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From essay to resumé : a study of writing genre and discursive positioning in senior school English

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**From Essay to Resumé: A Study of Writing Genre
and Discursive Positioning in Senior School
English**

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Bachelor of Arts (Curtin University), Master of Letters (University of New England),
Diploma of Education (University of New England)

This thesis is presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education and Arts
Edith Cowan University

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

In 2004, the Western Australian government signalled its intention to increase the school leaving age from 15 to 17 by 2008 (Carpenter, 2004). During the period from 2004 to 2006, increasing numbers of young Western Australians completed twelve years of secondary school. For English faculties in Western Australian schools, this resulted in a notably diverse cohort of students undertaking compulsory English studies in their final two years of school.

The central aim of this thesis was to examine what it means to be a writer in senior school English. In doing so, the thesis investigated the construction of student writing identities in an environment where increasing numbers of students progressed through senior school with the intention of pursuing pathways other than university. In this setting, students were offered a range of English subjects, each of which represented and promoted particular writing identities, and access to specific opportunities for learning about genre. The thesis explored the role of environmental and discursive features in shaping student writing identities through the selection, presentation and construction of genre. In this process, it examined the discursive framing of writers through the key features of writing in curricula, policy, seminal discourses of the English subject area, teacher interpretation of curricula and the texts students construct.

A review of the literature, particularly the recent work of Kress (2005, 2006), Bourne (2003) and Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Hardcastle, Jones, and Reid (2005) suggests that the factors shaping writing identity in the English subject area emanate from both the local contexts of the classroom and broader cultural and institutional contexts. In order to analyse and interpret the influence of broader social and cultural values and practices, a discourse analysis (Bernstein, 1990, 1996, 2000) has been applied to policy, curriculum and classroom practice. To do this specifically, Bernstein's notion of pedagogic discourse has been used to explain how educational contexts were framed through regulative discourses that shape social order and outline how learning takes place. Additionally, using Bernstein's framework, the thesis explored how opportunities for learning and access to particular forms of genre were framed at the level of policy and curriculum.

Central to this investigation of identity has been an analysis of how the selection, presentation and construction of genre discursively positions students. It drew upon the theoretical framing of genres as culturally embedded templates, which influence the features of texts and the parameters of successfully constructed texts (Feez, 2002;

Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2006a; Martin, 1985, 2002, 2009). The thesis examined the discourse roles (Smidt, 2002, 2009) offered to students and their own attempts to establish identities as they engaged with the genres they encountered. To examine the nexus between identity, genre and discourse, the thesis has utilised Bakhtin's (1986) notion of the discourse community and its use in studies of genre (Hyland, 2010; Ivanic, 2006; Smidt, 2009). Aspects of systemic functional linguistics (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop, 2000; Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1985) have been employed to identify and interpret some of the linguistic resources presented to students and the ways students appropriated and transformed these. In doing so, the research drew upon investigations of the positioning of students writers in subject English through a number of discourses and practices (Bourne, 2003; Christie, 2002b, 2005a, Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Kress et al., 2005).

A case study methodology provided the primary research design. Elements of the ethnography were used as interpretative tools, and the thesis incorporated the social semiotic ethnography (van Leeuwen, 2005a, Vannini, 2007). Data from a range of sources were used including policy and curriculum documents, teacher and student interviews, classroom observations and text analysis.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

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Acknowledgements

Undertaking and completing a thesis is a lengthy, complex and often isolated process. It requires much time and effort, and I could not have finished it without encouragement and support. I would particularly like to express my gratitude here to my supervisor, Associate Professor Doctor Deslea Konza. Her patience, encouragement and insight were invaluable as I progressed through the writing stages. Thank you also to my associate supervisor, Doctor Brian Moon, for insightful comments and useful editing. Early guidance from Doctor Anne Thwaite provided useful advice on construction of the thesis. This project owes its existence also to Edith Cowan University and the many individuals who have supported me in this journey.

