contexts in which these social practices would be enacted were those of an emerging new work order (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Gee & Lankshear, 1997).

This pre-eminence of a socio-cultural, contextualised view of literacy within the VET system was reflected in the development of curriculum frameworks and related documents. It seems that this was by no means an easy task because it presented authors with a dilemma, a “two-edged sword” as Gilding (1994, p. 3) termed it. Either they vacated the field and critiqued from the sidelines, or they engaged with the

debates-of-the-day and sought to influence outcomes from within the system's structures of influence. Overwhelmingly, the choice has been to try to do both.

Evidence of this was provided by Rosie Wickert (1997) when she reflected that:

Aware of the risks of reductionism we constructed complex, principled, and yes admittedly, protective, frameworks which we believed would enable us to respond to the demands for greater accountability whilst fostering the continuing professional development of a new field of practice and taking into account the knowledge and understanding we have of literacy as social, cultural practices. However, arguably, educators of all political hues failed to recognise the greater risk - that of losing control of education. This is the dilemma we now find ourselves in. (p. 2)

LoBianco (1997) echoed this dilemma of those who moved with the times of framing literacy policy within the VET arena. He foreshadowed a potentially forgotten constituency of people who may not fit into the labour-market oriented funding profiles and programs identified earlier in this chapter.

Yet from the beginning of the 1990s, with the publication of the Deveson (1990) report during International Literacy Year 1990, as well as the findings and recommendations of Finn (1991), Carmichael (1992) and Mayer (1992), it was evident that the notion of 'literacy' was integral to the operations of the VET system. This 'literacy' supported new contextualised learnings and work practices that were supposedly needed for the

success of a National Training Reform Agenda (Australian National Training Authority, 1994).

Concurrently, theorists and some teachers were writing of the inherent tensions they were experiencing as their collaborations with the system continued. They analysed the historical, ideological and theoretical challenges of working within the differing power-knowledge relationships of the governments, professional associations, industry training advisory bodies and special interest groups in the system's orbit of control (Dymock, 1993a&b; McConnell & Treloar, 1993; Gilding, 1994; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994; Hodgens, 1994; Sanguinetti & Riddell, 1997; Angwin, 1997; McKenna, 1997; Wickert, 1997; Kell, 1998a&b; Kelly & Searle, 1998; Castleton with Ovens & Ralston, 1999).

A review of this literature supports the claim that the VET system purchased a particular notion of literacy that was considered necessary to deliver workplace reform policies of the day. Wickert (1997) argued that this notion of literacy contained in competency based curriculum frameworks brought with it the "risks of reductionism" (p. 2). These risks were realised in a process of atomisation that reduced literacy, or literacies, as socio-cultural practices within contextualised purposes, to competencies that could be measured, recorded and reported upon as part of the system's accountability to industry. This process changed both the name and nature of learning. In making this claim, I am arguing that while the words used to describe the work of adult literacy teaching and learning had changed, so too had its fundamental purpose

changed. Literacy teaching and learning was now based upon the premise that the VET system was accountable to employers for the delivery of a competent workforce.

The following section will investigate further this juncture of policy and practice in adult literacy teaching.

2.2 AT THE POLICY–PRACTICE INTERFACE

A new language for learning was chosen to distinguish the VET system from the old technical and further education system. It reflected the history of trade and military based training from the earlier years of the twentieth century and became known in its present guise in Australia as competency based training (CBT), or competency based education (CBE) (Tovey, 1997; Chappell, Gonczi & Hager, 2000; Foley, 2000). Integral to the notion of competency based training, was a concept of competency based assessment (CBA), which meant that people's performances were deemed to be assessable against pre-determined performance criteria.

When she acknowledged the "risks of reductionism", Wickert (1997, p. 2) was referring to the atomisation of learning with which her colleagues and she had to contend as they developed competency based, literacy focused curriculum frameworks such as the National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994) and the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna, & Makin, 1995). These were the literacy frameworks that were used to inform the industry endorsed competencies in national

training packages as well as syllabus documents for vocational access and community literacy courses.

As in all vocational training areas of the VET system, teachers had to meet the particular human resource requirements articulated in these competency based training packages and syllabus documents. These requirements also detailed the instructional and content or discipline specific qualifications necessary to be allowed to teach particular modules and/or competency units from such documents.

In this section's investigation of this policy–practice interface space, I am focusing on both the language of learning relative to adult literacy provision that was embraced by the VET system and its determination of who gets to teach this literacy to adults. This means that the sub-section below focuses on 'what' is supposed to get taught (and inferentially learned), while the next section engages with 'who' is allowed to do this teaching.

2.2.1 The language of learning: competencies and literacy

Teachers entering the field of adult literacy teaching brought with them their own school-based and/or industry-based identities as educators, together with the specific ways of using language, objects, tools and technologies from those sites and institutions for which they worked (Gee, 1996a&b, 1999). They then entered a professional field in which access, equity and social justice principles co-existed with policies of competition which brought with them managerialist practices of the marketplace. The language of adult literacy echoed that of the vocational education and training system

as a whole. For example, ‘products’ (also known as courses or programs) were ‘sold’ to ‘customers’ or ‘consumers’. Individual students were no longer the only customers because they had been joined by other key ‘stakeholders’ in the VET system, that is the employers, unions and industry training advisory bodies. The learning process and its outcomes were owned by more than the learners themselves.

This learning was centred around a notion that work could be broken down into component parts known as units of competency which could specify the knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in a place and space known as ‘the workplace’. In these training packages, Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) have endorsed all sorts of competencies: core competencies, mandatory competencies, elective competencies, key competencies, enterprise-specific competencies and whole-of-industry competencies³.

It is not my intention to investigate in depth the history of competency based education and its many permutations⁴ because, for the purposes of this study, its existence in the

³ The website of the Australian National Training Authority (<http://www.anta.gov.au>) is a useful starting point for all national ITABs and their curriculum development activities. In Queensland, the Department of Employment and Training's website (<http://www.det.qld.gov.au>) is a central information point for state based ITABs. The Queensland Industry Training Council is an umbrella organisation of all state ITABs (<http://www.qitc.com.au/Training.htm>).

⁴ From their extensive research with competency and the professions in Australia, Hager and Gonczi (1996) have identified competency as: (1) task-based or behaviourist; or (2) general attributes of knowledge or critical thinking capacities that provide the basis for transferable or more specific attributes; or (3) integrated, holistic complex structuring of attributes needed for intelligent performance in specific situations that incorporates professional judgment (Hager & Gonczi, 1996, pp. 247-249). They took the position that it was the third conceptualisation that overcame all tensions within the former two conceptualisations. Tovey (1997) identified eight characteristics of the Australian VET system's competency based training: (1) focus on specific, useable skills; (2) recognition of prior learning; (3) multiple entry and exit points; (4) modular training; (5) criterion referenced; (6) personalised; (7) immediate application; and (8) flexible delivery (pp. 14-15).

lives of these teachers was a non-negotiable curriculum given. It is sufficient to note that the concept of competence or competency as used in adult literacy program or course development within the Australian VET system was contentious because of the already identified potential for reductionist, narrow, pre-determined learning outcomes that it presaged.

VET has become synonymous with CBT (competency based training). Critique of this competency based training gives it the reputation of a politically manipulated, narrow, behaviourist orientation to learning with the specific purpose of ‘value-adding’ to the human capital of big business (Collins, 1996; Smith, Lowrie, Hill, Bush & Lobegeier, 1997; Foley, Crombie, Hawke & Morris, 2000; Chappel, Gonczi & Hager, 2000). Once Mayer’s (1992) committee had identified its eight key employment-related competencies⁵ for post-compulsory education and training, they too were incorporated into industry competency standards as the general transferable attributes of knowledge and thinking required for all work and learning in vocational education and training.

The expectation that this conceptualisation of competency would be used across all industry sectors and training providers was operationalised by the common language and competency standards format mandated for all documents of the VET system. It also included the system’s interpretations of how this particular conceptualisation would be operationalised in curriculum development and implementation. This was the ‘front-face’ of competency based training with which teachers were confronted. On the

⁵ Ken Mayer was the chair of the committee that developed the ‘key’ competencies: “collecting, analyzing and organizing ideas; communicating ideas and information; planning and organizing activities; working with others and in teams; using mathematical ideas and techniques; solving problems; using technology” (Mayer, 1992, p. 5).

surface, these characteristics reflect the system's policy orientations, which in turn were intended to assure the industry training advisory bodies, big business interests and powerful lobby groups that this new system was capable of delivering just-in-time, just-enough and just-to-the-price training. Change was occurring at such a rapid pace that there was no guarantee that the particular groups and individuals for whom this system was created would be satisfied that the eventual outcomes serviced their needs.

Accordingly, the decision to align the vocational education and training system with workplace performance outcomes measured by competency standards was accompanied by one specific curriculum orientation to learning. This fundamental shift meant that, in the VET system, teachers and trainers were employees of registered training organisations contracted to 'deliver' workplace competencies. By and large, they were excluded from the decision-making processes that determined what counted as knowledge, skills and the attributes necessary for working in particular jobs. It was not until the program or course design, delivery, assessment and evaluation stages that teachers entered the vocational education and training system and encountered the competencies to which they had to teach.

As change is worked through the system, it ends up at a policy–practice interface. Here the power of the VET system decreases as the power of the teachers increases because the system itself cannot do the teaching; it can only put in place the structures within which the work of teaching will occur.

Competency and Literacy

In the Australian adult literacy field, the National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (NFAELLNC) was the result of an Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) project (1994). It provided the first conceptual blueprint for adult literacy from which a range of ‘competency based’ curriculum documents was written. The framework was predicated on the belief that language, literacy and numeracy are essential elements of communicative competence in all social activities because:

Competence requires a connection of performance and knowledge and skills, coordinated in such a way as to achieve social goals in particular contexts. People act on the basis of what they know, to realise and transform their knowledge through performance. While knowledge and skills are the products of formal education, training and study, they are also the products of experience. (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994, p. 5)

This experience is “shaped by the complexities of culture” which “refers to differences that arise from Aboriginal, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic background” (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994, p. 5). These differences are understood to be “varied, multi-layered and dynamic” whereby “constellations of differences in the life experiences of adult learners produce distinctive ways of knowing and doing” (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994, p. 5).

The complexity of this definition of competence can be appreciated when it is considered with the previous discussion on conceptualisations of competency. The

authors of the framework (NFAELLNC) tried to meet the system's demands for competency while relying on curriculum writers and eventually teachers to give it meaning/s (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994). However, there are many questions to be addressed if this conceptualisation is to guide practice. For example, which people are considered to need "social goals"? Who gets to determine people's "social goals" – adults as learners themselves, or some mix of teachers, or employers or funding bodies? Which "particular contexts" are to be favoured over others? Who determines the content and balance of "performance, knowledge and skills"? Are all "products of experience" of equal value, or are some more valuable than others? Who determines this and why?

By this stage in 1994, both the language and the meaning of literacy learning within a competency based framework was being extended by the development of the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995). This document was the result of a national project that was jointly funded by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the Commonwealth government's Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET, now known as the Department of Education, Science and Training). The National Reporting System stated that:

...a person's competence derives from the interplay between the chosen activity, the features of the text/task, and the context and level of support under which the activity is performed. (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 4)

A reading of both the National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (NFAELLNC) and the National Reporting System (NRS)

illustrates similarities in the language of learning used to describe literacy within a competency framework (see *Table 2.1: Competency and Adult Literacy* below). The significance of both documents lies in the alignment of competency not only with literacy, but also with language and numeracy, as well as their explicit linking of the notions of ‘communication’ with ‘competence’ as is also demonstrated in the table below.

Table 2.1: Competency and Adult Literacy

National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994)	National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995)
SOCIAL ACTIVITY COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK -18 competence statements necessary for participation in work and social contexts -each competence statement contains an orientation, stage and context (tied to an aspect)	INDICATORS OF COMPETENCE -sequenced according to principles of language, literacy, learning and numeracy complexity -the underpinnings of competence -must be interpreted in conjunction with ‘Conditions of Performance’ plus ‘Language and/or Numeracy Features & Performance Strategies’
6 ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE -performing tasks -using technology -expressing identity -interacting in groups -interacting in organisations -interacting with the wider community	6 ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION -perform procedures -use specific technologies or media -develop knowledge and resources that arise from personal identity -understand and participate in cooperative relationships within groups -participate in activities, structures and goals of an organisation -participate in community structures and activities
3 STAGES OF COMPETENCY -assisted -independent -collaborative 4 PHASES OF COMPETENCY -reflecting on experience -engaging in activities -broadening applications -critically reviewing	5 LEVELS OF COMPETENCE -from 1 (low) to 5 (high, <i>with</i> increasing task and text complexity when processing information <i>related to</i> : -oral communications for interpersonal exchanges, transactions and active listening -mathematics for communicative competence -learning strategies valuing personal and cultural resources -familiarity of content and transferability of knowledge and skills across contexts -types of support/assistance provided

The National Reporting System was designed to accommodate a much wider constituency than the national competency framework (NFAELLNC), which was essentially produced for curriculum designers. The authors of the National Reporting System document stated that it was:

- ...not an assessment system;
- ...not a curriculum;
- ...not a model of language acquisition;
- ...not a means for categorizing students by a simple 'level';
- ...not a set of broad competency statements;
- ...not a recruitment instrument for employers. (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 2)

On the other hand, they argued that it did:

- establish a common language across providers and funding agencies;
- facilitate student pathways and articulation; and
- contribute data to national information systems for accountability and planning purposes. (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 2)

The National Reporting System was a specific-purpose document that was the result of the aforementioned push for accountability in the expenditure of public funds in the adult literacy field. As a requirement of receiving these funds, this document is still used for the measurement, recording and reporting of educational outcomes in vocational education and training, specific 'labour market' programs as well as adult and community education programs.

Syllabus documents have been written to the national competency framework's (NFAELLNC) aspects, stages and phases of communicative competence and later mapped against the National Reporting System's levels. The years from 1994 to 1999 were hectic because, in both national and State arenas, policy and frameworks for practice were formalised and endorsed (and reviewed) by the VET system's processes. The following table (*Table 2.2: Significant Events linking Adult Literacy Policy and Practice in Central Queensland*) illustrates this progression from policy to practice in the context of adult literacy teaching in Central Queensland.

Table 2.2: Significant Events Linking Adult Literacy Policy and Practice in Central Queensland

1994	Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Policy National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994)
1995	Syllabus: CNLO3 Certificate in Prevocational Access (TAFE Queensland and Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations) National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995)
1996	Consultation with community literacy groups: using the National Framework to construct a curriculum for community literacy provision
1997	Registered Short Course CNLITNUM syllabus endorsed by the Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission via the QAELLN Council for specific use by Community Literacy Program funded community groups or organisations Review of the QAELLN Policy (Kell, Cope, Hill & Howard, 1997)
1998	Revised QAELLN Policy published by Queensland Government
1999	New syllabus replacing CNL03 was mapped against NRS:

15051 Certificate I in Vocational Access and 15050 Certificate II in Vocational Access (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations)

For teachers, the syllabus documents and the National Reporting System are the most immediately significant because they work with them on a regular basis. The learning outcomes of modules in these key syllabus documents (CNL03, CNLITNUM and 15051, 15050) reflected the intent of policy, and the content of the curriculum framework and reporting system, when they stated that students would be:

- using literacy and language texts which will enable a person to acknowledge her/his individual nature and goals as a learner plus her/his identity (interpersonal competence); and
- working in groups (co-operative competence), in organisations (systems competence) and/or communities (public competence) to perform a range of genre-specific, textually dependent tasks (procedural competence) which require the use of a range of technologies (technical competence).

(adapted from TAFE Queensland, 1995; Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999)

Here a contextualised, socio-cultural notion of literacy is positioned firmly within these complex curriculum frameworks. In these frameworks, literacy is classified as ‘communicative competence’ according to pre-determined levels, stages and phases. Prescriptive models of a literate person are built into this National Reporting System and these syllabus documents such as the CNLITNUM Course in Literacy and Numeracy and the Certificates I and II in Vocational Access. Expectations about what

constitutes literacy are described in terms of the changing socio-cultural and/or job-credential demands that our culture places on its members in their dealings with texts.

However, Freebody and Luke (1990) believed that:

...only the necessary components of literacy success can be documented; everything that a member of our culture can take from or bring to a written text can never be pre-specified, any more than can everything that a culture demands or expects from its members in their dealings with written text. (p. 7)

Mindful of this caveat, their model prescribes four key cognitive resources. According to their model, literate people mobilise these cognitive resources in a “family of practices”. These practices are:

...a “set of interrogations”...not a curriculum framework or a set of pedagogies. The issue was “Whatever your curriculum and pedagogy or school policy on literacy, ask yourself these questions”. (Peter Freebody responding, in Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 3)

...this is a heuristic template, not a formula or method. It's a way of interrogating programs and asking yourself questions about the normative requirements for literacy in new cultural, economic and social conditions. (Allan Luke's response in Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 3)

The family of practices that could be used were initially known in the 1990 version of their model as “literacy roles”. In other words, when engaging in social practices involving texts, literate people would be able to take on the roles of:

- code breaker (coding competence-how do I crack this?);
- meaning maker (semantic competence-what does this mean?);
- text user (pragmatic competence-what do I do with this here and now?);
- text analyser (critical competence-what is this text trying to do to me?).

(Freebody & Luke, 1990, pp. 7-16; Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 1; Luke, Herschell & Bahr, 2000, Appendix B)

This model was to be found in every literacy module within Queensland's first competency based adult literacy syllabus, CNLO3 Certificate in Prevocational Access (TAFE Queensland, 1995) course. Teachers were instructed that engagement with these practices when working with texts could be considered indicators of literacy success for their adult students. By the time of the second syllabus in 1999 (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999), the explicit naming of these “literacy roles” or the later terminology of “family of practices” had been deleted in favour of its being embedded in the distinctions between the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995) “levels” against which the literacy modules were mapped.

During the process of writing the National Reporting System document, the theoretical basis of ‘literacy’ could not be agreed upon by either the members of the Advisory Committee or the Academic Reference Group. This was reported as the reason for the authors’ decision to “develop a set of principles which could explain progress along a continuum” that was believed to be “inclusive of the range of theories, philosophies and

curriculum approaches currently in practice” (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 3).

Literacy had arrived. It had moved from the margins to become “part of the official knowledge of state curriculum” (Luke & Freebody, 1997, p. 13). Nevertheless, Alison Lee (1997) agreed with her colleagues that “at a time when literacy has achieved major government policy attention, the question of who controls the terms on which debate and scholarship about literacy are carried out is one that carries large stakes” (p. 409). The terms of the debate and the scholarship about literacy had already been determined. These terms had infiltrated every aspect of the curriculum operations of the VET system via these syllabus documents and curriculum frameworks.

Yet the literacy of these documents still needed to be promulgated throughout the VET system. Therefore, throughout this period of development and implementation of competency based curriculum frameworks for adult literacy, the professional development of teachers featured prominently in the system’s priorities for funding allocations (Norton, 1996; Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Council, 1998a&b; Heinemann, 2002). After all, it was the teachers who had to know and action these notions of literacy as communicative competence if policy outcomes were to be achieved. The following section attends to the second issue significant to this thesis and articulated in its second research question, namely that of the identities of those who are to be recognised as adult literacy teachers by the VET system. In particular it focuses on the issue of professional development in adult literacy teaching.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADULT LITERACY TEACHING

As part of the VET system's National Training Framework requirements that were set out in the Australian Recognition Framework and its replacement, the Australian Quality Training Framework (Australian National Training Authority, 2001), registered training organisations had to ensure that teaching staff's qualifications and experiences met the minimum human resource requirements in syllabuses and training packages. Because these quite complex changes had taken place in a relatively short period of time, professional development for existing teachers and those entering the field was deemed to be crucial.

This section explores the provision of professional development for adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland's regional, rural and remote communities that was put in place during this period. Understandings of professional development in this context will be explored first. An overview of the history of professional development courses in adult literacy teaching in Australia will then be presented. Finally, the particular professional development course in which the teachers in this research study participated will be examined.

Initially though I return to the reason why the VET system's funding for targeted professional development was considered necessary in the first place. I present two examples where Australian research has found that teachers were not always aligned

with the values, ethics, beliefs or actions expected of them when change swept through the educational system in which their employing organisations did business. The first example comes from Chappell's research with TAFE teachers, and the second from Smyth and Schallock's research with school teachers.

Chappell's (1998, 1999, 2001) research found that, as registered training organisations tried to become the system's market-oriented, competitively-priced providers of training, their teachers were expected to focus on the marketing of their educational products and industry expertise. While engaged in this marketing process, teachers were expected to be simultaneously identifying and engaging in new commercial opportunities that would bring funds to their colleges to supplement the ever-dwindling public sources of income. Yet he concluded that "teachers overwhelmingly speak of equity, fairness, social justice and public access rather than profit, competition, efficiency and entrepreneurial activity when describing their work" (Chappell, 1998, p. 24). This resonates with Kell's (1998b) acknowledgement that there was an actual social and cultural role for VET teaching. Teachers' belief that they were engaged in a 'public service' defined their identities as professionals in opposition to an 'ethos of enterprise' that their employer had embraced (Chappell, 1999).

In their research into the professional development of advanced skills teachers, Smyth and Schacklock (1998) found that Australia's schooling system also demanded a "new marketised, customer-oriented teacher able to demonstrate government policy through the satisfaction of pre-determined criterial indicators of performance" (p. 8). Here again, a commitment to teaching as a public service predicated upon principles of

access, equity and social justice was displaced by notions of “quality, excellence, lean organisations, world best practice, user-pays, multi-skilled workforce – all in the interests of international competitiveness” (Smyth & Schacklock, 1998, p. 2). Most importantly for my study, Smyth and Schacklock (1998) concluded that, in the positioning of teaching as “economic work”, the teachers in their study “testified to the pedagogic meaninglessness of the fragmentation of teaching skill to criterion-referenced descriptions” which denied the “existence of multiple-value positions for assessing a range of sophisticated practices for teachers’ work accomplished within particular contexts and with particular sets of children and colleagues” (p. 197).

Like Chappell (1998, 1999), they too found an economic rationalist agenda behind the restructuring of teachers’ work in the schools’ system. They also found that the advanced skills teaching professional development processes were intended to re-configure teaching as consumer-driven, contractual work based upon values and beliefs to which teachers did not subscribe and which they found to have little relational relevance to their worlds of teaching and learning.

These research studies focused on the work of teachers already in the profession. In her investigation into the changing nature of teachers’ work in the United Kingdom, Helsby (1999) distinguishes three categories of professional development in the teaching profession: (1) initial teacher education; (2) formal courses and activities undertaken by practising teachers; and (3) work-based spontaneous, informal learning opportunities. It is in the second category of professional development that this study has been

contextualised, that is, a formal course undertaken by practising teachers, who are in this instance working within the vocational education and training system.

With particular reference to the British government's technical and vocational education initiatives, which were implementing an agenda similar to those already identified in Australia, Helsby (1999) found that, "for many teachers, one of the consequences of this combination of imposed change, lack of teacher support and lack of planning time was a loss of professional confidence" (p. 156). For teachers who moved into a different education system, or saw the system within which they had worked for years change dramatically, professional confidence would be at a premium as they sought to understand anew the terms and conditions of their jobs.

Only qualified, experienced teachers could be employed by training providers wishing to offer adult literacy learning. These registered training organisations (including the not-for-profit, non-government organisations) were responsible for ensuring that they employed teachers who met the human resource requirements for adult literacy teachers as stated in syllabus documents and training packages. If not, they could lose registration to offer those particular courses and/or packages of competencies. The policy-driven, systemic imperatives impacted directly on the employment opportunities for adult literacy teachers.

2.3.1 Professional development at the adult literacy policy–practice interface

The Australian National Training Authority commissioned a major review, analysis and evaluation of the first half-decade of professional development in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. In synthesising the findings from this evaluative research, Perkins (1997) found both systemic and project level issues emerging. She distinguished between them on the basis of the following descriptions:

Systemic issues relate to the conceptualisation, funding and management of PD programs at national and State level. Project issues relate to the management, delivery and methodology and evaluation of individual projects within a program. (Perkins, 1997, p. 12)

In the report of this review, Harris and Simons (1997) developed a series of case studies that reported on the strategic use of professional development to implement vocational education and training objectives. One of the case studies reported at the project level illustrates the relationship between policy and practice as the curriculum in an adult migrant education service (AMES) changed from a “needs-based to competency-based” (Harris & Simons, 1997, p. 174) language program. In summary, they concluded that:

The changes the AMES teachers were required to implement were very significant. The staff had been used to a range of changes in language teaching methods but this change was much more fundamental. What is more, it was part of a system-wide change, not something which had evolved from the language teaching area. (Harris & Simons, 1997, p. 178)

This “change” environment in which the professional development occurred was “significant” and “fundamental” because it reflected the qualification or credentialing requirements and employment trends of the VET system as a whole.

For this sub-section, I have reviewed the major professional development courses that were developed for adult literacy teachers. From this review, I have identified four particular professional development considerations that are significant when policy meets practice at the project level within a context of systemic change: (i) motivation, (ii) cost, (iii) timing and location, and (iv) course curriculum requirements.

First, there is the consideration of teachers’ motivation to participate: Why would teachers choose to engage in a formally delivered and assessed professional development course? The second consideration is cost: Who pays for the professional development course? The funding of the professional development course in which this cohort of adult literacy teachers participated highlights the roles (initially) of the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Council and (subsequently) of the Department of Employment and Training’s Central Queensland regional officers throughout the latter period of this research.

The third consideration for teachers, such as the cohort participating in this study who were living distant from one another in time and space, is a combination of timing and location: When and where will the professional development course be available? The fourth consideration for professional development is the actual structure, content and

assessment requirements of the course: What is in the course and what has to be done to pass? I will now examine each of these considerations in turn.

A syllabus document sets out the mandatory “pre-service and in-service competencies and knowledge” (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 15). To demonstrate their in-service⁶ competencies and knowledge, teachers must:

Have completed a major professional development in adult literacy teaching e.g. *Adult Literacy Teaching: A Professional Development Course* or satisfy the requirements of an established process of recognition of prior learning acceptable to the Accreditation Council or undertake to complete a tertiary qualification in adult literacy teaching commencing within 12 months. (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 15)

For the teachers participating in this study, the decision to undertake the first option was influenced by the availability of this *Adult Literacy Teaching: A Professional Development Course* from a local TAFE college and teacher in Central Queensland. This particular professional development course could be undertaken with colleagues from throughout the region. It satisfied their employment requirements and meant that they could be employed by any registered training organisation as an adult literacy teacher.

⁶ Pre-service requirements are also set out on that page of the syllabus (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 15)

Cost is another consideration for teachers who may be contemplating enrolling in a professional development course in adult literacy teaching. If the individual pays, then the issue is related to permanency and/or promotion and/or mobility in one's employment. If the employer pays, then it is perhaps understandable that the issue of cost is related to the employer's expected outcomes from the expenditure. If a system pays, then it is the system's outcomes that are foremost in expected outcomes.

In its budget allocations from 1996 to 2000, the QAELLN Council allocated a percentage of its funds to Queensland TAFE's Language and Literacy Services⁷. This meant that teachers whom the VET system's registered training organisations wished to employ, or those already in employment, could undertake this professional development course at no cost to themselves. With the disbandment of the QAELLN Council at the end of 2000, this practice continued in Central Queensland via a fee-for-service costing structure from the organisations registered for delivery of the course, the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. In the 2000 professional development course, the Department of Employment and Training's QAELLN regional officer approved the payment of fees for teachers working for the non-government, not-for-profit registered training organisations.

Timing and geographical location is the third consideration in professional development provision. For those teachers who participated in the professional development courses of 1996 to 2000, timing and location was linked to the peculiarities of living in the Central Queensland's already identified regional, rural and

⁷ A feature of change is constant name-changing to reflect position and purposes in the bureaucracy. This part of TAFE has had various name changes since 1990; however this was the most consistent during the period of my study.

remote communities and towns. For example, in the sheep country of Central Queensland's far west, the shearing season is not a sensible time to schedule professional development because all communities have a single focus during that period – get the sheep shorn and get the fleece to the metropolitan and overseas markets. Throughout the whole region, there is a rhythm to adults' participation in formal learning (such as professional development) that is seasonally dependent. The blistering heat of summer more often than not brings with it either continued drought or flooding of the coastal and inland river systems from torrential tropical storms. The consequences of a 'normal' summer season in both social and economic terms pale into insignificance in comparison with the social and economic disruptions and dislocations of more severe seasonal variations.

Because of the diverse individual circumstances of people and amongst communities throughout the region, professional development courses are best offered at times and in locations that are negotiated with the participants – if successful participation is the intended outcome. Hazel and Wilson's (1998) research into literacy networking at the interface among employer, provider and (the then) Commonwealth Employment Service in the 'red dust and spinifex' lands of north western Australia identified differences of context among urban, rural and remote locations.

In an analysis of issues for educational provision in geographically remote areas, Scott (1993) concluded that more than ninety-five per cent of Australia could be defined as rural, covering all areas fifty kilometers distant from major urban centres. Urban centres sometimes include regional towns although, while these towns may function as

the educational hub for a particular geographic region, they too are reliant on policy-engendered funding mandated by legislation enacted through capital city offices of government departments. From another similar study, d’Plesse (1993) recognised that structural and psychological isolation was caused by lack of services, facilities and information, as well as attitudinal factors.

Attitudinal factors have already been addressed in previous discussions on the nature of place and space. When providing a system’s sanctioned professional development for teachers, the cost of communication in terms of time and money is a significant factor for people living in regional, rural and remote communities. The cost of learning in terms of the time away from other professional and personal commitments may increase exponentially as its perceived value may decrease, especially if there are minimal prospects of worthwhile work at the end of it.

The fourth consideration in professional development provision is the structure, content and assessment requirements of the professional development course these teachers undertook. Professional development of adult literacy teachers was considered to be a system’s priority because there was a recognised “shortage of skilled and trained practitioners in the Adult Literacy/Numeracy field” (Commonwealth of Australia/TAFE, 1992, p. 1). Efforts to address the changing work contexts of adult literacy teaching were ongoing throughout the decade of the 1990s and the rapidly consolidating VET system determined certain knowledges to be important for adult literacy teachers.

Throughout the period of this study, these changes were encapsulated within three main topic areas: adult learners and learning; curriculum issues; and program or course development. The following table summarises the module topics and key features of two representative formal professional development courses that emerged from this era.

Table 2.3: Professional Development Courses in Adult Literacy Teaching

<i>Adult Literacy Teaching: A professional development course</i> (Commonwealth of Australia/TAFE, 1992, pp. 1-11)	<i>Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program</i> (National Staff Development Committee, 1995, pp. 2-8)
<u>Strands:</u> Adult Learners Foundation Studies Program Development Curriculum Areas	<u>Modules:</u> Adult Learners and Learning Curriculum areas and Issues Program Development
<u>Delivery Modes:</u> face-to-face 'blocks' (from 1 week to 2-4 hours per week) + self study of x hours/week	<u>Delivery Modes:</u> flexible delivery- self-paced with minimal external input and supervision, <i>or</i> external using correspondence <i>or</i> fax, email, teleconference, videoconference or series of face-to-face, on-campus workshops, seminars or tutorials
<u>Length:</u> Over one TAFE semester (17 weeks)	<u>Length:</u> 80 hours nominal duration
<u>Entry:</u> Participants must be- Working as practitioners in an adult literacy context; <i>and</i> Trained teachers or teachers in training	<u>Entry:</u> Course participants will be- Experienced vocational education teachers and trainers with graduate qualification; <i>and/or</i> adult English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners with graduate qualifications; <i>Or</i> Practitioners without graduate qualifications who are experienced and competent in the ALBE field.
<u>Special Entry:</u> may be available to those who are working as adult literacy practitioners and are able to show evidence of relevant prior learning and extensive teaching experience in an adult learning context (should be able to provide names of two referees); recommended special entry places do not exceed 20% of each course intake.	<u>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):</u> Participants who are able to demonstrate that they have previously achieved any of the learning outcomes and that their competence is current will be able to negotiate, with the presenter, exemptions from the learning activities related to those outcomes.

A common feature of both courses was the preferred use of experienced practitioners with appropriate qualifications as presenters/facilitators. Local people were to be encouraged to function as co-ordinators within each Institute or region. An Adult Literacy Information Office's 1997 survey of the impact of the 1995 Adult Literacy Teaching (ALT) flexible delivery course (in the right hand column) on teachers' practice found that: "ALT was viewed as immediately practical and relevant to

participants' teaching contexts and was also seen as providing a good forum for making new professional contacts" (Walsh, 1998, p. 38).

The 1992 course had four strands (modules) and eight objectives (learning outcomes), while the 1995 version of the curriculum had twelve learning outcomes over three modules (National Staff Development Committee & Commonwealth of Australia, 1995, pp. 26-27, 79-80, 169-170). Both courses included modules on "adult learners and learning" as well as "program development". One had "curriculum areas and issues" while the other had "teaching and learning strategies". The additional module in the 1995 version was called, "foundations". Both courses had a nominal duration of eighty hours.

The National Staff Development Committee (NSDC) for Vocational Education and Training professional development programs used competency statements based upon national consultations undertaken for the Adult Basic Education field. The competency statements were initially compiled in *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best practice* (University of Technology Sydney, 1993). Other such programs included the *Inservice Program for Adult Literacy and Basic Education Personnel* (National Staff Development Committee, 1995). The acronym ALBE (Adult Literacy and Basic Education) became popular in the southern states, but was not used in Queensland. With their distinctive mustard, blue and white cover colours and NSDC logo, these documents reflect a considerable expenditure on the part of governments operating through the VET system to build a professional knowledge base and develop

teachers' practices consistent with the system's conceptualisation of literacy as 'communicative competence' that in turn reflected the policy imperatives of the day.

The course in which the teachers in this research study participated was adapted from the 1995 flexible delivery course noted in *Table 2.3: Professional Development Courses in Adult Literacy Teaching*. To maintain registration and pass audit requirements, I wrote a combined course profile and study guide for the first 1996 course, with a second edition in 1997, and a third in 2000. Though each edition remained faithful to the mandated course requirements, it was updated with current readings and text that reflected the ongoing changes in the VET system, its curriculum issues and program/course development requirements.

There were usually three groups of people who participated in this course. In the first group were those who had trained and worked as early childhood, primary and/or secondary school teachers. People in the second group were usually teaching in their trade or industry specific vocational training area/s for registered training organisations such as private training providers or TAFE colleges. In the third group were people who were working or intending to work as trainers of volunteer tutors or co-ordinators of community literacy programs conducted under the auspices of a non-government organisation that is registered to deliver literacy and numeracy to its clients. Some of these people had been, or were currently, working in the multiple jobs of a school teacher, a VET teacher and a community literacy co-ordinator or tutor trainer at the same time in the same community (Harreveld, 1999).

Because of the system's continued reliance on competitive tendering as the process of achieving its policy outcomes, registered training organisations (RTOs) resorted to contractualised employment practices for staff to deliver their training. It was only with a large organisation such as TAFE that there were still permanent positions available, although even in Central Queensland short-term contracts were the order of the day for many of the teachers who had participated in these professional development courses. Professional development for teachers, scattered as they were throughout the region, provided an opportunity to share their experiences and test out their developing understandings of literacy, adults as learners and the VET system itself. The foci for their particular interests varied widely and were dependent upon their many and varied professional backgrounds.

Teachers were being redefined and reconstituted by these changes. Professional development provided an opportunity for taking stock and examining the changes in an organisationally legitimised fashion. It also brought with it an opportunity for this research to be undertaken at an interface between policy and practice.

There was also other research being undertaken during this period that was similarly contextually situated. I conclude this chapter with an overview of this research and its implications for my study.

2.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT LITERACY TEACHING IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

While funding for adult literacy provision has become available through the plethora of programs already identified in this chapter, registered training organisations contracted to deliver services in the bush could not attract and retain the services of qualified adult literacy teachers. This was a problem for these organisations because they had to acquit tendered funds against pre-determined, criteria-based outcomes delivered by appropriately qualified staff. It was also a problem for the bureaucracies of Commonwealth and State governments and the National Training Authority which had to be seen to be implementing policy and responding to the expressed training needs of the system's key stakeholders (see *Figure 2.1 The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*).

The findings from two research reports commissioned by Queensland governments during the early 1990s established concern about barriers to adult literacy provision in rural and remote areas of the state (Morris, 1990; Corcoran, Morris, Castleton, Gardiner, Bowden & Ritchie, 1993). At a time when governments were keen to demonstrate outcomes for their training dollars according to principles and policies of the National Training Reform Agenda (Australian National Training Authority, 1994), problems continued with provision outside the metropolitan area.

The QAELN Council existed for the purpose of managing the allocation of recurrent funds provided by ANTA, which were distributed across curriculum development,

professional development and community literacy groups as well as special groups identified from national, state and regional priorities. Its response to these problems was to commission research reports that could be used to inform ongoing policy formulation and subsequent funding directions for adult literacy provision. Findings from three key research reports have been chosen to illustrate this contextual significance.

The first is Castleton, Schiffman and Richards' (1995) research report to the QAELN Council on the modes of delivery for adult English language, literacy and numeracy for remote areas. 'Remote areas' were considered to be geographically isolated communities, which in Central Queensland were characterised by: (1) a fifty kilometre distance from the regional centres of Rockhampton, Gladstone and Emerald; (2) small population size; (3) economic disadvantage; (4) poor road conditions; (5) lack of public transport; and (6) erratic operations of communication facilities (Castleton, Schiffman & Richards, 1995, pp. 28-34). Their findings revealed explicit concerns about: (1) the supply and retention of qualified teaching staff; (2) access to professional development courses; (3) teachers' technical skills in the use of technology for delivery of adult language, literacy and numeracy (ALLN) programs; and (4) concomitant cultural and attitudinal changes required of teachers for the recommended increased use of technology in program delivery. This research also noted an explicit need for the "development and coordination of human, financial and physical resources" (Castleton, Schiffman & Richards, 1995, p. 87) within remote communities.

By 1996, the QAELN Council's Regional Priorities Language and Literacy funding was directed to establishing programs in remote and isolated rural areas throughout the state. Funding was put out to tender via the (then) Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations. Some sites had no tender placed while in other sites successful tenderers were unable to conduct the training. This tendering process was but one of the changes that had come into adult literacy provision with the epoch of 'user choice' policy directions for the adult literacy field, and its competency based curriculum framework, national reporting system and syllabus documents.

The effects of these system's engineered changes on the social and cultural roles of adult literacy teachers was recognised by Marion Norton in a speech to the Queensland Council of Adult Literacy's fifteenth 'birthday' celebrations in Brisbane on 6 September 1996. She speculated on potential changes to the work roles of adult literacy teachers:

...the role of specialist teachers may change to one of train the trainer, adviser to develop vocational curriculum, to link with industry standards, flexible mode resource writers, assessors...

What is always difficult but essential as major change affects us, is deciding which parts to let go of and which parts to adamantly maintain in order to achieve our goal of providing access to literacy programs for Queensland adults while retaining professional and personal integrity and standards. (Norton, 1996, p. 13)

From a national perspective, Rosie McKenna (1997) concurred, believing that the work of adult literacy teaching could be known as case management, consulting, industry

training and assessing. These name changes are but the outward manifestations of the tensions and dilemmas identified by Norton. She foreshadowed a potentially more contentious retention of “professional and personal integrity and standards” within this context of major change. Norton (1996), McKenna (1997) and Wickert (1997) had been reflecting on the consequences of seeking to position the profession towards survival within the system.

For regional, rural and remote communities, this of course presupposed that there were actually people who could be enticed to work as adult literacy teachers. Norton (1996) was aware of this problem and, as one of her last acts as QAELLN’s State Executive Officer, oversaw the framing of another research proposal that would seek to provide advice on models for changing delivery modes using new technologies as well as entry and ongoing training for literacy personnel in remote communities. The QAELLN Council and the (then) Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations believed a lack of trained personnel (teaching and tutoring staff) in all non-metropolitan areas to be the main reason that providers could neither identify client groups nor conduct the training to meet tendering requirements.

Such was the scenario for the second research project which built upon the findings of Castleton, Schiffman and Richards (1995). Our action research report into the flexible delivery of adult literacy using new technologies in remote communities in Longreach and the regional centre of Rockhampton (Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997) provided thirteen recommendations, a three-stage model for program delivery and four conceptual frameworks for the sustainability of adult literacy program provision.

Communicative information technologies such as videoconferencing and email were relatively new at that time and it was part of the project brief to investigate their suitability for supporting adult literacy learning at a distance. Together with the more familiar technologies of telephone and fax, both an adult literacy tutor training course and the adult literacy teaching course were conducted as the teachers and tutors also taught students in Longreach who were enrolled in the language and literacy syllabus modules.

Trials with teaching from the literacy syllabus modules using videoconferencing were undertaken and students, tutors and teachers were eventually connected via email with colleagues in Rockhampton. While not prescriptive in intent, our four conceptual frameworks for sustainability did reflect a distillation of findings from this Flexible Delivery of Language and Literacy project. The frameworks set out potential realisations of relationships between actors and actions with respect to: (1) tutor and teacher education; (2) professional development; (3) balancing the money and the numbers; and (4) technology, teaching and learning in a rural community such as Longreach.

Our major findings did not identify “inadequacies – or lacks – within these communities themselves” (Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997, p. 131). However, we did find that “the issues are much more complex” and that “the sense of alienation and marginalisation underlying alleged community deficiencies might be more appropriately read as symptoms of the failure to meet their needs for decent education and training, and worthwhile work” (Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997, p. 131). With

specific reference to adult literacy teaching using new technologies, we found that as a key feature of policy-making in vocational education and training the flexibility debate is concerned with changing modes of delivery, work practices and employment patterns which continue to produce rigidities that are characterised by:

- in/flexible funding mechanisms;
- infrastructure in/flexibility;
- rigidities of curriculum design and quality assurance; and
- intensification of teachers' work. (Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997, pp. 137-140)

The QAELLN Council decided to act upon the recommendations of this report by commissioning another research project that was framed around the concept of sustainability of provision in rural and remote communities. In their final report on this project, Luke, Herschell and Bahr (2000) identified four key conditions considered necessary for the successful use of technology to train and support tutors and volunteers:

- (1) social and cultural conditions (centred around the networks needed for program delivery);
- (2) mentoring conditions (local, regional and statewide);
- (3) technology conditions (based upon analysis of local technologies and access);
- (4) multiliteracies condition (select literacies – traditional and new – which are relevant to the community and programs). (p. 5)

These conditions were located within a 'Literacy/Technology Matrix' that provided a range of strategies as starting points for program implementation. Using case studies

from Longreach, Winton and the Open Learning Institute in Brisbane as the basis for the particular findings noted below, the report put forward these conditions as diagnostic tools. It was noted that, as cases, the site-specific findings were not to be generalised across other rural and remote communities in Central Queensland. With specific reference to the applicability of the literacy/technology matrix to the professional development needs of the three communities, it was reported that:

- a single strategy for professional development is inappropriate across all three sites – or across the State;
 - a mixture of local and generic professional development issues needs to be addressed;
 - technology professional development is as important as literacy and numeracy professional development which need to be blended and integrated where possible; and
 - it is imperative that literacy and numeracy programs are contextualised locally.
- (Luke, Herschell & Bahr, 2000, p. 50)

These combined research findings claim that local contextualisation of adult literacy (and numeracy) programs occurs when there are people in the local community with the knowledge and power to interpret the system's documents, network around the bureaucracies' funding mechanisms and meet staffing requirements. Furthermore, the findings affirm that professional development must undoubtedly be contextualised with a mixture of local and generic issues addressed. However, there must be people who will organise it and follow through from within a community.

Throughout the period of this research study from 1996 to 2001, there have been no published evaluations of the long-term worth or otherwise of all this research. Apart from warnings about the demise or enforced identity changes of people in the adult literacy teaching profession, the literature has failed to articulate the voices of these teachers themselves. A snapshot of the many words that have been written about adult literacy education in rural and remote communities has been provided. However, from all these sources, there is a gap in this research literature. I refer here to the teachers' responses to these extraordinary changes. The VET system's framing of the work of adult literacy teaching has still not been balanced against the teachers' own framing of their work and the identities they construct around that work.

2.5 SUMMARY

In mapping the contextual boundaries of this thesis, I have reviewed policies, practices and research findings from literature pertinent to teachers in Australia's vocational education and training system who were already in situ as adult literacy teachers, or who chose to enter into the terrain of adult literacy education.

In the first section, I have investigated the VET system and its structural contexts of influence on adult literacy provision, with consequent influences on the system's understanding of 'literacy'. In the second section, I introduced the interface of policy and practice where literacy was positioned within the orbit of competency based education. Also at this policy–practice interface, and in the third section, the role and nature of professional development has been identified as central to situating this study.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I have interrogated findings from previous research studies focusing on adult literacy provision in regional, rural and remote communities in Central Queensland for their relevance to my questions in this study.

From this review and analysis, I argue that the challenges to social democratic traditions of government, and in particular the traditions of adult education within such governments, have become more pressing as the globalised market economy and its all-encompassing, fundamentalist claims for the efficient allocation of resources have continued to confront all sectors and systems of public education (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997; Wickert, 1997; Kell, 1998a&b; Smyth & Schacklock, 1998; Helsby, 1999; Searle, 1999a&b; Castelton, 2000). Changes to the social bases of adult education have been most evident in changes to systems' structures, and the work practices of staff and students.

People have been constructed as homogeneous sub-groups of 'unemployed', 'youth', 'non-English speaking background', 'people in correctional centres' or 'women' (among other designations). They are then to be engaged in adult education in terms of the system's understandings of literacy and a totalising and reductionist account of who they are according to the sub-group categories. This process fails to recognise and engage with the specific cultural, socio-historical and economic contexts of individuals and groups in their local communities (LoBianco, 1997; Harreveld, 1999).

These structural changes to the system have in turn brought uncertainty regarding the value or relevance of the knowledge base of adult education, and specifically for the

purposes of this study adult literacy education. This is inextricably linked with the uncertainties surrounding changes to the vocational education and training system that have been shown to be dependent upon governments' changing policy directions. Policy directions in relation to 'literacy' have been found to be reflective of a particular notion of literacy, namely that it is a contextualised, socio-cultural construct that integrates listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking in a family of social practices.

The major policy induced structural changes identified in this chapter have contextualised a number of shifts in adult literacy education. In the first instance, literacy has been repositioned from the margins to the centre of vocational education and training. As this happened, adult literacy moved from being one kind of construct related only to its practitioners (students and teachers), to being another kind of construct that was to service greater social and economic needs.

Here 'literacy' was constructed as essential to changing work practices and knowledges of people that positioned them as human capital, or the human resources to be used by industries, businesses and organisations. In the next chapter I will therefore be theorising a framework within which these changes can be conceptualised.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORISING THE STUDY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two, changes to the knowledge base of adult literacy teaching within Central Queensland were investigated through the structures of the Australian vocational education and training system. This specific contextualisation reflected the research questions' focus on two dimensions of adult literacy teachers' lives: the nature of their engagement with the VET system; and the resultant implications of this engagement for their identities as particular types of teachers.

The previous chapter has demonstrated the appropriation of teachers' work in this field of adult education by political and socio-economic agendas of governments as they have sought to position Australia for economic survival in the twenty-first century. Central to this appropriation has been the alignment of vocational education and training with the production of human capital for a globalised marketplace. Yet the effects of globalisation have seen governments seeking to mediate, among other things, a social and economic interrelatedness of everyday life. With respect to the provision of adult literacy education, this has been achieved through literacy policies that have promulgated a particular framing of 'literacy' and the work organisation of adult literacy teaching.

My purpose in this chapter is to develop key concepts in the thesis's theoretical framework. This framework functions as a lens through which the specific research questions can be explored:

- 1. How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?*
- 2. What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?*

Conceptual resources that are brought together to answer these questions must enable me to connect with the multiple dimensions of adult literacy teachers' work, as well as the diversities of local communities in which this work is enacted. So I turn to a socio-cultural framing of this world because here I find thinking that most usefully unites with the problem, questions and contexts of this study. Central to this premise is Edwards' (1997) contention that "society is not a bounded entity, but an interactive space of multiple shared sentiments, collective bonds and customs, of sociality" (p. 182). Society is characterised by a heterogeneity which is reflected in this field of adult literacy education. However, as the previous chapter illustrated, the social changes required by the vocational education and training (VET) system are dependent on the knowledge base of the teachers working for the system.

Teachers can be quite effective and efficient change agents (Hargreaves, 1994), with minimal start-up and re-tooling investments when compared to technological infrastructures and capital-intensive plant and equipment often needed for massive economic and industrial change. As agents of change, teachers can also be used to influence the social infrastructures and cultural conditions necessary to facilitate change. To achieve this, it is necessary to govern the terms, conditions and credentials of their jobs so that they embody the prevailing change policies (Foucault, 1972). Within this framing, teachers could also function as effective and efficient saboteurs of change processes and/or catalysts for change of a different nature from that intended by the system within which they are working.

Given the nature of the research questions, and the social contexts in which they are being framed, three major concepts are foregrounded:

- discourses,
- power, and
- identity.

While each of these will be examined in turn, the reason for my choice of conceptual resources lies in the argument that discourses have the capacity to help people not only understand, but also create, theoretical spaces in which alternative readings of the world can be formulated and from which they may or may not be enacted. The focus on identity in the second research question is an equally significant investigation following on from the investigation of discursive productions of power in the first question. To bind the conceptual elements of this framework, I have chosen a particular socio-cultural theory that combines linguistics and semiotics as

proposed by James Gee (1991, 1992, 1993, 1996a&b, 1997, 1999, 2001). In this thesis, his theory is also tested for its potential robustness to scaffold the research design and its data analysis strategy. Gee's (1999) 'big D/little d' conceptualisation of discourses embodies two primary functions of language central to my research questions, namely that the purposes of language are "to scaffold the performance of social activities (whether play or work or both) and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions" (p. 1).

Integral to theorising these three major concepts is a conceptual consideration of:

- ideology,
- work, and
- pedagogy.

There are three reasons for this choice. First, neither discourses nor power can be deployed without a consideration of ideology: what it is, how it works together with power in discourses, and how it is expressed through language. Second, notions of work are inextricably linked with the discourses of identity in this thesis because it is the changes to teachers' work that were the initial impetus for the research study and that provide the material, 'real life' framework for the operationalisation of both identity and discourse. Third, teaching is pedagogical work. This third reason is explored through the use of pedagogy as cultural border-work scaffolding theoretical understandings of the work of adult literacy teaching.

The chapter has three sections. The first focuses on the notion of discourses with specific attention to Gee's concept of 'big D/little d' discourses. With specific

reference to the problem and the two research questions that I have framed to address that problem, this first section provides a detailed examination of the ‘big D/little d’ distinction. My purpose in doing this is to establish theoretical connections with: (i) the ‘work’ of adult literacy teaching undertaken within the VET system in research question one; and (ii) the identity constructions of these teachers in research question two. Once this important distinction has been established and investigated, I need to move on to the other building blocks of my theoretical framework that are complementary to Gee’s D/discourse perspective. At the end of this first section, I will dispense with the use of the ‘big D/small d’ and revert to the all-encompassing ‘small d–discourse’ used by those theorists to follow.

The functions of power and ideology in discourses are explored in the second section. In this section, I explicitly address Michel Foucault’s (1972, 1980) conceptualisation of power and its role in the production of discourses. The third section focuses on the concept of identity as it is extended to considerations of adult literacy teaching as pedagogical work within and across cultural borders.

3.1 ‘D/d’ DISCOURSE THEORY

Significantly this theoretical framework presents a deliberate alignment of the thesis with a particular theoretical perspective about discourses that combines the traditions of linguistics (the study of language) with semiotics (the study of the ways in which meanings are made in social systems) in a socio-cultural theory. This is a worthwhile – indeed, crucial – method for studying the contextual changes to adult literacy

teachers' worlds of work identified in the previous chapter because it recognises the ways in which language use is linked to wider social and cultural processes from within local communities of practice. This particular alignment of the linguistic with the semiotic is the foundation for this framework's theoretical perspectives

I am aware that there are other theorists who have developed extensive socio-linguistic understandings of 'discourse theory' which could contribute to this study (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Halliday, 1985; Kress, 1985; Martin, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Fairclough (1992) identified a linguistic view of discourse as "extended samples of either spoken or written language in social situational contexts" (p. 3). It encompassed semiotic considerations of socially and culturally framed situational contexts in which people used language to make meaning (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Kress, 1985; Martin, 1985). An iterative relationship between context and text was central to this consideration when composing and/or comprehending meanings through language. Kress (1988) stressed that:

Language is in fact very far from being a neutral carrier of meaning: it is language which constitutes meaning, and meaning is always and everywhere structured by differences of value-systems (ideologies) and by differences of power. (p. 80)

Different cultural groups achieve their purposes through language in different ways and the contribution of these linguists and their inclusion of cultural artifacts as meaning signifiers are noteworthy here. When used in research, this relationship enables meanings that were generated in contexts and expressed through texts to be

examined. Clearly this decision will also have implications for research design and data analysis strategy in the following chapter.

Central to Halliday's (1985; see also Halliday & Hasan, 1989) theoretical positioning of the context-text relationship is a consideration of the variables that operate within any situational context. The three variables that largely determine the language choices that are made in the construction of a language text were called: field (subject matter of a social activity); tenor (social roles and relationships); and mode (distance in space, time and place). All three variables are important considerations in any communicative act. However the tenor describes relationships that are determined by power relations, frequency of contact and the attitudes, feelings, values and beliefs about the subject matter (field) and any other people who may be functioning as participants. This is important, but it does not enable full engagement with the conceptual underpinnings of these two research questions.

While all these theoretical perspectives are significant, for my specific research purposes in this study, I am going to begin with Gee's particular discourse theory because it provides explicitly for a conceptual framing of the knowledge base of 'literacy' as well as the identity constructions of people who teach 'literacy'. This is the reason for beginning my theorising at this point. The 'big D/little d' distinction is deployed to conceptualise the scaffolding of adults' learning transitions as they moved from one world of work to another; whether these transitions were by their own choice or by someone else's design. Here I am referring to teachers moving into adult literacy teaching and undertaking professional development to qualify for

teaching in this area. Collaterally, I am also referring to the students with whom such teachers work – adults as students who are engaging with systems and constructing their own particular identities.

Gee's 'Big D/little d' provides a logical basis for thinking through teachers' work in the adult literacy field, whether they were employed as community educators, industry trainers, high school teachers or college teachers. Crucial to understandings of this theoretical perspective is the 'Big D/little d' D/discourse relationship.

3.1.1 The 'Big D/little d' relationship

A Discourse comprises "ways of coordinating and integrating words, signs, acts, values, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, objects and settings", so as to take on "a particular social role that others will recognise" (Gee, 1996a, p. 6). There is a robustness about Gee's (1991, 1993, 1996a&b, 1999) 'big D' and 'little d' D/discourse theory that is based upon his premise that:

When we write or read, speak or listen, we coordinate and are coordinated by specific identities, specific ways of using language, various objects, tools, technologies, sites and institutions, as well as other people's minds and bodies. (Gee, 1996a, p. 6)

Gee argues that it is not *just* the words themselves that are important, because the 'big D' Discourses are constructed not only by the language, but also by the objects, tools, technologies, sites and institutions (through which meaning is negotiated) that are put

together in such a way that “others *recognise* you as a particular type of who (identity), engaged in a particular type of what (activity) here and now” (Gee, 1999, p. 18; emphasis in original).

At this juncture his theory is relevant to my research questions in two respects. First, it can scaffold investigations into the concept of literacy itself. Second, it can foreground explicit considerations of people’s lived experiences. In Gee’s theoretical stance, the capital ‘D’ is distinct from the small ‘d’ of discourse. The ‘small d’ refers to the ‘language bits’ that are used within a Discourse. These ‘language bits’ are understood to be the words, phrases, sentences and utterances used in oral, written and visual communication acts. To have meaning within a Discourse, its discourse (language bits) actually has a structure that is recognised by the people who operate within that Discourse (Gee, 1996a&b). In Gee’s (1996a&b, 1999) conceptualization, an ‘identity kit’ is the ‘big D’ of Discourse.

Herein lies the significance of this ‘big D/little d’ relationship for this study. The explicitness of the ‘big D/little d’ relationship gives conceptual space to investigate discursive practices which are both created and constrained by the social structures of the VET system within which the teachers work, as well as by themselves as individuals negotiating their professional practices (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Giddens, 1997; Mawer, 1999). In other words, the ‘big D/little d’ theorising facilitates explicit engagement with both the language (the words), and also the worlds of adult literacy teaching. A ‘big D/little d’ discourse theorising encapsulates a socio-cultural approach to thinking and theorising about

language. Such an approach makes sense in the context of this study because it coheres strongly with the nature and purposes of this study.

This highlights Lankshear's (1996) "cultural brokerage" notion, as well as Kress' socio-linguistic idea that "language and culture are very closely interwoven; social structures and linguistic form are intimately intermeshed" (Kress, 1988, p. ii). In its conceptual framing here, the term 'brokering' used in the thesis title refers to the teachers' mediations between the changing linguistic forms and social structures of, among other things in their lives, their worlds of work.

On the one hand, language has a role to play in the development and dissemination of policy directions that ultimately influence the identity constructions of teachers. On the other hand, language has a role to play in brokering how teachers think and talk about themselves and conduct themselves in the context of their work. In this view, language is part of a family of social practices which mediates "the larger processes by which groups socialise and educate their young into the social practices – the Discourses that constitute their way of life" (Gee, 1996b, p. 21).

3.1.2 Distinguishing features of D/discourses

There are three features of Gee's theoretical perspective that are pertinent to this thesis because each contributes to understandings of the research questions. The first feature is the notion of primary and secondary Discourses which contributes to identification of the work of adult literacy teaching as a secondary Discourse. The acquisition and learning of Discourses is a second feature that contributes to the focus

of this thesis and its socially situated contexts of professional development in adult literacy teaching. The notion of dominant Discourses is the third distinguishing feature that is important when considering teachers' engagements with the institutionalised, disciplinary power of the VET system. In the analysis of Gee's theory in this sub-section, I will continue to use Discourse with a capital D because I want to examine the integrated, iterative 'language bits' and 'identity kit' relational understanding of D/discourses.

Gee has identified 'primary' as distinct from 'secondary' Discourses. Primary Discourses are "those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings" (Gee, 1996a, p. 137). Secondary Discourses build on these primary Discourses as people are apprenticed into other social interactions with recognisable groups and institutions in society such as school, work-specific groups of employers and employees, churches, volunteer associations, gangs, sporting groups, political parties and so on (Gee, 1996a). For some people more than others, the social tools to take on extended social roles are easier to acquire and/or more valued than others. It is in secondary Discourses that people take on even more social roles and their associated responsibilities; for example an adult literacy teacher may also be a daughter, sister, mother, wife, neighbour and colleague.

Through these multiple social roles and responsibilities not only the primary Discourse, but also other secondary Discourses, are produced and reconfigured over time, in diverse spaces and places. Crucially, Gee (1996a) notes that he makes this

distinction between primary and secondary Discourses “because the boundaries between the two sorts of Discourses are constantly negotiated and contested in society and history” (p. 138). There is a strategically oriented ‘both-ways’ flow between the identity kits and language ‘bits’ of both primary and secondary Discourses that people may use for different purposes at various times in certain situations. This means that the distinction between primary and secondary Discourses is understood to be fluid and with problematic potentialities, as will be seen in considerations of the next two distinguishing features.

The second distinguishing feature of Discourses pertinent to this thesis is the distinction between the acquisition of Discourses and the learning of Discourses. This distinction is significant when working with secondary Discourses because:

Much of what we come by in life, after our initial enculturation, involves a mixture of acquisition and learning. However, the balance between the two can be quite different in different cases and different at different stages in the developmental process. (Gee, 1996a, p. 138)

Again, there is a strategically oriented both-ways flow between the processes of acquisition and learning because each is used interchangeably depending on the purpose/s for which people engage in certain social actions. The notion of literacy is clearly embedded in this conceptualisation of D/discourses because, as Gee (1996a) argues, ‘literacy’ can be defined as “mastery of a secondary Discourse” (p. 143) that involves communicative texts and technologies. I understand this to mean that, to master a secondary Discourse thoroughly, its texts and technologies of communication must be both acquired and learned.

Gee's (1996a)¹ definitions of the two processes illustrate this point:

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something (usually, subconsciously) by exposure to models, a process of trial and error and practice within social groups, without formal teaching.

Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection. (p. 138)

However mastery of a Discourse would come through further immersion in the field using the conscious knowledge learned through either formal teaching and/or critical reflection. Now it is here that things get interesting for a Discourse of adult literacy teaching. Other previously mastered secondary Discourses can be used to facilitate acquisition and learning of yet another secondary Discourse.

Through both formal studies and work, people who teach adult literacy have already been socialised as members of a number of secondary Discourses in their professional lives. Following Gee's (1996a&b, 1999) reasoning, if a teacher had no access to the social practices of adult literacy teaching, then s/he would not be recognised as a member of that Discourse. For people who are already enculturated into the social practices of teaching in the VET system, their Discourses of adult literacy teaching are more learned than acquired, because it is the meta-knowledge of language and literacy that they are looking to learn. If a teacher in a specific vocational area wanted

¹ Here Gee refers to Krashen's (1985) distinction between acquisition and learning. He makes the point that the two processes have to be seen as on either end of a continuum, with various combinations in between.

to do an adult literacy teaching course because s/he was finding that students were not comprehending the texts of their particular training program, then a lot of knowledge about the workings of language in that Discourse would have already been acquired and learned by that teacher.

For example, if trade teachers in a TAFE College want to do an adult literacy teaching professional development course and thus become credentialed as adult literacy teachers, then they bring with them their extensive knowledge of their students' learning styles and the demands of their training programs both on and off the job. So there can be a transfer from one secondary Discourse to another. The nature of the transfer would be different for a primary school teacher who would be familiar with the language of 'language, literacy and numeracy' as used in the curriculum texts, but may be not so familiar with the concept of competencies underpinning these texts, or the Discourses of the world of work in the VET system.

The third feature of Discourses emerges from previous reasoning that, if teachers can acquire and learn a secondary Discourse, then that is co-ordinated not only from previous secondary Discourses, including teaching and/or training Discourses, but also in relation to other dominant Discourses of systems and institutions. In Gee's (1996a) terms, a dominant Discourse is a "globally oriented, public-sphere secondary Discourse" (p. 143). On the basis of this definition, the discourses of Australia's vocational education and training system would constitute a dominant Discourse.

Even though the VET system's Discourse may be identified as a dominant Discourse, it does not necessarily follow that its dominance obliterates all other Discourses. On the contrary, it means that other Discourses are sometimes co-ordinated in opposition to, and potentially at the same time as, this dominant Discourse. In other words, "each Discourse contracts complex relations of complicity, tension, and opposition with other Discourses" (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, p. 10).

This notion facilitates considerations of what I have termed 'discursive dissonance'. Discursive dissonance occurs in and among Discourses because of tensions, dilemmas, opposing and/or complicit forces which may not have become evident until a dominant secondary Discourse impacts on hitherto unacknowledged, and perhaps unarticulated, other secondary Discourses (or challenges primary Discourses). Therefore, the dominance of one Discourse over another is not only socially and culturally determined, but it is also historically, economically and technologically dependent.

Experienced teachers will have potential mastery of two or more contesting or conflicting Discourses, one or more of which may be recognised as dominant Discourses (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). In effect they may already be or could become what Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) called "bi-Discoursal" people who "are the ultimate sources of change" (p. 14). The prefix 'bi' means two, and this suggests that there are only two secondary Discourses that could be really mastered. However, because of multiple memberships and reciprocal recognition from within a number of secondary Discourses, some of which may be dominant, public-sphere Discourses,

people such as the adult literacy teachers in this study are actually what I have termed, ‘multi-Discoursal’ people. Multi-Discoursal people are ultimately sources of change in society.

An adult literacy teaching D/discourse is an amalgam of other secondary Discourses that have been mastered by such multi-D/discoursal people: primary school teaching, secondary school teaching, trade teaching and industry training. It is also a hybrid of many discipline specific Discourses. Gee (1999) argued that “Discourses can be hybrids of other Discourses” (p. 22). On the basis of this reasoning, a D/discourse of adult literacy teaching is indeed a ‘hybrid’ D/discourse produced by multi-Discoursal teachers.

3.1.3 Teaching with D/discourse theory

To this point, I have dealt extensively with Gee’s very useful distinction between ‘big D/little d’ D/discourses. I turn now to another crucial implication of his discourse theory, namely teaching other people to learn secondary Discourses. To facilitate my engagement with that issue, I draw on Delpit’s (1995) critique of that aspect of Gee’s theory, with which I juxtapose my own, rather more positive interpretation of Gee’s ideas.

Delpit (1995) found two aspects of Gee’s D/discourse theory problematical when using it as a theoretical frame to scaffold the actions of teaching and learning. Her concerns were expressed around interpretations that: (1) “people who have not been born into dominant discourses will find it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to acquire such a discourse”; and (2) “an individual who is born into one discourse with

one set of values may experience major conflicts when attempting to acquire another discourse with another set of values” (Delpit, 1995, p. 154).

In relation to the production of D/discourses, it seems to me that Delpit has filtered both interpretations through a contextual lens of classroom teaching, together with a lock-step notion of mutual exclusivity with respect to D/discourses. These interpretations do not appear to reflect the symbiotic, iterative relationships among the three distinguishing features of Gee’s theoretical perspective just discussed: (1) primary and secondary Discourses; (2) acquisition and learning of Discourses; and (3) dominant Discourses.

Paraphrasing an unidentified colleague, Delpit suggests that there is a “dangerous kind of determinism” to what she believes to be a function of discourses that has the potential to preclude movement from primary to secondary and secondary to secondary Discourses. The essential point that this argument seems to ignore is the acknowledgement that, while secondary Discourses can be built from a basis of identification with that initial primary Discourse, they can also be built from a basis of resistance to that primary Discourse, just as they can be built from a contestation and conflict with other secondary Discourses.

Gee’s point about the interrelatedness of acquisition and learning processes for full membership or mastery of a Discourse seems to have been missed in Delpit’s interpretation. In both a conceptual and a contextual sense, Delpit’s critique seems to have separated the two processes. However, this separation is then discounted with a

confirmation of Gee's stance. This confusing contradiction is illustrated in the following interpretative statement:

He argues strongly that discourses cannot be 'overtly' taught, particularly in a classroom, but can only be acquired by enculturation in the home or by 'apprenticeship' into social practices. (Delpit, 1995, p. 154)

Gee actually says that "Discourses are *mastered* through acquisition, not through learning" (Gee, 1996a, p. 139; emphasis in original). The learning of a Discourse, that is the process by which conscious knowledge is gained through teaching or conscious reflection, involves explanation and analysis of that which is to be learned and leads to "some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter" (Gee, 1996a, p. 138). In other words, people can learn all about the teaching profession in a combination of off-the-job learning from books, tutorials, lectures, seminar presentations and so on, with structured, supervised on-the-job fieldwork practice at schools, colleges or training providers. This fieldwork practice begins the acquisition process of a teaching apprenticeship. Yet it is not until they have completed their formal studies and are officially enculturated into the world of teaching with their first appointment to an educational institution that they are socially recognised as 'teachers'.

Delpit (1995) uses a different example, namely a "paralysis suffered by many teachers" as they seek to overcome the "obstacles to acquisition" (p. 155) posed by both classroom learning contexts and incompatible values among Discourses. If the Discourses to be acquired are outside the classroom experiences, then there are

obviously going to be obstacles to their acquisition. Rather than suffering a paralysis, teachers could perhaps be more usefully engaged in exploring with their students ways in which they can be moving out of classrooms and into socio-cultural environments in which such Discourses can be acquired.

Furthermore, the interpretation that secondary Discourses can be acquired only if values-based tensions and dilemmas are ignored is simplistic and does an injustice to the intellects and professional commitments not only of teachers, but also of other participants in learning and acquisition processes such as the students themselves. It is through addressing these selfsame values-based tensions, dilemmas, contradictions, contestations and complexities from within the Discourse that it is acquired. From outside the Discourse, teachers provide learning experiences in which such values-based discursive dissonances are identified, analysed and critiqued.

At no time though does Gee say that one's value system has to be subjugated to a particular Discourse, but he does argue that to be a recognised member of a Discourse a person has to know and be able to act according to the dictates of that Discourse. An 'outsider' cannot challenge or change the knowledges, values, beliefs or behaviours of a Discourse because the challenge (or change) would not be recognised as a challenge (or change) because the challenger (or change agent) would have no cultural capital within that particular Discourse. Thus Discourses recognise particular communities of practice.

Etienne Wenger (1998) has developed a social theory of learning that I find contributes to the debate on using D/discourse theory to scaffold teaching and learning practices. His theory is built upon four premises:

1. We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning.
2. Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises – such as singing in tune, discovering scientific facts, fixing machines, writing poetry, being convivial, growing up as a boy or a girl and so forth.
3. Knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, that is, of active engagement in the world.
4. Meaning – our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful – is ultimately what learning is to produce. (Wenger, 1998, p. 4)

Thus the meanings, practices, identities and social constructions of people who identify as a community of practice contribute to the framing of a Discourse. Wenger (1998) admits that “in an institutional context, it is difficult to act without justifying your actions in the discourse of the institution” (p. 11).

It is really here that the importance of context in Delpit’s (1995) critique is noteworthy. Context is crucial in all constructions of meaning and her critique cannot be appreciated unless the context within which it was constructed is understood. Her identification of a “dangerous determinism” in Gee’s theory is evidence of its use in contexts in which problematic potentialities occurred in the teaching and/or the learning processes of D/discourses as recipes for success (however that may be

measured) in the material life of society. In other words, when this theory was used as a prescriptive grammar for learning how to be a particular type of person, instead of a descriptive grammar for understanding oneself and the worlds in which one did or could or would want to live, its potential could not be fully realised.

Gee (1996a) argued that “true acquisition of many mainstream Discourses involves, at least while being in them, active complicity with values that conflict with one's home- and community-based Discourses” (p. 147). This is the choice of words upon which Delpit's critique is centred when she considered children whose home and/or community based Discourses were based upon value and belief systems that differed from dominant secondary public-sphere Discourses, this meant that the values of the dominant Discourse had to subsume and/or negate those of primary and other secondary Discourses.

Such a critique focuses attention onto this particular aspect of the D/discourse theory and I had to consider what this meant for the teachers in this study. It is for this reason that I am investigating her critique and ultimately rejecting it. For the adult literacy teachers in this study, it does not mean that mastery of a VET system's Discourse (a dominant Discourse) implies acceptance of the values and beliefs of the system. Gee's words suggest that people cannot be recognised as belonging to a Discourse unless ‘true acquisition’ has taken place. The point at issue for Delpit is that this must be translated into an ‘active complicity’ or support for contradictory values and beliefs. Yet Discourses are dominant only if they are recognised as such in relation to

other Discourses. As a consequence, people feel, value, believe, think and/or act in certain ways because of that dominance.

Gee's theoretical perspectives foreground an iterative relationship between the conceptual variables of acquisition and learning, and primary and secondary Discourses, together with a transformative potentiality for change that could perhaps emerge from mastery of a dominant Discourse. On the other hand, it also confirms for me that such transformative potentialities for change could be mobilised outside a dominant Discourse, and even in direct opposition to it. Whether this ever has effect on the dominant Discourse is a moot point, because what can be seen in D/discourse theory is the potentialities for multi-Discoursal people to engage with power co-ordinations and construct their identities through multiple social roles. Thus the contingent complexities of Discourses can actually be used to exercise the right and the responsibility to think and act according to one's own knowledges, values and beliefs, which are themselves subject to change.

While the 'Big D/little d' distinction is helpful for theoretical discussions such as this, it can also be useful to draw attention to the 'identity kit' attributes of social positions and roles, as well as to recognisable 'language bits' that would be expected when using particular identity kits. However, for answers to my questions in this thesis, I need further emphasis on the co-ordinations of power and the role of ideology in Discourses. Gee has taken me so far, but not far enough to engage with the discourses produced through the VET system's institutionalisation of power.

In the following sections, I will dispense with the ‘Big D/little d’ and revert to the lower case ‘discourse’ used by those theorists. This is not because Gee’s D/discourse is being ignored; it is rather because I now need it to work in conjunction with the theoretical perspectives to follow.

3.2 POWER AND IDEOLOGY IN DISCOURSES

Discourses are ideas of ‘framing up’ events, beliefs, values and knowledges that have meaning only if they are shared with and recognised as such by other people. Inherent in understandings of the concept of ‘discourse’ are the twin concepts of power and ideology. In this section, I investigate theoretical co-ordinations of power in discourse production together with what I argue to be a complementary role of ideology in discourses. The role of language in expressions of this power and its underpinning ideology/ies is considered in the final part of this section because it is through language (in all its forms) that discourses are able to be recognised and enacted.

At this point, I should emphasise that this thesis is not centrally concerned with the theories of Foucault (1972, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1991). Instead, I use certain elements of his ideas about power and ideology that, when aligned with Gee’s (1996b, 1999) discourse theory, give me the theoretical resources to address the thesis’s first research question. From that perspective, the following discussion includes the results of ongoing dialogue with colleagues about the selective deployment of writings by Foucault and de Certeau (1984) in our respective research projects, which I have found a useful means of locating this thesis in a broader scholarly community.

3.2.1 Power in discourses

Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy. (Foucault, 1980, p. 100)

Power is the name given to these “force relations” that may be tactics to be used or blocks to be avoided in human relationships. In his introduction to a detailed examination of discourses of power from Hobbes to Foucault, Hindess (1996) has differentiated between two conceptions of power: (1) power as a quantitative phenomenon indicative of a capacity to act; and (2) power as not only a capacity to act, but also as a “right to act, with both capacity and right being seen to rest on the consent of those over whom the power is exercised” (Hindess, 1996, p. 1). Hindess has placed Foucault’s conception of power in the latter conception.

An analysis of power in discourses also enables me to unpack the power of the VET system’s policy driven legislative ‘right to act’, together with the effects of its ‘capacity and right’ to act, which in a descending analysis of power could be seen to be condoned by people such as the teachers in this study, who it is assumed have consented to such power being exercised over them. However, my alignment with a Foucauldian perspective facilitates an ascending analysis of power which can focus on the discourse productions of the teachers in relation to the system’s discourses.

From Foucault’s understanding of the notion of power in discourses, Silverman (1989) argued that “people simultaneously may exercise power and be governed by it” (p. 89). At its extremities, at the furthest points from its governance and

surveillance mechanisms, power becomes capillary. The notion of ‘capillary’ attached to the actions of power and resistance comes from Foucault, and in particular the collected anthology edited by Gordon (Foucault, 1980). In this reasoning, when the power of systems (or institutions) becomes capillary, people who are positioned by the system to be governed by its power, can concurrently exercise their own power to produce their own discourses².

In a Foucauldian sense, I am concerned with the ways in which the institutionalisation of the VET system has produced “power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions” (Foucault, 1980, p. 96). Therefore, in this study I seek to locate and engage with power at what Foucault terms “the extreme points of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character” (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). It is here that Foucault (1980, p. 99; emphasis in original) argued an “*ascending* analysis of power” should start.

These capillaries are “infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics” which “have been invested, colonized, utilized, transformed, displaced, extended, etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination” (Foucault, 1980, p. 99). In other words, a descending analysis of what constitutes ‘literacy’ and the actions of ‘adult literacy teaching’ would not uncover the ascending displacements, extensions and

² From her research with Irish Traveller education, Kenny (1997) found that teachers use such interactions to construct their distinctive identities and work practices. In other words, an investigation of the mechanisms of power and how it actually functions together with its intended and unintended consequences can uncover not only the ‘capillary actions of power’, but also the ‘capillary actions of resistance’ (M. Kenny, personal communication, 04 February 2002 ²).

alterations that take place at the extremities as discourses develop in ways often unintended by the system's institutionalised descending power.

An ascending analysis of power can occur at the extremities, at the points where power becomes capillary. These same capillaries of descending power can themselves be colonised as capillaries of resistance via the tactics of engagement employed by the consumers of institutionalised power co-ordinations (de Certeau, 1984). This pairing of de Certeau's tactics with Foucault's discourse production mechanisms could be perceived to add unnecessary complexity to an already complex theoretical terrain. However, as the silent 'consumers' of this institutionalised VET system, teachers render themselves visible through their tactics of engagement with the system's discourses.

De Certeau's (1984) conceptual framework includes categories of consumer production and the tactics of practice (pp. xii – xvii). I use this idea to complement those of Foucault in understanding the consumption of institutionalised power as co-ordinated in discourse production.

In elaborating his tactics of practice, de Certeau (1984) proposes a distinction between strategies and tactics:

I call a 'strategy' the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an 'environment'. A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper...and thus

serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, ‘clienteles’, ‘targets’ or ‘objects’ of research)...

I call a ‘tactic’, on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a ‘proper’ (a spatial or institutional localisation), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalise on its advantages, prepare its expansions and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The ‘proper’ is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized ‘on the wing’. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’. (pp. xix-xx)

While eschewing an unintended dichotomy that could be read into these elaborations, I shall be using de Certeau’s explanation of ‘tactics’ in this thesis.

My reasoning here is that, through social dialogue, these capillaries of power and resistance, together with people’s tactics of engagement with them, can be named. Not only can they be named, but discursive dialogue of this nature also facilitates understanding while uncovering differing values, beliefs, assumptions and social stances. Therefore discourses are messy and fluid because, as Macdonell (who was also using the work of Foucault) identified, they “differ with the kinds of institutions

and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they address” (Macdonell, 1986, p. 1).

Through discourses, people create meanings and interpretations of their worlds. The power of discourses to create meaning is manifested through language (whether that be spoken and/or written and/or ideographic). When used in institutional practices, language expresses people’s values about certain objects, actions and particular concepts at the expense of others (Macdonell, 1986; Gee, 1996a & b, 1999).

In the production of dominant discourses in particular, power is so institutionalised that what counts as knowledge is determined by the discourse. This notion is integral in my theoretical framework because, as has been demonstrated when situating this study, the institutionalised VET system’s contextualised structures of influence have determined not only what counts as ‘literacy’ knowledge, but also who gets to teach that knowledge and who gets to learn it.

For Foucault, knowledge is always framed within institutional settings affecting such things as what forms of knowledge are privileged over others, and how the relationships between the knower and the known (that is, the subject and object of knowledge) are co-ordinated (Foucault, 1980). In my study these relationships are co-ordinated around the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers and the VET system. In Foucault’s reasoning, these teachers also co-ordinate and are in turn co-ordinated by other people, known as their students. These students are also co-ordinated by the power of the system to be particular types of subjects.

In Foucault's reasoning, these forms and relationships don't originate in the mind of an individual but emerge from the network of disciplinary power circulating within institutional contexts (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1991; Macdonell, 1986; Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000). Foucault recognised two meanings of 'discipline': (1) how particular types of knowledge and not others constitute a particular discipline; and (2) the process through which people are disciplined in the values of this knowledge (G. Danaher, personal communication, 31 January 2002³).

In my study, this means that certain people are authorised to teach or transmit the particular types of knowledge as to what constitutes 'literacy'. From Chapter Two, I have already established that the knowledge base of what constituted this 'literacy' in the first place has been pre-determined and it is controlled by institutionalised mechanisms of the vocational education and training system. Therefore not only has the system exercised disciplinary power as to what this knowledge will be, it has also sought to determine the process by which others will be disciplined into the values of this knowledge.

The systematic sets of meanings that have circulated around and through the contexts in which the VET system operates via government departments have both enabled and constrained the practices of adult literacy teaching (Foucault, 1980; Hindess, 1996).

³ Geoff Danaher's concise synthesis of this Foucauldian perspective as it relates to my study was provided in response to my questions regarding the exercise of disciplinary knowledge through the discourse/s of power within institutions (here I was referring to an institutionalised VET system and its appropriation of 'literacy'). His email discussion did much to clarify my thinking on this duality of meaning of 'discipline' and 'disciplinary power'.

This understanding of the co-ordination of power is being used here because not only does it both enables me to explore the different relations of power and resistance, and it also engages with the role of language. Language is central to the construction and negotiation of social meanings and relationships between people positioned as teachers and students. In an ascending analysis of power, the power of the system is engaged via the tactics chosen by the people, not those chosen by an institutionalised system. Such a fundamental difference is pivotal to my theoretical framework.

Teachers and students are positioned and made known by the discourses of the VET system; discourses that are themselves predicated upon particular ideological perspectives. This means that I need to consider the notion of ideology in discourses.

3.2.2 Ideology in discourses

As Gee (1996b) showed in his examination of ideology from the time of Napoleon to Marx, “ideology is a socially contested term” (p. 16). This means that ideology depicts “a social theory which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which goods are distributed in society” (Gee, 1996b, p. 21). Furthermore, van Dijk (1998) defined ideology as “the basis of social representations shared by members of a social group” (p. 8). Chiapello and Fairclough (2002) provide a transdisciplinary definition of ideology that links these notions of ideology as social contestations, the basis for distribution of goods in society and social representations within groups, to the world of work:

An ideology is a system of ideas, values and beliefs oriented to explaining
a given political order, legitimizing existing hierarchies and power

relations and preserving group identities. Ideology explains both the horizontal structure (the division of labour) of a society and its vertical structure (the separation of rulers and ruled), producing ideas which legitimize the latter, explaining in particular why one group is dominant and another dominated, why one person gives orders in a particular enterprise while another takes orders. (p. 187)

Therefore ideology is fundamental to the production of discourses. For example, it may be claimed that people who are unemployed form a particular social group. Some people may believe that unemployed people cannot gain a job or even participate with other social groups unless they possess something called 'literacy'. Now more powerful groups in society who produce its dominant discourses may believe that this literacy is a good thing for these unemployed people to have. Such a bundle of beliefs and claims (or ideology) could partially explain why only certain people, those who are unemployed, are considered to be the worthy recipients of 'literacy' funded from the tax-payers dollars (i.e. from people in another social group, namely those who are employed). In such a scenario, any social grouping of people could be substituted.

Ideology is used in the production of discourses that groups of people recognise and with which they claim membership. Jurgen Habermas interpreted ideology as "a world-view or world-picture of the group" (Geuss, 1981). From his interpretation of Habermas in the German, Geuss (1981) contended that:

...individuals and groups don't just 'have' randomly collected bundles of beliefs, attitudes, life-goals, forms of artistic activity...the bundles generally have some coherency...the elements in the bundle are complexly related to each other, they all somehow 'fit', and the whole bundle has a characteristic structure which is often discernible even to an outside observer. (p. 10)

For a group of people to use a shared ideological perspective in the production of a discourse, there must be a coherence, a characteristic structure and complexity in relationships among the elements of people's values, beliefs, attitudes, life-goals and so on. In Habermas' view (Geuss, 1981), these characteristics are recognised by those who share the same ideological perspective as well as by those who do not. Hence people who are 'outside' particular discourses can still recognise and react to ideological perspectives as different from their own. Thus ideology operates "through a complex series of mechanisms whereby meaning is mobilised in the discursive practices of everyday life for the maintenance of relations of domination" (Thompson, 1984, p. 64).

By virtue of the participants' deployment of divergent ideological positions in their discourse production, that discourse becomes a site for a contested choreography⁴ of meaning. It is in this theoretical space that discursive dissonance can occur as the

⁴ In her email discussion, Mairin Kenny noted that discourses develop in often unintended ways, developing internal contradictions as the two sides develop their unwilling choreography (M. Kenny, personal communication, 04 February 2002). From this thinking, I have envisaged the choreography of meaning as contesting ideologies engage at the extremities, among the capillaries of power and resistance.

contested choreography of meaning is played out between opposing ideologies and contested power co-ordinations both within and between discourses.

Discursive dissonance is a term that I am using here to depict a clash of ideologies, where one set of beliefs or claims about the way social goods should be distributed in society is diametrically opposed by another set of beliefs or claims which are predicated upon a differing view of the ways in which these same goods should be distributed. Discursive dissonance emerges as structural tensions from the institutionalisation processes of the VET system become part of the daily transactions of being an adult literacy teacher.

Ideological differences between these institutionalisation processes on the one hand, and educational processes on the other, have the potential to engender discursive dissonance. Co-ordinations of power produce discourses that are maintained through disciplinary networks and discursive formations that operate to regulate actions and distinguish the 'acceptable' from the 'unacceptable' and the 'normal' from the 'deviant' (Danaher, Coombes, Simpson, Harreveld & Danaher, 2002).

The following table, *Table 3.1: Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching*, represents a synthesis of discourses that have been instrumental in positioning teachers in the adult literacy field in Australia. The key research bodies and/or researchers and/or theorists who have named these discourses are also identified. These discourses act as "regimes of truth" (Edwards, 1997, p. 21) through which power as to what can be counted as adult literacy teaching and learning can be exercised.

Table 3.1: Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching

<i>Discourses of...</i>	<i>discursive positioning of adult literacy teaching</i>	<i>key research/ers naming the discourses</i>
Social Justice (Liberal progressivism + Individualism + Humanism + Adultism + Emancipation)	Individual's perceptions, needs, aspirations and learning styles determine the type of teaching Reciprocity in teacher–student relationships Power differences acknowledged but subjugated to teachers' allegiances to social justice as a 'human right'	Australian Council for Adult Literacy (1989); Dymock (1993a); Lee and Wickert (2000); Blackmore (2000); Sidoti (2001)
Emancipation	Teachers committed to personal empowerment and radical social change (conscientisation) with learners as co-investigators	Freire (1970, 1973); Freire & Macedo (1987)
Situated social change	Teachers as members of communities of practice that recognise and use differing historical and cultural bases of literacies being practised among the diverse groups that comprise societies	Street (1984); Wenger (1998); Wagner & Venezky (1999); Luke & Freebody (1999); Kilpatrick, Falk & Johns (2002)
Managing diversity	Adjust teaching, training, learning and assessment to encompass difference Develop an ethos of inclusiveness and respect for difference Respond to changing workforce and population characteristics, without targeting particular groups or identifying specific areas of disadvantage	Australian National Training Authority (1998)
Corporate federalism	Centralised policy control and implementation including national curriculum and reporting frameworks	Bartlett, Knight & Lingard (1991); Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry (1997)
Economic rationalism	Teachers produce human-capital for a learning economy using discourses of corporate federalism	Lee and Wickert (2000); Blackmore (2000)
Lifelong learning	Shift from adult education, access and equity to vocational relevance Flexible learning with a changing institutional role of the student Sanctions any other visions or notions of a learning society	Edwards (1997); Robinson (2000a & b); Grace (2000); Longworth (2002)

This table depicts Yeatman's (1990) "politics of discourse" – a story of history, change, ideology and power depicted as: social justice, emancipation, situated social change, managing diversity, corporate federalism, economic rationalism and lifelong learning. While on the surface these are only words, they embody co-ordinated meanings that people share and that determine the ways in which goods (such as

money, power, and social prestige) are distributed within society. What this means for the discursive positioning of adult literacy teachers, is set out in the middle column.

Here it is possible to see the ways in which “regimes of truth” can tell different stories about the nature of, and rationale for, the work of adult literacy teaching. The language used to describe these discourses becomes important in any examinations of them. Therefore, ideology in discourses becomes known through the centrality of language and the role that it plays in people’s engagement in the social activities of work and/or play. Ideology also becomes known through people’s affiliations within cultures, social groups and institutions. It is to this centrality of people’s language use and their affiliations within social activities that I proceed for the next stage of theorising this study.

3.2.3 Language and power in discourses

The multiple discourses associated with linguistic practices across different adult literacy education sites can be confusing and difficult to manage when there is a discursive dissonance that has been caused by conflicting ideologies. From research into the professional education of pre-service teachers, Phillips (2001) usefully encapsulated this vital link among language, discourse and power:

Such discourses have the ability to authorize what can be said and/or thought, as well as who can speak, when and with what authority.

Discourses compete with one another and often inflict varied demands and expectations on subjects. (p. 263)

Foucault's (1980, 1984, 1991) explanation of the co-ordination of power within discourse production continues to be useful because it engages with the role of language that is central to the construction and negotiation of social meanings and relationships between people positioned as both adult learners and teachers. The positioning of some people as 'adults', and then 'learners' and 'teachers', is governed not only by bureaucracies such as the Australian National Training Authority, other statutory authorities and diverse government departments. Their positioning is also determined by the contextualised internal structures of colleges, schools, training providers and other registered training organisations operating within the system. At the same time, there are other discourses that are mobilised by these people; discourses through which they position their practices of learning and teaching differently. These discourses enable them to exchange meaning at specific sites such that those sites are recognisable as instantiations of particular social relationships.

Here the complex role of language in the discourse/s of a community of practice becomes even more evident. Not only does language function as a social marker and an instrument of power, but it also operates through particular linguistic facilities which ensure that some individuals are recognised as community members while lack of such linguistic facilities sets other individuals apart from that community. It is also here that a particular discipline knowledge construction of 'literacy' frames up some people in the community as in need of this literacy and others as teachers of this literacy.

At a policy–practice interface, the power of the system meets the power of practitioners (teachers and students). In a Foucauldian ascending analysis of power, it would be the power co-ordinations of the practitioners (the teachers) that meet and negotiate meanings with the power of the institutionalised VET system. At this point, the system’s power is weakening as that of the teachers in local communities is in the ascendancy. Therefore at its extremities, in its regional and local forms, a homogenising system’s power is met with the heterogeneous societal power co-ordinations of people in communities of practice.

It is here that discourses as co-ordinations of language and power are produced. This has occurred in the context of a nation state such as Australia in which both the causes and effects of financial and social capital moving into and out of country towns is associated with the establishment, mutation, shrinkage or disappearance of institutional infrastructures in concert with high mobility rates and demographic shifts in populations. In our earlier research study that focused on the relationships between adult literacy education and new technologies, my colleagues and I found that such relationships were:

...not only embedded in broader organisational dimensions governing changes in vocational education and training, but in quite complex ways, they are also connected to the development of information industries covering computers, telecommunications, publishing and broadcasting.

(Singh & Harreveld with Hunt, 1997, p. 158)

Hence the relationship between language and power in discourses is multidimensional, complex and connective in nature. It is this relationship however

that is implicated in the construction of social identities through discourses.

3.3 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH WORK

In this third section, I return to the questions framing the research because embedded in those two questions are the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘work’ that are also necessary for my theoretical framework.

In the first section of this chapter, I presented an initial conceptualisation of ‘identity’ through Gee’s (1996b, 1999, 2000) notion of an ‘identity kit’ that constituted the ‘big D’ component of a Discourse. The notion of identity and its relationships to the conceptualisation of ‘work’ is another fundamental theoretical building block for this framework. It fleshes out Gee’s ‘big D identity kit’ notion, by situating it within the spaces and places of this study’s socio-cultural contexts. These contexts are vital considerations integral to all aspects of my study. Gee (1996b) argues that “context has the nasty habit of almost always seeming clear, transparent, and unproblematic, when it hardly ever is” (pp. 77-78).