I would also like to thank colleagues who have supported me as I have completed this thesis. In particular, I would like to thank Ollie Martinson who encouraged me to undertake further postgraduate study. His interest and encouragement provided an impetus to continue. I would like to thank colleagues at Aquinas College and Helena College in Western Australia for their enthusiasm, generosity and patience.

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Prologue

The purpose of this research was to investigate how the discourses and practices surrounding construction of genre influence writing identity. To do this, the thesis looked to a number of theoretical frameworks that had supported investigations into student writing identities. Research into the ways environments influence writing identities alerted this researcher to the fact that contexts are complex entities that need to be considered at multiple levels.

For this reason, the research incorporated a social semiotic framework that focused on the process of meaning making. In order to achieve this, the thesis turned to the seminal work of Hodge and Kress (1988) who maintained that individuals and groups construct meaning by drawing on the communicative templates available in particular environments and by adapting them to achieve specific social purposes.

More specific theoretical concepts and research tools were needed to support this broad social semiotic umbrella. Discourse analysis scaffolded through Bernstein's (1996, 2000) notion of pedagogic discourse supported interpretations of policy, curriculum and the organisation of learning about writing within the classroom. Australian genre studies (Macken-Horarik, 2005; Martin, 2001) offered ways of analyzing the purposes, structures and stages of student texts. Bakhtin's (1986) notion of discourse community provided a framework for studying the integration of discourse, genre and identity (Hyland, 2010; Ivanic, 2006; Smidt, 2009). Additionally, the thesis utilised some of the work of Kress (2005, 2006), Jewitt (2005) and Bourne (2003) who argued that investigations into subject English are limited by their lack of attention to the physical dimensions of classrooms.

One key aspect of this project was determining how student texts reflected emerging writing identities. To do this, the researcher considered the use of various resources in the process of text production. A framework that provided the analytical tools to examine linguistic resources and the choices made by students was needed. To do this, the researcher chose elements of the Hallidayan (1985, 1994) functional linguistic framework because of its close alignment with Australian genre studies and because it offered the opportunity to examine students' choices about language. This thesis utilised, however, only a limited number of functional linguistic concepts and in this respect does not purport to offer an indepth functional linguistic analysis of text production.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 An overview of the research

For at least the past decade, education in Australia has been marked by controversy. On one weekend in September 2006, *The Australian*, the country's only national newspaper, published four articles and one long editorial dedicated to Australian education¹. At stake was the reputation of the country's state based education systems, the validity of the school curricula and the future of "true values" in education. Amidst charges of neglect of the Western literary canon and an ideologically driven interest in critical literacy, the English subject area was held accountable for inadequate literacy standards and neglect of Australian educational and social traditions. Underpinning these articles was a sense of moral outrage that Australian schools, the English subject area and its teachers had failed to deliver in a climate of economic prosperity and social stability.

At a deeper level, arguably, such concerns reflect some of the challenges facing Western liberal societies as they come to terms with social, economic and technological change. New communications and new cultural and technological practices confront education systems, schools, teachers and existing subject areas. This is an environment where certainties of the previous century are under challenge as new communication forms and technologies are established in young people's private lives and are entrenched in public and business domains. It is against such a background that this study of the English subject area and three Year Twelve English classes in Western Australian schools, the teachers and students at Woodlands, Altona and Alexander Heights High Schools was located. (All names used throughout are pseudonyms.)

This thesis aimed to identify the ways writing identities are discursively constituted in writing practices and in the learning environments in which those practices take place. First, it identified the salient discursive features of the learning environments. Second, it explored how students are discursively positioned as particular types of writers and third, it scrutinised the writing identities of the students in the three classes. In doing so,

¹ Ferrari, J. (2006. September 24/5) 'States failing nations' schools'.
The Editor (2006) 'Deconstructing the loony fringe: a real education is the right of every Australian child'.
Freemith, D. (2006) 'Critics have loaded agenda'.
Donnelly, K. (2006) 'Subject for complaint'.
Wiltshire, K. (2006), 'In defence of the true values of learning'.

the thesis closely examined the relationship between learning environments, discourses and writing identities in three senior English classes. Through these processes, the thesis examined how the discipline area of English has framed expectations of writing and genre for particular groups of students.