This work of adult literacy teaching is enacted within an institutionalised, bureaucratic system that operates in various social and cultural contexts. Therefore an understanding of the relationships between teachers’ everyday lives and the nature of work in the bureaucratic systems that provide their employment is also integral to the study (Freire, 1970, 1973; Castells, 1993; Welton, 1995; Collins, 1996; Gee, Hull &

Lankshear, 1996; Giddens, 1997; Acker, 1999; Ball, 1999; Brown & Lauder, 1999; Esland, Flude & Sieminski, 1999; Green, 1999; Fairclough, 2002).

A bureaucracy is a hierarchically structured organisation. In Giddens' (1997, p. 581) terms, a bureaucracy is a "a pyramid of authority" and is used for large scale human organisation. Weber (cited in Giddens, 1997, p. 581) argued that bureaucracy expands with large scale economic and political growth with implications for social life. Bureaucratic systems exist to organise all large organisations, from multinational, global corporations to government departments. Constructing particular professional identities while working for organisations that are accountable to government departments' bureaucracies is no mean feat, especially if those identities are embedded in the local and particular practices of communities that may not be congruent with bureaucratically determined identities.

Initially, I investigate a conceptual combination of culture and context in identity construction. From there, I will discuss and identify social markers of identity and the recognition of self and others in this process. Finally, in preparation for considerations of identity in and through work, I will examine the characteristics of identity construction.

3.3.1 Identity

Giddens (1997) has defined identity as:

the distinctive characteristics of a person's character or the character of a group. Both individual and group identity are largely provided by

social markers. Thus one of the most important markers of an individual's identity is his or her name. The name is an important part of the person's individuality. Naming is also important for group identity. (pp. 582-583)

From his research with Australian adult education teachers working in the VET system, Clive Chappell (1998, 1999, 2001) argued that identity is a "contingent and constructed concept" (1999, p. 1).

Teachers working within and across multiple discourses alternate among various names, with the choice contingent upon particular identity constructions deemed necessary for specific purposes at certain times. For example, it may sometimes be prudent to self-identify as a 'trade teacher', or an 'ex-primary school teacher', or 'industry trainer' or 'secondary English teacher', or 'consultant' or 'facilitator' and so on. On the other hand teachers may choose to identify as 'TAFE teachers', or 'community educators' and so on. Therefore identity construction is a process that is constantly re-negotiated over time because it is "subject to continuing social and historical transformation" (Chappell, 1999, p. 1).

There is another set of social markers operating in this context which are distinct from those already identified but which also co-exist in a socio-cultural symbiosis. These are the constructions of teachers' identities by those whom they teach: in other words, their students. It is not the purpose of this study explicitly to explore students' constructions of teachers' identity. Rather, the teachers' *perceptions* of their students'

constructions of their (the teachers') individual and group identities are part of this study's focus.

Identity is a "socially-situated" construction that Gee (1999) succinctly explains encompasses "the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts", with "the term 'core identity' for whatever continuous and relatively 'fixed' sense of self underlies our contextually shifting multiple identities" (p. 39).

In his parable of the history of identity in modern and postmodern times, Bauman (1996) argues that identity is "a name given to the escape sought from uncertainty" because:

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. (p. 19)

For teachers such as those participating in this study, this conceptualisation of identity is significant. Despite the structures of a VET system that have appropriated notions of 'literacy' for the service of competency based education with adults, the professional identities of multi-discoursal teachers who work with these adults is by no means as clear cut and unproblematical as the outward structural manifestations of the system would suggest. Edwards (1997) argued that there was a need for "culturally specific and contextualised understandings of the discourse of the role and purposes of workers with adults" (p. 155).

Hall's (1996) arguments are also useful to explain the conceptual significance of 'identity' in the culturally specific and contextualised understandings of discourses of adult literacy teaching in this thesis. His definition of 'identity' resonates with Gee, Hull and Lankshear's (1996) complex, complicit and tensioned relationships among and within D/discourses, when he stated that identity was:

...never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. (Hall, 1996, pp. 3-4)

Herein lies a theoretical contribution to the second research question and its focus on identity constructions.

In Bauman's parable, identity becomes visible only when people are not sure where they belong. His stance reinforces the proposition that, for the adult literacy teachers in this thesis, their changing worlds of work brought with them uncertainties as to how they could engage with the discourses of such worlds. Hall's contribution to this thinking is that the very messiness of discourses contributes to the creation of conceptual spaces in which people can figure out who they are and where they belong. This process is ongoing; it is not a 'one off' task whereby a single work identity can be constructed which will be constant and unchanging throughout one's career.

The cultures of particular workplaces also contribute to identity construction because identity is a function of discourse membership. Marshall (1998) summed up the

concept of culture as “a general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society” (p. 137). Being more specific, Giddens (1997) defined culture as “the values, norms and material goods characteristic of a given group” which is “one of the most distinctive properties of human social association” (p. 582). Lankshear (1996) understood the concept of ‘culture’ in relational terms among group members, defining it as:

The shape that is given to life from the way relationships between members are patterned, to the particular material artifacts produced and shared inside those relationships – as well as the ways this ‘shape’ (and its constitutive meanings) is experienced, understood and interpreted by participants. (p. 18)

Using the analogy of a video film, Gee (1996a, 1999, 2000) has depicted cultural models as pictures or scenarios of prototypical events that give shape and meaning to the ways in which values and beliefs about the distribution of social goods (i.e. ideologies) are understood, experienced and interpreted by participants in the social life of communities.

As teachers move into the work of adult literacy teaching, they construct new social identities for themselves. In this study, I have chosen the term ‘construct’ to depict this process. The nature and location of the work that people do is integral to their identity construction.

3.3.2 Work

Work is defined as “the supply of physical, mental, and emotional effort to produce goods and services for own consumption, or for consumption by others” (Marshall,

1998, p. 706). In his dictionary, Marshall (1998, p. 706) further defines work according to three main categories: (1) economic activity or employment; (2) volunteer community service; and (3) unpaid domestic and leisure activities (see also Giddens, 1997). Marshall's (1998) understanding of the concept of work does not explicitly reflect the outcomes of the previous discussion which argued that work and the identities of people who perform that work are socially, culturally and historically contextualised (Hall, 1996; du Gay, 1997).

According to Robert Reich (1993), there are three broad categories of work emerging across nations in the new world economy: (1) routine production services; (2) in-person services; and (3) symbolic-analytic services. In Reich's (1993) terms, the VET system's adult literacy teachers would be considered to provide symbolic-analytic as well as in-person services which are intended to 'add value' to the people they teach. Moreover, if the ideological intent of the national strategies⁵, State policy and curriculum documents were to be realised, these adults as both teachers and students would then be able to add value to the outputs of their workplaces and to the society in which they live. In this context, adult literacy teachers are framed as specialised knowledge workers in a new capitalist work order that is post-Fordist yet managerialist in nature and character (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999; Ball, 1999; Blackmore, 2000; Brown & Lauder, 1999; Esland, Esland, Murphy & Yarrow, 1999; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Helsby, 1999).

⁵ Specific strategies of influence here are the Active Literacy: The Queensland Government Literacy Strategy 1992-1995; the Queensland Department of Education's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 1994-1998; and the Federal government's National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy, 1993. In their evaluation of the first QAELLN Policy of 1994, Kell, Cope, Hill and Howard (1997, p. 4) provide a detailed discussion of the iterative relationship between policy and strategies played out during this period.

In his sociology textbook, Giddens (1997) defined capitalism as “a system of economic enterprise based on market exchange” (p. 587). Marshall's (1998) sociological dictionary defined capitalism as “a system of wage-labour and commodity production for sale, exchange, and profit, rather than for the immediate need of the producers” (p. 53). ‘Old capitalism’ was understood by Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) to be based on “the mass production of (relatively uniform) goods by large, hierarchically structured corporations serving a commodities-starved, but progressively richer post-World War II population in the developed world” (p. 26). It was representative of Fordism's organisation of labour and attitude towards training of workers (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999; Brown & Lauder, 1999).

Fordism is a term used to refer to the twentieth century processes of “assembly-line mass production, certain leading sectors of industry, a hegemonic form of industrial organisation, or a mode of regulations” (Marshall, 1998, p. 235). Over the last decade, notions of work have been fundamentally changed as information and communications technologies which use micro-electronic processors reorganized the notion of ‘work’ while creating new images, ideas and actions for workers which function as cultural technologies of representation (Hall, 1996; du Gay, 1997; Marshall, 1998; Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999). This means that not only does technology change our representations of work, but it also changes the actions of work itself.

In the past, workers used their manual and intellectual labour, as well as mechanised labour. With the increasing capacity of technologies to perform manual labour and complete technical tasks formerly undertaken by people, work has a new meaning. This is the basis of Aronowitz and DiFazio's (1999, pp. 76-96) argument that there is a "new knowledge work" replacing the older categories of manual, technical and intellectual labour. This new knowledge work is also made known through technologies of representation of new identities for workers. What counts as knowledge has moved from "industry-specific labour processes to computer-mediated work as a new universal technology" (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999, p. 80). In the move from a technical and further education (TAFE) system to a vocational education and training (VET) system, not only was the economic and political work of teachers reorganised, but what counted as 'teacher-knowledge' was also restructured and reoriented to capital technologies.

Australia's institutionalised VET system comprises a large-scale social system which, according to Giddens' (1997) definition and Marshall's (1998) interpretation of his definition, is "produced and reproduced by structured and routine social practices" (p. 621). So it is the nature of the social actions and interactions taking place between people that gives the VET system its particular properties. The people who work in this system use capital that consists of "tools, machinery, plant and any other humanly made material or equipment which, not being used for immediate consumption, contributes to or enhances productive work" (Marshall, 1998, p. 52). In all aspects of what counts as productive work, capital-technology is used and Aronowitz and DiFazio (1999) argue that this capital-technology intrudes into every facet of work

and living. Hence they have renamed the notion of work to depict more effectively the current conceptualisation of “capitech-intensive work” (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999, p. 80).

‘Capitech-intensive’ work requires multi-skilled, flexible workers, who can service changing niche markets by using capital technologies to design, produce and market customised products for created customers (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Marshall, 1998; Brown & Lauder, 1999⁶; Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1999). In Gee, Hull and Lankshear’s (1996) argument, this is representative of a new capitalism. This new capitalism becomes new ‘fast capitalism’ because of the pace at which workers must be prepared to respond to change, to ‘reskill’ or ‘multiskill’.

Fairclough (2002) concurs with the above understandings that a new capitalism is emerging from such “contemporary transformations” (p. 163). He identifies both a restructuring and a rescaling of capitalism that is not only:

...knowledge led, it is also discourse led, for knowledges are produced, circulated and consumed as discourses (economic, organisational, managerial, political, educational and so forth). Moreover, discourses are dialectically materialised (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2001) in the ‘hardware’ and ‘software’ of organizations, enacted as ways of acting and interacting, and inculcated (through a variety of processes including e.g. ‘skills training’) as ways of being, as identities. (p. 164)

⁶ Brown and Lauder (1999) distinguish between Neo-Fordism and Post-Fordism, arguing that the former represents ideologies of the New Right politics in the United Kingdom and Western societies, with the latter representative of ‘Left modernizers’ who advocate a ‘producer capitalism’ which brings policy changes to investments in physical and human resources.

New fast capitalism operates in demand-driven markets that require new identities for those doing this capitech-intensive work. Identities constructed through old capitalism's supply-driven markets are not longer valued. New fast capitalism also operates through crises that are manifested as demands for immediate responses around the effects of global competition and ongoing technological changes, with consequent impacts on people's work and daily living. Finally, new fast capitalism requires workers who are mobile, adaptable and capable of managing themselves and developing their own employability prospects through changing networks and partnerships arrangements within workplaces (Fairclough, 2000; Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002).

The intensification of teachers' work that a new fast capitalism and new technologies bring with them was confirmed in the findings from our research project using 'flexible delivery' with adult literacy and new technologies in remote communities (Singh, Harreveld & Hunt, 1997). Intensification is a phenomenological by-product of the exploitation of teacher's labour through a new capitalist framing of their work. On this issue, our findings concluded that:

The work of adult literacy teachers has intensified as flexible delivery validates customised courses with variability of content, sequence, time, location and modes to suit constantly changing groups of students. The increasing proliferation of courses with short lifespans and quick turn-around times, together with shrinking redistributed infrastructure funding, has contributed to this intensification. (Singh, Harreveld & Hunt, 1997, p. 140)

Therefore the intensity of this capitech work comes not just from the technologies and their use, but also from the VET system's structuring of what counts as teaching, which is itself a manifestation of the system's dominant secondary discourse.

As envisaged by Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996), a 'new fast capitalism' evokes the self-contained, episodic fragmentation of capitech-intensive work, within a new work order. In this new work order, teachers do all the jobs they used to do before, as well as those of middle management, because "the roles and responsibilities of the middle will pass to the front-line workers themselves (formerly the bottom of the hierarchy)" (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, p. 29). The basis of their argument is that, in the new work order, a middle management that understood workplace operations (processes and internal systems) has disappeared. As this style of middle management has disappeared, a new management administration has been created which has as its purpose and function the control of information flows internal and external to the system.

Those workers who are left, are expected to acquire the knowledge of, and ability to use, capital-technologies which is intended to enable them to "innovate, design, efficiently produce, market and transform products and services as symbols of identity and lifestyle in a high risk world" (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, p. 28). In theory, this would make them valuable to organisations operating within an institutionalised, fast capitalist VET system.

Within this new work order, self-contained, episodic fragmentation of capitech-intensive work has also been used to reframe or reshape teachers as ‘self-contained and episodic’ workers, or portfolio workers. While this is happening, workers (including teachers and their students) have had to continue to learn both on and off the job because, as Aronowitz and DiFazio (1999) have found, “the technologies of many knowledge-based industries require a more qualified worker” (p. 94). This has meant that some workers are positioned as ‘core’ (permanent, full time) and others are positioned as ‘peripheral’ (casual part-time, contract part or full-time). Yet all are positioned as ‘learners’. The combination of these changes to the terms, conditions and nature of work itself, together with the short-term, self-contained, episodic fragmentation of funding for this work, serves to destabilise previous constructions of professional identities.

Not only is there change within the knowledge base of what once used to count as teaching and learning, but the ways in which teachers are to do the work of teaching have also been changed under this new fast capitalism. If the arguments of Reich (1993), Castells (1993), and Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) are valid, then teachers have to be able to know and understand the nature of this capitech-intensive work in the new world economy. For educators directly involved with the world of work as adult literacy, vocational education and training teachers are, confrontation with the tensions, dilemmas and contestations of this new work order is perhaps inevitable. Simultaneously, they have to construct new identities for themselves as workers, whilst educating their students in the secondary discourses of new social identities.

The dilemma for teachers is that their old knowledges may not be valued in the new work order unless they can demonstrate their worth in the discourses of fast capitalism and globalisation. As Blackmore (2000) identified in her investigations into the restructuring of relations between the state, family and work:

Education organisations rely upon the passion, commitment and intellectual creativity of people. Yet these same organisations (and indeed the state) are seeking to control this creativity towards their own priorities and ends, seeking certainty in the face of uncertainty. (p. 26)

Australia's Commonwealth, State and Territory bureaucracies have been seeking the certainty of a national vocational education and training system in the face of the uncertainties of globalisation processes. These processes of globalisation involve power orientations, identities and networks in what Beck (2000) saw as "the dimensions of communications technology, ecology, economics, work organisation, culture and civil society" (p. 19). It may be naïve to assume that all teachers who work for registered training organisations are intellectually creative people who have a passion and commitment for their work. However, it is indeed reasonable to assume that these organisations still rely on such characteristics even if the system itself will recognise them as professional attributes only if they are enacted from within the system's sanctioned discourses (such as discourses of communicative competence).

Obsessive control of work attributes as evidenced by the versions of competency based education adopted by the Australian VET system is incongruent with the

contingent power orientations, identities and networks configured through the dimensions of globalisation that are operating in communities throughout the world.

In his analysis of the changing discourses operating in adult education and training, Edwards (1997) argued that current reconfigurations of capital are spawning paradoxical processes of globalisation. Featherstone (1995) observed that globalisation at work is depicted by flows of “goods, people, information, technology and images” (p. 81). Change to the concept of work is being enacted in social, economic and cultural contexts which both produce and are produced by: (1) a “space-time compression” in which former boundaries between time and space are eroded; and (2) an increasing stress on “place and identity, diversity and difference” (Edwards, 1997, p. 14; see also Bauman, 1996). These changes are manifested in local communities and workplaces which are sites of cultural formation and sites where workers’ (i.e. teachers’) identities are constructed.

3.3.3 Constructing professional identities

In view of the contingent, culturally contextualised view of identity and work presented in the previous two sub-sections, I now use the concept of multi-discoursal teachers (from the first section) together with the co-ordination of power and ideology in discourse production (from the second section) to examine the ways in which teachers may construct their professional identities in the field of adult literacy education. Central to this examination is first the notion of professionalism, and second the notion of teaching as pedagogical work.

So far in this thesis, much has been made of the structural and consequent curriculum changes within the VET system. My focus on the curriculum changes has shown a direct relationship to teachers' work. Discourses of competency based education and corporate managerialism's regulation and accountability that were mobilised to bring these changes into being brought with them a potential for teachers to be reduced to technicians who simply deliver pre-specified, unproblematic knowledges to their adult students.

Experience from the United Kingdom has found that similar initiatives have resulted in a de-skilling of teachers' pedagogical role because they were considered not capable of bringing forth the new workers for the new world's work order (Collins, 1996; Ball, 1999; Gleeson & Hodgkinson, 1999). Hargreaves (1994) argued that teachers are developers, definers, interpreters and reinterpreters of curriculum because it is "what they think, what they believe and what they do" (p. ix) that determines learning encounters for their students.

Darling-Hammond and Wise (1992) contended that teacher professionalism is not concerned solely with financial remuneration or perceived social status, but that it depends on the affirmation of three principles in its conduct and governance:

- (1) Knowledge is the basis for permission to practise and for decisions that are made with respect to the unique needs of clients;
- (2) The practitioner pledges his or her first concern to the welfare of the client;

- (3) The profession assumes collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal and enforcement of professional standards of practice and ethics. (p. 1359)

Deprofessionalisation was found to occur when these principles do not underpin practice. Darling-Hammond and Wise (1992) found that “in all occupations that claim the term, professionalism exists in some tension with alternative forms of regulation and accountability” (p. 1359). It is perhaps inevitable that teachers, in this case adult literacy teachers, who may be committed to these principles and who believe they practise according to those values and beliefs would find themselves operating in some tension with the system’s discourses of regulation and accountability for the work of adult literacy teaching. Such tensions would emerge from a dissonance in practice of one or more of the three principles above.

With reference to the first principle of professionalism, the basis for permission to practise in this context is the teachers’ knowledge of literacy, of adults as learners and of the VET system’s operations. Significantly, the second half of this principle refers to decisions that are made on the basis of this knowledge. As professionals, teachers’ decisions are also made on the basis of their knowledge of the “unique needs of clients” (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1992, p. 1359) or students.

The second principle refers to the expectation that a professional would have the welfare of clients (or students) as a first concern. In this line of reasoning, the welfare of an institutionalised system would therefore be of secondary concern to a professional. Evidence from the previous chapter suggests that, while the rhetoric of

the system and its organisations may be the welfare of clients, the reality is that employers and other stakeholder groups are the VET system's primary concern; that is, the employers and stakeholders are its clients. Teachers who 'put students first' could find themselves in a quandary if, when putting the welfare of the clients or students first, they were putting the welfare of the system second.

The third principle of professionalism assumes that teachers would take a collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal and enforcement of professional standards of practice and ethics. This is an important consideration for teachers working in non-school settings where there are no professional registration standards established and monitored by the profession itself.

For the state's school teachers in Queensland, the Board of Teacher Registration fulfils this function across all sectors of public and private education. There is no such corresponding body for teachers (who may be called trainers, consultants, organisational development officers and the like) working in the VET system's registered training organisations. As the VET system was becoming entrenched as a national institution, its fundamental operating premise of competition allied to the supply of human capital has meant that this sense of professionalism⁷ has struggled for survival.

Researchers like Wickert (1997), Kell (1996, 1998b) and Chappell (1999, 2001) have already warned that, as a result of these changes, teachers are at risk of being

⁷ Adult literacy educators in this study have access to membership of many professional associations. The most obvious for membership are the Queensland Council for Adult Literacy and the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.

decontextualised from the social relations of teaching. This could occur when they grapple with practices which they perceived to be potentially and/or actually divisive, and in contradiction of their professional ethics, beliefs, knowledges and values. If adult literacy teachers affirmed their allegiance to these three principles of teachers' professionalism in the conduct and governance of their work, then they would be at risk not only of being de-contextualised from their students' lives in communities, but also of having to negotiate professional dilemmas and tensions caused by the dissonance of conflicting discourses jostling for dominance and expression through their practices.

This work of adult literacy teaching therefore involves negotiating meanings within and across complex and contentious co-ordinations of power in the discourses of local communities. In an ascending analysis of power, capillary actions of resistance could be activated by multi-discoursal people using tactics of engagement whereby they can 'read', name and thus challenge "the social relations that keep privilege and oppression alive as active constituting forces of daily life within the centers and margins of power" (Giroux, 1992, p. 19).

Giroux's sense of pedagogy goes to the heart of what is involved here because:

Pedagogy is, in part, a technology of power, language, and practice that produces and legitimates forms of moral and political regulation, that construct and offer human beings particular views of themselves and the world. Such views are never innocent and are always

implicated in the discourse and relations of ethics and power. (Giroux, 1992, p. 81)

The very complexity of Giroux's notion of 'pedagogy' is appropriate in this thesis because it situates the key concepts of discourse, power and identity at the policy–practice interface. Pedagogy as a “technology of power, language and practice” invokes the ethical, value-laden dilemmas that, as professionals, teachers could be expected to identify and negotiate in their everyday lives at work.

As professional workers, teachers' pedagogical practices are representative of their “intellectual, emotional and ethical investments” (Giroux, 1992, p. 81) in negotiating, accommodating and possibly transforming their work relationships. To illustrate this part of my argument, I will use the words of the first adult literacy teacher in the Central Highlands district of Central Queensland, Gail Chudleigh, who was interviewed on the history of adult literacy tutoring in Queensland:

It was interesting to see all the work that was going on, all the politics that were happening and today nothing has changed in that line. We are still meeting the political agenda and I think it is only the dedication, absolute dedication of literacy teachers who really have a philosophy that's absolutely student centred that allows us to manage in spite of the systems and still stay student focussed.

...It gives us the power and the resourcefulness – deviousness if you like – to manage in spite of the systems. (Chudleigh, interview, 10 May 1995, cited in Searle, 1999a, p. 44)

Chudleigh's words hint at the possibilities for pedagogical practices that may involve covert curriculum subversion on the part of teachers. This appears to be different from the ideas of a 'hidden curriculum' in which "traits of behaviour or attitudes that are learned at school are not on the formal curriculum" (Giddens, 1997, p. 590). In any interaction amongst people in a learning situation, there is the potential for a hidden curriculum to operate. This extract suggests that Chudleigh was referring to a more subversive pedagogical space in which teachers deliberately refocus technologies of power, language, and practice that produce and legitimate forms of moral and political regulation, such that they construct and offer students views of themselves and the world with which they (adults as students) wish to engage.

This notion of 'deviousness' foregrounds the idea that, as teachers negotiate their pedagogical practices, the discourses which they produce may be in tension or even conflict with those of an institutionalised VET system's discourses. It was Chudleigh's perception that she and her colleagues needed to be devious. Yet there seems to be more happening here than just deviousness – because the issue to be addressed is why she feels the need to be 'devious' in the first place.

From Chudleigh's perspective, an adult literacy teaching pedagogy remains "student centred" and "student focused". Giroux's (1992, pp. 19-38) concept of a "border pedagogy" is useful here to understand the ways in which teachers' actions are co-ordinated as student centred and focused from within situational and cultural contexts in which a dominant discourse determines 'what' students want to learn as well as 'how', 'when' and 'where' they will learn. Most importantly for this study, this

dominant VET system's discourse seeks to mandate the type of teacher students will have and the system will determine the cultural spaces in which this work of teaching will be undertaken.

In Giroux's (1992) understanding, the concept of 'border' is that of cultural borders, which are theoretical spaces in which people can:

retheorize, locate and address the possibilities for a new politics based on the construction of new identities, zones of cultural difference and forms of ethical address that allow cultural workers alike to transform the languages, social practices and histories that are part of the colonial inheritance. (p. 28)

In a sociological sense, colonialism is understood to be "the establishment by more developed countries of formal political authority over areas of Asia, Africa, Australasia, and Latin America" which resulted in "the destruction of old social, economic, and political systems and the development of new ones" (Marshall, 1998, p. 92). While nation-states' colonialism of previous centuries has ebbed and flowed, its essential elements of political and economic domination, plus attempted re-enculturation of people and social actions as well as re-historicising of events, are evident in the processes of globalisation enacted today (Beck, 2000; Prakash & Hart, 2000).

The specific aspect of Giroux's work that is pertinent to my thesis is that of 'border pedagogy'. In a theoretical sense, the term 'border' refers to cultural borders which are "historically constructed and socially organized within rules and regulations that

limit and enable particular identities, individual capacities, and social forms” (Giroux, 1992, p. 30). Through discourses, teachers can engage with knowledge as border-crossers, as people who can move “in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power” (Giroux, 1992, p. 29).

Moving in and out of borders constructed around co-ordinates of difference and power is the work of people who have not only learned, but also acquired membership of, a number of secondary discourses. Adult literacy teachers are border-crossers whose pedagogical practices engage with the languages of power, history and difference. They can move in and out of socio-cultural realms of meaning, each with its own rules and regulations, knowledge constructions and power relationships. In their professional lives, there are two aspects of these teachers’ border-crossing. First, to be eligible to be adult literacy teachers, they have actually crossed physical and cultural borders themselves. Second, their job as literacy teachers offers them spaces to engage with their students as they too are learning to cross cultural borders.

In these scenarios, teachers are “challenging, crossing and refiguring” (Giroux, 1992, p. 30) their knowledge bases and their social identities, as they are co-ordinated into new discourses, each with its particular “identity kit” (Gee, 1996, p. 6). The category of border signals a recognition of those epistemological, political, cultural and social margins that structure the language of history, power and difference. The category of border also prefigures cultural criticism and pedagogical processes as a form of border crossing (Giroux, 1992, p. 28).

There is a tension in this conceptualisation of border crossing as pedagogical work that can also enrich this theorising. It enables the work of teachers and the learning of both themselves and their students to be approached from the power relations framework of Foucault to bring a critical perspective to my theorising. Here I am referring to a ‘critical theory’ in which, as Merriam and Caffarella (1999) identified, the “larger systems in society the culture and institutions that shape learning, the structural and historical conditions framing, indeed defining the learning event” (p. 340) can be analysed.

From this stance, Collins (1994, 1995, 1996) was quite critical of pedagogical practices that actually undermined adults’ capacities to control their own learning. He argued that, for teachers of adults, their “initial task is to identify social structures and practices which (mis)shape social learning processes” (1994, p. 100). This brings an extra dimension to understandings of professionalism already expressed by Hargreaves (1994) and Darling-Hammond and Wise (1992). In fact, Collins (1995) argued that the field of adult education in general was too preoccupied with its professionalisation – so much so that it would forego its potential for social action and critique in “an eagerness to serve the conventional professions” (p. 79).

A sense of professionalism can assist teachers to identify potentially disempowering systemic structures and pedagogical practices in the field of adult education. Professionalism also substantiates a basis for making decisions about: (a) the knowledge base for permission to practise; (b) the unique needs of adults as learners;

(c) these adults' intellectual, social and emotional welfare; and (d) the definitions, transmission and enforcement of shared ethical standards of practice.

Enacting what they consider to be professionalism is a significant step for teachers in the VET system. It is especially so for adult literacy teachers who exist professionally in interstitial conceptual and contextual spaces among school teaching, adult community education, industry and trade teaching. Welton (1995) argued that workplaces did have "the potential to open up space for non-coerced, free communication pertaining to the organisation, control and purposes of work" (p. 152). As a theoretical proposition, this "non-coerced, free communication" presents a social feasibility that can all too easily founder upon the rocks of human nature and its oft enacted will for power and control.

When teachers, students and systems are interacting from positions of unequal power, critical theory's espoused pedagogical practices of communicative action from within an ideal speech situation unsettle the notion that education sites can at one and the same time be emancipatory and dialogical. Ellsworth's (1989) argument that terms such as "empowerment, student voice, dialogue and even the term critical...are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination" (p. 298) is echoed in Collard's (1995) finding that the conditions of ideal speech actually "disregard difference and exclude those who have no voice" and "merely reintroduces an old elitism under the guise of a communicative ethic" (pp. 65-68).

This resonates with Delpit's (1995) notion that domination comes from mastery of a secondary discourse that requires complicity with the values, beliefs and actions of that discourse. Such critique is important and necessary because it keeps these theoretical spaces in tension and hopefully obviates complacency by uncovering for inspection the institutionalised co-ordinations of power at its capillaries. It also facilitates an investigation of the tactics teachers employ in their engagement with this power and the implications of this named pedagogical work for their professional identity constructions.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, discourses have been presented as technologies of language and power through which identities are constructed. In the first section, I examined Gee's 'big D/little d' D/discourse theory with the purpose of testing its contribution to a theoretical framework predicated upon the major concepts of discourses, power and identity. In this discourse theory, I found the role of language to be central to understanding constructions of identity and the co-ordination of power in discourses.

In the second section, I used the theories of Foucault (1980, 1984, 1991) and de Certeau (1984) to contribute to the study's theoretical framework. The role of ideologies was also explored in this section as a secondary contributing concept to understandings of discourses *per se* and specifically power in discourses.

Weaving its way through considerations of discourses, power and ideology was language. Considerations of language have functioned as a conceptual binding agent throughout this theoretical framework. It is only through language that concepts such as discourses, power, ideology, identity, work and pedagogy can be framed and made known so that they can be analysed and interrogated.

In the third section, identity was found to be a contingent, constructed, even tactical concept that could be used to understand border crossing pedagogical work of multi-discoursal teachers. From the major concept of identity, supporting concepts of work and pedagogy were examined and found to contribute to understandings of the work of adult literacy. These concepts also contributed to the research questions' considerations of the co-ordinations of power within a bureaucratic system and the identity constructions of people who work within such a system.

My challenge now is to determine how these concepts might be operationalised in terms of empirical research. In other words, how might these concepts be developed in ways that yield instruments for field based research? What kinds of D/discourse data collection and analysis might be intimated by these central concepts? Responding to such questions will help me to prepare the research design and implementation of the study in the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGNING THE STUDY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two situated the study within the temporal and spatial contexts from which the problem emerged. There I demonstrated the significance of the structural changes to Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system and the implications of those changes for the knowledge base of adult literacy teaching in Central Queensland. The chapter included an explicit consideration of the changing terms and conditions of teachers' work within this system's registered training organisations.

In Chapter Three, key concepts relating "discourses", "power" and "identity" were used to theorise this problem. Supplementary concepts of ideology, work and pedagogy were used to add a conceptual breadth and depth to the theoretical framework. Central to this theorising was a core consideration of language and its role in the coordinations of power and constructions of identity constructions in discourse. Gee's (1999) discourse theory was foregrounded in this discussion; I will now return to his theoretical position. Investigations and arguments from both chapters have implications for the design and conduct of the research study reported below.

My immediate purpose is to outline and justify the study's research design by making explicit the relationship among theory, methodology and data collection and analysis processes. This function is clarified in the following diagram:

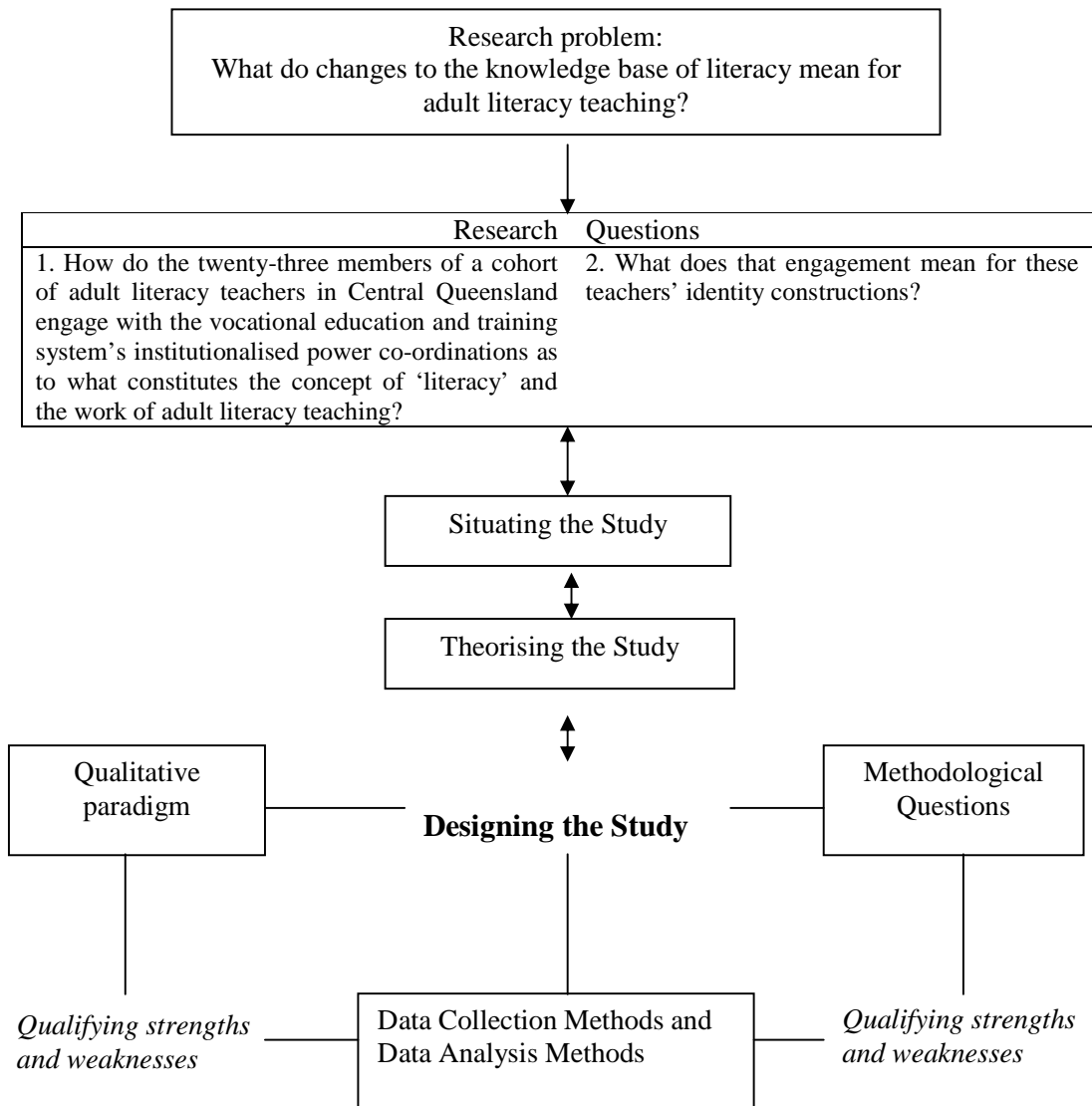


Figure 4.1: Research Design Components and Relationships

In *Figure 4.1: Research Design Components and Relationships*, the research design is shown to be directly connected to its research site context, and to the research questions that emerged from the framing of the research problem. The chief theoretical resource brought to the design of this research is the concept of discourses. Gee's (1999) discourse theory, informed by insights from Macdonnell (1986) and Fairclough (1992), will serve to link the theoretical framework of Chapter Three with

the selection of methodological questions and data collection and analysis in this chapter.

Each element of this research design will be described and explained in turn in this chapter. The first section begins with a description and rationale for the choice of a qualitative paradigm. From within that paradigm, the type of methodological issues that arise when asking these types of research questions are considered. This section concludes with consideration of the types or sorts of data that would be counted from within the paradigmatic and methodological framing of the design. The second section will focus on the research data themselves, with detailed explanations of data collection and analysis processes. In the third section, the strengths and potential limitations of this research design will be qualified initially according to four criteria. Ethical and political considerations that have been taken into account throughout the study are then discussed. The section will conclude with an overview of the strategic risks such a design and its implementation present for my research purpose in this thesis.

4.1 CHOOSING THE DESIGN BLUEPRINT

Merriam (1988) viewed a research design as an “architectural blueprint” which is determined by “how the problem is shaped, the questions it raises and the type of end product desired” (p. 6). In other words, explicitly stating the research design outlines a logical ‘fit’ between what the study sets out to do and what it actually finds. In this first section, I explain and justify the decisions that have been made to address this research problem.

4.1.1 Qualitative research paradigm

This research is situated within a qualitative research paradigm. The term ‘paradigm’ connotes a cross-disciplinary sharing of commitments, beliefs, values, methods and assumptions about research (Schwandt, 1997, p. 109). Qualitative research is understood to be “multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). While qualitative research may involve the use of numeric data, it gains its meaning from interpretations of “non-numeric data in the form of words” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 130).

Merriam (1998, p. 24) identifies nine points of difference in the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms: the focus of the research (the quality or nature or essence of a phenomenon versus how much, how many of a quantity); their philosophical roots; associated phrases used; the goals of investigations; design characteristics; sampling; data collection; modes of analysis; and the findings of the research. From the combined considerations of the research problem and its

questions, the contextual boundaries and theoretical framework, a qualitative, interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter of this study is clearly indicated.

According to Glesne (1999), when engaging in qualitative enquiry, “the open, emergent nature of interpretivist approaches means a lack of standardization; there are no clear criteria to package into neat research steps” (p. 6). Having noted this, she does provide a list of predispositions of positivist and interpretivist modes of inquiry that is helpful in distinguishing key features of the interpretive, naturalistic approach I have chosen for this study. In an interpretivist mode of inquiry, qualitative ways of knowing predominate in all areas of the research’s assumptions, its purposes and strategies, and the researcher’s role. The table (*Table 4.1: The Interpretive Mode of Inquiry*) below has been adapted from Glesne’s (1999, pp. 5-6) summary.

Table 4.1: The Interpretive Mode of Inquiry

<i>Assumptions:</i> Reality is socially constructed and its variables are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure	<i>Research Purposes:</i> Understand and interpret how the research participants in their social settings construct the world around them (contextualisation)
<i>Research Approach:</i> Focuses on in-depth, long-term interaction with relevant people in one or several sites; seeks pluralism and complexity with minor use of numerical indices; uses a descriptive write up.	<i>Researcher’s Role:</i> Researcher becomes the main research instrument as s/he observes, asks questions and interacts with research participants

This interpretive mode of inquiry is therefore qualitative in nature, which is itself a term given to a range of interpretive research interests. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) have identified two characteristics of a qualitative inquiry paradigm that are important

for my eventual choice of research design within this qualitative research paradigm: (1) a 'multimethod' focus, and (2) 'data in the form of words' (see also Schwandt, 1997). For my purposes in this research design, I have interpreted a multimethod focus to refer to methods of data collection. Therefore, from within this study's appreciation of the qualitative research paradigm, multiple methods of data collection from real life contexts will use words as data.

This approach has been brought to a design process that is intended to address my two research questions. The research methodology underpinning that design question is now articulated.

4.1.2 Research methodology

The enunciation of a research methodology is a theoretical means of proceeding from the questions to the design. By the end of this process, my rationale for the study's design will in turn justify the data collection techniques and data analysis strategy to be implemented. The development of this research methodology was an iterative process as the questions were developed and refined in conjunction with the development of the eventual research design.

This thesis is both theoretically and methodologically concerned with discourses and the ways in which people use language and co-ordinate power within discourses to construct their professional identities. Methodologically, discourses constitute a heterogeneous field of study because the primary condition of all discourse is dialogue, and dialogue is inherently social (Macdonnell, 1986). Through dialogue,

discourses become conceptually visible. Dialogue is understood to be conversations between two or more people in which thoughts and ideas are exchanged. Therefore, my research methodology is bound by theories of discourse and discourse analysis.

In her extensive examination of the *Theories of discourse*, Diane Macdonnell (1986, pp. 1-4) identifies “discourses of knowledge” in which the social production of meanings via dialogue is inscribed in both processes of speech and writing and interchanges of verbal and non-verbal signs. In these discourses of knowledge, meanings are made known through institutional practices, techniques and forms of knowledge construction and dissemination, including pedagogical forms of knowledge transmission and diffusion (Foucault, 1980, 1984, 1991; Laclau, 1990).

I am using this understanding of “discourses of knowledge” to investigate the ways in which institutional practices of the VET system can inscribe meaning via written words through which the knowledge base of adult literacy teaching is constructed and disseminated. I also examine other discourses of knowledge through which teachers’ meanings are produced via dialogue inscribed in their speech and writing and interchanges of verbal and non-verbal signs during conversations. With this research methodology, my aim is to make possible an examination of the different and sometimes contradictory discourses that may be used in one particular educational terrain.

In doing so, I will attend to four aspects of the work of discourses: (1) the effects these discourses have on the lives of teachers; (2) the political spheres in which the

discourses are shaped; (3) the social positions of those who configure the discourses; and (4) discursual connections with institutions of the vocational education and training (VET) system. The research problem emerged from the first aspect, and in the development of this thesis it has subsumed all other aspects because it was the effects of the discourses of change in adult education, specifically adult literacy education, that provided the initial focus for this research.

While mentioned briefly in Chapter Three, Norman Fairclough's (1992) work on *Discourse and social change* now features prominently in developing this research methodology. Fairclough has identified three different interpretations of discourse tendencies that have worked both to influence and to be influenced in turn by social change in contemporary society. He calls these tendencies the "democratisation", "commodification" and "technologisation" of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 200-223). The discourses of adult education in this country have been influenced by all three tendencies, as I have already identified in both Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

The tendencies of democratisation are reflected in discourses of social justice, humanism, emancipation, access and equity. Fairclough (1992) defines democratisation as "the removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people" (1992, p. 201). Tendencies of commodification are evident in the discourses of competency based education, corporate federalism and economic rationalism through which social domains and institutions that do not immediately produce commodities or products for sale are still "organised and conceptualised in terms of commodity production,

distribution and consumption” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 207). The technologisation tendencies of discourses are also evident in the discourses of competency based education, economic rationalism and so on, but I would also argue that they are evident in discourses of lifelong learning in which discursive change is brought about by a conscious design as identified by Fairclough (1992, pp. 215-218).

In attempting to clarify these understandings of discourse for the methodological purpose in this thesis, I will focus on Fairclough’s way of making sense of these tendencies and show how it contributes to addressing my research questions. Already in this thesis it has become apparent that such discourse tendencies may have contrasting and quite different values, depending on the articulations they enter into; and they are thus open to different political and ideological investments (Fairclough, 1992, p. 219). Discursive dissonance results as opposing, contesting values and beliefs jostle for dominance. This very complexity, heterogeneity and contradictory nature of discourses are exemplified in these tendencies which cannot be positioned as binary opposites because they are continually intersecting and interacting with one another. Herein lies the core issue for these tendencies in this study, namely the ways in which they contextualise the shifts in the “social constitution of the self in contemporary society” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 219). This means that ‘the self’ or subjectivity of identity can be positioned differently or shifted through the convergence of [democratisation and commodification] discourse tendencies.

This is a useful theoretical and methodological position because it enables a focus on the potential pervasiveness of these tendencies to: (1) transcend boundaries between

institutions and local orders of discourses; and (2) regulate discursive practices. However, it is here that Foucault's (1972, 1977, 1980) work on discourse production facilitates a closer examination of strategic discursal connections with institutions, together with the political forces and socially constructed networks of power that present what would be a post-structuralist orientation to this research methodology. From this perspective, discursal struggles can be investigated as dissonances and/or convergences among the three tendencies which may see particular discursal practices marginalised, resisted, colonised, rejected, accommodated or involved in combinations of all of these tactics of engagement.

In his *Introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*, Gee (1999) refined Macdonnell's (1986) notion of dialogue, noting that, while speaking and writing form part of social languages, the meanings that are taken from this speaking and writing are actually embedded in "specific *social conversations*" (pp. 34-37; emphasis in original). Gee's penchant for the use of capital letters is reflected in his use of the 'capital C' to denote these "social Conversations", which he determined to be constitutive not just of people using language, but also of controversies, values and ways of thinking, as well as of the symbolic value of objects and institutions that could be termed non-verbal participants in Conversations (Gee, 1999, pp. 34-35).

My specific focus is the 'symbolic value' of objects (such as curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents), together with language fuelled debates, controversies, values and ways of thinking (about these objects) that are expressed through social conversations or dialogue expressed in spoken, written, verbal and non-verbal

language forms. The salient point here is that these Conversations occur not only between individual people, nor only between people and ‘non-verbal participants’. They also occur as conversations (with the small ‘c’ related to the small ‘d’ of discourses) among and within Discourses.

Finally, Gee (1999) believes that these concepts are but “tools of inquiry” or “thinking devices” that can “guide us to ask certain sorts of questions” (p. 37). When faced with a piece of oral or written language, Gee (1999) asks the following sorts of questions:

- What social languages are involved? What sorts of “grammar two” patterns indicate this? Are different social languages mixed? How so?
- What socially situated identities and activities do these social languages enact?
- What Discourse or Discourses are involved? How is “stuff” other than language (“mind stuff” and “emotional stuff” and “world stuff” and “interactional stuff” and non-language symbol systems, etc.) relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?
- What sort of performance and recognition work (negotiations and struggles) has gone on in interactions over this language? What are the actual or possible social, institutional, and political consequences of this work?