This is the story of three teachers and their students in contemporary Australian schools. Each of their classes represented environments where a unique set of factors coalesced, ones where teachers and students brought with them distinctive experiences and expectations. Woodlands Senior High School, located in Perth's north-western suburbs, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2006. In the midst of a busy English faculty, Barry (pseudonym) a recent recruit to English teaching, and coming from a carpentry and small business background, taught lower and senior school English and Literature.

Altona High School commenced classes in 1940. The school is located in one of Perth's older neighbourhoods, close to the Swan River and a short distance from the Central Business District. Typical of many inner city areas, in 2005 the population was one of contrasts composed of migrant groups, indigenous families, university students, retired workers and a growing number of young professionals (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002, p. 107). In this increasingly cosmopolitan school environment, Frances (pseudonym), a classroom teacher with an established career in the English subject area, maintained a broad teaching program.

Situated in Perth's north-western corridor, Alexander Heights Senior High School opened in 1987, with a capacity for 1,000 students. Set amongst large playing fields and native gardens, the school buildings featured broad verandas and spacious classrooms, common work areas and computer rooms. Erin (pseudonym) had commenced at the school the previous year after a decade teaching in the mining towns of north-western Australia and specialising in middle school literacy.

1.2 Writing in Senior English in Western Australian

This research was conducted during a period of expansion in Australia's provision of senior or upper school education (Carpenter, 2004; Lamb, Dwyer & Wyn, 2000). During this time of fluctuating youth unemployment, state governments and education sectors made a determined effort to keep young Australians at school. There was also increasing concern about the limited skill level of young people leaving school, particularly those leaving after only ten years, and their vulnerability in an employment market requiring fewer unskilled workers as jobs moved offshore (Carpenter, 2004). Such concerns were reflected in Western Australia. In 2002, the Curriculum Council of

Western Australia released its review of post-compulsory education: *Our Youth, Our Future: Post Compulsory Education Review* (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2002). The report addressed the Western Australian government's drive for retention of students through post-compulsory years, noting that only two-thirds of school students in Western Australia stayed on to Year Twelve (p. 2). Arguing that there were limited outcomes for these students, the report maintained that students leaving school at Year Ten were unlikely to possess the fundamental skills for necessary employment and were at risk of exclusion from many aspects of social and economic life.

Many of these concerns were reiterated in the consultation paper *Creating the future for our young people: Raising the school leaving age* (Carpenter 2004). The paper advocated an increase in the school leaving age for Western Australians to sixteen by 2006 and to seventeen by 2008. It highlighted the fact that in 2004, thirty per cent of fifteen to nineteen year olds, approximately thirty thousand young people, were not engaged in higher education, training, or full time employment (p. 1). Many of these thirty thousand were identified as coming from low social economic backgrounds. At this time, fewer young Western Australians completed twelve years of schooling than in other Australian states (p. 10) and Western Australia trailed behind several OECD countries in levels of school retention (p. 11).

Across Australia, individual state and territory based boards designed and managed English curricula, an arrangement resulting in seven systems of curricula. During 2005, all senior students in Western Australia studied one of the five English subjects designed to prepare them for diverse post school destinations.

The English subject is a complex school discipline. At its core lies an array of knowledge bases and traditions such as drama, media, literature, rhetoric and more recently business and cultural studies. Consequently, English teachers have the opportunity to appropriate multiple areas of knowledge, theoretical underpinnings and textual practices in the delivery of secondary school curricula. Not surprisingly, debates fill English professional journals as to whether the subject is primarily a liberal arts subject, emphasising aesthetic and rhetorical uses of language, a vehicle for cultural studies or part of a broader notion of literacy (Macken-Horarik, 2009; Sawyer, 2005; Unsworth, 2008).

Accompanying this disquiet is the propensity for the subject to capture the Australian public's increasingly pervasive concerns about literacy standards. As a result, the English subject area is regularly enmeshed in political and public anxieties over a contemporary literacy crisis and perceived declining literacy standards (Carrington, 2005). Curricula designers and teachers have extended the subject's repertoire based on the understanding that successful communication in the modern period requires the

integration of multiple literacy practices (Beavis & Charles, 2005; Jewitt, 2005b; Kalantzis & Cope, 1997; Kress, 2006; Macken-Horarik, 2009; Unsworth, 2008). This has resulted in an increased emphasis on the importance of design and integration of multiple modes such as writing, image and video clips in text (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996; Kress, 2003b). Ironically, such discourses and practices have contributed to public perceptions that the subject has lost sight of its function, which is primarily the teaching of reading and writing (Turner, 2007).

In many English classrooms, teachers and students encounter a myriad of textual forms and semiotic resources shaped by changing technologies and communication practices. Increasingly English teachers incorporate the analysis and composition of visual modes such as the photograph and the film into their teaching and textual practice. In this environment, writing occupies an increasingly uncertain place as forms of representation and production, such as the website, the image, the email and blog challenge the place of writing, and particular forms of writing, as a preferred and valued form of communication (Beavis, 2006; Kress, Howie & Sawyer, 2006). Increasingly, for teachers, the process of balancing changing and diverse communicative demands and practices with public, and indeed media expectations, and the demands of universities, employers and their own subject discipline has become increasingly complex.

1.3 The aims of this research investigation

The primary aim of this thesis was to identify what it means to be a writer in the senior secondary school English context. It sought to do this initially by examining the types of texts students constructed and some of the genre and linguistic resources they employed in this process. Additionally, the thesis sought to delineate how particular learning environments and specific writing practices shape writing identities. More specifically, it focused on the ways learning environments construct particular identities and roles for writers through the semiotic resources made available in those environments and the ways students were positioned to appropriate and use those resources. The key question framing this thesis was:

What environmental and discursive features shape the writing identities of senior secondary English students?

The following questions framed the investigation, description, analysis and interpretation more specifically:

1. What is the interaction between the physical and discursive learning environments, and the selection, presentation and construction of particular genres?

- How did policy, curriculum and classrooms discursively shape writing and genre practices?
 - How did selection and presentation of text frame genre and writing practices?
 - In particular, how did these contextual aspects frame access to particular ideational, interpersonal and textual resources?
2. What writing practices were evident in the focus classes?
- How did these practices facilitate access to a range of ideational, interpersonal and textual resources?
 - How did taking part in these practices discursively position students?
3. What writing identities were students positioned to affiliate with in these contexts?
- How did students' understandings of their nature as writers influence their activities of writing?
 - How were students' understanding of themselves as writers reflected in the texts they construct?
 - How were they displayed in students' construction of texts and their use of particular registers and linguistic resources?

1.4 The significance of this research study

This combined discursive, genre and functional linguistic study explored the dynamic web of factors that shaped writing practices in three senior English classes. Initially, the thesis adds to the existing body of research in the English area by identifying the writing practices, genres and resources utilised in senior English classes. To achieve this, it examined how the English subject area constitutes a specific environment in which writing takes place. It identified key aspects of English classroom environments that influence and help shape what it means to be a writer in senior English. In particular, it aimed to explicate the complexity of the environments in which students write by incorporating a multilayered understanding of these contexts comprised of policy, curriculum, selection and presentation of genre and classroom instruction.