- In considering this language, what sorts of relationships among different Discourses are involved (institutionally, in society, or historically)? How are different Discourses aligned or in contention here?
- What conversations are relevant to understanding this language and to what Conversations does it contribute (institutionally, in society, or historically)? (pp. 37-38)

The development of this research methodology was coterminous with the development of the research questions and research design. The table below (*Table 4.2: Relationship Between Methodological Questions and Research Questions*) illustrates this relationship:

Table 4.2: Relationship Between Methodological Questions and Research Questions

<i>Methodological Questions</i>	<i>Research Questions</i>
What sort of performance and recognition work (negotiations and struggles) has gone on in interactions over this language? What are the actual or possible social, institutional and political consequences of this work?	1. How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?
What socially situated identities and activities do these social languages enact?	2. What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

In summary, discourses provide a logical, theoretically and methodologically sound articulation with a research problem that arose from the effects of a changing knowledge base of literacy on the work of adult literacy teaching. The research questions seek to answer what this means for adult literacy teachers' engagement with the VET system, and its constructions of the discipline knowledge of 'literacy'. This

research methodology facilitates an investigation of the shifting discourses of adult literacy teaching because it foregrounds the issue of subjectivity or self in changing identity constructions. Conversely, discourses are difficult to ‘pin down’, to identify as data for research purposes. Therefore, if this thesis is predicated upon a methodological orientation towards discourses, there are implications to be considered as to what would count as data for such a research methodology. It is this issue that is considered in the conclusion to this sub-section.

Clearly, from the perspective of a research methodology that is based upon discourse theory, what count as data is data that are dialogic or conversational in nature. In line with this theoretical orientation, dialogues, conversations or social languages that depict values, assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, interpretations and representations of others and/or self would count as data.

The table (*Table 4.3: What Count as Data*) below sets out the relationship amongst the sorts or types of data that are counted, the research questions and the initiating research problem.

Table 4.3: What Count as Data

<i>Research Problem</i>	<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>Data</i>
What do changes to the knowledge base of literacy mean for adult literacy teaching?	1. How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system’s institutionalised power as to what constitutes ‘literacy’ and the work of adult literacy teaching 2. What does that engagement mean for these teachers’ identity constructions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values• Assumptions• Perceptions• Beliefs• Interpretations• Representations of others• Representations of self

It is necessary to count as data words that express values, assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, interpretations, representations of others and representations of self. The issue to be addressed at this stage in the research design process is: what would these sorts of data look like, or in other words, how would they be recognised as data? These sorts of data would have to be recognisable because they are either: (1) read in documents that would express such interpretations, representations, values, assumptions and beliefs in a dialogue between author/s and reader/s; and/or (2) heard and seen in dialogic encounters between people expressing their interpretations, values, beliefs and so on. The processes by which such data are collected and eventually analysed are detailed and justified in the following section.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This second section features the data collection methods and the data analysis strategy that I have chosen for this study. From the previous section, the types or sorts of data necessary to address the research questions were identified. The sources of such data were also identified and noted as being primarily from documents and/or from dialogic conversations. In their exposition of ways of doing research in literacy, Knobel and Lankshear (1999) argued that there were three main types of data: written, observed and spoken. For this qualitative study, I will be collecting written data from library research; and from field research I will be collecting written, observed and spoken data.

The first sub-section will therefore investigate the collection of written data from curriculum framework and syllabus documents, known as library research. In the second sub-section, the collection of data from observations and spoken and written social conversations is explored from the perspective of field research. The particular choice of data analysis strategy is detailed in the third and final sub-section.

4.2.1 Collecting data from library research

Library research is understood to use existing texts as data and includes:

correspondence, previously published lab and field research studies;
newspaper files; databases; historical archives; syllabus documents;
policy documents; exegetic texts; position papers; commentaries;
accounts of concepts; theoretical works. (Knobel & Lankshear, 1999,
p. 36)

Library research collects documentary data that have both merits and limitations, depending upon the kind of research being undertaken in a particular instance.

Documentary data from library research can be reviewed repeatedly over long periods of time. Documentary data may contain exact, precise and even quantitative evidence although such evidence must always be checked for authenticity and accuracy.

Such documents may have been originally written for an immense range of different purposes; it is important that this be taken into account and made explicit (Knobel & Lankshear, 1999). Merriam (1988) argued that collecting data from documents is a method underutilised by qualitative researchers. Yin (1994) agreed, with the proviso

that researchers remain critical when interpreting documentary evidence. Knobel and Lankshear's (1999) inclusion of critically interpretive texts, newspaper files, position papers, commentaries, accounts of concepts and theoretical works mitigates the disadvantages of using data collected from library research. Merriam (1998) referred to mining data from documents, because "documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 118).

Given the situated contexts in which this research was undertaken, I collected many existing texts that were included in a data inventory which recorded both library and field research documents that were collected throughout the research period. Other than the documents listed below, all other library research documents became secondary data sources that, while contributing to the richness of the data base, were not ultimately used as primary data sources.

Library research is an essential component of my data collection process, because the documents that I use constitute the voice of the VET system to which the teachers respond in the conversations during professional development sessions and confirmatory interviews. The library research documents that I use as primary data sources in this study are:

- curriculum framework documents;
- syllabus documents; and
- policy documents.

Two key curriculum framework documents used as data are: (1) the National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994); and (2) the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995).

There are two key syllabus documents with which the adult literacy teachers in this study worked on a daily basis: (1) a 1995 syllabus in Vocational Access (TAFE Queensland, 1995) that was being used when the first two adult literacy teaching professional development courses were conducted; and (2) a revised version of that syllabus used by the teachers in the third and final professional development course conducted in 2000 (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999).

The policy documents that had the most direct impact on the work of adult literacy teaching were the original and revised versions of the Queensland Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Policy (Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, 1994; Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations, 1998). Data collected from these documents as primary data sources are complemented with data from field research.

4.2.2 Collecting data from field research

Field research collects the moment-to-moment interactions among people in the given contexts of a specific research study. Techniques used in field research include those

of observation, interviews, artifact collection and journalistic techniques of journal writing.

Table 4.4: Techniques and Tools of Field Approaches to Literacy Research
(Source: Knobel & Lankshear, 1999, pp. 92-93).

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Tools</i>
Observation	data collection in real life, everyday contexts, fieldnotes, audio-recording, video-recording, priority observation, participant observation as a teacher/researcher
Interviews	open ended discussions; audio-recording, video-recordings used for life histories
Artifact collection	texts, lists of objects, photographs, drawings
Journalistic writing	researcher journal

Of the four techniques listed in the table above (*Table 4.4: Techniques and Tools of Field Approaches to Literacy Research*), data from field research have been gathered using the tools of participant observation, artifact collection of written assignments and interviews. Data have come from twenty-three (23) of the thirty-one (31) teacher-participants in three professional development courses in adult literacy teaching that were delivered in 1996, 1997 and 2000. Some teachers did not complete their course, while others did not wish to participate in the research. While I did keep journal notes, they were not consistent over the full period of the study and thus do not form reliable evidentiary data worthy of analysis.

Access to the field research data came through my delivery of *CNVOC011 Adult Literacy Teaching*, an eighty hour professional development course registered with the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and offered in flexible delivery mode through the Rockhampton Campus. The use of the term ‘flexible delivery’ is in itself part of the system’s discourses of vocational education and training discussed in Chapters Two and Three. In this ‘flexibly delivered’ professional development

course, these teachers participated in an external, distance education course structure with paper-based written course profile, study guide and readings provided, plus varied options of face-to-face sessions, teleconferences and/or videoconferences. These options were supplemented with telephone calls, faxes and email messages on an as-needs basis.

The techniques of data collection reflect the nature of my engagement with the participants. Because I was the teacher of the in-service professional development course, the participant observations were recorded during and after the sessions. The following table (*Table 4.5: Logistics of Data Collection from Field Research*) presents the processes used for this field research. It includes the year, number of teachers, plus field research data collection tools employed. It also documents the number of participant observations undertaken, artifacts collected and interviews conducted.

Table 4.5: Logistics of Data Collection from Field Research

Year	Teachers	Participant Observations	Artifacts (written assignments)	Interviews*
1996	6	4 (videotaped face-to-face sessions @ 2 hours each)	6	1
1997	6	3 (audio-taped teleconferences @ 1-1.5 hours each)	6	1
2000	11	4 (taped videoconferences @ 1-1.5 hours each)	11	2

* Interviews were undertaken in 2001, after all professional development courses had been completed.

Participant observations

Eleven participant observations of these professional development sessions were recorded during face-to-face, teleconferenced and videoconferenced sessions. For each session, written notes were prepared and, as the session progressed, the priority

events and/or comments were noted for later detailed observation and listening from the video and audiotapes. The face-to-face sessions were each approximately two hours in length, while the teleconferences and videoconferences were between one to one and a half hours in length. Face-to-face sessions were conducted in 1996, teleconferences in 1997 and the videoconferences in 2000. Three of the face-to-face sessions conducted in Rockhampton were also videotaped.

Three teleconferences were taped on audiocassettes. While the four videoconferences were being conducted, they were also being recorded on videotape and all of those have also been used as data. The audiotapes were transcribed and, together with the notes from the videotapes, used as data. The number of sessions offered was determined initially by the funding available to run each course, and then by negotiation with the teachers as participants. Anonymity was ensured via coding of all tapes according to data source, date and length of session recorded.

Artifacts

To complete the course successfully, teachers had to complete assignments that were presented as written essays and teaching programs. Twenty-three of these were collected. This has meant that, while they did not have to be transcribed, the authenticity of authorship still had to be confirmed. This was to be expected in any case with people submitting work from an external study program. During the 1996 and 1997 courses, I was working with the local Rockhampton teachers in the adult literacy field. Throughout the 2000 course, I maintained regular contact and had considerable interactions with the teachers in the rural and remote communities via

telephone, fax and email, as well as the 'official' course sessions. Some people I had already met when teaching in other areas. Therefore I knew these teachers and was comfortable with the authenticity of their written assignments as artifact data for analysis purposes.

These artifacts were good quality data because a lot of thought had gone into their production. While they were written to pass assessment criteria from the competency based *CNVOC011 Adult Literacy Teaching: A professional development course*, the teachers knew that their 'audience' was a colleague, not an organisational line manager. There is always the danger that I was being told what they thought I wanted to read, especially so given the fact that they had to receive eventually a 'competent' or 'not yet competent' statement for their work. However, the text extracts that have been selected for analysis were not chosen on the basis of their relevance to the course 'learning outcomes' or 'performance criteria', but rather on the basis of their relevance to the research questions. So in this instance the assignments/artifacts served two purposes, one of which was the research purpose for this thesis.

These data are not only authentic but also a very reliable evidence source for data analysis. Finally, these artifacts have also had all the advantages of library research documents because of their written paper-based and/or electronic formats.

Interviews

There are three main types of interview used in qualitative research studies and they are generally described as: (1) highly structured; (2) semi-structured; and (3) unstructured (LeCompte, Prissle & Tesch, 1993; Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1998;

Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). I chose semi-structured interviews because they enabled me to use a mixture of structured questions and exploratory questions related to issues emerging. These semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2001 after all professional development courses had concluded. They were intended to provide data that could provide dis/confirming evidence relating to the text that was being considered as relevant to the research questions. I was concerned that, from the first course to the last course, there may have been ‘slippage’ that I had not detected in the initial categorisations that I would be using as the evidentiary basis from which actual text would be selected for analysis. My caveat was that the teachers had to be still working in the adult literacy field in 2001 because this recency of practice would enable me to check if the issues identified within each data category as relevant to each research question were actually still relevant as this thesis was being written.

These interviews could have been used as a definite internal validity check, known as “member checking” which is understood to be the process of “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). However, of the twenty-three teacher participants, only five were still working as adult literacy teachers in 2001. Of these, four consented to an interview: one from each of the 1996 and 1997 courses and two from the 2000 course. Although this was far from the desired level of feedback, the four commentaries were useful.

As already noted, these questions reflected initial categorisations of data that had emerged from participant observations and written assignments. Four interviews were

conducted and each was taped. Three were conducted face-to-face and one by telephone. I negotiated with the interviewees that each interview would take between thirty minutes and one hour. This maximum time was reached for every interview.

The semi-structured interview questions were as follows:

- 1 What do you believe to be the purpose of your job as an adult literacy teacher?
- 2 What helps and/or hinders you in achieving this purpose?
- 3 To be able to do your job, what do you have to know about language?
- 4 To be able to do your job, what do you have to know about how and why adults learn?

In the interview process, the answers to Questions 1 and 2 subsumed the focus of Questions 3 and 4. These people were experienced teachers and their talk was multilayered. When we did a quick review at the end of each interview, I was told that Questions 3 and 4 had already been addressed in their responses to Questions 1 and 2. As with the other data transcriptions, I listened to the tapes and wrote the transcripts. When reading these transcripts, I confirmed to myself that it was indeed only Questions 1 and 2 that were relevant to my research questions and the latter two questions were subsumed in those first two.

In summary, the data collection methods detailed in this sub-section have provided an overview of both library research and field research techniques and tools that I used for written, observed and spoken types of data. The following sub-section will outline my data analysis strategy.

4.2.3 Data analysis strategy

There were two stages in my data analysis strategy. Stage 1 was a preparatory phase in which I prepared the data for analysis. Stage 2 describes the detailed process by which I analysed data as text.

Stage 1: Tidying up

I began the ‘tidying up’ process as the written, spoken and observed data were collected. An initial coding system was used that listed the type, date and location of data. I compiled a data inventory that functioned as a library for ongoing data retrieval (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The data inventory was an electronic and printed ‘evolutionary’ document in which I also recorded brief descriptions of each item as it was collected.

From the tidying up stage, I then moved on to an electronic and physical categorisation of data. Some data were rejected during this process. Three categories were eventually used to tidy up the data. Data which were related to each of the research questions and, most importantly, which could be used as evidence of values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, interpretations, representations of self and representations of others were chosen and placed in each of three categories that were relevant to the research questions. The data categories were: (1) concepts of literacy; (2) teaching practices; and (3) teachers’ roles (see *Table 4.6: Relationship between data categories and research questions* below). Data which did not ‘fit’ in any of these categories were still kept in the data inventory, but discarded for consideration as potential text for detailed analysis.

Table 4.6: Relationship between data categories and research questions

<i>Data Categories</i>	<i>Research questions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concepts of literacy• Teaching practices	1. How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers' roles	2. What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

There was both an electronic and a paper-based copy of data in each category. The paper-based data were then colour-coded according to each category.

From here I formulated the questions and conducted the interviews. As could be expected, the interviews elicited data across all three categories, so I used coloured highlighters on the interview transcripts to indicate category memberships. It was now that the final steps in the tidying up phase took place.

Another sorting took place when data were cross-filed in a time-sequence folder covering the year in which teachers enrolled in their particular professional development course: 1996, 1997 and 2000. I then simplified the coding because by now I had discarded even more text. From all the field research data now gathered and categorised, I decided upon five different evidence tools and they are listed below together with their abbreviations:

- videotape (VT);
- audiotaped teleconference (ATT);
- videoconference (VC);
- participant observation notes (PON);

- assignment for Adult Literacy Teaching course (ALT); and
- interview (IN).

To facilitate quick retrievals during the detailed analysis phase, the year was added to the abbreviation e. g. (VT, 1996). By now it was also necessary to assign the pseudonyms by which the teachers would be known in the analysis phase. Therefore the code (Karl, VT, 1996) denotes Karl's words on a videotaped, face-to-face professional development session recorded in 1996.

Stage 2: Analysing data as text

In the second data analysis stage I worked with 'chunks' of language or text from these different sources of evidence that I found responded to the research questions. In Chapters Five and Six, I will use a combination of spoken and written language with utterances or words that "are made up of cues or clues as to how to move back and forth between language and context (situations), not signals of fixed and decontextualised meanings" (Gee, 1999, p. 85).

I understand text as "any stretch of oral or written language such as a conversation, story, argument, report, and so forth" (Gee, 1996a, p. 94). In linguistic terms, I consider the stretches of oral or written language in the data to be text. As a specific data analysis strategy, I will use Gee's (1996b) approach to discourse analysis: this recognises five interrelated linguistic systems which, when working together, "constitute the *sensefulness* of a text" (p. 93; emphasis in original).

Table 4.7: Five Interrelated Linguistic Systems and Key Researchers
(adapted from: Gee, 1996b, pp. 90-121)

<i>Linguistic System</i>	<i>Key Research</i>
1. prosody -oral language's variations in rate of enunciation, pitch, tone, syllabification, i.e. loudness, stress, syllable lengths, pauses, hesitations and so on	Halliday (1976) Bolinger (1986)
2. cohesion -in both oral and written language, the ways in which sentences are connected to one another e.g. conjunctions, ellipses, pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, repetition of words, phrases	Halliday & Hasan (1976)
3. discourse organisation -organisation of sentences into higher-order unit of meaning, the 'top-level' structure of meaning	van Dijk (1980) ¹
4. contextualisation -cues used by speakers and writers to signal the context of the text to its listeners and readers, a context which is actively constructed and negotiated by the listeners and/or readers	Gumperz (1982)
5. thematic organisation -the ways in which themes, that is the images, contrasts, focal points of interest in the text, are signaled to listeners and/or readers	Hodge & Kress (1988) Fairclough (1992)

In the table above (*Table 4.7: Five Interrelated Linguistic Systems and Key Researchers*), I have shown that, while acknowledging key research proponents of each system, I will not be using them in isolation in the analysis strategy. Instead, I will follow Gee's notion of these linguistic systems' interrelatedness and interconnectedness to work them together to analyse particular texts. This means that, for each particular text chunk chosen for analysis, I will use the combined five linguistic systems to identify its meaning through: (1) its prosody (if it is a transcript from the spoken word); (2) its cohesive ties; (3) the text organisation (generic and

¹ In later work on critical discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk (1993) explicitly links the dominance of powerful groups and institutions in society as they enact, legitimise and/or reproduce text and talk through discourses: "managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk" (p. 254). When analysing the structures of text and image/s, van Dijk argues that we need a "cognitive interface", with the other side of the power-discourse relationship so that other knowledges, attitudes, ideologies and social representations of the social mind, which also relate the individual and the social, and the micro- and the macro-levels of social structure can be examined.

top-level structures); (4) any contextualisation cues; and (5) its thematic organisation².

In preparation for this detailed linguistic analysis, I will break the text chunks into lines and stanzas in the manner described by Gee (1996b):

Lines are usually clauses (simple sentences); stanzas are sets of lines about a single minimal topic, organised rhythmically and syntactically so as to hang together in a particularly tight way. The stanza takes a particular perspective on a character, action, event, claim or piece of information. (p. 94)

When working with written text, a researcher can use the punctuation marks, paragraphs and section headings for initial guidance in selecting lines and stanzas for detailed interrelated linguistic analysis. However, when speaking, these teachers expressed their meaning in smaller, more disjointed ‘chunks’ than those found in written sentences.

Gee (1993) called these small speech chunks “basic speech units” (p. 339). These basic speech units (BSUs) express a chunk of meaning that for the speaker is a coherent communication which may or may not be all there is to say on the matter. Therefore it is not until the speaker makes some sort of closure (either permanent or temporary) that the listener can realise what meaning is being communicated. Gee (1993) said that “each BSU contains on its last content word a salient change of pitch

² See also Emmitt & Pollock (1997), where each of these linguistic systems is used for teaching purposes. They do not combine them into an interrelated system as Gee has done here for his analysis strategy; however their detailed explanations are useful for understanding how each linguistic system works in conjunction with the other.

(and stress) and the words in each BSU are said with an integrated intonational contour” (p. 339). In other words, basic speech units ‘hang together’ in some way that is signaled by changes in intonation. Small intonational changes are usually signaled by a slight rise and this is the indication that the speaker has uttered a basic speech unit. In Gee’s reasoning, a significant fall in pitch is more dramatic and this signals closure of the oral sentence. “All the BSUs up to such a major pitch change constitute an *intonational sentence*” (Gee, 1993, p. 339; emphasis in original). For analysis purposes, an intonational sentence is a stanza.

I have followed Gee’s plan of numbering each basic speech unit (BSU) as a line and signalling the end of each line with a single slash (/). The end of each intonational sentence is signalled with a double slash (//). I have also been guided by my initial coding of transcripts where a very slight pause was signalled by a comma (,); a pause by one dash (–); a longer pause by two dashes (– –); an interrupted response by three dots or full stops (...); contextualisation signals by CAPITAL letters; and a major stress or emphasis by underlining the word or words (person). The actual words uttered or written are written in *italics*.

The meaning in the text is also identified through its generic structure, for example, text may be expository, narrative or procedural in nature to reflect the speaker’s or author’s intent. In my initial analysis, I look for this structuring of the text and signal the elements of generic structure to the readers with capital letters between the stanzas and in some instances, within a stanza. Where there is evidence of the relationships between the ideas in the text, this is also identified as its top-level structure e. g.

cause and effect, list/s and description/s, problem and solution and so on. The cohesive ties that convey meaning within and among stanzas are also identified and discussed. I conclude each analysis with a summary of the thematic organisation of the text which is reported on a stanza by stanza basis. Because each text is unique I am guided by the text and what I have already established about the social contexts in which it was used.

To demonstrate the application of this data analysis strategy, I have prepared some examples taken from the data categories pertaining to research question one. This final part of the strategy is explained in the sub-section below.

4.2.4 Applying the data analysis strategy

In this sub-section, I apply this data analysis strategy so that readers of the thesis are prepared for the two data analysis chapters to follow. Throughout each major section of each data analysis chapter (Chapters Five and Six), I use a two-step presentation process as demonstrated below.

First, to address the particular research question I use what I have called ‘synthesised narratives’ to weave a story using text extracts as quotes from the appropriate data category (or categories). My purpose here is to introduce the teachers’ voices on this issue or topic relevant to the question under discussion. An example is provided here.

Rebecca’s reaction to the syllabus documents was indicative of someone new to the field. During a teleconference, she wondered:

...what room is there for me in my teaching – – and what room is there for flexibility...I guess I'm not really used yet to – to the sort of teaching where everything is laid down in such cut and dried – terms y'know... (Rebecca, ATT, 1997)

A more experienced adult literacy teacher such as Terry responded to Rebecca's concerns by telling her (and the rest of the group on the teleconference) what she does when faced with the syllabus document:

I just say well, I think this equates and I don't take it as purely prescriptive, I just take it as a guide...I don't feel restricted by it...sometimes I prefer to be creative than just follow – I don't like following rules particularly... (Terry, ATT, 1997)

These teachers interpret the syllabus documents differently. Those who have worked in the system for a longer time, share with their newer colleagues the ways in which they interpret these competency based learning outcomes. Melissa was another teacher new to the field who expressed her feelings of inadequacy in competency based syllabus interpretation when she stated that she was “*not overly confident*” (Melissa, ALT, 2000). Just as Rebecca before her, Melissa had initially felt unsure about her abilities, however after teaching her first combined literacy and numeracy program for migrants in her community, she concluded that:

...on the whole the experience changed my own views of literacy and somewhat lifted my confidence in this area...this

flexibility in teaching further encouraged me to become more prepared for the situations that arose while teaching adult learners and gave me greater confidence to change paths where necessary during the lessons (Melissa, ALT, 2000)

In this example, a combination of data types is used to tell the story. It begins with two text extracts from the same data type, even from the same professional development session, because it was the interplay between the teachers that brought out the meaning relevant to how they interpreted and worked with a syllabus document. I then use a different data type from the same category.

I then choose a specific text extract to analyse in detail as per the five interrelated linguistic systems already discussed. The text comes from that same data category (or categories in the case of research question one) as used in the synthesised narrative/s.

I now provide an example of the application of the detailed interrelated linguistic analysis strategy used with a specific text extract. Initially I organise the text into stanzas. I then identify and analyse its discourse organisation (generic and top-level structures). The cohesive ties and any contextual organisation are then recognised and examined. The thematic organisation of the text summarises the findings from all previous analyses and synthesises my interpretation.

In the text extract used for this example, the teacher's pseudonym is Catherine and her words were recorded on videotape (VT) during a session in 1996. I initially

present the text in the double-spacing of the main body of this thesis, however I reduce this to single-line spacing when undertaking the detailed analysis.

It's such a difficulty when you've got – a student just worked out how to read a newspaper – even though I knew that reading and writing go together and the one will help the other – that's not – he could read that newspaper – he didn't want to write that job application – he didn't want to – he's always got in and shook the person's hand 'n told him he was a good worker and got his job – he did it three times and it worked – so why would he want to... (Catherine, VT, 1996).

In analyzing the prosody of this text, I have used the single dashes to guide the identification of the basic speech units. To identify the beginning of each next basic speech unit I have been guided by the slight pitch rises and very slight pauses as Catherine inhaled. Stanzas have been determined by major rises of pitch signalling the end of an intonational sentence, but also by the topic being discussed. As the topic has changed, so too has the stanza. The end of each line is indicated with a single slash (/) and the end of a stanza is marked with the double slash (/).

The text also has the generic macrostructure of a narrative story with an orientation, complication and resolution (Martin, 1985); or in Gee's (1999) more detailed exposition it is a lineal progression from setting to catalyst, crisis, evaluation and resolution with maybe a coda or closure line or stanza at the end. The "body parts" (Gee, 1999, pp.110 – 114) of Catherine's text are noted in plain font capital letters with sequenced Roman numerals.

SETTING

1 It's such a difficulty when you've got /
2 a student just worked out how to read a newspaper //

CATALYST

3 even though I knew that reading and writing go together /
4 and the one will help the other /
5 that's not //

CRISIS

6 he could read that newspaper /
7 he didn't want to write that job application /
8 he didn't want to //

EVALUATION

9 he's always got in and shook the person's hand /
10 and told him he was a good worker /
11 and got his job //

RESOLUTION

12 he did it three times and it worked /

CODA

13 so why would he want to //

The CATALYST for the problem is identified in Stanza 2 and is found to be Catherine's own understanding that reading and writing go together and help one another in literacy learning. The matter comes to CRISIS point in Stanza 3 because the student had a different idea about his literacy learning that was evidenced by his refusal to write a job application after he had mastered the reading of the newspaper.

In Stanza 4, the EVALUATION makes the story interesting to the other teachers in the group because it presents empirical evidence for the problem or difficulty. The

RESOLUTION to Catherine's difficulty is evident in Stanza 5's Line 12 where it is resolved that this man did indeed not perceive any reason for writing a job application because his social practices of job application had been reinforced by his experiences over a period of time that proved to him that writing an application was not necessary. The CODA in Line 13 of Stanza 5 is Catherine's closure to the story and reinforces the resolution because she confirms that on the basis of this evidence, there is no reason at this time for this man to engage in the social practice of writing a job application.

The conjunction 'so' in Line 13 of Stanza 5 not only links the meaning from Line 12, but it also signals the coda or closure of Catherine's story. It supports the internal top-level structure of the text that is a sequence of cause and effect which expresses the relationships between the ideas in the text.

Cause	Effect
A man went to Catherine's adult literacy classes to learn to read	He learned to read a newspaper (Stanza 1, Line 2; Stanza 3, Line 6)
This man could read a newspaper (Stanza 1, Line 2; Stanza 3, Line 6)	He did not want to learn to write a job application (Stanza 3, Lines 7 and 8; Stanza 9, 10, 11, 12) He did not want to write (Stanza 5, Line 13)
Catherine knows that reading and writing go together (Stanza 2, Lines 3 and 4)	It is difficult for the teacher to balance different perceptions of literacy (Stanza 1, Line 1)

From this cause and effect relational sequence established above, it is evident that the issue in this text is not so much whether the man continued with reading or engaged in some other sort of writing or even if he ever finished the module activities. The

issue is identified in Line 1 when Catherine tells her colleagues that, “*it’s such a difficulty*”.

An examination of the text’s contextualisation signals illustrates Catherine’s difficulty as she seeks to co-opt the listeners and viewers into her world in which this difficulty made sense. The words that signal her feelings and beliefs are noted in capital letters. Because this was a videotaped discussion, it has been possible to use Catherine’s slight pitch and tone changes, together with her eye contact and body language to guide the decision as to which words and phrases best depicted her feelings.

Stanza 1

1 It’s SUCH A DIFFICULTY when you’ve got

2 a student JUST worked out how to read a newspaper

Stanza 2

3 EVEN THOUGH I knew that reading and writing go together

4 and the one will help the other

5 that’s NOT

Stanza 3

6 he could READ that newspaper

7 he DIDN’T WANT to write that job application

8 he DIDN’T WANT to

Stanza 4

9 he’s always got in and shook the person’s hand

10 and told him he was a good worker

11 and got his job

Stanza 5

12 he did it three times and it worked

13 so WHY would he want to

In Line 2 of Stanza 1, the cohesive tie of ellipsis is evident where the words ‘who had’ or even ‘who has’ have not been uttered:

1 It’s SUCH A DIFFICULTY when you’ve got

2 a student [who had] JUST worked out how to read a newspaper/

In this instance, the ellipsis did not alter the meaning but it did clarify that the student had already achieved a personal milestone by learning 'how to read a newspaper'. Her question in Stanza 5's Line 13 was a plea to her colleagues to understand the difficulty she faced with this student because not only does it have the contextualisation signal of '*WHY*', but it also includes the cohesive tie of ellipsis that is indicated in the square bracket and non-italicised font below.

13 so WHY would he want to [write]

Catherine gradually worked her way through the five stanza story to arrive at the point she wished to make about literacy, which was that not always do people want to learn what they perceive to be two separate literacy tasks, namely reading and writing, because their social uses of these skills are not perceived by them to be linked in their communities of practice.

Ellipsis is also evident in Stanzas 2, 3, 4 as well as Stanzas 1 and 5 noted above. In Stanzas 2, 3 and 4 ellipsis functions to strengthen Catherine's argument, because it supports the contextualisation signals she is sending her colleagues and is in turn supported by them. There are words not uttered but implied in the text that signal meaning within and across these Stanzas: 'and', 'but', 'the issue', 'because'.

Stanza 2

3 [and] *EVEN THOUGH I knew that reading and writing go together*

4 *and the one will help the other*

5 [but] *that's NOT [the issue]*

Stanza 3

6 [because] *he could READ that newspaper*

7 [and] *he DIDN'T WANT to write that job application*

8 *he DIDN'T WANT to*

Stanza 4

9 [because] *he's always got in and shook the person's hand*

10 and told him he was a good worker
11 and got his job
Stanza 5
12 [and] he did it three times and it worked
13 so WHY would he want to [write]

Themes emerging from this analysis are presented in *Figure 4.2 Example of Thematic Organisation* below.

Stanza	Themes
1 and 5	Different perceptions of literacy
2	For this teacher, reading and writing go together in literacy learning
3, 4 and 5	Adults learn according to their own understandings of literacy

Figure 4.2 Example of Thematic Organisation

This approach to discourse analysis of data as text uses the five linguistic systems to unpack the ways in which language has been structured and used to determine what counts as ‘sense’ to specific people in particular social situations. This is not only an inherently social process, but also a political process because ‘making sense’ is always an attempt by writers and/or speakers “to recruit ‘appropriate’ hearers and readers; and hearers and readers, within their own social and political contexts, recruit speakers’ and writers’ meanings in diverse and value-laden ways” (Gee, 1996b, p. 121).

I am aware of the political nature of this process and in the following section, I explicitly address the strengths and potential limitations of this whole research design.

4.3 IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS AND POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

I use five criteria to examine the strengths and potential limitations of my research design, namely its: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, (4) confirmability, and (5) ethical and political considerations. The issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability will each be addressed in turn in the first sub-section. Because the ethical procedures which guide the conduct of research are also used to contribute to the trustworthiness of its account, the second sub-section will consider initially the biographically situated researcher and then the ethical procedures and political considerations embedded in this design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1998; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This section will conclude with a summary of the strategic risks and potentialities of this research design and its eventual implementation.

4.3.1 Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

Research undertaken within a qualitative paradigm rejects a perception of reality as something waiting to be discovered, observed and measured in favour of a perception of reality as negotiated, ever-changing and multi-dimensional (Merriam, 1988, 1998). This qualitative research paradigm acknowledges multiple, negotiated, constructed and co-ordinated realities and truths (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, to evaluate the strengths and potential limitations of this research design and its implementation

processes, I am going to use constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Merriam, 1988, 1998).

Credibility

Credibility is a concept used to describe the process by which researchers seek to establish the truthfulness and trustworthiness of their reconstructions and interpretations of the multiple realities of the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1998; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). It relates to the degree of confidence established in the study's theoretical framework and its data collection and analysis processes (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). To strengthen the credibility of this design, I have used the strategies of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and referential adequacy.

Prolonged engagement refers to the notion of time-in-field and it requires a researcher to engage with the field of study long enough to learn the context. Persistent observations require an in-depth focus on the specific factors related to a particular study. These are crucial elements to be considered in any credibility check; however they are considered in detail in the second subsection when my position as a biographically situated researcher is addressed as a criterion on its own.

Stake (1998) defines triangulation as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p. 97). Triangulation of multiple data sources of evidence and data collection methods

has been used to clarify the teachers' meanings and verify the repeatability of my interpretations of their words. The hexagon diagram below (*Figure 4.3: Triangulation Evidence Sources and Data Collection Methods*) illustrates the triangulation of data sources and collection methods used in this study.

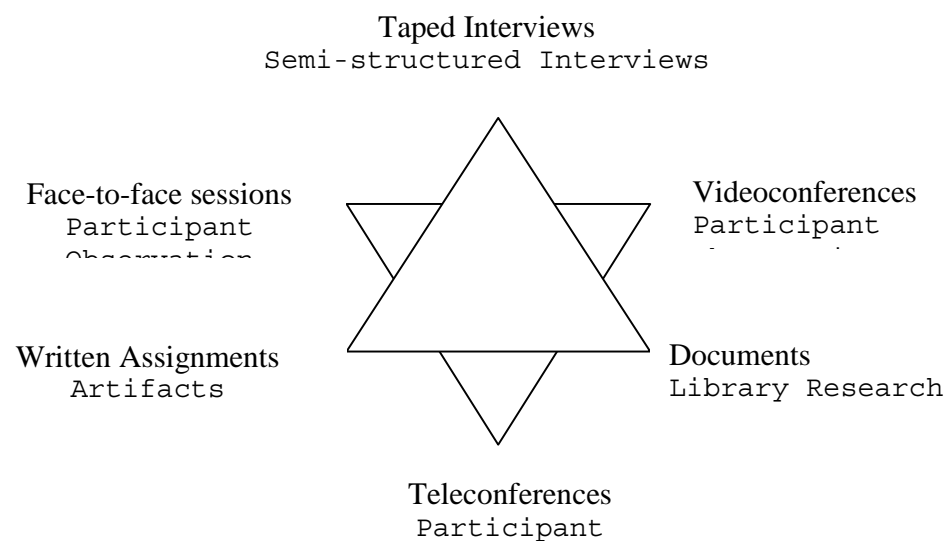


Figure 4.3: Triangulation of Evidence Sources and Data Collection Methods

As previously discussed, data sources include evidence from participant observations, artifacts and semi-structured interviews that reflects people's differing positions, perceptions, values, beliefs, interpretations, theories, assumptions and representations of themselves and others. In both library and field research, I have used multiple data collection methods including documents, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and artifacts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Referential adequacy refers to the means by which benchmarks are recorded (audiotapes, videotapes and so on), and against which data analysis findings can be tested for adequacy of interpretations. In the previous section, the referential checks for adequacy were outlined in the description of the audiotapes and videotapes of professional development sessions, group discussions and one-on-one interviews. These provide benchmarks to which I can return time and again to test the adequacy of my interpretations. The credibility of the design has also been strengthened by explaining my system of data collection methods and data analysis strategies in detail (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Transferability

Qualitative research relies upon a depth of understanding of the particular phenomenon-in-context to provide the focus and purpose of the research (Merriam, 1988, 1998). Considering the transferability of a particular research design is appropriate because it better situates the notion that it is readers of qualitative studies who determine whether the study's questions, theoretical framework, data collection methods and data analysis strategies bring insights into their own situations. A study's transferability is determined by the person who seeks to make the transfer, not the investigator as researcher. It is the job of the original investigator or researcher to provide enough descriptive data, while it is up to other researchers, if they wish, to bring to bear their own contextual evidence.

There are two key strategies of fostering transferability in a qualitative study like mine: the use of rich, thick description and triangulation. Rich, thick description is provided by building a study's context, its conceptual or theoretical framework and

other design elements such as its data collection methods and data analysis strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, 1998). It is intended to allow other researchers (and/or readers) to compare the extent to which the components of a study such as its theoretical propositions, the selection of participants, the context and data analysis strategies are described such that other studies may deal with related issues (LeCompte, Prissle & Tesch, 1993).

Triangulation assists comparability, which in turn facilitates transferability. Triangulation of multiple data sources and data collection methods strengthens the ways in which the study's ideas are "structured, highlighted, subordinated, connected, embedded in contexts, embedded with illustration, laced with favor and doubt" (Stake, 1998, p. 95).

Readers of this thesis will be able to determine whether or not the combination of research questions, methodological questions, data collection methods and analysis strategies bring insights into their own situations. Chapter Two has contextualised the study's historical, social and cultural sites-of-enactment. In Chapter Three, the theoretical framework provides the three major concepts being used: discourses, power and identity. It argues the theoretical lens that is brought to bear in the two data analysis chapters. This chapter explicates the overall design in detail, thereby completing the rich, thick description and contributing to the transferability of the design.

Dependability

Dependability in a research design is understood to be the extent to which it can be depended upon to provide consistency and credibility of findings. The concept of dependability is a qualitative one that I am using instead of the quantitative notion of reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; LeCompte, Prissle & Tesch, 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The dependability of my research design is linked to the sensefulness of its results. If this research design and its implementation produces consistently trustworthy (i. e. credible) results, then it can be said to be dependable.

I have used prolonged engagement, participant observations, triangulation and referential adequacy as dependability checks. In addition, I have left a research or audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998, p. 207) through the compilation of an extensive data inventory of raw data collected over the six years, as well as data collection sources, methods, analysis and thesis writing development. Here readers can see the types of data gathered, and the formats in which these data have been collected and stored. Thus this research design is considered dependable if, given access to all data, documents from library research, theoretical framework, and this chapter, the results ‘make sense’ and are believable to the readers.

Confirmability

Not only is a research or audit trail a criterion for dependability in a qualitative study, but it also contributes to the study’s confirmability. Notions of objectivity are representative of quantitative paradigm assumptions that traditionally see the concept of objectivity as associated with the researcher (Schwandt, 1997). In this sense, the

neutrality or objectivity of the researcher is held to be paramount. This harks back to the quantitatively bound assumption that there is a singular truth to be found and that researchers must beware of their subjectivity which can contaminate the objectivity of research design and results.

By my choice of a qualitative paradigm, this notion of researcher determined objectivity has been rejected in favour of judgements about the extent to which the data and the results of data analysis are confirmable and dependable. Decisions about confirmability necessitate examining the research design, methodological questions, selection of participants, data collection methods and analysis strategies. With the focus on the data and their interpretations, my use of the criterion of confirmability raises the issue of the role of the researcher as part of the ethics of the research that is addressed in the following sub-section.

4.3.2 Ethics and politics in design

In qualitative research, it is at the stages of gathering and disseminating research findings that ethical dilemmas may occur and in which ethical decisions have to be made (Merriam, 1988, 1998). In the first part of this sub-section, I address five issues related to the underpinning ethical and political considerations of this research design: (i) the biographically situated researcher; (ii) the multiple roles of the researcher in this study; (iii) the researcher's emotional labour; (iv) the multiple realities of the researcher role; and (v) the legislative regulations by which the study was bound.

The biographically situated researcher

As he sat sipping his strong black coffee, the deep brown, impenetrable eyes of the Regional Director of Education were fixed on mine: “Well, the Secondary Personal Development Program’s finished, so where would you like to go? There’s a high school, or a primary school, or ... there’s TAFE...”

Visions of staff-rooms past flashed through my mind before I uttered the fateful words, “I think I’ll try TAFE...never taught there.”

This highly subjective recount encapsulates a pivotal moment in my professional career, which had already encompassed waitress, co-owner/manager of a restaurant, student nurse and classroom teacher. At the time in late 1987 that this decision was made, the TAFE Inspector’s office was just down the corridor at regional office and the move from the Schools’ division to the TAFE division was confirmed congenially over coffee in the lunch room. However, when I reported for work at the local TAFE college at the end of January 1988, I was no longer an employee of the Queensland Department of Education. I was working instead for an entity that started out as the Bureau of Employment, Vocational, Further Education and Training, because the TAFE division had just been ‘floated’ as separate from the Department of Education.

A decade later I heard Barbara Lepani (1998) tell a national conference of adult language, literacy and numeracy teachers, researchers and policy makers that we were ‘knowledge navigators’ and I thought how appropriate this metaphor was for describing the ways in which teachers were navigating their own journeys through the continually changing knowledge bases of what had by then become vocational education and training (VET).

Giroux (1992) stated that “a critical pedagogy recognizes that history is constituted in dialogue and some of the voices that make up that dialogue have been eliminated” (p.

100). In choosing to position myself within this research design as a biographically situated researcher, I am deliberately engaging with the research process as a form of critical pedagogy in the sense that it is my belief that the voices of the ‘everyday’ teachers, and specifically for these research purposes ‘everyday’ adult literacy teachers who were my colleagues, were being eliminated from the public domain dialogues of the VET system.

In effect, this research is a reflexive project in which past and present lived experiences are not only recognised, but also examined for meanings in the diverse daily actions of teaching in communities throughout a vast, climatically harsh and sparsely populated region such as Central Queensland. Giroux (1992) saw such notions as “central to the politics of identity and power and to the memories that structure how experience is individually and collectively authorized and experienced as [a] form of cultural identity” (p. 101).

Therefore, in researching the cultural identities of adult literacy teachers, the ethics and politics of being ‘in and of the field’ of experience both as individual and member of a collective are addressed through three considerations: (1) the multiple roles of researcher; (2) the emotional labour of research; and (3) the multiple realities of this research process. These considerations occur at each stage of planning, implementing and qualifying this research design as well as the writing of this thesis.

Multiple roles

As researcher, I fulfilled the roles of confidant to, and negotiator with, the research participants. The enactment of these roles was complicated by the fact that I was also fulfilling the social roles of work colleague and professional development course facilitator. The research participants themselves engaged in the multiple social roles of teacher, learner, employee and researched in the context of this research.

Conceptually, there was both convergence and dissonance between the discourses of researcher and researched that were a perhaps inevitable by-product of this research design. In other words, it was difficult to remain ‘in role’ as a researcher while also facilitating a professional development session with fellow adult literacy teachers. This was particularly so in the first two courses (1996, 1997) but to a lesser degree in the third course (in 2000), when I was no longer a direct colleague working for the same employer as some of the adult literacy teachers.

For the administrative management of these multiple roles, I put in place a negotiated ‘safe’ process for the teachers’ participation because the use of their values, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and so on would reveal circumstances that had to be safeguarded from possible retaliation on the part of their employers, or other unaccounted for and unforeseen effects (Merriam, 1988, 1998). The need for anonymity is paramount because I am reporting the perceptions and circumstances of people who live in small to medium sized communities within a region in which the actions of adult literacy teaching depict an easily identifiable group of teachers. Therefore, pseudonyms have been used when quoting their words as text from the

semi-structured interviews, professional development sessions and written assignments. As indicated in the previous section on the data analysis strategy, the coding of data was eventually simplified to indicate the pseudonym, data source and year (for example, Ed, VC, 2000).

No matter how careful a researcher may be, reducing people to anonymous beings so that their words and worlds can be analysed is really ethical only in so far as the people-as-researched themselves consent to this (Nespor, 2000). Thus, while accepting that it is virtually impossible to preserve total anonymity (Merriam, 1988, 1998), I met this ethical dilemma by informing participants of the risks involved, via the use of signed consent forms (Appendix 2: Sample Consent Form).

Emotional labour

Given the multiple roles of researcher and researched already identified, I now move from the administrative management of the research process to its emotional management. In other words, the work of planning, implementing and evaluating this research design is really “emotional labour” (Jarzabkowski, 2001). In her article on “Emotional Labour in Educational Research”, Lucy Jarzabkowski reports on the emotional labour undertaken in her ethnographic research study in a primary school. She defines emotional labour as “the hiding or changing of true feelings in an effort to display a more acceptable emotional front” and she argues that “the issue of emotional labour in research can be viewed from two perspectives – the participants’ expectations of me and my own expectations of myself” (Jarzabkowski, 2001, p.

133). Managing these dual expectations was my emotional labour in this research study.

As research participants, the teachers had few expectations of me as a researcher. They gave permission for the tapings and recordings but evinced little interest in the eventual outcomes of this research. Unlike Jarzabkowski, I was not an ‘outsider’ trying to be accepted as an ‘insider’; rather I had the opposite problem, namely that of an ‘insider’ trying to carve out an emotional space in which I could gain some perspective or distance from which I could engage with the role of ‘researcher’. Accordingly complicity between researcher and researched had to be balanced between involvement and support for my role of confidant and negotiator on the one hand, and collusion with consent to my role of researched-colleague on the other.

It was my expectations of myself as researcher that were more difficult to manage and it was here that I found it necessary to jettison an earlier action research approach to this research design because the price of the emotional labour was too high. Not only were my colleagues not interested in taking the reconstitutions and reformulations of their knowledges about adult literacy teaching beyond the role of research participants, but also I found it increasingly difficult to manage the ‘researcher/researched’ dichotomy in that environment (Harreveld, 2001). From within a qualitative paradigm, it was my perception that I could be the researcher who did not have to ‘hide or change’ my true feelings to “display a more acceptable emotional front” (Jarzabkowski, 2001, p. 133) because, as researcher, I could gain

that distance from the emotional connections with my colleagues as fellow adult literacy teachers.

Multiple realities

The juggling of the multiple roles and working through emotional labour bring with them a danger in attributing meaning that draws upon knowledges that were never intended to be used for research purposes. Acknowledging this does not make it go away, yet it does mean that it has to be consciously addressed when continually filtering interpretations between researcher and researched at all phases of the study. In his chapter on “Ethics and Researching Educational Itinerancy” within the field of Traveller education, Patrick Danaher (1998) identified three “complex and contextual categories of interaction” that facilitate a functional analysis of the “multiple realities of contact between researchers and research subjects” (p. 67).

The first reality was that “agency belongs to all research participants” (Danaher, 1998, p. 67). In this study, the research participants were definitely not powerless, instead having the facility to respond actively to all questions, whether that was during professional development sessions or interviews. In their written assignments, some participants chose to use the assignment as a vehicle for their interpretations—of—self that they considered central to their work as adult literacy teachers. The dynamics of the group interactions that captured dialogic conversations among the teachers were unfettered and freely-ranging. When I was functioning in the role of professional development facilitator, certain stimulus readings or tasks were provided – whereas in the role of researcher my task was to observe and record. The relational

networks thus established between researcher and research participants assisted negotiations in navigating through the complex networks of these relationships.

The second reality is concerned with the “specific issues” that emerged from the “material intersections of different groups of research participants” (Danaher, 1998, p. 67). In my study’s research processes, the material intersections of research participant groups also constituted a significant reality. These material intersections occurred among different groups of teachers as research participants in this research design, both within each of the professional development courses and also among the teachers external to their participation in these courses. These material intersections were manifested in the ongoing refinements of the facilitative frameworks for the professional development sessions that have in turn developed from continued interactions with the teachers as research participants throughout the period of the study.

The third multiple reality of the biographically situated researcher is, as Danaher (1998) argued, the extent to which the researcher (myself), as well as the research participants (the twenty-three adult literacy teachers), “are changed as a consequence of being involved in the research project, and the ethical implications of such changes” (p. 67). Here he is arguing that researchers need to be aware that there are moral and ethical dilemmas connected with researchers’ either consciously or unconsciously being responsible for changes in the lives of the research participants, no matter the nature of these changes.

From an ethical point of view, it is important to continue to show respect, with minimal coercion and manipulation during the data collection processes, yet this too is a value laden process that by its very nature cannot ever be really 'free' from even subtle coercion and gentle manipulation. I am aware that linking some aspects of this research study's data collection processes with the implementation of the professional development courses was a risky business in an ethical sense because it could be perceived that the teachers participated because they wanted to pass the course. I minimised this danger by my clarifying my reasons for wanting to use our professional interactions as data and this was acceptable to these teachers.

Legislative regulations

This study is designed in accordance with established ethical procedures for research involving human participants. The four basic principles of the Australian Association for Research in Education's Code of Ethics (1997) underpinned research actions by ensuring that (1) respect for the dignity and worth of all participants took precedence over researchers' self-interest; (2) no risk of significant harm to individuals was permitted; (3) the complex relations of education to various views on the human good were acknowledged; and (4) the consequences of this research were intended to enhance people's general welfare (Australian Association for Research in Education, 1997, p. 116).

The research was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Human Ethics Research Review Panel of Central Queensland University (Clearance No: 96/6-309). A copy of the consent form is included (Appendix 2: Sample Consent

Form). All participants contributing to the evidentiary archive were provided with a written information sheet about the nature and purpose of the study and, in the consent form, advised of their right to withdraw at any time during the course of the study.

4.3.3 Strategic risks

While risks have been taken with this research design, it is argued that they are strategic in nature because they have been undertaken with a clear consideration of ethical issues already discussed, as well as with a calculated understanding of the political nature of this research. This final sub-section is concerned with the politics of taking strategic risks in a research design.

My engagement with this issue is focused on two parallel sites of risk identification and its assessment. The first site is the collection of data from the working lives of this group of twenty-three adult literacy teachers. The second site is found in this research design's engagement with its theoretical framework via its research methodology and data analysis strategy.

Risks at Site One

The decision to collect data whilst engaging with my colleagues in the facilitation of three 'flexibly delivered' professional development courses involved a calculated risk. In seeking to capture these adult literacy teachers' active encounters with the changing knowledge base of their work through curriculum documents mandated by

the VET system, the data collection methods were of necessity chosen on the basis of being the least intrusive for capturing dialogic conversations, but most durable for later analysis purposes. The teachers spoke with their colleagues during the professional development sessions and engaged in a dialogue with themselves and me (as the reader) in their written assignments. Other methods such as focus groups or interviews alone could have been used, but these were discounted for five reasons.

First, the teachers would have been participating in these processes purely to please me as the researcher, with little benefit in the encounters for them. My decision to embed the data collection within the professional development courses brought a direct, tangible benefit to the participating teachers because they could also receive their Statement of Attainment and thus the 'licence' to teach adult literacy within the VET system. The risk to me of course is that it could be perceived that they were being coerced into participating. This risk is outweighed by the fact that the choice was theirs as to whether they actually gave permission for their data to be used in this study. There were eight teachers who chose not to do so, yet this did not in any way affect their completion or otherwise of the professional development course.

Second, the use of the plural 'encounters' is noteworthy because my decision to align with the professional development course meant that there was a minimum of two and a maximum of four group encounters with each teacher on every course, during which the participant observations were recorded. Individual encounters were provided for via the assignments where teachers 'talked' with me. A number of suggestions had been provided for these assignments as prompts; however, I also asked the teachers to put forward their own proposals and this became the discussion

focus of the last session in every course. The risk here is that the needs of the research study could have become forgotten in the facilitation of the teachers' learning needs during each course. The design of the course was such that engagement with the current documents and issues was encouraged, plus the politics within literacy teaching in local communities throughout the region was such that teachers came to these professional development courses for the precise purpose of engaging with the syllabus and National Reporting System documents.

Third, the two major data collection processes just mentioned provided for both spontaneity of responses in the group discussions and time for reflective reasoning in the written assignments. In effect, this gave two 'readings' of each person's perceptions, values, beliefs, assumptions and so on. Naturally, the risk is that contradictions between the two would provide even more complications because they would have to be tracked down and either eliminated or included as dis/confirming evidence. However, this risk is far outweighed by having a double input from the written word of a research participant's assignment in front of oneself at the same time as listening to that person's voice on an audiotape or watching and listening to her/him on a videotape.

The fourth risk at this site is found in the nature of a 'flexible delivery' course within the VET system. Flexible delivery is a euphemism for what used to be called distance and/or external education or even open learning with the terms 'distance', 'external' and 'open' encompassing differences in time and space amongst the course participants. Not only did geographical distances have to be considered, but also the

spaces of these people's lives within their own communities had to be central considerations in planning for and implementing these data collection methods. This meant that, for some teachers, we 'met' only in a virtual sense via teleconferences and videoconferences. It was only from the first course that I could collect data in same-time videotaping in a classroom. Telephone calls, faxes and emails, together with other professional engagement opportunities, were used to augment these electronically mediated relationships and build the rich, thick description that informs the later data analysis.

The fifth risk is really a result of taking all four previous risks. The cost of such a data collection process and the particular methods of recording data would have been prohibitive for a lone doctoral researcher unless research funding had been made available. Because of my initial decision to use the delivery of the professional development courses as the main data collection vehicle, and to choose methods that were compatible with that context, the financial cost to the research study was negligible. The costs of the teleconferences, videoconferences and all other communications were borne by the registered training organisation as part of the delivery of the courses.

All machinery had the facility for recording tapes and one copy of all these tapes was made available through a college library for those who may not have been able to participate in particular sessions because of sudden issues arising in their own lives. As previously noted, I had already written the course study guide and this was provided to each participant, with the costs of publication and delivery borne by the

organisation. However, the organisation's cost was repaid in kind with these learning resources remaining available for all teachers if they wished to use them.

Risks at Site Two

The second risk site is found in this research design's engagement with its theoretical framework via its research methodology and data analysis strategy. Here risk is strategic in the sense that it engages with the issue of for whom, if anyone, this research could be of educational benefit. In a review of research in professional development and vocational teacher education, Watson, Nicholson and Sharpin (2001), writing for the Australian National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), concluded that "professional development in the area of literacy and numeracy teaching is crucial to ensure pedagogical issues are understood and addressed and the quality of delivery is optimal" (p. 47). Furthermore, on the specific issue of professional development in the context of adult literacy, Wagner and Venezky (1999) argue that it should engage practitioners in the pursuit of "genuine questions and problems over time in ways that alter their own perspectives and practice" (pp. 24-25).

There are four salient points embedded in these findings that are pertinent to considerations of this research design and its implementation. The first point identifies pedagogical issues as those that professional development is intended to address. As I have already identified in this thesis, pedagogical issues are understood to be concerned with discursal co-ordinations of language and power in teaching/learning situations. That professional development should be undertaken over time so that practitioners' problems and questions are the focus of enquiry is also

worthy of note because I have primarily aligned the course delivery to the practitioners' or teachers' needs, rather than to the secondary needs of their employing organisations or the VET system as a whole.

Watson, Nicholson and Sharpin's (2001, p. 47) exhortation that the "quality of delivery" should be "optimal" could be reflective of a system's view of professional development as having as its primary purpose the delivery of policy imperatives which may or may not be congruent with the teachers' view of what constitutes 'optimal quality delivery' in adult literacy education. Wagner and Venezky's (1999) assumption – that the aim of professional development should be to alter people's perspectives and practice – is problematical, because, if that is what people choose to do (or not to do), then they will do it (or not do it) and no amount of coercion or cajoling on the part of a system's professional development framework will really achieve anything more in practice than the individuals involved want it to.

Collecting data from multiple sites-of-engagement in which teachers could give unrehearsed responses from within the everyday concerns of their working lives was part of a strategy. This strategy was: to interrupt what could have been a system's complacency that teachers would meekly swallow their professional development medicine in the form of competency based learning outcomes for adult literacy teaching. The danger of course is that these data collection methods would capture what I wanted them to capture; in other words, that they would serve my ideologically driven purposes (as expressed in Chapter Three's theorising), rather than some objective and esoteric 'truth' that was waiting to be found. In refuting the potentiality

of this claim, I argue that the theoretical framing of the study clearly situates the notion of ‘truth’ in research as a constructed, contingent concept within co-ordinated networks of power relations.

The use of Gee’s (1999) interrelated linguistic systems’ data analysis processes may also bring with it other ethical dilemmas and concerns (Merriam, 1988, 1998). It is inevitable that, as the researcher, I would filter data through my theoretical biases, values and beliefs and consciously or unconsciously include confirmatory data and/or exclude disconfirmatory data. Merriam (1988, 1998) suggests that this ethical dilemma of bias is addressed by providing a full, rich, thick description of the methods of data collection, participant selection and data analysis strategies. The previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated: (1) the data collection methods and multiple sources of evidence; (2) the rationale for and processes of participants’ selection; and (3) specific strategies for data analysis using the five interrelated linguistic systems.

Finally, the choice of a theoretical and methodological ‘theme’ of discourses that is woven through this study’s conceptual framing and research design constitutes another strategic risk taken at this site of engagement with theory, methodology and data analysis. On the one hand, this may contribute to the coherence and cogency of the research design itself, while on the other hand it could be perceived to be an over-reliance on one particular ‘take’ on discourse theory that is not sustainable across such major elements of a research study. As the researcher on site, I took the former

view; the latter view constituted the calculated risk that I took when deciding to ‘test out’ Gee’s theory in a study such as this.

Gee’s (1993, 1996b, 1999) conceptual operations of ‘big D-identity kit’, ‘little d-language bits’ and ‘big C-conversations’ in discourses function as identifiers or social markers. They identify or mark these teachers’ discourses of adult literacy teaching, and link theory, methodology and data analysis via the interrelated linguistic analysis system. From my own lived experiences working with the concept of ‘literacy’ with adults as vocational education and training students or pre-service or in-service teachers, Gee’s ‘Big D/little d’ D/discourse theorising has always provided an *entrée* to understandings of literacy that seem to make sense for people. So, while having experienced its use for teaching, I was aware that the risk lay in learning if it could also be a useful way to engage with the initiating research problem and scaffold an entire research project.

In summarising the strategic risks at this site, I acknowledge that the overall benefit of this educational research is firstly to myself as the researcher, because I stand to benefit from completing this thesis. If this research design and its implementation proves efficacious for my purposes in this study, then it will have proved to be a worthwhile professional development process for myself as an apprentice researcher. The potential utility of taking these risks could also been found in the theoretical framework of discourses, power and identity that I have used to scaffold this research design and that has identified the possibilities inherent in its transferability to investigations of other changing socio-cultural worlds of work.

4.4 SUMMARY

The worth or otherwise of a research study is integral to its perceived rigor. Merriam (1998) identifies five attributes that contribute to the rigor of a qualitative research study:

Rigor in a qualitative research derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description. (p. 151)

In this chapter, I have made my presence known and established the nature of the interactions between myself and the twenty-three teachers as research participants. Data have been triangulated by evidence sources and data collection methods. I have also explained and justified the basis upon which my perceptions of findings will be interpreted. Ultimately, I have provided a rich, thick description of the rationale underpinning all major research decisions and the contexts in which they were made.

Specifically in this chapter I have proposed and examined the design blueprint developed for this particular research study. The characteristics of qualitative research were identified in relation to the methodological questions underpinning this study. The data collection and analysis processes were set out in the second section with specific reference to collecting spoken, written and observed data from both library research and field research. Careful attention was paid to the data analysis strategy because it will be using a model of five interrelated linguistic systems proposed by Gee (1999) to undertake the analysis of data from multiple sites and sources.

Qualifying the research design in the third section involved the use of criteria to determine its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Also included were the ethical and political considerations in planning and implementing the design. This section concluded with a detailed examination of the strategic risks undertaken in planning and undertaking this study.

The first data analysis chapter follows and it will feature the data analysis strategy of this research design in action.

CHAPTER FIVE: ENGAGING WITH INSTITUTIONALISED CO-ORDINATIONS OF POWER

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three I used the reasoning of Foucault (1980, 1984, 1991) and de Certeau (1984) to theorise a conceptual picture of what may happen when people engage with the power of an institutionalised system. In Chapter Four I explained and justified my research methodology¹, and of particular relevance to this data analysis chapter, I clarified the relationship between my research problem, the research questions and what count as data (*Table 4.3 What count as data*). In that chapter, I also outlined my data analysis strategy² and provided a detailed example of its application³.

This is the first of two data analysis chapters. Written, spoken and observed data from both library and field research is analysed as I address the first research question in this study:

How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to

¹ See Section 4.2 Research Methodology

² See sub-section 4.2.3 Data Analysis Strategy

³ See sub-section 4.2.4 Applying the Data Analysis Strategy

what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?

In responding to this question, I use data in two ways⁴. First, from frequent readings of the data in each of the categories that I had developed, I write a synthesised narrative using data from the specific categories that related to this particular research question. I have written a number of these synthesised narratives and I use them as introductions and explanations throughout each section, prior to choosing particular text for the detailed interrelated linguistic systems analysis. The choice of which data to choose as key texts for detailed analysis was initially quite difficult; however, there are some particular extracts of documents, transcripts, assignments and interviews that encapsulate effectively and vividly the teachers' assumptions, perceptions, values, beliefs, interpretations, representations of self and others more than others.

In Sub-section 4.2.3 The Data Analysis Strategy (*Table 4.6: Relationship between data categories and research questions*), I name the two categories from which I have chosen the data analysed in this chapter. I will now clarify the relationship between these two data categories (Concepts of Literacy and Teaching Practices), the research question and the specific evidence tools from which text is extracted and used in this chapter⁵.

⁴ See Sub-section 4.2.4 Applying the data analysis strategy

⁵ See sub-section 4.2.3 The data analysis strategy; in particular, *Table 4.4: Techniques and Tools of Field Approaches to Literacy Research* (source: Knobel & Lankshear, 1999, pp. 92-93).

Research Question 1

How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to...

...what constitutes the concept of 'literacy'...

Data Category: Concepts of Literacy

- Videoconferences (VC, 2000)
- Videotaped sessions (VT, 1996)
- Participant Observation Notes (PON, 1996)

...and [what constitutes] the work of adult literacy teaching

Data Category: Teaching Practices

- Adult Literacy Teaching Assignments (ALT, 1996; ALT, 1997; ALT, 2000)
- Audio-Taped Teleconferences (ATT, 1997)
- Interviews (IN, 2001)
- Syllabus document (1999)

The teachers engage with the system's co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes 'literacy' and therefore their work of adult literacy teaching in many ways. In the first section, the teachers' thinking and talking about the concept of 'literacy' is examined through transcripts from videoconferences, videotaped sessions and my participant observation notes (from the 'Concepts of Literacy' data category). Here I explicitly address the ways in which the teachers articulate their perceptions of the VET system's conceptualisation of literacy. In the second section, I shift my focus to the work of adult literacy teaching in the system. From the data category of 'Teaching Practices', I use transcripts from audiotaped teleconferences and interviews, extracts from written assignments and a syllabus document.

5.1 ENGAGING WITH THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

In this first section, I will investigate the following data for evidence of the ways in which these teachers engage with the VET system's concept of literacy:

- perceptions – of the syllabus and competency framework notion of 'literacy';
- assumptions and interpretations – of the system's standards documents;
- assumptions – about the notion of competency based education;
- beliefs – about the system's conceptualisation of literacy;
- representations – of their colleagues, students, employers, curriculum developers, employees of other organizations in the community; and
- representations – of themselves.

I conclude this section with a detailed interrelated linguistic systems' analysis of a text taken from one of the videotaped sessions from the first professional development course in 1996. 'Peter' is the teacher, and he is sharing his interpretations, beliefs and representations of others (Peter, VT, 1996).

5.1.1 The system's notions of literacy

During their professional development sessions, the teachers read and discussed both curriculum framework documents, the National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competency - NFAELLNC (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994) and the National Reporting System - NRS (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995). They found them "*too complicated*"

(PON, 1996). The complexity of the latter document (the National Reporting System) has been a recurring theme throughout the adult literacy teaching professional development courses. Teachers' interpretations of this complexity have been summarised from the first session in which the documents were discussed. These interpretations have stayed consistent until the last professional development course conducted in 2000 and were reflected in the confirmatory interviews in 2001. Complexity was identified in:

- *the physical layout of the document, in particular each of the five level descriptors;*
- *the discourse of the text (i.e. the 'language bits' that carry a high lexical density and nominalisation);*
- *the lack of clear statements about what literacy is understood to be;*
- *the relationship between six aspects of communication and five levels of competence;*
- *each level of competence, the relationship between five indicators of competence plus three conditions of performance, across three workplace and social contexts, six assessment principles, together with four language and literacy features and performance strategies as well as four numeracy features and performance strategies. (actual words summarised from transcripts of discussion during Video Conference number 7 in 2000 and Video Taped session number 4 in 1996; also recorded in Participant Observation Notes from session number 4 in 1996)*

The syllabus documents (and the curriculum frameworks on which they were based) are indeed objects of scrutiny because they have a symbolic value against which

adults as both students and teachers are measured. The following dialogue illustrates this in a transcript from the first course when the National Framework for Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competency and the National Reporting System were ‘new’ knowledges with which teachers were expected to engage. Kevin, Peter, Karl and Julie identified other people who they believed would also find the curriculum documents (frameworks and syllabuses) both complex and complicated:

Kevin: ...I mean - if we hadn't sat here for the last two or three weeks, and went through all this - by chance we had an understanding of that now - imagine a kid rolling up to an engineering workshop asking for a job as an apprentice boiler maker, and presenting that to the managing director - not only wouldn't he care, but how could he understand it? How could he know what it meant?

Peter: ...but even someone who worked at the CES or DEET⁶ or the local office – who's going to have access to that knowledge?

Kevin: It begs the question, doesn't it - we talk about - transparent curriculum and sharing the curriculum and empowerment and whatever and student centred learning, all the rest of it - if they're Level 1⁷, they're not going to be able to read that document...it's not even written in terms they could possibly understand or read...

Karl: ...trying to figure out how it works...

⁶ “DEET” the acronym is articulated as a word (d-e-e-t). In 1996, it was the name of the Department of Employment, Education and Training; a federal government department, that was renamed the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) and is now known as Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

“CES” is another acronym that was pronounced as separate letters. It refers to the Commonwealth Employment Service (a 1996 term); since renamed as Centrelink.

⁷ ‘Level 1’ refers to Level 1 of the National Reporting System.

Julie: ...and how much would you resent having to pull that out? - I mean, I would, having to go through it

Peter: the other point is if someone arrives at Rocky - TAFE or a private provider and wanting to do say Child Care – are they going to then ask for something as comprehensive as this? (VT, 1996)

I have deliberately put question marks (?) and an underline (that) in the text above to illustrate the prosody of this particular text because I have not chosen this sample for detailed linguistic analysis. The questioning is significant because the teachers use this statement-question-answer process to express their meaning. The questions are crucial to this dialogue because they are used not only by the speaker to confirm his/her beliefs to the group, but also as stimulus prompts by other group members to share their beliefs and interpretations of these documents.

Kevin, Peter, Karl and Julie argued that employers, training providers and bureaucratic officials would find these documents inordinately complex. The literacy knowledge in these documents is identified as knowledge that is neither understood by, nor accessible to, such people. Kevin supported his initial statement and extended this in his argument that adults, who as students were assessed as being at a Level 1 of the National Reporting System, would not understand the very documents that had been used to determine that this was their 'level' of 'communicative competence' in reading and/or writing and/or oral communication and/or learning strategies and/or numeracy. In support of Kevin's statement, Julie believed that adults as students

would resent having to take out such an assessment of their indicators of 'communicative competence' and present it to an employer.

These teachers expressed their concern that people in local communities may not be able or want to engage with the language used to talk about literacy; nor may they believe that such a framing of literacy is worthwhile to either learning needs, or those of their clients (in the case of employment agency staff), or those of employers. For these teachers, the tenets of adult education are breached because they believed that they could not use such a system's documents in a transparent process, in which they shared with their adult students the joint development of their curriculum.

In a continuation of this dialogue later in the same session, Kevin shared his belief that the complexities of the documents were not representative of what would really be happening when teaching. He acknowledged their symbolic value to the VET system, but did not value them himself. His argument to the group focused on the actions that could follow from having identified these complexities:

You've curriculum writers driving content that - you know - they're being incredibly prescriptive...they're never at the delivery phase and all you're actually doing is satisfying their demands and really doing whatever you want to do...it's at the interpretation phase...I'm sure they did not anticipate people to be as tricky as us - as sneaky and tricky...(Kevin, VT, 1996)

Here complexity is identified via a compare and contrast process in which Kevin establishes a binary situation with the "curriculum writers" on one side and the

“people” (presumably teachers) on the other. From there he argues that complexity is being caused by these “*curriculum writers*” who are “*driving content*” and “*being incredibly prescriptive*”. He interprets this complexity as “*satisfying their demands*”, which means the demands of those people who were the curriculum writers. On the other hand, Kevin and his colleagues were “*sneaky and tricky*” because they took control “*at the delivery phase*”, which was also “*the interpretation phase*”. Significantly, Kevin shares with his colleagues that his tactic of engagement at this delivery phase, where the prescriptive curriculum document is interpreted, is to be “*really doing whatever you want to do*”.

Kerry’s thoughts expressed in his assignment confirm that there is such a space in these relational networks of power co-ordinations. He believes that “*the training system basically leaves it up to the teachers to make it happen*” (Kerry, ALT, 2000). This statement demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of “*the training system*” that Kevin also shares. Having identified the complexities in the documents, teachers are by no means finished in their engagements with the system’s institutionalised power co-ordinations.

5.1.2 Integrating knowledge about the VET System’s Standards

The teachers’ assumptions and interpretations of VET system’s standards documents vary considerably. The variances seem to depend on the length of time in which they have worked for the VET system’s registered training organisations. This appears to be a more significant variable than the nature of their employment, whether part-time

or full-time, casual or contract or permanent employee, although there is not enough evidence to suggest that the nature of employment should be discounted altogether. On the other hand, from these data, it could not be discerned to be a significant variable influencing teachers' assumptions and interpretations of key system's standards documents that were discussed in Chapter Two: the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995); the Mayer key competencies (Mayer, 1992); the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board, 1998).

A retired school teacher such as Stephen, who was new to part-time teaching in the system, believed that *"they need a handbook to show you how to drive it"* (Stephen, VC, 2000). The *"it"* was the National Reporting System that he was reviewing as he uttered this statement to the group during a videoconference session in which teachers were examining the document, its layout and content. Stephen was engaging with this document for the first time. In contrast, trade teacher Chris, who was used to training packages and the power of 'industry' to determine what counts as knowledge, saw it as *"a very, very powerful document - gives the standards"* (Chris, VC, 2000). For a trade teacher who was taking his first foray into adult literacy teaching in 2000, Ed thought that understanding the concepts embedded in these documents meant:

getting the linkages together with all that paperwork – there's a vast quantity of paperwork to get a handle on...just getting the whole philosophy of the different - NRS, to the AQF and Mayer key competencies. (Ed, VC, 2000)

Here it is the knowledge base of the teachers themselves that Ed is identifying as an issue. He connects this knowledge to “*getting the linkages together*” and understanding the “*vast quantity of paperwork*” connected with ‘*getting the whole philosophy of the different*’ documents that determine curriculum processes in the VET system. This “*vast quantity of paperwork*” comprises not just the National Reporting System, but also the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Mayer key competencies.

At the same time, Ed is illustrating the system’s knowledges that he brings to the work of adult literacy teaching. For example, he is demonstrating his knowledge that the qualifications awarded to students undertaking adult literacy learning are determined by a nationally endorsed framework that sets out the criteria for Statements of Attainment, Certificate Levels I to IV and so on. He is also demonstrating his understanding of the role that the concept of ‘key competencies’ plays in training packages, namely that they are used to describe the ‘levels’ of literacy demands of competency based performance in workplaces. Yet he is also showing that he is aware that these levels are different from the National Reporting System levels. He lists them separately as dependent on, but at the same time, distinct from one another.

The use of acronyms, abbreviations and verbal shorthand is demonstrated clearly here, for example: “*NRS, to the AQF and Mayer key competencies*”. When similar utterances were made in group sessions with a combination of teachers ‘new’ to the system, and those ‘old hands’ such as Ed and Chris, in my role as facilitator, it was

necessary to ask those using the system's jargon to translate for those for whom it was virtually a foreign language. This request served two purposes. It initiated those new people into the 'VET-speak' as they needed to know it and it also served to make explicit to the ones already well versed in the system's language the extent to which these words and phrases could potentially exclude other people from knowledge of the system. This was important if they were to be able to make connections with the symbolic value of all such documents.

5.1.3 The system's literacy

Teachers explicitly questioned the conceptualisation of 'literacy' expressed in the system's documents. In her assignment, Denise articulated the reason for such questioning when she wrote, "*Can such a complex web of skills and meaning making and individual differences really be adequately slotted into a framework of levels and performance criteria?*" (Denise, ALT, 2000). In Denise's conceptualisation, literacy is "*a complex web of skills and meaning making and individual differences*", with which the writers of the National Reporting System and the syllabus documents would most probably agree.

However, like Kevin before her, Denise recognises the structural influences of the system with its demand for competency based education, which is translated in this instance into literacy as communicative competence. Her insights into both knowledge of literacy and knowledge of competencies are reflected in her rhetorical questioning of the adequacy of the concept of literacy being "*slotted into a framework of levels and performance criteria*".

To examine this contention more closely, I return to the first professional development course and take a text extract for detailed linguistic analysis. As he pointed to a page of the syllabus document that listed the learning outcomes, Peter (VT, 1996) asked his colleagues: *“Having done this row of items - is that going to make them really any more literate than they would be?”*

While he was pointing to a module descriptor from a syllabus, Peter signalled the end of this intonational sentence by a major rise in pitch as he asked his colleagues this question.

Stanza 1
1 having done this row of items /
2 is that going to make them /
3 really any more literate /
4 than they would be //

Lines 2, 3 and 4 are the question Peter asks as he turns to look at the other teachers in the group. In this stanza I have identified the specific discourse organisation techniques of cohesive ties of reference and ellipsis, together with the lexical relationships linking meaning throughout.

The lexical relationships are signalled through the chain of pronouns that are referring to the purpose statement and other items in the module descriptor, including the six learning outcomes:

This – row – items – that

Ellipsis is evident in Line 1, with linked pronouns in Lines 2 and 4 as shown in the referential chain below. From the discussion leading up to this statement, the students

are understood to be the subject of this intonational sentence and indicated in square brackets:

[students] – *them* – *they*

Peter is using a top-level structure comparing the literacy module's items (Line 1) with other unknown items not in a module descriptor (in Line 4). This comparison is signalled in Line 4 by the use of "*than*". He is using this comparison to structure his argument that this module's constructed conceptualisation of literacy is not necessarily the most efficacious for some people (Line 3). By Line 4, there is an implied relationship to other unknown social actions that students "*would be*" engaging in that could "*make*" them "*literate*". While he does not articulate his understanding of the concept explicitly, he does tell his colleagues that he believes that this particular syllabus conceptualisation of literacy is not the only possible conceptualisation.

Contextualisation signals are evidence of Peter's consistency of belief about the contents of the module descriptor. They are signalled in the text below in capital letters.

1 having done THIS row of items
2 is that going to make them
3 REALLY any MORE literate
4 than they WOULD BE

In Line 1, "*this*" indicated a particular row of items and was accompanied by Peter's use of his right hand and index finger to point to a module descriptor. The words on Line 3, "*really*" and "*more*", together with those on Line 4, "*would be*", were used with an emphasis in a firmer tone to his voice. By the end of the stanza, he had put the

module descriptor down and was looking at his colleagues with a slight shrug of his shoulders as he raised his voice for the question at the end of Line 4.

From the prosody, cohesive ties and overall organisation of this stanza, its thematic organisation could be summed up in an expression of Peter's belief about the usefulness of the module for achieving literacy:

- the syllabus modules are but one conceptualisation of literacy.

Peter is doing no more than confirming what was acknowledged in the National Reporting System itself. The theories, curriculum frameworks and pedagogical perspectives embedded in both the syllabus document and its intended social practices could be termed a theoretical tower of Babel as evidenced in the National Reporting System statement that it was “designed to be inclusive of the range of theories, philosophies and curriculum approaches currently in practice” (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 3). In his question, Peter is also implying that the social and educational purposes of the syllabus document may have little to do with literacy at all. He is suggesting that some people could be considered literate without having participated in a learning program developed from this document.

From this analysis of their perceptions, assumptions, interpretations, beliefs and representations of themselves and others, these teachers are found to engage with the VET system's conceptualisation of literacy by critically assessing the social value of 'literacy' as expressed in the system's frameworks and syllabus. They also identify a complexity to the concept when expressed in curriculum documents. The nature of

this engagement and their interpretations of significant system's documents differs depending on each teacher's length of time-in-field.

On the one hand, the VET system's power to determine what will be counted as 'literacy' is considerable. On the other hand, the teachers do not accept this 'literacy' as an unproblematic basis for their work practices.

5.2 WORKING WITH THE SYSTEM'S LITERACY

In this second section, I investigate the ways in which these teachers engage with the system's power to determine what counts as the work of adult literacy teaching, and integral to this, its power to determine what counts as 'literacy'. The following data will be examined for answers corresponding to this second part of Research Question One:

- values – of being a literacy teacher with adults
- beliefs – about adults as learners in general and literacy learners in particular;
- values and beliefs – about the place of the syllabus' literacy in the work of literacy teaching;
- perceptions and interpretations – of their students' words and behaviours;
- assumptions – about people's motivations to participate in literacy learning;
- representations – of adults as their students; and
- representations – of their professional concerns

For detailed analysis, I have chosen four texts taken from the following evidence tools: (i) a written assignment (Lorraine, ALT, 2000); (ii) a syllabus module

(Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999);

(iii) two interview transcripts (Eleanor, IN, 2001; Thea, IN, 2001).

The literature in Chapter Two revealed that teachers are positioned as being ethically torn between their professional allegiances to the system on the one hand and to their students on the other. When theorising the framework for this study in Chapter Three, I identified seven discourses of adult literacy teaching, each of which discursively positioned the work of adult literacy teaching in discrete ways (see *Table 3.1 Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching*). In their reading of the discourses of adult basic education teaching, Lee and Wickert (2000) argued that:

For many ABE⁸ workers, one of the consequences of this shift in the positioning of their work is a sense of being co-opted or colonised by these changes and of having to serve the requirements of funding bodies, often in apparent contradiction to the needs of students. (p. 142)

Yet such ethical dilemmas are not uncommon in the field of adult education (Usher & Bryant, 1989; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Brookfield, 1996; Mawer, 1999). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) argue that “an ethical dilemma forces choice between competing courses of action, each with its own values” (p. 372).

Specifically, the data analysis in this section focuses on the teachers’ beliefs and values-based decisions they perceive face them as professional educators working

⁸ ABE is the acronym for ‘Adult Basic Education’. In their chapter, Lee and Wickert (2000) refer to “ABE workers”, not ‘teachers’. This acronym and its description are not used in Queensland by either the system or the adult literacy community of students, tutors, teachers and administrators.

with adult learners. The analysis also documents their representations of actions they take as a consequence.

5.2.1 Adults as learners

Robyn (ALT, 2000) believed that waiting to know the people who became her students constituted a challenge for adult literacy teachers because “*understanding the adult learner is not a static activity at the beginning of an adult literacy program*”; it is “*an ever-changing, fluid component*” of adult literacy teaching. From his own experiences, Kerry supported Robyn’s view since “*you can’t size everyone up straight away – no, you – you learn all the time*” and, together with the students, “*we build on knowledges – we move out from*” there (Kerry, IN, 2000). However, not all adults want to be positioned as ‘learners’.

Knowing that not all adults participate willingly in literacy learning is important ‘entry-level’ knowledge for adult literacy teachers. During a teleconference session, a more experienced teacher in the adult literacy field, such as Terry, informed her colleagues who were mostly new to the field that:

...whether they’re there on a voluntary basis or on a conscripted basis and I think that makes a huge difference to the learning – that happens – conscripts are there because they’ve been fingered – others are there because they’re volunteers and they tend to learn much better because they can see the relevance. (Terry, ATT, 1997)

Here again, the knowledge Terry is sharing is presented as a binary which she then compares and contrasts to consolidate her meaning to herself and to the other listeners. Of all the people who come to adult literacy classes as students, there are two sorts: those who are “*volunteers*” and those who are “*conscripts*”. Volunteers are there because they want to be there, but conscripts are there because they have been “*fingered*” or distinguished as having to ‘have’ this literacy. Volunteers learn better than conscripts because volunteers want to learn and conscripts do not want to learn.

Knowing and understanding the nature of this ‘conscription’ is considered important when working as an adult literacy teacher. Conscription or “*being fingered*” could happen to people for a combination of reasons. They may be unemployed, and/or in a correctional centre; or involved in workplace reform and enterprise bargaining initiatives within their places of work. While this was a common and expected topic in oral discussions, two teachers engaged specifically with this issue in their written assignments and recounted the tensions and ethical dilemmas this knowledge brings.

Marjan believes that “*negative learners are the harder end of the bargain*” and she found that she began “*to feel negatively about them and resentful that I am allocating time to try and help them that I could be using for an enthusiastic learner*” (Marjan, ALT, 2000). Teaching is positioned as “*the bargain*” with a “*harder end*” and presumably an easier end. Marjan too uses binary opposites to make her meaning clear. At the harder end of the teaching bargain are “*negative learners*” and at the easier end is the “*enthusiastic learner*”. Articulating her feelings about this part of the

bargain that is her work was significant because here the emotional tensions and ethical dilemmas of this work are evident.

People who do not want to learn are positioned as negative learners and when Marjan has to teach such people she feels negatively about them. This negativity manifests itself as resentment that, as part of the bargain of being a teacher, she feels obligated to give her time to people who she knows do not want it. She believes it would be easier for her to give time to those enthusiastic learners who do want to be in that learning context.

Denise believes that enforced, conscripted participation reflected a “*deficit definition of the students’ whole value set*” because, “*when working with students who actively reject the world of paid work, they feel no need to learn, and have no personal goal that learning will help to achieve*” (Denise, ALT, 2000). Her insights here were the beginning of her assignment review of the mutual obligation requirements that people who are unemployed must accept if they are to receive financial benefits from the government (Harreveld, 1999).

The “*deficit definition*” that Denise believed was given to adults’ “*whole value set*” came about because, for certain groups of unemployed people, the symbolic value given to the National Reporting System and the syllabus document meant that they were labelled as literacy-deficient. They were sent for ‘assessment’ of their literacy competencies and if found deficient, then they had to undertake a program of formal learning to make up those deficiencies. Denise’s words indicate her perception that

the adults themselves have no problem with not meeting various levels and performance criteria of ‘communicative competence’ according to pre-set tasks that supposedly determine such information. She interpreted their behaviour and language to mean that they do not care about this literacy learning because it is not important to them. Such social actions are not part of their “*value set*”, but, because their value set/s are different from those embedded in such literacy indicator assessments, they are considered deficient, as not being ‘communicatively competent’.

Denise is not just concerned with the concept of literacy *per se*, but she is also concerned with the more general social activity of learning. In this text, she has constructed a referential chain of cause and effect. She concludes that these people “*have no personal goal that learning will help to achieve*”. This means that, if learning is not something that they believe they need, then they do not want it. In Denise’s reasoning, the consequence of this is that they “*actively reject the world of paid work*” because this world of paid work expects them to learn.

Knowing this seems to be accepted as part of the bargain of being a teacher. This situation is summarised through Marjan’s conclusion that “*they are the face of adult language, literacy and numeracy which...will become more and more the end user of adult literacy teachers and training organisations*” (Marjan, ALT, 2000). In other words, she is assuming that teachers will be finding more people as conscripts at the negative, harder end of the bargain than there are volunteers at the enthusiastic, easier end of the work of adult literacy teaching.

Working with adults as learners is further complicated by the teachers' beliefs that, for their students, learning is also a frustrating activity that brings with it 'emotional baggage' with which they as teachers have to deal.

Karl and Bob contributed their experiences with students who *"will not necessarily begin a program and finish a program – and then the following year, those same people who dropped out, could turn up and want to continue – not for something new, but want to pick up where they were at"* (VT, 1996).

Pip found that some of her students *"make all the right noises, but they can't follow through with the action – absenteeism for example – so they say yes they'd like to do it but they – they can't come to classes for whatever reason"* (ATT, 1997). She explained further to her group participating in the teleconference that the young men with whom she worked had:

... been the strugglers, the underachievers before they come to me with all that emotional baggage and so when they do go away to TAFE they don't know the information, they think oh damn, I was dumb at school and I'm dumb at TAFE...they've got the emotional baggage as well...

(Pip, ATT, 1997)

"Emotional baggage" carried by adult literacy students was perceived by these teachers to be a complex mix of what Kylie termed *"a fear of failure ... a confidence thing"*. This is a view which Pip reinforced when she reflected that *"you're scared of failure, aren't you...we are scared of failure as adults"* (Kylie & Pip, ATT, 1997). In

their written assignments, teleconferences and videotaped discussions, the teachers shared their experiences with their students' "*emotional baggage*" as an everyday part of their work.

Melissa reported that "*there are social and cultural difficulties that can stop adults from becoming involved in adult literacy programs*" (Melissa, ALT, 2000). Lorraine found out that one of her adult students took "*about twelve months to build up the courage to enrol*", and that "*many have bad memories of their own school days and imagine any learning environment to be similar*" (Lorraine, ALT, 2000).

As alluded to earlier, Terry also tapped a reservoir of "*emotional baggage*" when she worked on her first workplace specific literacy program. While the men came from a diverse range of ages, work histories, cultures and geographical areas, "*many indicated that their childhoods had been interspersed with poverty, itinerant lifestyles, abuse and illness (either themselves or a parent)*" (Terry, ALT, 1997). In her written assignment, she described common experiences that they brought to the learning situation with her:

Despite many differences in background etc the one common trait that all these men had, apart from working for [...], related to the fact that they did not like school...

They all indicated that they 'played up' in class and made no effort to 'fit in' with the system. Many spent their school days gardening, in isolation on school verandahs or waiting outside the principal's office... (Terry, ALT, 1997)

From the rural community that Pip was working in, “*there’s a lot of frustrations*” with teaching young people who did not like school because

...they want a job that attracts the big bucks – that’s all really – most of them are sick of school and they want to get out of years 11 and 12 – making jolly nuisances of themselves at school – it’s sort of like bulk packets of testosterone – [laughter] – certainly lots of frustrations, lots of challenges. (Pip, ATT, 1997)

Working with these changing frustrations and challenges from both young and mature age people means for Kylie that she viewed both herself and her colleagues to be “*the guider – the facilitator as a demonstrator – as the supporting role*” because “*we are still teachers and the idea of what a teacher is can encompass a lot of things – it does encompass a lot of things*” (Kylie, ATT, 1997).

What else “*a lot of things*” encompasses, other than syllabus concerns, is illustrated through a particular text. Lorraine believes that tensions exist when students’ personal social and cultural agendas have an enforced connection with those of the bureaucracy’s compliance requirements. She reported that the adults she taught:

...quite frequently experience problems with time management. Making time for work and family is important and essential, but not always easy to do when put against the demands of learning. (Lorraine, ALT, 2000)

Here she was summarising events that had been taking place in her local community where women from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds found the pressures of conflicting social roles resulted in “*problems with time management*” from the view of the registered training organisation/s with which they were enrolled for adult literacy classes.

In her assignment, she investigated these issues and concluded that:

Classes are not always scheduled at appropriate times, particularly in rural and remote areas where resources do not allow for a great deal of flexibility.

Other concerns include money/finances, confidence/fear, interest, lack of information regarding course options and childcare. (Lorraine, ALT, 2000)

Because this extract encapsulates much of this meaning expressed above, I will use the interrelated linguistic analysis to delve further into the ‘sensefulness’ of this text and its implications for representations of adults as learners.

This was originally a written text, so the punctuation marks are used as guides for preparing it for analysis. The macrostructure of this text is that of an exposition, albeit a sequentially mixed-up exposition with the thesis stated in Lines 3 and 4 of Stanza 1 and no Conclusion in this part of the extract. This macrostructure is set out with capital letters and Roman numerals, in the following Lines and Stanzas:

Stanza 1

SUPPORTING POINT I

1 *Classes are not always scheduled at appropriate times /*

II ARGUMENT

2 *particularly in rural and remote areas /*

1 THESIS (and CONCLUSION)

3 *where resources do not allow /*

4 *for a great deal of flexibility //*

Stanza 2

SUPPORTING POINT 2

5 *Other concerns /*

6 *include money/finances /*

SUPPORTING POINT 3

7 *confidence/fear /*

SUPPORTING POINT 4

8 *interest /*

SUPPORTING POINT 5

9 *lack of information regarding course options /*

SUPPORTING POINT 6

11 *and childcare //*

Lorraine's THESIS statement reflects her conclusion that is made further on in the full text of her assignment, namely that the "*resources do not allow*" (Line 3) adult literacy teachers to have "*a great deal of flexibility*" (Line 4). Her argument is contextualised to her own geographical location, which is "*particularly in rural and remote areas*" (Line 2). Here there is an assumption that it is particularly in rural and remote areas that resources do not allow a great deal of flexibility. This assumption underpins a number of concerns that Lorraine believes to have emerged from this resourcing situation.

These concerns are set out in each of the seven supporting points across Line 1 (in Stanza 1) and Lines 6 to 11 (in Stanza 2). The internal top-level structure of this text suggests that Lorraine is arguing a complex cause and effect relationship to transmit her meaning within this text.

Table 5.1: Causes and Effects of Inadequate Resources and Inflexibility

Cause	Effect
Resources are inadequate (Line 3)	In rural and remote areas in particular, there is NOT a great deal of flexibility possible (Lines 2 and 4)
Lack of flexibility due to inadequate resources in rural and remote areas (Lines 2, 3 & 4)	Classes are not scheduled at times appropriate to the students' needs (Line 1)
There are other concerns related to resources – the lack of adequate resources (in rural and remote areas) – that contribute to inflexibility (Line 5)	Students may not have the money or finances to be able to attend classes (either fees or transport or...) (Line 6) Students may not have the confidence or be fearful of attending (Line 7) They may have no interest in learning or going to classes OR Students may be interested in learning something but there are no resources to support that learning (Line 8) There is a lack of information regarding course options (Line 9) And child care is also a concern (Line 10)

To examine the feasibility of this cause and effect contention, I identify the cohesive ties within and between the stanzas in the lines below. Elliptical conjunctions are the most obvious cohesive ties that give meaning to Lorraine's exposition. The words inserted are in plain font and placed in square brackets e.g. [ellipsis]. I have also rearranged the text lines so that they follow the cause and effect structure established in *Table 5.1: Causes and Effects of Inadequate Resources and Inflexibility*.

- 2 *particularly in rural and remote areas*
- 3 *where resources do not allow*
- 4 *for a great deal of flexibility*
- [one concern is]
- 1 [that] *Classes are not always scheduled at appropriate times*
- 5 [and] *Other concerns*
- 6 *include [students'] money/finances*
- 7 [and] *confidence/fear*
- 8 [and] *interest*
- 9 [and] *lack of information regarding course options*
- 11 *and childcare*

Because this is a written text, there are few contextualisation signals other than those punctuation marks already noted. The thematic organisation of this text suggests another dimension of teachers' actions of waiting to know'.

Stanza	Theme
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers are concerned about resources• Resources determine flexibility• Resources determine class times
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers are concerned about students (their money, finances, confidence, fears, interests, access to information about course options, childcare)

Figure 5.1: Lorraine's thematic organization

In summary, this teacher and her colleagues whom I have quoted in this sub-section believe that:

- There are volunteers and conscripts in adult literacy learning
 - Conscripts are negative learners who feel no need to learn
 - Volunteers are enthusiastic learners who want to learn
- Teaching is a bargain with a harder end and an easier end
 - Adults who have no personal goal/s that learning will help achieve are at the harder end of the bargain
 - Enthusiastic learners are at the easier end of the bargain
- The literacy teaching bargain also involves:
 - Accepting adults' itinerancy as learners
 - Dealing with adults' emotional baggage
 - Working with resourcing inflexibilities.