Previous research has identified that the English subject area is prone to being overlaid by discourses from other fields and therefore it is often adapting to emerging discourses, technologies and social change (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Beavis, 2006). An examination of the literature revealed that contemporary forms of English in Australia draw from a number of areas such as Literature, Cultural Studies and Vocational Education. For this reason, as Green (2004, 2006) contended, we cannot

easily speak of doing *English*. Rather we need to consider the differing versions of English such as *English as Literature*, *English as Work*, *English as Cultural Studies* and *English as Literacy* (Green, 2006) as a series of specialised languages and part of a segmentally structured school discipline (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007). Australian researchers over the past decade have raised concerns that writing practices in the subject may not provide adequate opportunities for the development of writing competencies (Gilbert, 2001; Kamler & Comber, 2004; Macken-Horarik, 2006a). Researchers have questioned whether specificity in the subject area has further limited this development and ignored the myriad of social and cultural purposes writing serves.

An understanding of school-based writing is both socially and politically important. Within schools, conceptual knowledge is often demonstrated through writing (Kress, 1994), and the capacity to construct particular texts - such as the essay, signals certain educational milestones (Christie & Derewianka, 2008). This thesis incorporated Bourne (2002) and Kress' (1994) view that schooled writing is a distinct, routine, discursive practice that is constructed within the context of particular learning environments, through particular practices and activities, and is embodied in the construction of particular texts. In spite of recent and far-reaching changes to text production, the status afforded to writing demands that it maintain a key place in the English classroom. As Johnson and Kress (2003) have posited, English curricula designers and teachers need to give:

...an even greater seriousness of attention to the teaching of writing. Far from suggesting that we need no longer pay attention to these forms of literacy, we feel strongly that writing will remain the preferred form of the cultural and political elites, so that an equitable curriculum must pay the greatest attention to writing for the reason of 'access' alone. (p. 13).

This thesis takes the position that successful and confident student writing facilitates social inclusion and subverts forms of marginalisation. For this reason, teacher educators, schools, curriculum designers and English teachers would benefit from an understanding of the factors privileging and shaping the writing identities presented to students. This is particularly the case in a nation experiencing the transition to a national English curriculum. In such an environment, policy decisions and national, state based and local strategies for implementing curriculum may have a significant impact on writing practices in the classroom. A more explicit recognition of the multiple and dynamic factors influencing the writing practices presented to students and the ways students are taught to value and use those practices can help teachers to understand these. Equally, it is important to consider how such broad factors removed from the classroom interact with school agendas, the traditions of the school discipline and indeed teachers' own perspectives about writing and about particular groups of

students. The thesis aims to address this gap in secondary school English education research through use of key research in the field of identity construction and the positioning of student writers.

1.5 Discursive positioning of identity through writing genre – a conceptual framework

1.5.1 *An interpretation of writing as a social semiotic practice*

Social semiotics is a collection of theoretical and analytical frameworks which assume that the human need to achieve social purposes drives the process of meaning making and that possible meanings are shaped by the availability of semiotic resources (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005a). From a social semiotic perspective, writing is a complex process of constructing meaning (Kress, 1994, 1997; Christie, 2002a, 2005b). This is because the construction of written text results from the appropriation of a multifarious array of linguistic, cultural, material and increasingly visual resources (Jewitt, 2005b; Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2005, 2006a).

On a more specific level, the notion of genre provides a valuable operational tool for explaining the social and cultural framing of text. According to Martin (2002, 2009), genres function as communicative templates which offer potential meanings and the resources that afford those meanings. They are, as Martin explained, “configurations of meaning that are recurrently phased together to enact social purposes” (2002, p. 243) as potential and patterned forms of text. Their success in achieving social purposes and acts of communication requires a level of stability. However, writers modify these forms as they respond to the demands of their immediate environment, their own interests and changing social and technological environments.

This thesis examined the texts students in three classes constructed and the generic templates they draw upon in that process. Additionally, it examined how curriculum, classroom practices and teachers’ perceptions of students and the subject area influenced the selection, presentation of text and construction of genre. In turn, the thesis drew upon elements of systemic functional linguistics to identify the meanings offered to students and the ways these are constructed through writing (Macken-Horarik (2002, 2006a, 2006b). In doing so, it incorporated the concept of register to describe how resources are used in particular contexts to achieve specific communicative purposes (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Martin, 2009).

1.5.2 Discursive framing of environments for participation in writing and genre practices

For many young Australians the school classroom is the dominant arena in which learning to write takes place. Social semiotic research into the role of the physical environment, particularly the work of Jewitt (2005a), Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Hardcastle, Jones and Reid (2005) and Bourne (2001, 2003) indicated that the learning environment is imbued with potentials for meaning. Features such as the arrangement of furniture, wall displays and the availability of technologies, such as computers, offer significant potentials for meaning and access to resources used in writing and construction of text.

However, as Brandt and Clinton (2002) and Morais (2002) explain, the factors that influence these environments, that frame possibilities for meaning, and shape access to resources, begin in locations far removed from the classroom. Perceptions of which textual and writing practices are valued, and are deemed appropriate for particular groups of students, take shape in the broader social, cultural and political world, such as in the policy arena. Notions of valued genres and their composition are shaped by dominant social and cultural values and attitudes, and indeed the influence of specific interest groups that find their way into the classroom through factors such as educational policy, curriculum, teacher education and teaching resources.

For this reason, a theoretical understanding of the notion of context that incorporates both local environments and broader cultural settings was used. To build this understanding, the thesis drew on Halliday's (1985) conceptualisation of context as a "semantic environment", a location of semiotic resources and a resource in itself. As such, it viewed context as a "dynamic entity, a multi-levelled phenomenon", where meaning arises out of the interaction between an immediate context of situation, and a broader cultural environment or context of culture.

The concept of discourse community (Beaufort, 1999a; Hyland, 2010; Swales, 1990) provided a framework for investigating environments as largely discursively constructed. The thesis incorporated the notion that discourses operate at multiple levels of society (Gee, 1999, 2002, 2004) and serve to represent and maintain the values of a culture (Hodge & Kress, 1988). Bakhtin's (1986) notions of *discourse role* and *positioning* helped to describe how students are framed as particular types of writers by the roles offered in their classroom and the texts they constructed.

School subject areas, and the discourses that support them, constitute a link between broader cultural features and elements of the specific or local environment of the school classroom. As Bernstein (1990, 1996, 1999a, 2000) articulated, school subjects are never constructed, framed or enacted in isolation. They comprise discourses, taken

from elsewhere and reshaped or recontextualized to conform to, and at times resist, particular social and cultural agendas. In a Bernsteinian framework, subjects such as English are significant and powerful mechanisms by which social, ideological and political discourses are legitimised in education systems and in individual classrooms. For this reason, schools and school subjects constitute powerful locations of socialisation and acculturation.

This thesis drew upon Bernstein's (1996, 1999b, 2000) notion of pedagogic discourse to help explain the ways discourses shaped learning environments, framed appropriate writing practices for certain groups of students and in turn, shaped forms of student writing identity. For Bernstein, pedagogic discourses fell into two categories. Regulative discourses, 'discourse of social order', frame the social environment in which learning takes place. These ideological discourses shape the second category of instructional discourses, which frame the content, sequencing and pacing of what is taught and the strategies used for the transference of knowledge, competencies and skills.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

This research was bounded by an indepth study of three Year Twelve classes which provided the opportunity to examine writing practices and the ways these helped construct student writing identities. For this reason, they represented unique environments with specific sets of circumstances and therefore the findings of this study cannot necessarily be replicated in other contexts (Cresswell, 2003). The study was also bounded by its concentration on one particular subject within the English area. As such, it did not take into account writing practices in English classes in other states or indeed, in other English subjects of the time.

In this study, the learning environment was examined primarily as a discursive construct derived from policy, curriculum, selection and presentation of genre and teacher instruction. However