In the following sub-section I investigate what this could mean when working in the system.

5.2.2 Balancing the students, the system and self

In this sub-section, I analyse two particular texts because they signify a recognisable distinguishing feature of the work of adult literacy teaching. In a vocational education and training system that includes workplace-specific training, traineeships and apprenticeships, it is the job that predominates, with employees or potential employees being trained (or retrained) to fit into the secondary discourses of particular jobs or communities of practice (Gee, 1996b; Wenger, 1998). In the first text, I analyse an extract from a syllabus document; and in the second text, I analyse an extract from Eleanor's interview.

Syllabus literacy

The following text is an extract from LIT213 Literacy Personal Focus Level 3, which is a module in the Certificate in Vocational Access (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 1). I have chosen the purpose statement only as the text for detailed analysis because it not only encapsulates the system's conceptualisation of literacy, but also implies expected social practices for syllabus interpretation. The module's six learning outcomes are presented as the means by which this purpose is achieved. While I have not undertaken a detailed interrelated linguistic analysis of the learning outcomes, they are used to contextualise further both this text and the teacher's text to follow.

The term 'module' refers to the modularised syllabus document for this certificate course. The contextualisation of this module has been discussed in Chapter Two, so it

has already been established that it is to be taught and assessed to an Australian Qualification Framework Level 1 and a National Reporting System Level 3, over a maximum period of sixty hours, with a stated focus on students' personal lives.

Module Purpose

The purpose of this module is to develop the learner's ability to communicate using written and spoken texts which are familiar and unfamiliar, moderate length, routine and non-routine, which have concrete and abstract context and which are related to self.

(Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 1)

For the purpose of analysis, the basic speech units will be identified using specific syntactical cues that reflect the way in which I 'say' this text in my mind. As Gee (1999) notes, this is a process of choice in which I impose my interpretation on this text. Through the choice of sentence structure and punctuation use, the writer (or writers) of this text have tried to guide me into a particular interpretation, but, as Gee (1999) points out, "they cannot completely determine it" (p. 108).

The stanzas have been identified according to each topic discussed within the sentence. There are two stanzas. In Stanza 1, the topic focuses on the development of "*the learner's ability*" which will involve the learner in communicating "*using written and spoken texts*". It tells the reader that literacy is the ability to write and speak. Stanza 2 expresses the types of spoken and written texts as its focus topic. Here the reader is also told that these types of texts must be "*related to self*" – in other words

the learner's own life. There are three major actants in the text: "*purpose*", "*the learner*" and "*texts*". The text begins with an abstract noun as its first actant, "*the purpose*" (Line 1, Stanza 1) with a verb in the passive voice, "*is to develop*" in Line 2.

Stanza 1

1 The purpose of this module /
2 is to develop the learner's ability /
3 to communicate /
4 using written and spoken texts //

Stanza 2

5 which are familiar and unfamiliar /
6 moderate length /
7 routine and non-routine /
8 which have concrete and abstract context /
9 and which are related to self //

There is an absence of authorial voice in the text. The whole module is written as a procedural genre in the third person, which is a formula followed throughout the syllabus. The author of the syllabus itself is listed as Queensland's Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (1999). This is not unusual with syllabus documents, or even policy documents; for example, the revised 1998 Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Policy has the "Department of Training and Industrial Relations" as its author.

Evidence of cohesion within the text is found in its clausal substitutions, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. Clausal substitutions are cohesive ties that bind the text within Stanza 2 and between Stanzas 1 and 2. They are signalled by the use of the relative pronoun "*which*" in Lines 5, 8 and 9. As used in Stanza 2, "*which*" stands instead of the word "*texts*" at the end of Line 4 in Stanza 1. Ellipsis is evident in Lines 6 and 7 with the words "*and which are*" omitted, but they are understood implicitly by the reader from the previous and following lines as outlined below. In Line 8, the

word “and” is implied as a conjunction linking this line’s clause with that of Line 7.

The square brackets [] indicate ellipsis, and the relative pronouns are in bold type.

Stanza 2
5 **which** are familiar and unfamiliar
6 [and **which** are] moderate length
7 [and **which** are] routine and non-routine
8 [and] **which** have concrete and abstract context
9 and **which** are related to self

Therefore, the specific characteristics of the texts to be used by “the learner” to develop the ability to communicate are represented in the lexical chain of adjectives, nouns and verb phrase below:

*Texts – written – spoken – familiar – unfamiliar – moderate length –
routine – non-routine – concrete context – abstract context – related to
self*

Of further interest is both the actual and elliptical use of the conjunction ‘and’. It is this conjunction, ‘and’, that tells the reader that the texts the learner will use to develop the ability to communicate must have all these characteristics.

The thematic organization of this purpose statement text is summarized below:

Stanza	Themes
1	• Literacy is the ability to communicate
2	• Literacy learners must communicate using texts that have specific characteristics (written and spoken, familiar and unfamiliar, moderate length, routine and non-routine, concrete and abstract contexts, related to self)

Figure 5.2: Module’s Thematic Organisation

The meaning of both stanzas in this text is yet to be situated in the actual contexts in which the module is to be used. It is a disembodied text that can achieve meaning

only within the context of this syllabus and the other documents to which it specifically refers (the National Reporting System and the Australian Qualification Framework). Its particular construction of literacy as the “*ability to communicate*” using texts with these pre-specified characteristics has meaning only if it is situated within particular adult literacy funded teaching and learning contexts that specify that this syllabus document must be used.

There is no agency or subjectivity given explicitly to the teachers because they are absent from this text. Someone or something is needed to bring this purpose into being. Because of the nominalisation of “*the purpose*”, this is not yet known. The syntax of the sentence shows that the noun phrase of Stanza 1’s Line 1 clearly positions “*the purpose*” as the nominal noun that will “*develop the learner’s ability*”. As a reader, I interpret this to be teachers who are outside the text, but who will actually “*develop the learner’s ability to communicate*”. Yet this is an interpretation of the ellipsis that reflects but one reading of the purpose statement. It may not necessarily be a teacher who is given or takes the agency to act upon bringing this purpose into being.

The teacher in the text

Detailed reading of the whole module descriptor led me to the second last of its six pages, where, under the heading of “Delivery Strategy”, it is stated that:

Delivery Strategy

This module may be offered full or part-time. A range of flexible delivery strategies may be used, for example:

- *Group facilitated by a teacher*
- *One-to-one with tutor/teacher*
- *Computer managed learning*
- *Self-paced learning*
- *Peer tutoring.* (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999, p. 5)

On the one hand, this statement would appear to reinforce teachers' autonomy to determine the "*delivery strategy*" with flexibility of mode of learning, that is "*full or part-time*" with up to five choices of "*flexible delivery strategies*". On the other hand, there are only two delivery strategies that explicitly mention a teacher and it is only one of them, the group, that has to be facilitated by a teacher. The "*one-to-one*" delivery strategy could be carried out "*with tutor/teacher*", meaning a tutor or a teacher. There is no mention of a teacher being necessary for learning that is "*computer managed*", "*self-paced*", or undertaken with a fellow learner as tutor, "*peer tutoring*". Therefore, the absence of the teacher from the purpose statement of the module becomes more problematical in this text.

In certain situations, this text could be read so as to exclude teachers from the delivery of this module either totally or in part. The very use of the term "*delivery*" removes its implementation from the realms of "*teaching*" to that of a product that is delivered. In this argument, a "*teacher*" would not be necessary. However the human resource statement discussed in Chapter Two stipulates that a teacher must be used to "*deliver*" this module.

Conversely, the text of the purpose statement, together with that of the delivery strategy, may be used by training providers for a different social purpose. In other words, it may be found that, if the resourcing funds provided for a literacy course that had to use this module were inadequate to cover the cost of a teacher's salary for the whole sixty hours of its nominal duration, then the employing registered training organisation could decide to pay for twenty hours at a teaching rate and twenty hours at a tutoring rate with the balance of hours to be self-paced learning or computer-managed learning on the part of the student or "*learner*" enrolled in the module. In this instance, there is the possibility that "*delivery*" would mean that the adult literacy teacher would both teach the tutors to teach the students, and manage all the system's administrative requirements for the recording and reporting of this teaching and learning at a temporal and/or spatial distance.

From the beginning to the end date of the resource funding for delivery of a module such as this, students would be expected to achieve all six learning outcomes from the module to be considered "competent". Yet, for all this seemingly prescriptive direction, the syllabus is silent on the issue of who actually must, should or could determine what is learned as "*literacy*" and how it is to be taught.

Making it happen

As I reported earlier about Kerry, there are spaces in this syllabus text for the teacher to "*make it happen*" with individuals and groups of adults as learners. I am now going to analyse an extract from an interview with Eleanor to investigate this claim.

I couldn't start with the syllabus document and write a program, y'know, a set program that I was going to follow, I couldn't look at it and say, ok I've got IB literacy this time, I'm going to do da-ta-da-ta-da – I mean I may have some ideas of – all right, cause I know, technology is one of the aspects, one of the learning outcomes, so you sort of have ideas in mind – well, perhaps we could look at this or do that or – – whatever – but you – you wait really until you see – – who you've got – y'know, depends on how many you've got in your room as well and that sometimes varies, but yeah it's more – who you've got – and then what ... (Eleanor, IN, 2001).

In this text extract, Eleanor expounds her argument that an adult literacy teacher does not begin with the syllabus but with the person who is presenting as an adult literacy student (Stanzas 1, 5 and 6 below). The macrostructure of this text is that of an exposition, with the thesis just stated, her argument, three supporting points and then a reformulation of her thesis. Because it is a spoken text, it does not fit neatly into the generic structure of an exposition. For example in Stanza 5, Lines 14 and 15 are actually a reformulation of the thesis; however, this is directly linked with the point being made in Lines 17 and 18, so I have left it as one stanza. The macrostructure is set out with capital letters and Roman numerals together with the Lines and Stanzas below:

I THESIS

Stanza 1

1 I couldn't start with the syllabus document and write a program /

2 y'know, a set program that I was going to follow //

II ARGUMENT

Stanza 2

3 *I couldn't look at it /*
4 *and say, ok I've got IB literacy this time /*
5 *I'm going to do da-ta-da-ta-da //*

SUPPORTING POINT 1

Stanza 3

6 *I mean I may have some ideas of /*
7 *all right, cause I know /*
8 *technology is one of the aspects /*
9 *one of the learning outcomes //*

SUPPORTING POINT 2

Stanza 4

10 *so you sort of have ideas in mind /*
11 *well, perhaps we could look at this /*
12 *or do that /*
13 *or - - whatever //*

SUPPORTING POINT 3

Stanza 5

13 *but you /*
15 *you wait really until you see /*
16 *who you've got /*
17 *y'know, depends on /*
18 *how many you've got in your room as well and that sometimes varies //*

III CONCLUSION: REFORMULATION OF THESIS

Stanza 6

19 *but yeah it's more /*
20 *who you've got /*
21 *and then what //*

In Stanza 1, Eleanor formulates her THESIS that adult literacy teachers should wait until the adults who come to them as students are known to them, then plan the learning program: “*I couldn't start with the syllabus document and write a program*” (Line 1). This meant that there was to be no “*set program that I was going to follow*” (Line 2).

Eleanor presented her ARGUMENT in Stanza 2. Even though she may have been told that she “*got IB this time*” (Line 4), there was no evidence to suggest that she prejudged the learning needs of her students according to this categorisation. Just as with Kevin at the beginning of this section's story of compliance, the significance of

this lies in Eleanor's understanding of what "*1B*" really means in this vocational education and training system's context. "*1B*" refers to a particular syllabus module descriptor that has learning outcomes derived from the National Framework of Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Competence, NFAELLNC (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994). A "*1B*" designation means that the students have been assessed to be operating at an "assisted stage", thus needing assistance in the "control and manipulation of the language resources" (Australian Committee for Training Curriculum, 1994, p. 19) being used in the module's six learning outcomes.

She also indicated knowledge of the other significant point about "*1B*", namely the influence of the levels of competence in the National Reporting System, NRS (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995). Each of the modules in the syllabus has been mapped against the five levels of competence in the National Reporting System, and, for people who have been put into a Level 1 class, Eleanor knew that this meant she was expected to engage these people in activities:

- which require comprehending and/or producing simple texts which are typically short and explicit;
- which require recognizing, using, checking on, and communicating everyday, straight forward mathematical procedures and representations;
- which relate to immediate contexts;
- with extensive and structured support required. (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995, p. 21)

Even with all this knowledge, Eleanor still argued that she “*couldn’t look at it*” (Line 3) and decide upon “*a set program*” that she “*was going to follow*” (Line 2) with her students.

Three points are presented in support of her argument. SUPPORTING POINT 1 confirms in Stanza 3 that “*I know technology is one of the aspects, one of the learning outcomes*” (Lines 7, 8 and 9). From this knowledge, Eleanor “*may have some ideas*” (Line 6). The underline of “*ideas*” indicates the stress and emphasis given to enunciating this word. She was clearly signalling that this knowledge gave her only ideas or thoughts of possible learning activities in which people may engage, but she herself had not made any decision at that stage.

In SUPPORTING POINT 2, she provides further evidence throughout Stanza 4 that these ideas connected only tenuously in her mind as possibilities. When she thinks, “*perhaps we could look at this*” (Line 11), the use of the plural pronoun “*we*” indicated that she was including her potential students in any decision-making to be made because they chose to do “*whatever*” (Line 13). In this Stanza 4, there is a confidence based upon her knowledge and understanding of the people she is likely to have as students together with the aforementioned knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the syllabus. Eleanor is not looking for a formula or a recipe to follow but is confident that she can let the learning emerge through negotiation with whoever her students may be.

The logistics of teaching within an institutionalised system are evident in SUPPORTING POINT 3, which is detailed in Stanza 5. Eleanor also knows that it is no use planning a program prior to knowing “who you’ve got” (Line 16) because the “*who*” is inextricably linked to “how many you’ve got in your room as well and that sometimes varies” (Line 18). Embedded in this statement is her knowledge and understanding that the class will go ahead only if the pre-requisite financially viable number of students, according to the particular funding guidelines, have been enrolled.

As well as variable student numbers, the room or location in which the learning is scheduled to take place is also a consideration because it will determine the physical comfort of all concerned as well as access to particular learning resources such as computers and printers, library texts or even a kitchen (see also Catherine, VT, 1996; Denise, ALT, 2000; Emily, ALT, 2000; Kevin, VT, 1996; Maggie, IN, 2001; Terry, ALT, 1997; Thea, IN, 2001). Finally, in the CONCLUSION, Eleanor reformulates her thesis that the major consideration for her in her work is first, “who you’ve got” (Line 20) as students and second, “what” is to be learned, because the “*who*” will determine the “*what*”.

Conjunctions, ellipsis and pronoun referents provide cohesion to meaning within and across stanzas. In Stanza 4, there is a sequence from the causal conjunction “*so*” (Line 10) to the additive conjunction, “*or*” (Lines 12, 13), on the following two lines. These words have been indicated in bold type below. Combined with the ellipsis in Line 13, her meaning is communicated to the listener (or reader, in this instance). I have

inserted the words understood by the ellipsis in Line 13 in plain font and within square brackets [] .

Stanza 4

10 *so you sort of have ideas in mind*

11 *well, perhaps we could look at this*

12 *or do that*

13 *or* [we could do] *whatever* [they want to do]

The adversative conjunction “*but*” (Line 15) at the beginning of Stanza 5 signals that there are indeed other considerations to be taken into account, as already discussed:

15 *but you*

This conjunction is then used again at the beginning of Stanza 6, to signal that even all the considerations implicit in Stanza 5 are still not the essence of her decision-making. Ellipsis is evident in the last line of this last stanza, and it is in plain font within square brackets.

Stanza 6

19 *but yeah it's more*

20 *who* you've got

21 *and then what* [you are going to do]

Through the pronoun referents in every stanza, Eleanor signals her engagement in this process and also her acceptance that this is part of her work as an adult literacy teacher. While there is a mixture of first and second person pronouns, “*I*” and “*you*” as well as the plural “*we*” already discussed, it is the sequencing of “*I*” and “*you*” throughout the text that confirms her position. While the “*I*” refers directly to Eleanor, the use of “*you*” co-opted other adult literacy teachers into these actions (Lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20). She makes a distinction between being told that she has been assigned a particular group to teach, “*I've got IB literacy this time*” (Line 4), and the adults who will eventually be in that group as students with her as

their teacher. Eleanor reports no control over these actions because she is hired to teach allocated groups of students.

The pronoun “*who*” (Lines 16 and 20) refers to the adults who will be enrolled as Eleanor’s students. This knowledge is crucial and it is here that Eleanor begins to shift the locus of power from the syllabus to her own interpretations of her students as people.

Contextualisation signals throughout Eleanor’s text indicate her consistency of feelings and beliefs about her job that serves to establish her persona as a speaker. In the example below, these contextualisation signals are in capital letters. In this process, I have been guided by the rate, pitch, tone and rhythm of her speech as well as the accompanying body language including eye contact and gestures at this juncture of the interview. I have deliberately included the ritualistic “*you know*” and its contraction, “*y’know*”, because this is a natural part of Eleanor’s vocabulary .

Stanza 1

1 I COULDN’t start with the syllabus document and write a program /
2 Y’KNOW, a SET program that I was going to follow //

Stanza 2

3 I COULDN’t look at it /
4 and say, ok I’ve got IB literacy this time /
5 I’m going to do da-ta-da-ta-da //

Stanza 3

6 I mean I MAY HAVE some ideas of /
7 all right, cause I know /
8 technology is one of the aspects /
9 one of the learning outcomes /
10 so you sort of have ideas in mind //

Stanza 4

11 well, PERHAPS we could look at this /
12 or do that /
13 or - - whatever //

Stanza 5

14 but you /
15 you WAIT REALLY until you see /
16 WHO you’ve got /

17 Y'KNOW, *DEPENDS* on /
 18 *how* many you've got in your room as well and that sometimes varies //
 Stanza 6
 19 but *YEAH* it's *MORE* /
 20 *WHO* you've got /
 21 and then *what* //

By Stanza 6, the contextualisation signals assist in determining that Eleanor confirmed her thesis to herself. This is a previously noted feature common to unrehearsed oral speech whereby the speaker works out what her or his position really is by the end of the text. This is signalled by the use of “*yeah*” (Line 19) – in other words, ‘yes, this is what I really do mean’. These contextualisation signals illustrate how her position is established throughout each stanza. In Stanzas 1 and 2 she stated clearly what she could not do (Lines 1 and 3). By Stanzas 3, 4 and 5 the use of the conditionals “*may have*” (Line 6), and “*perhaps*” (Line 11), together with “*wait really*” (Line 15) and “*depends*” (Line 17), indicated the contingent nature of her decision-making.

The thematic organisation of this text has used these contextualisation signals as well as the prosody, cohesive ties of ellipsis, pronoun referents and conjunctions. This is indicated on a stanza basis and summarised.

Stanza	Themes
1	• Do not start with the syllabus
2	• Do not follow a set program
3	• Do have some ideas
4	• Do keep an open mind for possibilities
5	• Do wait until you know who, how many and where
6	• Do be guided by the students themselves

Figure 5.3: Eleanor's Thematic Organisation

The message from this text's thematic organization is that there are do's and do not's of adult literacy teaching:

Do

- Have some ideas
- Keep an open mind for possibilities
- Wait until you know who, how many and where
- Be guided by who the students are themselves

Do NOT

- start with the syllabus
- follow a set program

In this text, Eleanor assumes that she can determine the extent to which her teaching will comply with the syllabus. She believes that she can begin her job with considerations of her students first, even though she is aware of the syllabus power to validate the 'learning outcomes' for the system. This is suggestive of an active, iterative, ongoing balancing process. In Eleanor's text, the decision was made, and the syllabus considerations must wait until the students' and her own interpretations have been addressed.

5.2.3 Interpreting relevance

Yet when these teachers were working with the system's literacy, I could find no substantial evidence to suggest that when engaged in this balancing process, the teachers always made the same decision. On the contrary, the decisions that were recounted in their representations of themselves and others could be traced back to their interpretations of what they believed and valued to be relevant variables to take into account. There is of course a qualitative difference in the use of the word 'relevance' because it very much depends on whether 'relevance' is being interpreted

from the point of view of the system, the students, employers and/or teachers⁹. It is this notion of ‘relevance’ and its interpretation that I analyse in this sub-section because it underpins much of the data in the ‘teaching practices’ category.

In her written assignment, Maggie recounted a lively encounter with her students that illustrates the qualitative nature of ‘relevance’ when working with literacy as conceptualised in the syllabus:

Many were amazed at the sheer number and scope of the learning outcomes. One man wailed, ‘but I just want to learn to read’. He could not perceive the connections between speaking to a group, taking telephone orders or filling in forms and reading. Another student said, ‘I want to be able to read a book’, and a third desired a series of graded reading books to assure him of his progress. (Maggie, ALT, 1996)

The notion of relevance underpins much of the competency based education curriculum framing of adult literacy provision in the sense that only what is ‘relevant’ as literacy in a particular context is supposed to be taught and learned. When taken all together the text extract from the syllabus module descriptor and these teachers’ perceptions of their students reactions the notion of ‘relevance’ when working with literacy is problematical especially when teaching at the interface of context and concept.

⁹ See also Catherine’s sample text used in Sub-section 4.2.4 Applying the data analysis strategy.

When working with literacy as a discipline teaching area, the teachers use the word ‘relevance’ and its derivatives to justify a range of decisions that are based upon professional judgements. From the data, there are a number of texts that could be chosen to illustrate this claim; however, there is one in particular that explicitly connects concept and context, arguing that it is the perceptions of relevance between the two that is fundamental to working with literacy.

Thea was a former primary school teacher, who undertook the adult literacy teaching professional development course in 1997. She was still working in the field in 2001, and in her interview she shared her evolving experience, knowledge and beliefs about the concept of ‘literacy’ and its multifaceted understandings within the contexts of adult education in the Australian vocational education and training system. I have repeated a long section of transcript from her interview to set the scene and provide the context for the detailed linguistic analysis that will follow.

...it's relevance – yeah and what skills some people are lacking – it doesn't really necessarily mean they are illiterate or innumerate y'know – of a lower social order – you get all sorts of people – you get people who just want to refresh skills they already have – you get people who for various reasons they've been working in all sorts of industries but – they really feel they can't spell very well and their grammar's poor and now they're having to write reports at work – they want to skill up...but I don't know if that general community understands if there's a huge group of people who can benefit, not just who they perceive to be – your innumerate illiterates – who we never

really see – – yeah, you don't see those people – where are those people...some people don't realise – they get to a certain point in their life where they think, oh I do need these skills now – yep, I didn't need them before, but now I think I need them...often it just comes down to a simple – just people who need a little motivation, encouragement to build their own self confidence in the skills that they have – to push those skills a bit further – where in the past they've been afraid to do that or haven't had to do that and now they do... (Thea, IN, 2001)

On the lines below, the basic speech units and stanzas (intonational sentences) are numbered and set out. I have chosen the parts of this text that present Thea's exposition of the concept of 'literacy', in particular 'adult literacy'. Again, the prosody of the text has been used to guide the decisions as to lines and stanza. Therefore, the following also sets out the thesis, argument, supporting points and reformulation of the thesis that is an expectable macrostructure for an expository text.

I THESIS

Stanza 1

I it's relevance //

II ARGUMENT

Stanza 2

2 yeah and what skills some people are lacking /

3 it doesn't really necessarily mean they are illiterate or innumerate /

4 y'know /

5 of a lower social order /

6 you get all sorts of people //

SUPPORTING POINT 1

Stanza 3

7 you get people who just want to refresh skills they already have /

8 you get people who for various reasons they've been working in all sorts of industries /

9 but they really feel they can't spell very well /
10 and their grammar's poor /
11 and now they're having to write reports at work /
12 they want to skill up //

SUPPORTING POINT 2 and repetition of ARGUMENT

Stanza 4

13 but I don't know if that general community understands /
14 if there's a huge group of people who can benefit /
15 not just who they perceive to be /
16 your innumerate illiterates /
17 who we never really see /
18 yeah, you don't see those people /
19 where are those people //

SUPPORTING POINT 3

Stanza 5

20 some people don't realise /
21 they get to a certain point in their life where they think /
22 oh I do need these skills now /
23 yep, I didn't need them before /
24 but now I think I need them //

SUPPORTING POINT 4

Stanza 6

25 often it just comes down to a simple /
26 just people who need a little motivation /
27 encouragement to build their own self confidence /
28 in the skills that they have /
29 to push those skills a bit further //

III CONCLUSION: REFORMULATION OF THESIS

Stanza 7

30 where in the past they've been afraid to do that /
31 or haven't had to do that /
32 and now they do //

The THESIS in Stanza 1 has been kept to one line because it actually refers back to the preceding text for its meaning. The pronoun “*it*” stands instead of the adjective and noun “*adult literacy*” and together with the contraction of the verb “*is*”, defines the term “*adult literacy*” in Line 1 so that:

I it's relevance = adult literacy is relevance

Thea's thesis statement is also confirming and yet extending those lines from previously analysed text in which Kevin states that "*literacy's not just understanding but applying*" and that "*the majority of it is useless unless you can apply it, unless you can use it somewhere*" (Kevin with Karl, Catherine and Bob, VT, 1996). Kerry's assignment confirmed this to be a shared belief of these teachers when he noted that "*the most important point...is for the student to see relevance in his or her own situation*" (Kerry, ALT, 2000). This evidence suggests that it is accepted that the system's syllabus will not provide this relevance, and that it is the teachers' job to build the frameworks of pedagogical bridges that will enable adults to learn within and among discourses.

Stanza 2 then sets out the ARGUMENT which is essentially that "*you get all sorts of people*" (Line 6) who need adult literacy because, as stated in Line 2, "*some people are lacking*" language skills of some sort. Crucial to Thea's argument though is her repetition of it in Stanza 4 that serves the double purpose of a second supporting point. Here she extends her initial contention of "*some people*" to a "*huge group of people who can benefit*" (Stanza 4, Line 14). These people are not really "*illiterate or innumerate*" (Line 3) or "*of a lower social order*" (Line 5). In other words, people who need adult literacy do not fit neatly into the categories of people identified as being the targeted recipients of adult literacy funding:

disadvantaged people, people with a disability, trainees and apprentices,
migrants, unemployed people, Indigenous people, workers, jobseekers,
community groups and people with special needs. (Queensland Adult
English Language Literacy and Numeracy Council, 1998, pp. 3-10)

In her argument, Thea brokered her own understanding as to the types of people who constituted her students.

To support the argument and thus prove her thesis, she presents four SUPPORTING POINTS in Stanzas 3, 4, 5 and 6 before concluding with a REFORMULATION of the THESIS in Stanza 7. Stanza 3 presents the supporting point that adult literacy means “*refreshing skills*” (Line 7) for people who “*want to skill up*” (Line 12) for “*various reasons*” (Line 8). Now these various reasons may involve improving spelling because they “*can’t spell very well*” (Line 9), or “*their grammar’s poor*” (Line 10), but this learning is relevant because these people have a reason for using these skills; for example they may have “*to write reports at work*” (Line 11).

The second SUPPORTING POINT in Stanza 4 not only reiterates the argument but also elucidates it because Thea argues that literacy learning is relevant to a “*huge group of people*” (Line 14) in the community. From her lived experiences as an adult literacy teacher over what was by the time of the interview a five year period, she identified that the “*general community*” (Line 13) does not understand about the nature and purpose of literacy. Nor does the general community understand that there is a huge group of people who could benefit from literacy. Line 19 in particular expresses her confirmed belief that there are no such people who could be termed “*innumerate illiterates*” (Line 16) in her community, because she has never seen them: “*where are those people*” (Line 19). This basic speech unit was said with a slight stress on the word “*are*” finishing with the rising inflexion, higher pitch and lighter tone of a question at the end. This was accompanied by body language of

direct eye contact with me as the interviewer, a shrug of the shoulders and a rueful laugh.

The significance of Lines 16, 17, 18 and 19 supports Gee's (1996b) contention that people are socialised into a primary D/discourse from birth, that they are 'literate' in the sense that, from this initial socialisation process, they have a sense of identity of who they are and where they belong and do not belong in society. Thea is reiterating her belief that no adult is a language-free or D/discourse-free blank slate; therefore in this reasoning, no one is actually illiterate. Therefore the '*general community*' categorisation of people who supposedly need literacy is not matched by her personal practical knowledge, beliefs and lived experiences.

In Stanza 5, SUPPORTING POINT 3 evokes a view of adult literacy's relevance to ongoing learning throughout adulthood, or lifelong learning. It could be that, when people think that they "*do need these skills now*" (Line 22), they are thinking about language skills that they had learnt years ago, thinking they would never be needed again. It may be that this learning becomes personally transformative in Mezirow's (1995, 1996) theoretical perspective on the cognitive processes and inner constructions of experience, which, while separate in theoretical terms, has still been influenced by Freire's (1970, 1973) social action oriented conscientisation theory. Or it may be as Gagnon (1992) found, that as people have experienced changes to the material conditions of their everyday lives and/or intellectual styles of explanations appropriate to those lives, they seek to transform their identities or selves in response

to these changes. Either, both or neither of these theoretical perspectives may be operating in this stanza.

To develop this analysis, I will identify the cohesive ties that link meaning both within and across stanzas. There is evidence of lexical relationships, repetition, ellipsis, consistency of two tenses and pronoun referents throughout the text. Lexical relationships are listed below and they have been set out as an equation because of the length of this text. The line references to specific stanzas are in brackets.

It = adult literacy
= *skills* (Lines 2, 7, 22, 27 and 29)
= *spell* (Line 9)
= *grammar* (Line 10)
= *skill up* (Line 12)
= *motivation* (Line 26)
= *self-confidence* (Line 27)

Thea believes that literacy for adults is about having the motivation to build self-confidence in using language skills such as spelling and grammar. This motivation comes about because of an identified need for these language skills on the part of the learner or student. She uses a combination of repetition and ellipsis to make this point.

In Stanzas 5 and 7 these cohesive ties have been used to consolidate this meaning. The ellipsis words have been put in square brackets [] and in plain print. The key word in each ellipsis is the verb ‘*need*’ (Line 32). Repetition of the verb “*need*” (Lines 22, 23, 24), demonstrated the relevance and direct application of this language learning for an adult student.

22 oh I do need these skills now
 23 yep, I didn't need them before
 24 but now I think I need them

31 or haven't had to do that
 32 and now they do [need to use those language skills]

The relevance of use or application of these language skills is also signalled in Line 32, whereby they “haven’t had to do that”; for whatever reasons, people have not had to use some of these skills. Therefore there is a compare and contrast, cause and effect set up in the top-level structuring of Stanzas 3, 5 and 7 which was signalled by a consistency of two tenses (past and present) in verbs and phrases throughout. Thea used an interplay between past and present tense to trigger the shifts in her comparison between people’s lives then (before these skills were needed) and now (when they are needed). The table below illustrates this with Line references in brackets.

Table 5.2: Past and Present Tense Verb Phrases

Past tense	Present tense
<i>they've been working</i> (Line 8) i.e. have been working <i>did not need</i> (Line 23)	<i>are lacking</i> (Line 2) <i>get</i> (Line 6, 7, 8 and 21) see <i>get all sorts of people</i> (L 6); <i>get people</i> (L7 & 8); <i>get to a certain point in their life</i> (L21) <i>want to refresh skills they already have</i> (Line 7) <i>can't spell very well</i> (Line 9) i.e. cannot spell very well <i>grammar's poor</i> (Line 10) i.e. grammar is poor <i>are having to write</i> (Line 11) <i>think</i> (Line 21 and 24) <i>do need</i> (Line 22) <i>need</i> (Line 24) <i>do</i> (Line 32)
<i>in the past</i> (Line 30) <i>haven't had to do that</i> (Line 31) i.e. have not had to do that	

This referential chain concentrates meaning from the previous lexical chain that included “*spell – grammar – skill up – motivation – self-confidence*” (Lines 9, 10, 12,

26 and 27) as referents for literacy. It is significant because it encapsulates the discipline specific knowledge, skills and understandings that people expect adult literacy teachers to have about the ways in which the English language is used in different contexts. The teachers themselves expect that they will have this knowledge, as do their employers, their students and the general communities in which they live and work. This is another aspect of the uniqueness of adult literacy teaching referred to by Maggie (IN, 2001). However, it is simply not possible for a teacher to be a member of every discourse or set of social practices within a community (Wenger, 1998; Gee, 1999).

As Catherine's (VT, 1996) text analysis found, particular social purposes of language use are meaningful only if determined by the adult learner. From Thea's text here, it can be seen that sometimes people's language skills are not really the issue. The issue is sometimes the tensions between their voluntary or enforced acquisition of a new secondary discourse encapsulated in a particular identity kit and the feelings, assumptions, values and beliefs from other discourses of which they are members.

When the acquisition of this new discourse and the learning of its language skills are located within an institutionalised system, it is also the teachers' job to know when and how to encourage adult learners, to give them "*a little motivation, encouragement to build their own self-confidence*" (Lines 26 and 27).

People – they – I – their
(Lines 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32)

The use of “*I*” in this chain is used when Thea talks as if she was a potential adult literacy student thinking out loud in Lines 22, 23 and 24.

You – I – we
(Lines 6, 7, 8, 13, 17, 18)

In this referential chain, Thea is referring to adult literacy teachers: “*you*” and “*we*” means she and her colleagues; “*I*” refers to herself.

General community – they
(Lines 13, 15)

Innumerate illiterates – people – people
(Lines 16, 18, 19)

In these last two referential chains, the argument is reiterated in Stanza 4 that it is people in the “*general community*” who construct people within that community as “*innumerate illiterates*”. This sets the scene for Thea’s refutation of this perception in Stanzas 5, 6 and 7.

Thea refuted the idea that literacy is indicative of the existence of its binary opposite, “*innumerate illiterates*” (Line 16), who are “*of a lower social order*” (Line 5, Stanza 2). “*Where are those people*” she asked rhetorically in Line 19. She believed that there was no literacy crisis within the adult population of her community other than one constructed in social, economic or cultural terms (Castleton, 2000; Gee, 1996b, 1999; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997; Hodgens, 1994; Searle, 1999b). In arguing that literacy is “*relevance*” (Line 1), she is in agreement with Gee (1996b) that “literacy has no effects – indeed, no meaning – apart from particular cultural contexts in which it is used, and it has different effects in different contexts” (p. 59). Because Thea does use the words “*skills*” and “*skill up*” when arguing her position on the concept of

adult literacy, without specific attention to Stanzas 2 and 4, her particularity of meaning may not have been communicated to a reader or listener.

From this discussion, the thematic organisation of this text is summarised in the figure below.

Stanza	Theme
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy is relevance
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All sorts of people lack some language skills
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult literacy is a process of refreshing old skills or learning new ones
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The general community does not understand literacy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People do not realize that the need for these skills changes over time
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation and self-confidence can extend existing skills
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a need to use these language skills

Figure 5.4 : Thea's Thematic Organisation

Thea positions literacy for adults as a process that engages people in seeking relevance between the contexts in which they have to use literacy and their understanding of the concept. She identifies dissonances between the community's conceptualisation of literacy and societal changes that required the reconfiguration of current secondary discourses of community involvement or work; or the co-ordination of new secondary discourses of work or community identity. Furthermore, she believes that literacy involves identifying a need to change, together with the motivation and self-confidence to engage in language learning that will facilitate that change.

In a pedagogical sense, she is positioning herself at the cultural borders of a range of secondary discourses, with a professional identity that is dependent on her abilities to scaffold people's learning of discourses that are new, or in need of "*refreshing*". It is not acquisition of the secondary discourses that this adult literacy teacher aspires to; rather it is the conscious knowledge gained through teaching some aspects of language that both teacher and students believe is needed to negotiate further learning and (perhaps) acquisition with potential mastery of particular secondary discourses.

5.3 SUMMARY

In undertaking this analysis of data that address the first research question, I have used a combination of synthesising narratives from two data categories plus a detailed interrelated linguistic systems analysis (Gee, 1996b, 1999) of four texts from those same data categories. In this summary I will present an initial interpretation of the findings from this chapter's data analysis.

When engaging with the institutionalised co-ordinations of power of the VET system, as manifested through what counts as 'literacy' and the nature of working with that literacy as a teacher within the system, these teachers:

- identified complexities for all users of the system's curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents dealing with 'literacy';

- made connections between the system's notion of 'literacy' as 'communicative competence' and other notions of competency supporting the system's framing of competency based education;
- questioned this system's 'literacy' and settled on it to be but only one conceptualisation of the notion of 'literacy'.
- waited to know their students, in particular to know them as learners;
- traded off the system's demands of what should be considered communicatively competent outcomes against what they knew about the adults-as-learners with whom they work;
- decided that, while literacy has something to do with language, self-confidence and motivation, this is all relevant to, and framed by, the contexts in which it will be used.

The VET system's constructions of literacy within competency based education for adults were found to be both complex and contentious to implement. Significantly, these teachers questioned the relevance of these complexities for adults' learning. The teachers also indicated their unease with the contentiousness that these complexities brought to adults' teacher–learner relationships. They responded to the coercive effects of the system's institutionalised power co-ordinations with what I suggest are their own 'tactics of engagement' [with the system].

De Certeau's (1984) understanding of tactics supports this interpretation because 'tactics' are able to be seized "on the wing" and manipulated, albeit for only transient times (pp. xix-xx). 'Tactics of engagement' are moments in time during which these

teachers seize the opportunities, capitalise on advantages and secure (however tentatively and temporarily) their independence with respect to their circumstances as consumers of institutionally produced co-ordinations of power. This term, ‘tactics of engagement’, depicts these transitory, even opportunistic meetings between people—as-consumers and institutionalised power co-ordinations through a system.

In their ‘Opening’ (or introduction) to Educational research undone, Stronach and McLure (1997) use the term ‘engagement’ to depict their examinations of postmodernism, poststructuralism and deconstructionism. They concluded that “engagement” means “to take part, without knowing in advance how things will turn out, or what have been the terms on which the engagement has been struck, or even who stands on what ground” (Stronach & McLure, 1997, p. 11). I find that their thinking on this matter is complemented with de Certeau’s (1984) notion of “tactic” because both terms embody the complex contingencies identified in this analysis of the work of adult literacy teaching in this context.

This cohort of teachers constitutes a particular group of consumers who are positioned at the furthest reaches of the system’s power, in the discursive spaces where power becomes capillary and where its co-ordinations can be resisted, dissembled, disrupted and/or dislocated (Foucault, 1980, 1984, 1991). They deploy these ‘tactics of engagement’ when they wish to ‘broker’ the system’s “institutionalised practices that have a primacy over forms of knowledge” (Foucault, cited in Macdonell, 1986, p. 90). I use this term, ‘broker’, advisedly because it builds upon earlier understandings of the term ‘cultural brokerage’ (Lankshear, 1996)

discussed in Chapter Three. From their own value-laden positions, these teachers questioned, negotiated, balanced and traded their perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and interpretations of the system's imperatives against their interpretations and representations of their students and their own professional senses of self. I therefore proceed to an investigation of the second research question that focuses on identity.

CHAPTER SIX: CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter investigated the institutionalised power co-ordinations of the Australian vocational education and training system and the ways in which the twenty-three members of this cohort of adult literacy teachers engaged with those power co-ordinations. Initial interpretations from that data analysis revealed that the teachers engage tactically at the extremities where its power becomes capillary and where teachers are positioned as consumers of the system's discourses.

In this chapter I address the second research question:

What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

In my response, I draw upon the theoretical framework built in Chapter Three and the research methodology and data analysis strategy established in Chapter Four. I also use data in the manner described and demonstrated in Chapter Five. Data to address this research question have come from the third data category that I had called 'Teachers' Roles'¹

¹ See Sub-section 4.2.3 The Data Analysis Strategy and in particular, *Table 4.6: Relationship between data categories and research questions*.

I will now clarify the relationship between this data category, the research question and the specific evidence tools from which text is extracted and used in this second data analysis chapter².

Research Question 2

What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

Data Category: Teachers' Roles

- Syllabus document (1995)
- Videotaped sessions (VT, 1996)
- Interviews (IN, 2001)
- Adult Literacy Teaching Assignments (ALT, 1996; ALT, 2000)
- Audio-Taped Teleconferences (ATT, 1997)
- Videoconferences (VC, 2000)

The data in this category is in the form of a syllabus extract and teachers' assignments (written data), transcripts of interviews (spoken data), and transcripts of videotaped sessions, audiotaped teleconferences and videoconferences (observed data). What count as data are expressions of values, assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, interpretations, representations of others and representations of self.

The task of building the connections within a discourse of adult literacy teaching is continued in this chapter as the discursive relationships established in the previous data analysis chapter are developed. Here again I am using the term 'discursive dissonances' to explain a lack of consistency and even an incompatibility between ideologies and beliefs about the concept of 'literacy' itself and consequent actions of adult literacy teaching. Therefore the word 'discursive' signals the analytical process

² See sub-section 4.2.3 The data analysis strategy; in particular, *Table 4.4: Techniques and Tools of Field Approaches to Literacy Research* (source: Knobel & Lankshear, 1999, pp. 92-93).

by which this conclusion has been reached. The word ‘dissonance’ signals the inconsistencies and incompatibilities that have been identified between teachers’ actions and beliefs on the one hand and those of the institutionalised vocational education and training system on the other.

Therefore in this chapter I will be concerned with the discursive dissonances occurring among the opposing ideologies of the system (as expressed in the syllabus), the teachers themselves and their students (as expressed by the teachers). I will analyse what appear by now to be contingent identities of these teachers constructed through their lived experiences working in regional, rural and remote communities in Central Queensland.

In sequence, the first section is an analysis of the descending institutionalised power of the system’s discourses as they are produced and made known through documents. Here again, the syllabus documents are my official texts of choice because the teachers must work with them on a daily basis and their teaching practices must be seen to be overtly compliant with the intent of such text. I provide a detailed analysis of a module extract (TAFE Queensland, 1995) and compare that with a module from a later syllabus that was also used in the previous chapter (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1999).

In the second section I analyse in detail two texts that exemplify how teachers construct meaning from discursive dissonances that occur among opposing ideologies (Catherine, VT, 1996; Maggie, IN, 2001).

In the third section, I investigate identity constructions at the interface between literacy concepts and the contexts in which meanings are constructed. Having said what they are 'for', they now tell of what they are against at the level of the local and the particular in their relationships with their students (Cory, Ed & Kerry, 2000; Denise, ALT, 2000; Kevin, ALT, 1996; Peter, ALT, 1996; Pip, ATT, 1997; Sandra, ALT, 2000; Thea, IN, 2001). In the final part of this third section, I set out and analyse one teacher's positioning of students, teachers, theorists and the system's bureaucrats (Julie, ALT, 1996). Like those before it in this section, this text depicts values-based perceptions and interpretations of the nature of institutionalised power co-ordinations and it includes representations of self and others in its identity constructions.

Each of these chapter sections contributes to addressing the second research question. Initially, I identify the policy induced syllabus changes because it is here that the changing knowledge base of the concept of literacy is to be found. Subsequent sections investigate the teachers' interpretations of the consequences of this change for their identity as adult literacy teachers.

6.1 THE SYSTEM'S SYLLABUS

In this thesis so far, the Australian VET system has been found to evince a commitment to policies that were ostensibly established to produce human capital for industries operating in a global economy. These policies were implemented via

particular funding procedures, competency based curriculum frameworks and the system's compliance standards. This contention was initially investigated in Chapter Two which situated this study within its social, economic, political and historical contexts. In Chapter Three's *Table 3.1: Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching*, the discursive positioning of the work of adult literacy teaching was synthesised within these contexts, with two discourses of particular relevance to the issue of teacher identity: social justice and economic rationalism.

The existence of these competing discourses is of direct significance to this chapter's analysis of discourses of teacher identity. The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research's (Watson, Nicholson & Sharpin, 2001) review of literacy and numeracy research within vocational education and training has identified two "diametrically opposed constructs", namely a "functional-economic discourse and a social practice discourse" (p. 1). In the context of this study's data analysis that builds upon previous chapters, a 'functional-economic discourse' is understood to be a combination of 'corporate federalism' and 'economic rationalism' (Bartlett, Knight & Lingard, 1991; Lee & Wickert, 2000; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). By contrast, a 'social practice discourse' with its understandings of literacy as socially constructed within communities of practice sits within discursive framings of both 'situated social practice' and 'social justice' (Australian Council for Adult Literacy, 1989; Lee & Wickert, 2000; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Sidoti, 2001; Street, 1984; Wenger, 1998; Wagner & Venetzky, 2000).

With specific reference to this study, note was made of Queensland's first official syllabus document for adult language, literacy and numeracy that was known as the CNL03 Certificate in Prevocational Access (TAFE Queensland, 1995). It was this document that had just been introduced by the time this study commenced in 1996. By 1999, the syllabus was rewritten as a nested award course with explicit mapping against the levels of the National Reporting System (Coates, Fitzpatrick, McKenna & Makin, 1995). In my search for the system's discursive positioning of adult literacy teacher identity, two modules will be examined in detail.

In the 1995 syllabus, there was a heading in every module descriptor that referred specifically to an idea of 'Social Justice'. To illustrate this, I will use a module called LIT124 Literacy and Language Vocational Focus – Level 3A (TAFE Queensland, 1995, pp. 255-267):

Social Justice

Principles of social justice must be appropriately addressed in all aspects of this module's implementation.

In rare cases workplace health and safety legislation may impinge on social justice considerations. (TAFE Queensland, 1995, p. 256)

This is a written text, so I could not identify the basic speech units in this factual text from the prosody. Instead, the sentence markers themselves have been used to guide me to the basic speech units.

Stanza 1

1 Principles /

2 of social justice /

3 must be appropriately addressed /

4 in all aspects /
5 of this module's implementation //
Stanza 2
6 In rare cases /
7 workplace health and safety legislation /
8 may impinge /
9 on social justice considerations //

There are two major actants in the text, both of which are non-human: “*principles*” and “*legislation*”. Stanza 1 tells the reader what has to be done in relation to the “*principles of social justice*” when teaching this module. In Stanza 2, the reader is told that, “*in rare cases*”, legislation pertaining to workplace health and safety may be allowed to override “*social justice considerations*” or “*principles*”. In other words, teachers of this module have to know and use these principles of social justice, though in some rare cases they can forget about them if it means that someone may be hurt or even put in an unsafe situation.

There is a lexical relationship that links Stanzas 1 and 2 which is signalled by reiteration of the words ‘*social justice*’ (Lines 2 and 9):

Principles of social justice – social justice considerations

In Stanza 1, teachers are told that something called the “*principles of social justice*” must be “*appropriately addressed*”. By the end of Stanza 2, these “*principles*” were written as “*considerations*”. The text begins and ends with its topic. However, absent from the text is a statement explaining what these “*social justice principles*” or “*social justice considerations*” are understood to be within this document.

The verbs and adverbs of Line 3 signal that teachers are accountable for using these principles or considerations:

3 must be appropriately addressed

The imperative verb “*must be...addressed*” tells readers that there is no choice when it comes to teaching this module. This transitive verb dictates that these principles must be addressed “*appropriately*”. The text is silent as to what constitutes an appropriate or suitable means of doing this task. Therefore the silence in the text provides a discursive space for a contested choreography of meaning among or even within discourses.

In the absence of any elucidation to the contrary, teachers could colonise this space with their own social justice discourse. Here there are two areas in which teachers can claim the autonomy to determine what constitutes an appropriate means of addressing these principles: their interpretations of “*social justice*”, and their interpretations of “*appropriately*”.

There is another aspect of this claim to the silent discursive space of social justice that is signaled by the conditional transitive verb “*may impinge*” in Line 8. If teachers consider that, by appropriately addressing these principles, they are at the same time contravening the legislation regarding health and safety, then the text suggests that they would presumably act so as to ensure that their adherence to social justice principles is reconsidered. The absence of another sentence here in Stanza 2 is quite important because there is no clear directive as to what must be done if choices made as a consequence of Stanza 1’s statement are found to “*impinge on social justice considerations*”.

There is an implicit threat here. The writers of the syllabus document have protected the copyright holders of the document (TAFE Queensland) in the eventuality that teachers may contravene this legislation. So the teachers who implement or put this module into effect are accountable for knowing the implications of this legislation for their teaching.

I will now search for contextualisation signals that indicate the context/s in which the text would make sense for the reader and in which the persona of the writer could be constructed. Here I am looking for words of feeling and/or belief that reach out to me as a reader, and seek to co-opt me into understanding the author's understanding of the topic "*Social Justice*". I cannot find any. There is an absence of the writer's or writers' 'voice' in the text.

I turn now to identifying the thematic organization of the text. 'Who' or 'what' must address these social justice principles is not identified.

Stanza	Themes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability: Someone or something is accountable for ensuring that the principles of social justice underpin the delivery of Language and Literacy (LIT124, Vocational Focus – Level 3A)• Autonomy: Someone or something has the autonomy to determine what the principles of social justice are to be and how to use them in language and literacy teaching and learning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability: Someone or something is accountable or responsible for knowing workplace health and safety legislation and its potential impact on language and literacy teaching and learning• Autonomy: Someone or something can decide to what extent this legislations may affect social justice considerations, and by implication the extent to which this has to be considered in relation to social justice.

Figure 6.1: Thematic Organisation of Social Justice

From a detailed search of the 1999 syllabus, I have concluded that there is no explicit reference to or heading for the term 'Social Justice'. Therefore, over the period from 1995 to 1999, the concept of 'social justice' had disappeared from the main syllabus document used by these teachers.

The discourse organisation and themes of this text from a syllabus module descriptor have been synthesised and summarised below.

Adult Literacy:

had something to do with the principles of social justice up until
1999

Adult literacy teaching:

gives teachers autonomy to determine what social justice is,
while at the same time making them accountable for its use.

The significance of this finding is found in the discursive positioning of the work of adult literacy teaching identified in Chapter Three. While the official syllabus text from 1995 uses the words 'social justice', it does not use the words *of* social justice such as human rights, relational reciprocity, emancipation, humanism, individualism, liberal progressivism and adultism that were identified as discursive descriptors of the concept of 'social justice' (see *Table 3.1: Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching*). Given the social, historical and political context in which the 1995 modules were written for that first syllabus, the inclusion of 'social justice' may have been a bureaucratic solution to the policy imperatives of the first Queensland Adult English

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Policy (Queensland Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, 1994). By the time that the 1999 syllabus was written, notions of ‘access and equity’ had replaced ‘social justice’ in official government policy as exemplified in the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Policy’s revised rationale:

The QAELLN Policy is designed to maximize access, participation and outcomes in the vocational education and training system by providing access to English language, literacy and numeracy provision for potential and existing participants. (Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations, 1998, p. 3)

This policy text firmly locates “*English language, literacy and numeracy provision*” within the vocational education and training system. Furthermore, it reduces that provision to a single purpose, namely to provide ‘*access, participation and outcomes*’ for the system’s “*potential and existing participants*”. Literacy funded from the public purse is to be provided to people who are either already participating in some form of vocational education and training, or who have the potential to become participants in vocational education and training.

However, these ideologically based discursive changes were occurring at the policy and syllabus levels far removed from these adult literacy teachers’ everyday lives. It is to these lives that I now return as I seek to find out the values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and experientially informed knowledges that brought about identity constructions within their adult literacy teaching discourse.

6.2 DISSONANT DISCOURSES OF IDENTITY

In this second section, teachers articulate their regimes of truth through which they suture temporary attachments to the subject positions that have been constructed for them by the discursive practices of the VET system. The pattern established in the previous chapter will continue with a synthesising narrative that links the dialogic encounters of the professional development sessions. These dialogic encounters (or self-narratisation or storying) constituted an iterative process in which the teachers used language to give themselves the authority to speak, think and recognise one another as particular types of teachers engaged in a particular type of work activity, namely adult literacy teaching (Wenger, 1998; Gee, 1999). It was a significant discursive feature of their individual and group ideological positionings, not only in relation to other teachers whom they were meeting for the first time, but also with the teachers whom they had known for years in their local communities.

When collating and categorising data, I found that, while a number of teachers used the actual names of the dissonant discourses identified and analysed in the previous section, only two mounted clearly articulated arguments for and against the discourses of social justice and economic rationalism. These two texts represent ‘the other’ (Hall, 1996) as an ‘exterior distinct’ (de Certeau, 1984) in strategic constructions of identity. From the total body of data from teachers’ interviews and discussions, I selected data that most efficiently served my purpose, which was to focus explicitly on the dissonant discourses that were identified in the field of adult literacy teaching over the six year period of the study.

My two key informants here are Catherine and Maggie. I am aware that their words have already been used in the previous chapter, and that it could be perceived that there is an over-reliance on their particular storying. However, I justify this because of their representative positions in the Central Queensland adult literacy teaching community throughout the period of this research study. To begin this section, I present two pen pictures³ of these teachers as they worked in this field of adult literacy teaching.

Catherine knew the history of adult literacy provision in her community and its embryonic movement into the VET system in Central Queensland. Apart from Gail Chudleigh from Emerald and the Central Highlands, who had already retired by the time of this research study, there was no teacher in the research participant group who had the lived experiences of the pre-syllabus, pre-VET-system era when adult literacy teaching was firmly positioned within the informal adult community and continuing education sector in Queensland. When I first met Catherine in 1988, she recounted the establishment of an adult literacy group in her small community during the early and mid-1980s. She began on her own. Here she was, an ex-primary school teacher, working as a volunteer combined co-ordinator–teacher–tutor who taught adults around her dining room/kitchen table as her four (then) young children played underfoot. She related how, during the later years of that decade, literacy funds started to become available through the (then) TAFE College network. Eventually, as

³ 'Pen pictures' is another term for biographical sketches that facilitate the examination of subjective processes experienced by people who have been influenced by changes in their physical, historical, social, cultural and geographical environments. My colleagues and I used this term in our investigation into the lived experiences of people living in regional, rural and remote communities in Central Queensland who choose to change their careers and become teachers in schools, colleges or industry settings (Harreveld, Danaher & Kenny, 2002).

the funding increased with the International Literacy Year in 1990, Catherine progressed to holding scheduled classes in a local church hall and training volunteer tutors to work with the increasing numbers of adults who were presenting as students.

Part-time, contracted work as a literacy teacher was the only professional option available to her as the years went by because she was told that there were never enough students in her local community to justify the system's expenditure on a full-time permanent teacher. She continued to train tutors for a local non-government organisation that could receive funds for the community literacy program, and some of her 'old' students still came to her as their teacher. But with four growing children, a husband with insecure employment prospects and a mortgage, she wanted a more reliable income. So she decided to go back to full-time school teaching. At the time of her participation in the first professional development course of this research study, she had made that decision and taken up a learning support and English teaching position at a high school in her local community.

Maggie began tutoring with a local registered training organisation in her Central Queensland community in a part-time casual capacity in 1996. She participated in the first professional development course and was still working in the area up to the time of her interview with me in 2001. She told me that she participated in the course because the fees were paid by the organisation and she needed the piece of paper from the Adult Literacy Teaching professional development course to bolster her case for appointment from the tutoring to the teaching pay scale. In the late 1990s, she secured full-time employment as an adult literacy teacher with the same registered training

organisation. However, teaching was not Maggie's first career. Throughout the course, she regaled the group with her work experiences prior to immigration to Australia. Her colleagues were most fascinated with the stories of working in chemistry laboratories in her country of origin as well as her subsequent teacher training and work as a teacher in big inner-city primary schools.

Maggie entered the world of adult literacy teaching at a time when it was changing irrevocably and she lived through the continuance of change as it was enmeshed further within the structures of the VET system's bureaucracy. In her interview text which is used in this section's interrelated linguistic analysis, she prophesied ongoing change.

6.2.1 Discourses of social justice and economic rationalism: Catherine the historian

Catherine's beliefs about the distribution of social goods in society were articulated through what she termed a commitment to "*social justice*". She contrasted this with "*economic rationalism*", which she believed operated in opposition to her belief in "*social justice*". Maggie concurred with Catherine's statements when she was a member of this same professional development group in 1996. During her later 2001 interview, she expressed the belief that the ideas, beliefs and practices of economic rationalism were pre-eminent in the operations of the VET system in general and the adult literacy field in particular.

This extract is from the transcript of a videotaped Friday afternoon session in which Catherine told five of her colleagues why she believed they were noticing changes in their work.

...the push began thirty years ago and where that push came from was all the social justice coming out of all – feminism and all of those types of – rights types issues, so adult literacy was part of that social justice thing that the change's so great from that – because economic rationalism's come in – so we're still – we've probably all come out of that social justice type background too – that's why we're here and yet economic rationalism's come now and those two are just pushing like this – the students – you know what's happening in the courses has changed so much – let's -- used to be that community type – look after these people and match their lives – now, try and match those lives to this reality of this world... (Catherine, VT, 1996)

During the professional development courses, these teachers used exposition and narrative as their favoured language structures for achieving their goals in group discussions. The basic generic structure of a narrative is outlined in the text below and, while it does not include a coda or basic speech unit as a closure, it does follow the structural pattern of setting, catalyst, crisis, evaluation and resolution common to narratives (Martin, 1985; Emmitt & Pollock, 1997; Gee, 1999). I have already noted that oral language is messy in the sense that speakers work out their meaning as the words are uttered. For this reason, it is not unusual to find a messy sequence to a generic structure in oral language, as in this text where the setting is continued in

Of the six stanzas, identifying a unifying single minimal topic for Stanza 2 has been the most problematical because it is here that Catherine brings in the thread of thought that she used to develop her ideas in Stanzas 3, 4, 5 and 6. So Stanza 2 functions as a 'cause-effect pivot' where she switches her utterances to introduce what she perceived to be the cause of changes to the fundamental reason for the work of adult literacy teaching. The macrostructure of the text is evident here because this cause-effect pivot functions as the catalyst in her narrative.

Stanza 1

1 the push began thirty years ago /
2 and where that push came from /
3 was all the social justice coming out of all /
4 feminism and all of those types of /
5 rights types issues //

Stanza 2

6 so adult literacy was part of that social justice thing that the change's so great from
that /
7 because economic rationalism's come in //

Stanza 3

8 so we're still /
9 we've probably all come out of that social justice type background too /
10 that's why we're here //

Stanza 4

11 and yet economic rationalism's come now /
12 and those two are just pushing like this /
13 the students //

IV EVALUATION
Stanza 5

14 you know what's happening in the courses has changed so much /
15 let's /
16 used to be that community type /
17 look after these people and match their lives //

V RESOLUTION
Stanza 6

18 now /
19 try and match those lives to this reality of this world //

Stanzas 1 and 3 identify a “*social justice*” (Lines 3 and 6) discourse as the basis of “*all of those types of rights types issues*” (Lines 4 and 5). Here in Catherine’s text the idea of rights is given a name – “*social justice*”. What had existed “*thirty years ago*” were “*feminism*” (Line 4) and all those “*rights type issues*” (Line 5). The concept of social justice in Lines 3, 6 and 9 that came out of this human rights push was one with which Catherine believed all the teachers in the group identified.

In an address to an Adult Council of Adult Literacy Forum on Literacy and Lifelong Learning, the former Human Rights Commissioner, Chris Sidoti (2001) established from the precepts of international human rights laws⁴ that the concept of social justice was part of people’s economic, social and cultural rights within free societies. In explanation of his definition, he turned to the words of Mick Dodson, a former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, who said that:

⁴ Sidoti (2001, pp. 5-9) was referring to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* of 1966; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights *General Comment 13, The right to education* United Nations Document E/C.12/1999/10 paragraph 1 (Retrieved 5 May 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au>).

social justice is what faces you in the morning...it is the prospect of genuine employment and good health, a life of choices and opportunity, free from discrimination. (Dodson cited in Sidoti, 2001, p. 6)

Sidoti argued that the right to education was fundamental to the achievement of social justice. In this speech though, it was not his purpose to address the community based, social practices of teaching and learning by which social justice could be achieved.

Yet it is precisely those social practices that were of interest to the adult literacy teachers who participated in this study. Catherine's linking of the concept of literacy with a social justice discourse is reflected in the argument that literacy is a socially constructed and contested concept that is embedded within its changing communities of practice (Casteleton, 2000; Gee, 1996, 2001; Lankshear, 1997, 1998; Searle, 1999b).

Having named the discourse that formed the ideological basis for her work in Stanza 2, Catherine identified a catalyst for change in the basis of adult literacy teachers' work which was because "*economic rationalism's come in*" (Line 7). By Stanza 4 she wanted to leave her listeners in no doubt that the catalyst for change had become a crisis not only for teachers, but also for students (Line 13), because they too were pushed from either side by two competing discourses (Line 12). This common background was then used to build the compare and contrast strategy used in the crisis in Stanza 4. Functioning as the historian of the group, Catherine explained why teachers were feeling disenfranchised by the changes that had been brought in with

the evolutionary formation of an Australian national vocational education and training system.

These changes were evaluated in Stanza 5. The work of adult literacy teaching “*used to be that community type*” (Line 16) provision which meant that teachers looked after people and taught what the people themselves wanted to learn about language so as to “*match their lives*” (Line 17) in their particular communities of social practice in which the language would be used. Throughout this text, Catherine co-opted her colleagues into a shared Freirian (1970, 1973; Freire & Macedo, 1987) allegiance to beginning education from within the socio-political contexts of people’s lives. The work of adult literacy teaching as described here suggests teachers’ commitment to a transformation of the structures of power from within society so that people who “have always been ‘inside’ – inside the structure which made them ‘beings for others’ ...can become ‘beings for themselves’” (Freire, 1970, p. 61). This was the “*community type*” work that was no longer valued.

In the resolution in Stanza 6, she reinforced her perception that the work of literacy teaching was no longer based upon a consciousness that in critical theorist Welton’s (1995) terms aimed to “help people to stop being passive victims who collude, at least partly, in their domination by external forces” (p. 37). Catherine believed that adult literacy teaching was “*now*” (Line 18) about looking at “*this reality of this world*” (Line 19) and then making people’s lives match this world. In other words, she believed that the philosophical basis for her work had shifted to one of her being

positioned as an agent to cajole people to accept and even collude in maintaining and not questioning the status quo of the social structures within which they were living.

Quoting from John Dewey, Giroux (1992) identified this same distinctive shift in relation to schools specifically and education in general:

I find myself frequently falling back on a distinction John Dewey made over forty years ago between “education as a function of society” and “society as a function of education”. In other words, are schools to uncritically serve and reproduce the existing society or challenge the social order to develop and advance its democratic imperatives? (p. 18)

From within the post-compulsory educational contexts of adult literacy teaching, Catherine was committed to the latter stance which meant that education “should function to provide students with the knowledge, character and moral vision that build civic courage” (Giroux, 1992, p. 18). Catherine’s feelings, beliefs, knowledges, values and ultimately her actions were predicated on the belief that her purpose in society had been changed by ‘others’ without her knowledge or consent.

Catherine’s choice of language and the ways in which she used it constructed the identities of both herself and her colleagues. She articulated her critical reading of the changes that had been taking place and were continuing to take place in their working lives. To investigate these discourses of social justice and economic rationalism further, I will identify the cohesive ties and lexical relationships both within and

across stanzas. Specific discourse organisation techniques that have been identified are the cohesive ties of reference, conjunctions and ellipsis, as well as the structuring of ideas via lexical relationships and top-level structuring.

The referential chains linking nouns and pronouns from the noun phrases' actants are:

The push – that push – the social justice – all – feminism – all of those types – rights types issues – adult literacy – that social justice thing – that – that social justice type background

The change – economic rationalism – economic rationalism – this reality – this world

Ellipsis is evident in referential chaining, lexical relationships and conjunctions. Square brackets and plain font have been used to identify words [omitted]. Reiteration of pronouns has been signaled in **bold** font as Catherine enjoins her colleagues to share her beliefs. The lines below demonstrate a referential chain of actants with ellipsis and reiteration that mobilises Catherine's meaning across the stanzas:

Stanza 3

8 so **we**'re still

9 **we**'ve probably all come out of that social justice type background too

10 that's why **we**'re here

Stanza 5

14 **you** know what's happening in the courses has changed so much

15 let's

16 [we] used to be that community type

17 [we] look after these people and [we] match their lives

Stanza 6

18 now

19 **[we]** try and match those lives to this reality of this world

Both the stated and implied actants (in this text, pronouns) listed above demonstrate Catherine's belief that the teachers in the group that afternoon shared her

understanding of social justice because “*we’ve probably all come out of that social justice background too*”.

we - we – we – you – ’s [us] – [we] - [we] – [we]

The extensive use of plural personal pronouns was combined with eye contact and tonal warmth to include all group members in this evaluation.

Conjunctions were used quite extensively to link meaning both within and across stanzas. Ellipsis is evident where a conjunction was omitted, but its presence and meaning are implied from previous conjunctions and the text to follow. Both these cohesive ties work together to bind Catherine’s ideas, using two particular top-level structuring techniques: comparisons; and cause and effect.

Stanza 1

=

and (conjunction of)

I have repeated Stanzas 2 and 3 in full below because they are illustrative of the use of causal conjunctions, ellipsis and the top-level structuring:

Stanza 2

6 so adult literacy was part of that social justice thing that the change’s so great from that

7 because economic rationalism’s come in

Stanza 3

8 so we’re still

9 [so] we’ve probably all come out of that social justice type background too

10 [therefore] that’s why we’re here /

Catherine was using these causal conjunctions in the top-level text structuring technique of cause and effect. Three of them are explicitly expressed as causal conjunctions:

So – because – so

Two are implied yet omitted via ellipsis:

[So] – [therefore]

She explained to the group that she believed adult literacy teachers are “*here*” doing this work because they “*come out of that social justice background too*”. Catherine believed that the “*changes*” to adult literacy teaching that were “*so great*” occurred “*because economic rationalism’s come in*”. Here she effectively positioned the idea of “*social justice*”, which she believed to be shared by all these teachers, in opposition to the idea of “*economic rationalism*” which was by implication not shared by all these teachers because this idea was responsible for imposed changes in how they were expected to go about their work of adult literacy teaching. Catherine also believed that, as a first priority of their work, they could no longer “*match these people’s lives*” .

The conjunctions of addition in Stanza 4 effectively link it to the previous stanza and are highlighted in bold below:

*11 **and** yet economic rationalism’s come now*

*12 **and** those two are just pushing like this*

In Line 11, not only does the additive conjunction link meaning across stanzas, but an adversative conjunction, “*yet*”, signals the contrast of opposing ideas which have “*come now*”:

*11 **and yet** economic rationalism’s come **now***

“*Now*” signals the timing of the change from what used to be the underpinning ideology of social justice to an ideology of economic rationalism.

These conjunctions set the scene for Catherine’s final clarification of her meaning. By now, she had worked out what she meant to say and was getting ready for her

concluding thoughts, in which she resolved her position to the group. The lexical relationships embedded in the text have now become important for meaning making. I am going to set these out in columns to illustrate three lexical relationship webs she was constructing through words of similar meaning. She was extending the use of a top-level structuring comparison to that of compare and contrast, which I think is best demonstrated by putting these lexical relationships in a vertical column presentation where they can be seen in relation to one another.

The indication of her developing conceptualisation is signaled in Line 12 of Stanza 4, when she said:

12 and those two are just pushing like this
13 the students

“*Those two*” refers to the opposing discourses of “*social justice*” on the one hand, and “*economic rationalism*” on the other.

These two discourses were pushing against each other, and the students were caught in the middle as exemplified in the following *Figure 6.2: The Push of Discourses*.

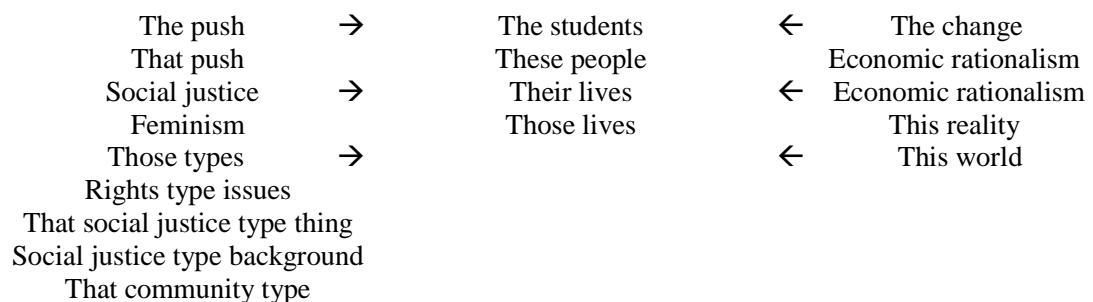


Figure 6.2: The Push of Discourses

So “*the push*” for “*social justice*” was opposed by “*the change*” of “*economic rationalism*”. This meant that, when the ideas of social justice were dominant, the students’ lives used to be matched by the actions of adult literacy teaching that came from the left hand column of social justice. However, the change to economic rationalism meant that the actions of adult literacy teaching had to be located in the right hand column and the students’ lives had to be brought into the right hand column of economic rationalism. It was only in this column, typifying “*this world*” and “*this reality*”, that the actions of adult literacy teaching for the teachers and learning for the students were recognisable.

Catherine’s use of contextualisation signals indicates a consistency to her feelings and beliefs throughout the text. These contextualisation signals will be indicated by CAPITAL letters. The following is a cross-stanza illustration and includes the ritualistic phrase “*you know*”.

Stanza 2

6 so adult literacy was part of that social justice thing that the change's SO GREAT from that

Stanza 3

9 we've probably all come out of that social justice type background TOO

Stanza 4

11 and yet economic rationalism's come NOW

12 and those two are JUST PUSHING LIKE THIS

Stanza 5

14 YOU KNOW what's happening in the courses has changed SO MUCH

16 USED to be that community type

17 look after THESE people and match THEIR lives

Stanza 6

18 NOW

19 try and match THOSE lives to THIS reality of THIS world

The contextualisation signals capitalised above indicate Catherine's feelings and beliefs with consolidation via changes in pitch and tone, changes in rhythm, facial expression and gestures.

In Lines 6, 9 and 11, "*so great*", "*too*" and "*now*" were uttered with stress and a lengthening of vowel sounds. Line 16 began with stressed emphasis on the word "*used*" which confirmed the changes we had just been told about and prepared us for the details of what adult literacy teaching used to be, that is, a community type course. When uttering Line 12 in Stanza 4, she bunched the fists of both hands up in front of her face, and pushed them towards each other as she said "*just pushing like this*". In Stanza 5, Lines 17, 18 and 19 were accompanied by gestures through which she indicated "*these*" people with "*their lives*" were now positioned as "*those lives*" on one side of the room, and "*this reality*" and "*this world*" were gestured to be on the other side.

My analysis of the text's prosodic, cohesive and overall discourse organisation, along with its contextualisation signals, has served two purposes. The development of the thematic organisation of the text is indicated and the analysis of the text's discourse organisation is consolidated.

Stanza	Themes
1	• Literacy is a social justice, rights type issue
2	• Economic rationalism is a significant change from social justice
3	• Adult literacy teachers are from a social justice type background
4	• Economic rationalism and social justice are opposing ideas
5	• Adult literacy teaching has changed from a social justice,

community type teaching that matches people's lives to an economic rationalist teaching that matches people's lives to a particular reality of this world

Figure 6.3: Catherine's Thematic Organisation

My findings from this analysis of Catherine's text have been synthesised in *Figure 6.3: Catherine's Thematic Organisation* so that they record her feelings, knowledge, beliefs and values. Naming the dissonant discourses of social justice and economic rationalism has provided a base from which she generates her relationship with both. She represents herself as allied to one (social justice) and opposed to the other (economic rationalism).

Catherine is constructing an identity through:

Knowledge that a social justice discourse is about a push for people's rights in society;

The belief that teachers situate the concept of literacy within this social justice discourse;

An assumption that adult literacy teachers work from a socially just, community-based perspective that matches people's lives;

The belief that a discourse of economic rationalism is being used to change the work of adult literacy teaching; and

The belief that teachers' social justice discourse is in opposition to the system's economic rationalist discourse.

6.2.2 Rising up and revolting against economic rationalism: Maggie the prophet

The dissonant discourses of social justice and economic rationalism identified and analysed in the previous sub-section functioned as social markers of identity construction for Catherine and, she believed, for her colleagues. To illustrate this finding, and to examine its meaning and construction in an adult literacy teaching discourse, I now return to Maggie. Her words could be likened to those of a prophet as she articulated her own discursive positioning through foretelling the demise of economic rationalism.

...there is the beginnings of a worldwide movement against economic rationalism – which is coming from grass roots which is coming from people like our people – which is coming from teachers like the sort of teachers I work with – people who do say, hey you know everything isn't a dollar – what about people and that is rising up – I've seen that, reading various different types of literature, even things like the co-op movement – it's people rising up against it, people revolting against economic rationalism – we just need that to come in. (Maggie, IN, 2001)

In Stanza 1, Maggie begins to make her case that the discourse of economic rationalism will not last because there is a “*worldwide movement*” against it. She then proceeds to present her argument as to why this will happen. Because of the expository macrostructure of the text, its thesis, argument, four supporting points and

reformulation are also indicated in capital letters and numbered with Roman numerals.

I THESIS

Stanza 1

1 there is the beginnings of a worldwide movement /

2 against economic rationalism //

II ARGUMENT

Stanza 2

3 which is coming from grass roots /

4 which is coming from people like our people /

5 which is coming from teachers /

6 like the sort of teachers I work with //

SUPPORTING POINT 1

Stanza 3

7 people who do say /

8 hey you know everything isn't a dollar /

SUPPORTING POINT 2

9 what about people /

10 and that is rising up //

SUPPORTING POINT 3

Stanza 4

11 I've seen that /

12 reading various different types of literature /

SUPPORTING POINT 4

13 even things like the co-op movement //

III CONCLUSION: REFORMULATION OF THESIS

Stanza 5

14 it's people rising up against it /

15 people revolting against economic rationalism /

16 we just need that to come in //

The strength of her prophecy is signalled in Stanza 1 by the pitch and tonal changes when expressing the word “*against*” (Line 2). Her reasons for this opposition to economic rationalism are presented in the argument which follows, although in Stanza 1 she signals to me as her listener that she is not alone in this feeling and belief because she is part of a whole “*worldwide movement*” (Line 1) that is against it. A

number of theorists have already argued that the location of the concept of literacy within an economic rationalist discourse is problematical if literacy education predicated on a discourse of social justice is to be achieved (Beazley, 1997; Gee & Lankshear, 1997; Searle, 1999b).

In Stanza 2, the main argument supporting her thesis that change will come is revealed to be grass roots people like “*our people*” and teachers “*like the sort of teachers*” she worked with (Lines 3, 4, 5 and 6). While the argument is truncated when reduced to print, it was presented with eye contact and body language that indicated “*our people*” were adult literacy students. At the beginning of the interview, we had been talking to a woman who used to be one of Maggie’s students and she gestured in the direction of that woman when making this statement. By Stanza 3, she began to present the supporting points to her argument that there are many people involved in this revolution against an economic rationalist discourse.

The first supporting point is that “*everything isn’t a dollar*”. This is in contrast to the idea that everything in life is a dollar, a resource, commodity or investment, which is the value implied in economic rationalism. The second supporting point reinforces her contention that economic rationalism is not about people, but only about a dollar. Stanza 4 includes supporting points numbers three and four when she confirms this to be knowledge that is available from “*various different types of literature*” and “*even things like the co-op movement*”. The “*co-op movement*” was explained to be a ‘co-operative movement’ of people who banded together for particular social purposes, such as the establishment and management of community banks and building

societies, plus co-operatively owned and run housing, corner stores and even supermarkets. In Stanza 5, she concluded by reformulating her thesis that it is people who will have to “*rise up*”, “*even revolt*”, against an economic rationalism that quantifies everything connected with the concept of literacy and adult literacy teaching in dollar terms.

In this text she uses cohesive ties of reference, clausal substitution, ellipsis and lexical relationships within an expository structure that lists and describes the key points in her argument. The actants in her text are identified through the noun clauses as “*a worldwide movement*” and “*economic rationalism*”. While this worldwide movement is only beginning, it has certain characteristics. It is a “*grass roots*” movement that in this argument means it comes from the “*people*”. Among these people are “*our people*”, who are “*teachers*” the likes of whom Maggie works with, and who believe as she does that the purpose of this worldwide movement is to revolt against economic rationalism by banding together in co-operative endeavours. Therefore this worldwide movement is positioned in opposition to some other movement that is called “*economic rationalism*”. Economic rationalism is about “*a dollar*”, or money. In contrast, this worldwide movement of grass roots people is predicated upon a belief that not everything in life can be measured in monetary terms.

Causal substitutions are used to bind the text both within Stanzas 1 and 2 and across those two stanzas. The examples of this are listed below and indicated in **bold** type:

Stanza 1

1 there is the beginnings of a worldwide movement

2 against economic rationalism

Stanza 2

- 3 ***which is coming from grass roots***
4 ***which is coming from people*** *like our people*
5 ***which is coming from teachers***
6 *like the sort of teachers I work with*

Three clauses are substituted for “*a worldwide movement*” and they have been indicated in bold font above: (1) “*which is coming from grass roots*”; (2) “*which is coming from people*”; and (3) “*which is coming from teachers*”. Ellipsis is used at the beginning of three other clauses which perform the same function of binding the text within Stanzas 1 and 2 respectively. The lines below indicate the ellipsis in plain font and [square brackets]:

- 4 *which is coming from people* [who are] ***like our people***
5 *which is coming from teachers*
6 [who are] ***like the sort of teachers*** [] ***I work with***

In Line 4 above, the revolt against economic rationalism is coming from people [who are] “*like our people*”. In Line 5, the revolt is coming from the teachers in Line 4, [who are] “*like the sort of teachers*” [who] “*I work with*”. If Maggie had been writing this as a sentence, then she may have expressed the last clause as ‘with whom I work’, but then again, she may not; however, in her spoken clause, it is more likely that the word omitted was [who].

Lexical relationships are signaled via repetition or reiteration and collocation of words from a similar semantic field. Through this process, two particular groups of people are identified. In the first group, there are ‘*people*’ who are representative of people “*who come from the grass roots*”. The second group is a sub-group of the first which comprises “*the sort of teachers I work with*”, in other words, Maggie’s fellow adult literacy teachers. Like Catherine, she included her colleagues in her assertions, even in their absence at the time of the interview. The sub-group of adult literacy

teachers needs the first group of people from the grass roots to rise up and revolt against economic rationalism. This is what is needed to counter a perceived hegemonic view that literacy, like other values or “social goods”, can be quantified in dollar terms.

Maggie’s contextualisation signals have indicated a consistency in her feelings and beliefs and further established her persona as a speaker. The following is a cross-stanza illustration and includes the ritualistic phrase “*you know*”.

Stanza 1

1 there is the beginnings of a worldwide movement

2 AGAINST economic rationalism

Stanza 2

3 which is coming from GRASS ROOTS

4 which is coming from people like OUR people

5 which is coming from TEACHERS

6 like the sort of teachers I work with

Stanza 3

6 people who DO say

7 HEY YOU KNOW everything ISN'T a dollar

8 what about PEOPLE and that is RISING UP

Stanza 4

9 I've SEEN that

10 reading various different types of literature

11 even things like the co-op movement

Stanza 5

12 it's people RISING UP against it

13 people REVOLTING against economic rationalism

14 we JUST need that to come in

Through these contextualisation signals, it can be seen that Maggie prophesised the overthrow of economic rationalism. The end of economic rationalism will “*come in*” with people’s “*rising up*” and “*revolting*”. This uprising will not be far away because she emphasises the word ‘*just*’ to tell me that this is all that is needed for the dollar to be banished as the only thing, and considerations of people to be considered important.

I have used the linguistic processes of prosody, cohesive ties of reference and causal substitution together with lexical relationships and contextualisation signals to identify the thematic organisation of this text.

Stanza	Themes
1	• Worldwide movement against economic rationalism
2	• People are against economic rationalism
3	• Everything is not a dollar
4	• Literature and the co-op movement are against economic rationalism
5	• People will rise up and revolt against economic rationalism

Figure 6.3: Maggie's Thematic Organisation

Part of the cultural model of an adult literacy teaching discourse that constitutes Maggie's professional identity is her opposition to a discourse of economic rationalism.

6.2.3 Thinking through dissonant discourses

Part of the identity kit or 'big D' part of the discourse of adult literacy teaching that is being constructed through this analysis is constituted by dissonant discourses. By this I mean that there are two key opposing discourses operating: social justice and economic rationalism. These teachers constructed their identities as adult literacy teachers through an ideological commitment to what they called a social justice discourse. This commitment relied for its existence on their opposition to a discourse that in their words is known as economic rationalism. Both discourses are relevant to their identities because it is through their belief in one and rejection of the other that they recognised fellow adult literacy teachers.

Identifying the dissonances among and within discourses has been possible for these teachers because they had other secondary discourses of work with which to compare and contrast their professional selves. Because of what is in effect a professional itinerancy, they had already ‘become’ a range of different types of adult workers, with particular sets of beliefs, values, knowledges and understandings accompanying each one. They had already constructed identities of ‘being’ a teacher prior to working as adult literacy teachers.

Teachers co-ordinate their social roles and relationships within their communities of practice via their opposition to this discourse of economic rationalism. The social justice discourse resonates with the previously discussed concepts of Freire’s (1970, 1973; see also Freire & Macedo, 1987) ‘emancipatory literacy’ and Giroux’s (1992, 1994) ‘cultural borders’ which signify both metaphorical and literal ways in which power is inscribed on bodies, cultures, histories, space/s and so on. It also exemplifies the ‘dynamic intertextuality’ of ‘dialectical relationships’ (Fairclough, 1992) as it reworks a “*social justice push*” that “*began thirty years ago*” (Catherine, VT, 1996) and responds to the “*economic rationalism*” (Catherine, VT, 1996; Maggie, IN, 2001) of the VET system.

These teachers believed that their work had changed because it was now aligned to a different discursive conceptualisation of ‘literacy’. In their view, it followed that their work practices could no longer be based upon a social justice, community type work in which they matched their teaching to people’s lives. It was their belief that this change to an economic rationalist type of work has meant that they have to match

people's lives to the particular reality of a world in which everything is measured in dollar terms and pre-determined outcomes. They did not support this view and they articulated their belief in the uniqueness of adult literacy teaching through their identification with "*grass roots*" (Maggie, IN, 2001) people who are opposed to economic rationalism.

Conversely, the syllabus text gave agency to someone or something unnamed via the use of non-human actants. However, the teachers were assumed to have both accountability and autonomy in relation to explicit notions of social justice, but only for a period of time from 1995 to 1999. With the absence of the teachers from the discourse of the syllabus text after that period, there was neither alignment with nor contestation of the teachers' discourse surrounding the concepts of adult literacy and social justice and their work of adult literacy teaching itself.

The data analysis in this section has identified dissonant discourses through which teachers are constructing their professional identities. There is evidence of a reinvigorated commitment to a view of literacy as multiple sets of social and cultural practices. These teachers believed that their job was to work with students' socio-cultural practices, and to focus attention on aspects of these practices that would enable them to function in their worlds in ways which were meaningful for the adults who were their students.

There has been no evidence to suggest that their students would want to, or should have to, embrace the values of the VET system. On the contrary, as has already been

shown, the values of this system may conflict with both the students' and the teachers' values about what constitutes 'literacy'. This reflects Gee's (1996b) argument that "the values of mainstream culture are, in fact, often complicit with the oppression of non-mainstream students' home cultures and other social identities" (p. 89).

Through their interactions with their students, these teachers are also attempting to maintain the dynamic of this intertextuality as together they work towards 'reading' the ever-changing, multidimensional texts that constitute our culture of social communities, workplaces and everyday life situations. In this sense, the work of adult literacy teaching is indeed a 'grey area' because of the somewhat paradoxical situations in which teachers can find themselves (Gee, 1996b).

6.3 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS AT THE LITERACY CONCEPT–CONTEXT INTERFACE

What it means to be an adult literacy teacher is constructed in the complex, relational and temporary mechanisms through which people generalise about the ways in which they believe social goods such as knowledge are, or should be, distributed in society (Gee, 1996b; Hall, 1996). Analysis in this section will further investigate teachers' identity constructions at a literacy concept–context interface. I will be examining teachers' lived experiences, beliefs and knowledges about the types of teachers they believe they 'are' (and are not). This concept–context interface is really a space in which teachers use their tactics of engagement (from Chapter Five) with the VET

system and, through the outcomes of these engagements, construct their work identities.

This third section begins with a synthesised narrative of teachers' connections with their students and the system's institutionalised power co-ordinations. They suture into their stories three main self-representations that take a stance against being positioned as certain types of people: 'I am not a dobber, not a healer and not disconnected'. In conclusion, I then analyse one teacher's story. In Hall's (1996) terms, this story could be described as being partly constructed within a "fantasmatic field" (p. 4). The significance of this sub-final section lies in its analysis of one teacher's construction of the different identities of people working in this institutionalised VET system's conceptualisation of literacy.

6.3.1 Connections: Teachers, students and system

From the analysis in Chapter Five, teachers expressed their beliefs that any conceptualisation of literacy is inextricably intertwined with the contexts in which language was to be used. Here I am going to explore this issue further by investigating teachers constructing their identities through their opposition to what are believed to be negative social markers of teaching which, in their perceptions, attempted to position them as agents of the State and Commonwealth government bureaucracies on the one hand and agents of their students' expectations on the other.

Not a ‘dobber’

In Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2 Waiting to know, I identified a tactic of engagement with the VET system’s institutionalised power co-ordinations. Here the teachers had identified the differences between people who were conscripts and those who were volunteers to adult literacy education. By 2000, teachers had begun to take quite clear positions on this difference with which they had to work.

Sandra shared her consternation that “*all the crucial assumptions*” about adults as learners “*are called into question*” (Sandra, ALT, 2000) when they engage in this type of adult literacy teaching. She cited as an example her lived experiences with the literacy and numeracy training (LANT) program funded under the Commonwealth government’s mutual obligation policy for people who were receiving unemployment benefits. For the purposes of reporting to Centrelink (the Commonwealth government agency that had the power to control the ‘dole money’), teachers were expected to record when the students failed to return from breaks and/or did not attend scheduled classes.

Sandra commented that “*when the students are ‘dobbed in’ to Centrelink*” it was a “*further undermining of efforts to establish a class of self-directed learners*” because it “*perpetuated the construction of the teachers as someone who can get them into trouble, rather than seeing the trouble as a consequence of their behaviour intersecting with government policies*” (Sandra, ALT, 2000). Her dilemma was echoed in Maggie’s interview, as they both resisted this identity positioning of them by the system on the one hand and their students on the other.

Sandra's use of the Australian pejorative vernacular term, "*dobbed in*", indicates not only her own "*emotional baggage*" (Pip, ATT, 1997), but also her cognitive resistance to this positioning. Yet, when she asks rhetorically, "*Where do we go with students who do not perceive their lack of employment as a problem?*", she was aware that these people who were positioned as her students did not share the system's view of their social status. "*The value laden nature of the work the teacher is engaged in under these circumstances*" had not escaped her as she noted a challenge that she believed all teachers in the VET system face, namely "*maintaining their marketability even while engaged in the activities of enhancing the marketability of their students*" (Sandra, ALT, 2000).

There are two important issues embedded in Sandra's statement that "*under these circumstances*" this is "*value laden*" work. Firstly, ethical tensions and dilemmas can be expected when being positioned as a 'dobber' because this is in conflict with the teachers' self-representations. Secondly, the system has represented teachers as having to maintain 'marketability' in a competitive working environment (see Chapter Two's discussion of the implications of 'user choice' policies). I have synthesised their profound disquiet at this ethically complex and potentially compromising positioning into their preferred self-representation of 'I am not a dobber'.

Not a healer

These teachers are different from people who work in the ‘healing’ professions. In her widely ranging interview responses, Thea (IN, 2000) expressed her view that she was “*not a healer*”, and she resisted being positioned as such by her students or the system. She related that while “*they want everything cured...I just don’t believe in perfection, I’m not perfect, I still make mistakes...and you have to admit, learn and move on*” (Thea, IN, 2000). Living with the notion that there are no cures to make everything in life perfect is important for Thea in a personal sense and also a professional stance that she was prepared to make.

She understood her own and her students’ learning through adulthood as a “*cyclic or spiral process*” (Thea, IN, 2000) in which there were no ‘cures’ because there was no healing necessary. This rejection of literacy as a curative measure for whatever ails society at any given time was unanimous amongst these teachers. Kevin visualised this literacy learning as a “*pot hole and peel*” (ALT, 1996) process, while Peter saw it more as a “*random acquisition of knowledge*” (ALT, 1996) process that, similar to Thea’s understanding, continued throughout life. From all these representations, each individualised from its author’s point of view, there is a construction of themselves as particular type of learners and teachers.

Not disconnected

From her personal experiences as a migrant, together with her qualifications and work as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, Pip managed students’

“*emotional baggage*” (ATT, 1997) and their expectations that teachers’ actions would include curing, healing and, in certain instances, ‘dobbing’ in ways similar to those recounted by her colleagues in the two preceding stories. These professional development sessions were the communicative channel through which professional dialogue was established and meanings negotiated.

As well as the previously identified question–answer rhetorical device, oral recounts were also used by the teachers to dis/confirm entrenched and/or emergent understandings. They followed a pattern in which one teacher articulated a point of view, and others concurred or disagreed or extended it until all had identified connections between the trajectories of their students’ lives and the learning situations they were sharing with them as their teachers. Establishing one’s bona fides as a member of the group was achieved through telling stories about one’s students; stories which demonstrated ‘connectedness’ with students’ lives. This was an *entrée* into this particular teaching fraternity and was an expected and typical social action for these teachers.

During one of the teleconferences, Pip was telling her colleagues she believed it was important to connect with students’ lives, but that it was equally important to know that in some instances these connections were best made within structured, teacher directed learning interactions, while in other instances connections were more effectively made in unstructured, student directed dialogic interactions. She began her exposition with an account of someone from the local high school who sent one of her/his students to her for: “*comprehension, reading, short term memory problems...I*

tutored him last year as a very low literacy year eleven student” (Pip, ALT, 1997). He secured a position as an apprentice boilermaker in her small rural community that depended on local mines for its economic survival. Pip recounted how, when helping him learn for his retests for his TAFE modules, she told him that:

It's like Greek to me you know, structural fabrication and technical drawings...I've told him, I've said, look I'm right out of my subject area and he needs to know that and we're coming back to this area where I am not the knower of all information and I said look I will find someone for you to help you with structural fabrication for instance...he was very positive...he would not have said that to me last year as a high school student – so there has been some maturity over there. (Pip, ATT, 1997)

Through knowledge of his previous and current learning situations, Pip did connect with what she perceived to be her student's cognitive and emotional need for what she termed “*structure*” because “*he's crying out for help – if he doesn't pass he's out of a job – for that particular student, he needs that – he needs structure*” (ATT, 1997).

However, she would not impose “*structure*” when she considered it to be counter-productive for her students' learning; when for example teaching “*people who've come through war traumas and so*” Pip told us how she “*might have this you beaut lesson plan and I want to go in and teach them about 'at the post office', but they want to come and tell me about the problems they've had and they're not interested*” (ATT, 1997). By resisting being positioned by the system as detached from her

students' "*emotional baggage*", Pip deliberately connected with the students and disconnected herself from her prepared lesson based upon the syllabus.

In summary, these teachers did not position themselves to be dobbers, healers or disconnected from students' lives. Yet, when engaging in the actions of overt compliance with the system by recording students' absences, which they considered to be a normal and expected task of being a teacher, they believed this role was being compromised because these same records were also used to report to Centrelink and/or employers. Therefore, in the teachers' perceptions they were functioning as agents of the state, who in their communities of practice were known as dobbers.

The only people who understood their ethical and moral dilemmas were those who were similarly engaged: that is, fellow adult literacy teachers. They were all under the system's surveillance via the attendance records and other audit documents they had to sign and date. They knew that these were no ordinary documents used to account for their duty of care to their students (Cory, Ed, Kerry, VC, 2000; Denise, ALT, 2000; Maggie, IN, 2000; Sandra, ALT, 2000). Via the use of body language, gestures, pitch and tonal variations they did signal that a range of delaying and even obfuscatory actions are used together with an explicit articulation of their positioning to their students. However, I will not use this as explicit evidence because there were never any verbal or written articulations of these actions. I also respect their need for privacy on the specific nature of any covert resistance that may have been undertaken in their tactics of engagement with these aspects of the system's power.

However, to gain recognition within their communities of practice, teachers had to be able to demonstrate connections with the trajectories of their students' lives. Knowing these lived experiences and the nature of their intersections with the world of adult literacy teaching and having the ability to relate to these lives from within teacher–student relationships were paramount to establishing what it meant to 'be' an adult literacy teacher. The differences of the many and varied literacy concept–context relationships, together with the similarities of relational connections with adults as students, constituted the cultural models upon which these teachers constructed their identities.

There was no evidence to suggest that the physical, social or emotional sustenance for establishing and maintaining these connections came from the VET system via either its official documents such as policy or syllabus, or its bureaucratic structures enacted through the operations of registered training organisations. The evidence suggests it was the relationships with their students and with one another that sustained them in constructing their work identities as 'adult literacy teachers'. This knowledge was important for teachers new to the field, who were doing the adult literacy teaching course prior to actually starting teaching with adults. The following sub-section analyses the text of one such teacher, who participated in the first professional development session and shared her critical reflections in her assignment at the end of the course.

6.3.2 Constructing teacher identity: Welcome to the war

Julie's pen picture synthesises what I know of her lived experiences as a single parent with two young children newly resident in a very small rural community. While she could have participated in the professional development sessions of the 1996 adult literacy teaching course via teleconferences, she chose to drive a return journey of just over four hours every Friday fortnight for a two-hour face-to-face session with her colleagues. An early childhood trained teacher, she had been approached by a representative from a registered training organisation operating from her closest medium-sized community to set up a community literacy program.

As she recounted to the group, she was told that successful completion of the adult literacy teaching course was mandatory if she was to be considered for a casual part-time teaching position on this proposed adult literacy program. Over the course of those Friday afternoons, she shared with the group her many and varied life experiences while asking many questions of her more 'experienced' colleagues. She never actually began the literacy program in that small community because the funds were not allocated owing to insufficient student numbers. By 1999, Julie was living in a different town in the far west of the Central Queensland region, teaching at the local pre-school by day and adult literacy classes in the evenings. At the time of writing this thesis, she had left that town.

I have chosen this text because it depicts the discursive dissonances evident in both the institutionalised power co-ordinations and the identity constructions that constitute this adult literacy teaching discourse. In other words, in this text I can see

both power and identity being worked out as Julie synthesises what it means for her 'to be' an adult literacy teacher.

I seem to have entered an educational field one could liken to a war zone! At 'the front' we have our practitioners – teachers, educators and students, striving for victories, often facing defeat and incurring casualties, living the frustration, yearning for peace and harmony, some consistency and for things to just 'make sense'. Behind the front line of battle are those who substantiate its existence and outline the battle plan – our theorist, working hard at formulating the best 'strategies', setting up the artillery for support of their plans and more importantly perhaps, addressing the 'higher order' demands. It is here we become aware of the unseen and often unacknowledged decision makers, who set the 'agenda' outside of individual concerns, operating rather at the higher level of political/socio-economic power plays. No name, no faces – decision makers who have the 'overall good' in mind.⁵ (Julie, ALT, 1996)

Because this is a written text, there are no prosodic cues of variations in pitch, rate, rhythm or tone of voice to guide my identification of basic speech units. Hence, for the purpose of this analysis, the basic speech units will be identified using syntactical cues that reflect the way in which I 'say' this text in my mind when reading it. Julie has tried to guide me into a particular interpretation by her choice of sentence structures, grammar and punctuation. However, as with the syllabus document texts

⁵ I have not altered Julie's punctuation or sentence structuring because this is how she has expressed herself in her written assignment. There are some words that are spelt differently from those in the main body of my thesis text, but I have retained Julie's expression as she originally presented it.

before, she cannot completely control my interpretations (Gee, 1999). Yet, having worked with Julie in the face-to-face sessions over the period of the professional development course, I bring to this analysis audio and video pictures of her voice, manner, physical features; memories of her personal qualities; and participant observation notes of her interactions with colleagues, together with the knowledge of her past personal and professional lived experiences that she was prepared to share with me.

Because of the length of this text, I will do as many preparatory jobs as possible so that the actual analysis can begin. In these eight stanzas below, Julie uses the analogy of “*a war zone*” (Stanza 1) to argue the position of teachers and students within the system by identifying the combatants on one side in this war. It is significant that, in this war, the human or ideological assailants remain unknown. The text is expository in its macrostructure with its thesis (Stanza 1), argument (Stanzas 2 and 3), three key supporting points (Stanzas 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) and a reformulation of the thesis (Stanza 8).

I THESIS

Stanza 1

1. *I seem to have entered /*
2. *an educational field /*
3. *one could liken to a war zone //*

II ARGUMENT

Stanza 2

4. *At ‘the front’ /*
5. *we have our practitioners /*
6. *teachers, educators and students //*

Stanza 3

7. *striving for victories /*
8. *often facing defeat /*
9. *and incurring casualties /*

- 10. *living the frustration /*
- 11. *yearning for peace and harmony /*
- 12. *some consistency /*
- 13. *and for things to just 'make sense' //*

SUPPORTING POINT I

Stanza 4

- 14. *Behind the front line of battle /*
- 15. *are those who substantiate its existence /*
- 16. *and outline the battle plan //*

SUPPORTING POINT II

Stanza 5

- 17. *our theorist /*
- 18. *working hard at formulating the best 'strategies' /*
- 19. *setting up the artillery for support of their plans /*
- 20. *and more importantly perhaps /*
- 21. *addressing the 'higher order' demands //*

SUPPORTING POINT III

Stanza 6

- 22. *It is here we become aware /*
- 23. *of the unseen /*
- 24. *and often unacknowledged /*
- 25. *decision makers /*
- 26. *who set the 'agenda' /*
- 27. *outside of individual concerns /*
- 28. *operating rather at the higher level of political/socio-economic power*
plays //

Stanza 7

- 29. *no name /*
- 30. *no faces /*
- 31. *decision makers /*
- 32. *who have the 'overall good' in mind //*

CONCLUSION: REFORMULATION OF THESIS

Stanza 9

- 33. *The overall betterment /*
- 34. *the overall objective /*
- 35. *determining the outcome of battle //*

In Stanza 1, Julie positions herself as an adult literacy teacher who in her THESIS statement has “*entered an educational field*” (Line 2), which is a special type of educational field that “*one could liken to a war zone*” (Line 3). The analogy for the whole text is established in Line 3.

The thesis is reinforced in her ARGUMENT that is presented succinctly in Stanza 2 and explained in Stanza 3. Two main features of her argument are presented in Stanza 2. First, “*teachers, educators, students*” (Line 6) are together as “*our practitioners*” and second, it is these practitioners who are “*at the front*” (Line 4) line in this war zone. Stanza 3 fleshes out the argument with its graphic visualisation of the work these “*practitioners*” (Line 5) perform at “*the front*” (Line 4) as they “*strive for victory*”, “*face defeat*”, “*incur casualties*”, “*live with frustration*” and “*yearn for peace, harmony and consistency*” with, above all, the hope that things in their working lives will “*just make sense*” (Lines 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13).

SUPPORTING POINT I continues the analogy’s visual imagery with the notion that there is something going on in this war “*behind the front line of battle*” (Line 14), because there are people there behind the line who “*substantiate*” (Line 15), or give reason for, the war’s existence in the first place and who also “*outline the battle plan*” (Line 16). In Stanza 15’s SUPPORTING POINT II, Julie identifies one of the people behind the line as “*our theorist*” (Line 17). The theorist’s job in this war is strategic (Line 18), which means “*setting up the artillery*” (Line 19) with the most important job of attending to the war’s “*higher order demands*” (Line 21).

While the strategy plotting, “*higher order demand*” knowledgeable theorist is visible to the practitioners, there is still yet another group behind the front line. In SUPPORTING POINT III, Stanzas 6 and 7 alert the reader to a group whose members remain in the shadows but whose presence is definitely made known to the

practitioners at the front. In this group are to be found the “*decision makers*” (Line 31).

The decision makers constitute a group that “*sets the agenda*” (Line 26) with the “*overall good in mind*” (Line 32). With the CONCLUSION, Julie reformulates her thesis to include the idea that the “*agenda*” for the battle set by the faceless, nameless ones (Lines 29 and 30) who were operating at “*the higher level of political socio-economic power plays*” (Line 28) must be for the “*overall betterment*” (Line 33), because this is in effect the “*overall objective*” (Line 34) of the war. This agenda will also determine the “*outcome of battle*” (Line 35) from the “*war zone*” (Line 3).

In this written text, contextualisation signals are read from the punctuation marks and use of parenthesis that were a feature of Julie’s writing style throughout her assignment. I will address these contextualisation signals now because they are used to consolidate the analogy by building her feelings and beliefs into the text in lieu of the pitch and tonal variations, eye contact and body language that can be used as contextualisation signals in oral speech. The use of the exclamation mark (!) at the end of Line 3 in Stanza 1 tells the reader that she wants this to be noticed and that the “*war zone*” is an important descriptor of the educational field of adult literacy teaching.

Parenthesis has been used within and across stanzas to consolidate her thesis. The relations among these parenthetical utterances are set out below and have also been placed in italics for ease of identification.

THESIS (Stanza 1)	an educational field a war zone!	[Line 2] [Line 3]
ARGUMENT (Stanzas 2 & 3)	at ' <i>the front</i> ' practitioners want things to just ' <i>make sense</i> '	[Line 4] [Line 5] [Line 13]
SUPPORTING POINT I (Stanza 4)	behind the front line of battle those who substantiate its existence and outline the battle plan	[Line 14] [Line 15] [Line 16]
SUPPORTING POINT II (Stanza 5)	our theorist best ' <i>strategies</i> ' ' <i>higher order</i> ' demands	[Line 17] [Line 18] [Line 21]
SUPPORTING POINT III (Stanzas 6 & 7)	decision makers set the ' <i>agenda</i> ' have the ' <i>overall good</i> ' in mind	[Line 25] [Line 26] [Line 32]

From the layout above, the main protagonists and their functions in this educational field's war zone are identified as illustrated in *Figure 6.5: The War Zone* below:

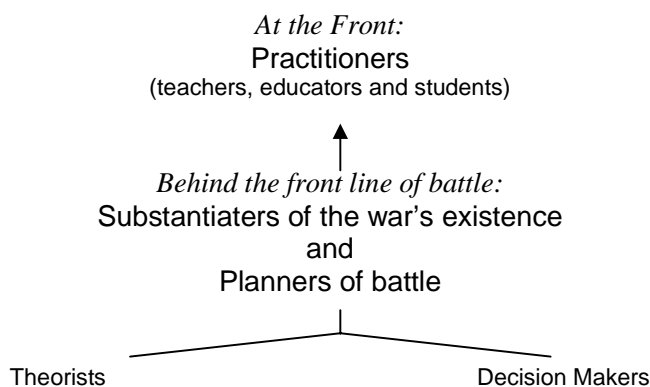


Figure 6.5: The war zone

From these contextualisation signals, Julie's use of cohesive ties is significant as she further establishes the semantic relations within this text and consolidates the identity of the main protagonists on one side of this war. Within and between Stanzas 2 and 3, she has used the cohesive ties of ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical relationships to

indicate the actants of her argument. To support this argument, the same process has been used within Stanza 4 (SUPPORTING POINT I) and Stanza 5 (SUPPORTING POINT II), as well as within and across Stanzas 6 and 7 (SUPPORTING POINT III). The ellipsis words have been put in square brackets with plain font, while the conjunctions are noted in **bold**.

Stanza 2

- 5 *we have our practitioners*
6 [who are] *teachers, educators, students*

Stanza 3

- 7 [who are] *striving for victories*
8 [who are] *often facing defeat*
9 **and** [who are] *incurring casualties*
10 [who are] *living the frustration*
11 [who are] *yearning for peace and harmony*
12 [**and** who are yearning for] *some consistency*
13 **and** [who are yearning] *for things to just 'make sense'*

Lexical relationships establish the characteristics of these practitioners to the reader. In Stanza 2, there are three groups of people who could be called practitioners: teachers, educators and students. She does not elaborate the identity of the educators, but I understand her to mean people who are employed as trainers and/or tutors (paid or voluntary) on adult literacy programs.

These practitioners are placed as equals and, in Stanza 3, a lexical chain of verb phrases [with ellipsis] carries this meaning:

*Practitioners – striving for victory – facing defeat – incurring
casualties – living the frustration – yearning for peace and harmony –
[yearning for] some consistency – [yearning for] things to make sense*

These people who substantiate this war's existence and outline its battle plan (Stanza 4) are determined by Julie to be in two groups: theorists and decision makers. Theorists are made known to the reader via the use of ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical relationships within the text in Stanza 5.

Stanza 5

17 *our theorist*

18 [who is] *working hard at formulating the best 'strategies'*

19 [who is] *setting up the artillery for support of their plans*

20 **and** *more importantly perhaps*

21 [who is] *addressing the 'higher order' demands*

The theorist has a number of jobs to perform and they are made known through another lexical chain of verb phrases:

*Theorist – working hard – formulating the best strategies – setting up
the artillery – addressing the higher order demands*

The pronoun “*their*” in Line 19 is significant here because it is “*their plans*”, that is the plans of the people “*behind the front line of battle*” (Line 14), that the theorist is supporting. This support is strategic in nature because it sets up the artillery trajectories for those at the front line to follow. However, Julie endows the theorist with an even more important job, that of “*addressing the 'higher order' demands*” (Line 21). Those at the front line are too busy fighting the battle/s (Stanza 3). From their vantage point behind the front line, however, theorist has the space to address these higher order demands, whatever they may be.

Decision makers are the second group of people behind the front line. The reader is told that, in relation to the troops at the front, these decision makers are people who are “*unseen*” (Line 22) and “*unacknowledged*” (Line 24), with “*no name*” (Line 29) and “*no faces*” (Line 30). The use of ellipsis, reiteration and lexical relationships via noun and verb phrases infuses the text with its meaning across Stanzas 6 and 7.

Stanza 6

22 *It is here we become aware*
23 *of the unseen*
24 *and often unacknowledged*
25 *decision makers*
26 *who set the 'agenda'*
27 *[that is] outside of individual concerns*
28 *[and which is] operating rather at the higher level of political/socio-economic power plays*

Stanza 7

29 *[These people have] No name*
30 *[and have] no faces*
31 *[yet they are] decision makers*
32 *who have the 'overall good' in mind*

Julie became aware of the existence of these decision makers. In these two stanzas, she expresses her understanding of their jobs in the war. The following lexical chain describes the characteristics of these decision makers and explains via noun and verb phrases and ellipsis, the key features of their work:

Decision makers – [are] unseen – [are] often unacknowledged
– set the agenda - operating rather at the higher level of political/socio-economic power plays – [have] no name – [have] no faces – have the overall good in mind

The “we” in Line 22 alerts the reader to the difference in power co-ordinations between those at the front line, that is, Julie and her fellow practitioners, and the faceless, nameless, unseen, unacknowledged decision makers behind the lines who operate “*at the higher level of political/socio-economic power plays*” (Line 28). The war’s existence and its battle plans are determined at the nexus of these political, social and economic power plays, not at the front with the practitioners.

The practitioners “*become aware*” (Line 22) of these decision makers and their role in the war through engagement with the work of the theorist. Hitherto as a practitioner, Julie had been unaware of the people who “*set the agenda*” (Line 26). She became aware that this agenda was concerned with more than just “*individual concerns*” (Line 27), as the following lexical chain with ellipsis demonstrates:

the agenda – [meets] *higher order demands* – [is] *outside individual concerns* – [has] *overall good in mind*

The agenda that is set behind the lines is not concerned with individual concerns *per se*. Rather, it is concerned with the overall good. I understand this to mean the overall good of society as a whole, in contrast to individuals in society. Here the essential differences and similarities between the work of people in this war are clarified: practitioners are concerned with individuals; while theorists and decision makers are concerned with people in society as a whole, including its political, social and economic power play dimensions.

Yet, in the restatement of her thesis, which also functions to elaborate her meaning, Julie believes that all people in this educational field’s war zone are sharing the same “*overall objective*” (Line 34), which is “*the overall betterment*” (Line 33) of people in society. This conclusion was reached after the use of a consistent compare and contrast top-level structure throughout the text as the characteristics and work of each of the main groups of combatants in the war zone were identified. The thematic organisation of the text illustrates this in the *Figure 6.6: Julie’s Thematic Organisation* below.

Stanza	Themes
1	• Teaching adult literacy is like teaching in a war zone

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | • Practitioners (teachers, educators, students) are at the front |
| 3 | • Practitioners want it to just make sense |
| 4 | • Behind the front people are substantiating the war's existence |
| 5 | • Theorists set the strategic artillery for higher order demands |
| 6 | • Decision makers set the war's agenda |
| 7 | • The agenda is not concerned with individuals |
| 8 | • The agenda is concerned with overall good |
| 9 | • Overall betterment is the objective of the war |

Figure 6.6: Julie's Thematic Organization

The war does indeed have strategically focused plans that are the artillery or the means by which the way forward will be cleared for the practitioners at the front. I interpret the artillery to be a metaphor for the policy framed, theoretically informed curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents that were intended to be lobbed strategically over the heads of teachers, educators and students at the front line. The artillery, that is, the frameworks and syllabuses, clear the path through the battle field of this war zone for the practitioners to follow.

As can happen in war zones, sometimes the artillery falls short into its own lines with the troops coming under friendly fire. In other instances, front line troops have been known to advance so swiftly that they are caught in the middle of an artillery barrage from their own side; while still other front line troops navigate different pathways forward such that the artillery is superfluous to the result of the battle and the overall outcome of the war. In such instances, there is a danger that the agenda set by the general staff of decision makers behind the line becomes further removed from those front line troops' lived experiences. On the other hand, if intelligence from the front is timely and grounded in these lived experiences, then the war's agenda will reflect the

overall betterment of all people and the strategically focused artillery will support the efforts of those at the front.

6.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have used Gee's (1999) interrelated linguistic analysis with three teachers' texts and one extract from a syllabus document's module descriptor. I have woven synthesised narratives around these texts using data from teachers' social conversations and written assignments.

The first research question asked:

How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?

In Chapter Five I provided a detailed response to this question. In summary, I found that these teachers engaged in a tactical manner with the Australian VET system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power. They used a range of tactics in their engagement with the system. They brokered this engagement within and across changing discursive positioning of both the concept of literacy and their work as adult literacy teachers.

In this chapter, I have addressed the second research question that follows from the first:

What does this engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

This engagement means that these teachers construct their identities through discourses of difference and change in which they express values, beliefs, perceptions and representations of themselves and others. In summary, they construct their professional identities through values and beliefs that:

- The work of adult literacy teaching is used to match learning to people's lives;
- The focus of their work has been changed from social justice to economic rationalism;
- This change means that they are expected to match people's lives to the country's economic need for certain types of workers;
- Not everything in life can be rationalised in economic terms;
- They are *not* doblers or healers or disconnected from their students' lives;
- They are practitioners with their students in learning and teaching;
- The literacy agenda is not concerned with individuals' lives;
- Practitioners are concerned with individuals' lives; and
- Literacy is for the overall good of society.

This chapter illustrates the contingent, constructed nature of identity as people seek out where they belong and to whom they are affiliated. As Bauman's (1996) parable so presciently taught his readers, it is not until people come up against change that they begin to consider their identity. The series of bullet points that summarise the

findings from this data analysis chapter show people thinking through who they are in relation to who others want them to be. They tell but one story of teachers constructing their identities within discursive structures that have positioned them as being certain types of subjects.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis began with a statement of the research problem in Chapter One: *What do changes to the knowledge base of literacy mean for adult literacy teachers?* In Chapter Two, the contextual limits and delimits of this problem were established via an extensive examination of the structural influences on Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system. In this area of adult education, it was found that, as the state moved from being both a provider and a policy director to being a policy enactment functionary, it institutionalised a bureaucratic system to achieve its policy imperatives. As one consequence of this, teachers' work and the knowledge that they used to do that work were redefined and reconstituted.

In Chapter Three I investigated that state-sanctioned redefinition and reconstitution by building a theoretical framework that could enable closer examination of these massive structural changes through the conceptual lenses of discourses, power and identity. Here the role of language was central to a particular theory of discourses espoused by Jim Gee, the 'Big D/little d' D/discourse theory that encompasses notions of ideology, power and identity. The theoretical framework also included considerations of work and pedagogy to complete the conceptual contextualisation of the study.

Chapter Four set out the study's methodological, data collection and data analysis strategy in its qualitative research design. I continued to use D/discourse theory

according to Gee (1996b, 1999) to anchor the data analysis strategy, in particular his interrelated linguistic analysis model. In Chapters Five and Six I applied these interrelated five linguistic systems in a way that made sense for me as I worked with document extracts and teachers' words as text. Chapter Five focused on analysis of text that would address the first research question, and Chapter Six focused on addressing the second research question.

In the first section of this final chapter, I present significant findings from these two data analysis chapters. In the second section, I explore the implications such findings may have for contributing to conceptual, methodological and empirical knowledge about this problem, its theoretical framework and its research design. The third section is both reflective and future oriented. Here I explore future challenges facing adult literacy education as it is positioned within the site of both literal and figurative struggle within an 'old' paradigm of education and training and a 'new' paradigm of lifelong learning.

7.1 FINDINGS

Findings from this research are presented in relation to the two research questions.

The first sub-section reports findings in relation to the first question:

How do the twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland engage with the vocational education and training system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes the concept of 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching?

The second sub-section responds to the second research question:

What does that engagement mean for these teachers' identity constructions?

7.1.1 Using critical literacy to broker change

Teachers engage with the VET system's institutionalised co-ordinations of power as to what constitutes 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching through a brokerage discourse in which they use a critical literacy to broker ongoing changes within their professional lives. This brokerage discourse is used to create spaces in which they use their own ideologically framed notions of the work of adult literacy teaching to shift the locus of power from the system to the students and themselves. Brokerage occurs at a policy–practice interface where the system's capillary networks of power encounter the teachers' capillaries of resistance.

Depending as it does upon its socio-cultural, economic, political and technological contexts, change is a contingent concept. It is mobilised when adult literacy teachers' actions are seen and believed to be in alignment with their employing registered training organisations' interpretations of: (1) their pre-service and in-service qualifications; (2) competency based training and assessment processes; (3) the terms and conditions of policy dependent funding; and (4) audit requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework (Australian National Training Authority, 2001; formerly the Australian Recognition Framework).

Change is brokered depending on the situation/s and the people involved. Teachers can comply with the system's changing requirements for particular qualifications, use of competency based education, adherence to funding guidelines and audit requirements. Yet, at the same time, they are employing tactics of engagement with these system's changes that give them space to construct their professional identities through their own values and belief systems.

Brokerage implies buying or selling something on behalf of others, usually, though not necessarily, for a fee. Teachers broker 'learning' for those who wish to sell it (their employers) and for those who wish to buy it (their students). This simplistic dichotomy cannot however reflect the intricate, ideologically based cultural, social, economic and political mechanisms by which some adults are positioned as sellers and others are positioned as buyers of literacy education. Brokerage is thus also a contingent and contextually dependent concept that engages with the system's disciplinary power co-ordinations as to what constitutes 'literacy' and the work of adult literacy teaching.

The discursive productions of brokerage are dependent upon the personal and professional particularities of individual teachers. When mobilised at the policy-practice interface in the contexts of adult literacy teachers' communities of practice, brokerage disrupts the VET system's power. It produces other co-ordinations of power through individuals and groups within those communities.

The processes by which these teachers broker change are enactments of a critical literacy. I found that these teachers use a critical literacy to empower themselves in the enactments of their professional practices. They know how to decode and encode meanings; they choose to identify and analyse the ways in which texts position people; to question and respond to such positionings; and to formulate and articulate their own views of the world (Luke, Herschell & Bahr, 2001).

The symbolic value of the curriculum frameworks and syllabus documents examined in this thesis is integral to these processes because, through their reactions to these documents, the teachers both recognise and articulate their own values, beliefs, knowledges and pedagogical commitments. The teachers also use this critical literacy to interrogate the discourses of lifelong learning that are reinscribing notions of adulthood itself.

Learning is found to be a price society expects adults to pay for unemployment benefits, continued employment, or promotion within employment, or mobility across employment sites; and literacy is but one of its currencies. This finding illustrates the paradoxes of a 'learning society' in which, as Peter Jarvis (1998) argues, "learning has become a process of consuming products of a new culture industry" (p. 67). Although there is still a need for public recognition of learning that is manifested through two of its major features that have emerged as significant in my research findings:

Learning that is vocationally orientated needs some form of public recognition because there is a sense in which its outcomes remain in the

public domain – the world of work and the labour market; and secondly, the capitalist enterprise of the mass media has penetrated the private sphere of individual leisure pursuits and de-privatised the sphere of interiority by creating a pseudo-public learning sphere (Habermas, 1989, p. 162) through the medium of qualifications, since it is only the possession of educational qualifications that demonstrates that ‘real’ learning has occurred. (Jarvis, 1998, p. 67)

Human beings respond to change in individual ways. The location of learning, which is essentially a private activity, within a social sphere that is itself undergoing continuous change exerts contradictory pressures on those people in contemporary society charged with its continuance. The adult literacy teachers in this study are just such people.

7.1.2 Double agents constructing identities

In their responses to these contradictory pressures, these teachers are constructing professional identities within the changing contemporary conditions of knowledge production and consumption within their worlds of work.

While these teachers are employed to become agents of the system, they also believe that they are professionals because they profess their first concerns to be their students as their clients. Now in some instances the needs of both system and students may be congruent; however, my findings suggest that this is not necessarily so. In actual fact, at times the teachers actively collude with the students in subverting the

VET system's organisational dictates – so long as they can do so undetected by its surveillance mechanisms.

There is a danger that this finding could be construed as a simple 'them' against 'us', with the teachers bent on the overthrow of the system and positioning themselves as 'double agents'. The construction of teachers' identities is more contingent and complex than that, as are their responses to the changing knowledge base of 'literacy' itself. The naming of this work as 'adult literacy teaching' is dependent upon the very VET system's structures of influences that created these jobs in the first place. Brokering the tensions and dilemmas of change that occur within contexts of conflicting professional loyalties is indeed difficult – based as they are upon differing ideological positions as to what constitutes teaching in general and, in this study, adult literacy teaching in particular.

In their discourse production, these teachers shift the pedagogical locus of power from the system to themselves and their students and, by extension, to the communities in which their students and they both live. This means that, within their communities of practice, they are engaged in fluid and at times messy relationships with one another and their students as the identities of all concerned are constructed in ongoing representational processes of self and others, which in themselves are political acts.

On the one hand, the institutionalised power co-ordinations of the VET system's bureaucracy mandates what counts as 'literacy' and what is recognised as 'adult

literacy teaching'. On the other hand, contemporary conditions operating in these teachers' local communities are used to co-ordinate their work and construct professional identities within the tensions and dilemmas of this ever-changing educational terrain. Hence, in their discourse productions, they perform and recognise each other as double agents who overtly comply with official discursive and disciplinary regulations while they are willing to subvert them covertly in order to provide what they believe to be a meaningful educational service to their clients.

7.1.3 Concluding thoughts

These findings warrant a guarded optimism that could be used to rejuvenate notions of teacher professionalism in this context, although there is a fragility to my optimism. The teachers' constructions of their professional identities could self-destruct if the policy imperatives of the system continue to be: (a) firmly wedded to the economic at the expense of the social well-being of people; and (b) implemented with a fiscal ferocity that denies teachers and students a voice, especially teachers far removed from the system's institutionalised power co-ordinations.

At the interface of policy and practice in their local communities, these adult literacy teachers have retained a sense of professional identity that they construct as fulfilling a worthwhile role in society. The inexorable weight of a VET system's institutionalised power structures that privilege the economic imperative for adult education while marginalising its social imperatives, does indeed pose challenges for them. Through their tactics of engagement with this power, the teachers reclaim their own discursive spaces.

These teachers are creating alternative spaces for their practices, spaces that are not acknowledged by either their students or the system's organisations which employ them. As professionals, they engage with both dimensions of their work: as teachers and employees. They use discursive spaces to broker complex and contradictory changes within society generally, and the VET system in particular. In other words, these twenty-three adult literacy teachers are in effect and effectively engaging with the economic, social, technological and political dimensions of global changes enacted at the level of the local and particular.

7.2 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

So what do these findings mean for the work that these people do as adult literacy teachers in particular, and for the significance of this study in general? To address this point, I will discuss the conceptual, methodological and empirical implications of these findings.

7.2.1 Conceptual significance and implications

In this thesis I have foregrounded three complex concepts of discourses, power and identity. To support this conceptual triangulation, I chose the three equally complex concepts of ideology, work and pedagogy. All six concepts contributed to the theoretical framing of my study. Having decided to use Gee's D/discourse theory as the mainstay of my theorising about discourses, I then needed an explicit focus on Foucault's understandings of discourse productions and institutionalised power. This

enabled me to investigate the relational ways in which power is co-ordinated in and through a bureaucratic system such as Australia's vocational education and training system. This was necessary because, through discourses, the power of this system was co-ordinated in certain ways that produced the changes to the knowledge base of literacy and the work of adult literacy teaching.

Discourse is at the conceptual heart of my study. Above all others, this concept has enabled me to investigate the concepts of power and identity. Laclau (1990) stated that "any institutional practice and any technique 'in and through which social production of meaning takes place' may be considered part of discourse" (p. 87). This explanation fitted my purposes in wishing to study the power co-ordinations of the VET system that had, it seemed to me, changed the disciplinary knowledge that scaffolded the work of these adult literacy teachers.

Used in the manner in which it has been in this study, discourse theory facilitates empirical investigations that can disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions about socio-cultural systems and the ways in which they operate. Discourses also enable full accounts of people's lives to be given a meaning that encompasses their differences of beliefs, motivations, attitudes, values and so on. Conceptually, discourses celebrate the diversity of human life and its knowledge creation abilities.

My explicit focus on the combination of Gee's and Foucault's notions of discourses together with Hall's constructions of identity brought a critical lens to my theoretical framework. Power and ideology are inextricably linked in discourses but it is the

addition of identity that creates the major significance of this study's theorising. Meaning is articulated, analysed and synthesised through this triumvirate of discourse, power and identity. Theoretically, this was important for my study because the VET system made adult literacy education mean just one thing; while for teachers it meant not just that one thing but also so much more besides. Foucault (1977) came to the rescue here by providing a way of thinking about meaning as part of discourse, as "embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms" (p. 200).

Hence the system's meaning was produced through its institutionalised power structures, while the teachers' meanings were established through their own ideologically framed socio-cultural systems. In this contested choreography of meanings they constructed their identities in ways that, as Habermas (in Geuss, 1981) noted, "satisfy certain very deep-seated human needs" (p. 22). There is much more to be said about ideology than was possible in this thesis but its conceptual role has been crucial in enabling me to isolate and analyse certain aspects of the VET system's power co-ordinations. Taken together with identity, ideology has facilitated my investigation of these teachers' constructions of identity that satisfy their needs for meaningful professional lives.

Although not anticipated, the combination of the concepts of work and pedagogy has significantly strengthened interpretations of the data analysis results. The brokerage of social change that was identified in Chapters Five and Six is a type of 'border-crossing pedagogical work' which itself is an indicator of a critical theory-in-action.

Pedagogical work uses the conceptual resources and will to engage in ongoing crossing of cultural borders in which constructed histories, bureaucratic structures, social forms and individual identities can be interrogated and retheorised (Giroux, 1992; Beck, 2000; Prakash & Hart, 2000).

Conceptually, this presents one way forward in understandings of adult learning for both teachers' professional development and adult literacy education. More generally, this study's conceptualisation has the potential to contribute to theorising other changes to the knowledge base of diverse worlds of work.

7.2.2 Methodological significance and implications

The study's contextual and theoretical framing, research design, data collection and data analysis strategy provide an avenue for investigating the methodological usefulness of Gee's 'Big D/little d' D/discourse theory. Specifically, this thesis gives a picture of what a 'Big D' identity kit looks like on human subjects and the role that language, the 'little d', plays in this identity construction. The teachers' work of brokering changes within both the system and their own and their students' lives is recognised as a cultural brokerage in which language is used to explore, challenge and contest dissonant discourses.

The rich thick description of Chapter Two actually began a significant methodological journey for this thesis. In this chapter, I built the foundation of a context–concept interface that went beyond synthesising the literature about other

people's interpretations of changes to the VET system. Using the literature, I developed an ideologically framed concept map of the system's contextualised structures of influence (*Figure 2.1: The VET system's structures of influence on adult literacy education*).

The context–concept interface was investigated further with the deployment of conceptual resources in Chapter Three. As part of this process, I conceptualised a relational matrix of the discourses of adult literacy teaching. In that matrix, I named discourses of significance from both inside and outside the VET system, together with my interpretation of the implications of these discourses for the work of adult literacy teaching (*Table 3.1: Discourses of Adult Literacy Teaching*).

The two data analysis chapters map the “performance and recognition work” (Gee, 1999, p. 38) with which the teachers engaged as they struggled and negotiated their way through seemingly never-ending mazes of change. Also in these chapters, the teachers’ “socially situated identities and activities” (Gee, 1999, p. 38) are identified through: (1) narratives that synthesise data of different types from different sources; (2) vignettes of the lived experiences of a selection of individual teachers written as pen pictures; and (3) an interrelated linguistic systems model for discourse analysis.

There is a methodological symmetry to this approach that links its contextualised rich thick description (Chapter Two) with its theoretical framework (Chapter Three). The research design (Chapter Four) flows from there and is followed by the data analysis processes of Chapters Five and Six.

The challenge in working with this singular methodological orientation came from what I found to be its initially disarming clarity that (for me) masks a formidable complexity of both theory and method. Theorising about discourses in Chapter Three enabled notions of power, ideology and identity to inform the methodological questions in Chapter Four. These methodological questions were the key to linking theory and design in the research process. They encapsulated the study's theoretical concepts and guided my refinement of the research questions.

Methodologically, the 'Big D/little d' relationship also informed a very detailed and rigorous method for analysing the data. The interrelated linguistic analysis gave me confidence that I was exploring as many meaning-making avenues as possible. I am aware that this probably says as much about my own nature, teaching background and experience as a researcher as it does about Gee's analysis method. This link between the personality of the researcher and her/his lived experiences is a feature of methodological significance that is also worth noting. It seems to me that people choose methodologies according to their 'fit' between different people in particular situations and certain types of research problems. While seeming logical and also defensible when part of doing research, this 'fit' is therefore both personal and professional in nature.

7.2.3 Empirical significance and implications

Empirically, this case resonates with stories that give a vocality (Gale, 1997a&b) to teachers' readings of adult literacy education within the VET system. During their professional development courses, I found that teachers used narratives to tell three different types of stories: sacred, cover and secret (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1996; Connelly, Clandinin & He, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). This categorisation of stories is a useful interpretive resource because it evokes the meanings the teachers themselves make when telling their stories.

Depending on the contexts in which they are considered to have meaning, the governing bureaucratic system's stories are sacred in the sense that they may be worshipped and/or left inviolate and/or desecrated by teachers. Through their cover stories the locus of power is shifted and identities constructed, because cover stories are those told to disguise and/or conceal the pedagogical practices of this border-crossing work from the surveillance of the system. Secret stories embody the knowledge gained from lived experiences of self and others. They embody knowledge, which is perceived to be "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly, Clandinin & He, 1997, p. 666).

Claiming vocality via storying such as was examined in this study has significant implications for a potential reconstitution of curriculum leadership within adult literacy education, teacher professional development and by extension the VET system as a whole. The use of secret and cover stories in relation to sacred stories

functions as a distinctive social marker of professional identities encompassing the possibilities of new social conversations and actions of a reinvigorated curriculum leadership.

In interpreting these findings as possibilities for curriculum leadership, I am using Kilpatrick, Falk and Johns' (2002) understanding that "leadership is about change, whereas management is about creating stability" (p. 236). Thus far, the VET system with its 'key competencies' and 'communicative competencies' has sought to take over the curriculum management of adult literacy education. Its purpose in doing so was to bring stability to what was perceived to be a previously unstable terrain outside the system's surveillance.

Through their secret stories these teachers appear to be comfortable with a curriculum leadership in which they broker change via processes in which knowledge, roles and relationships are neither pre-determined nor immutably set. A necessary condition for this curriculum leadership though is a valued stance, a vocality, from which to conceptualise and operationalise this leadership.

This notion of vocality relies not only on voice-as-articulation to give it meaning, but it also embodies the Bourdieu (1993) inspired stances or social positions that "are taken up, accorded value and made subject to the play of various tensions" (Danaher, Coombes, Simpson, Harreveld & Danaher, 2002, p. 14; see also Gale, 1997a&b; Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). The potentialities emerging from Habermasian lifeworld perspectives (Habermas, 1989) of teachers' curriculum decision-making are

presented through this notion. Vocality provides positions or stances in spaces that celebrate teachers' voices and their inclusion in the actions of curriculum leadership.

Autonomous forces from within the literacy field itself have been found to work in partnership with heteronomous forces (Bourdieu, 1993) that have emerged from beyond the field of adult literacy to transform the ways in which the work of adult literacy teaching is conducted. If the ideological intent of the VET system shifts or mutates, then teachers could be repositioned yet again. They could become significant stakeholders within the system's structures of influence through reinvigorated dialogic conversations in the discourses of knowledge. In such dialogue, social production of the meaning of adult literacy education could be advanced (Macdonnell, 1986; Foucault, 1980, 1984, 1991; Gee, 1999). Of course my optimism may be misplaced. It could be precisely because these teachers perceive themselves to be disenfranchised and marginalised within the system that their double agents' storying provides a sustainable, nurturing vocality to their professional lives.

The knowledge base of literacy teaching really challenges notions of 'discipline' knowledge and, as seen in these findings, that knowledge base can be used to resist actively the disciplinary power of a system that seeks to make discipline knowledge in its own image and likeness. It is literacy's very elusiveness that inveigles it into all institutionalised discourse productions, yet in this same elusiveness lies its potentialities for transformative change.

This tentative postulation is a challenge for a system whose policies have profiled Australia's responses to the processes of globalisation. Forces of globalisation have been characterised by an integration of economies across nation states that is facilitated by flexible markets for products and human capital, which in turn are dependent upon continually evolving information technologies (Edwards, 1997).

Crucially, these processes of globalisation involve power orientations, identities and networks in what Beck (2000) saw as "the dimensions of communications technology, ecology, economics, work organization, culture and civil society" (p. 19). Yet as I have found in this study, the effects of globalisation are seeing governments seeking to mediate, among other things, a social and economic interrelatedness of everyday life.

7.3 REFLECTIONS

In this thesis, I have identified a number of significant changes to teachers' professional lives. I have focused primarily on two particular changes that fundamentally challenged the knowledge base upon which they constructed their identities.

The first change was to the knowledge base of 'literacy'. Literacy used to be whatever people wanted it to be. It had something notionally to do with reading and writing, and would presumably serve some social purpose/s in people's lives. The people themselves determined that purpose. Now the state determines what literacy is to be.

This means that if people want to be paid money to teach literacy then they have to know what the state intends literacy to be. Likewise, if other people want to learn literacy as a stand-alone learning or integrated with other formal learning, then they have to accept the particular literacy that is on offer from the state.

The second major significant change was to the curriculum. The curriculum used to be determined by teachers in consultation with students. Even when literacy was embedded in other work-oriented disciplines, the teachers were the key determinants of how the curriculum was to be framed. That is not to say that employers and community members of various organisation did not have a voice in this process; they did. However the state and the community recognised the teachers as professionals whose job it was to determine the curriculum. Now state-funded, non-elected individuals cast as representatives of industry make decisions about curriculum in terms of competencies related to performativity in workplaces. Competency based education was a vehicle used to shift the purpose of state-funded adult literacy curriculum.

Publicly funded adult literacy education may be a good idea, but it is possibly not suited to bureaucratic systems that were established to service the supply and demand vagaries of global economies. It is so much easier to allocate funding on the basis of scenarios that forecast shortfalls of human capital in particular areas of business endeavour. The boxes are neatly categorised: 'x' cleaners, 'y' boilermakers and so on. As new work emerges, then it is just a matter of putting a box around yet another category, for example, 'z' call-centre operators. As old work categories disappear,

then those boxes are simply dismantled by not funding them. In western democracies such as Australia, boxes are filled on a transparent needs basis from 'buckets' of public money that can be justified according to government policies that people themselves have approved via democratic election processes.

In this scenario, lifelong learning is a process by which human capital can be re-tooled to suit changing knowledge bases that support all sorts of boxes in various combinations over increasingly short periods of time. If people can be convinced that learning is good for them, then their brains will become like well-oiled machines that can be adapted at will. Herein lies the crux of this scenario with which these teachers took issue. They effectively disrupted and destabilised the values, beliefs, assumptions, misinterpretations and misrepresentations of people upon which it was predicated.

In wrestling with the tensions and dilemmas of their working lives, the teachers posed no simple solutions, no new categories or boxes. Instead, they shared their methods of brokering these changes in their lives in ways that were informed by their own values, beliefs, assumptions, and representations of themselves and perceptions of others. Thus the future of adult literacy education is not entirely within the purview of nation states, or wholly within that of integrated economies and technologies. Its future lies within the multidimensional, complex and connective relationships among people as they establish networks, and broker the changes in their worlds of work in the twenty-first century.

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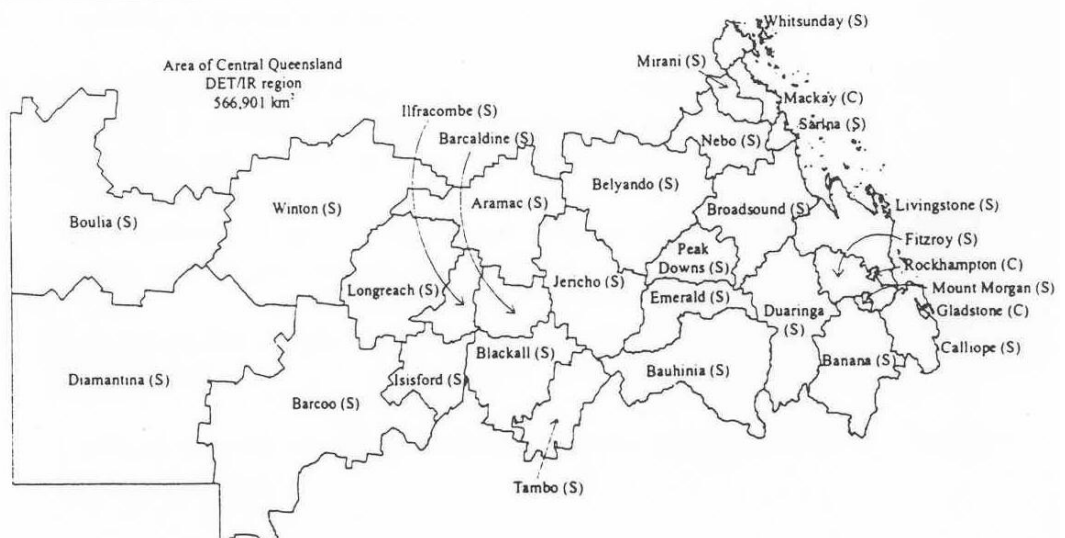
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APPENDIX 1: THE CENTRAL QUEENSLAND REGION

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CENTRAL QUEENSLAND DET REGION



C = City S = Shire

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

Research Project:

Brokering changes to the knowledge base of twenty-three members of a cohort of adult literacy teachers in Central Queensland: A study of power and identity through discourses

Roberta Elizabeth Harreveld
PhD Student
Faculty of Education and Creative Arts
Central Queensland University

Consent Form

(Ethical Clearance Number: 96/6-309)

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|----|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | An Information Sheet has been provided to me; it provides details about the nature and purpose of the study. | Yes/No |
| 2. | I also understand that I can obtain a copy of the detailed research proposal should I desire. | Yes/No |
| 3. | I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. | Yes/No |
| 4. | I want my anonymity to be maintained. | Yes/No |
| 5. | I am aware that I may ask to examine the transcripts of my interview/s to ensure they are an accurate reflection of my statements and can change these if deemed warranted. | Yes/No |
| 6. | Where relevant, I agree to having my assignment and tutorial work used as data for the purpose of this study. | Yes/No/
Not Relevant |
| 7. | I am aware that a copy of the thesis will eventually be stored in the CQU library. | Yes/No |
| 8. | I wish to view the results of the research for the area(s) in which I have participated. | Yes/No |

Signature:

Date: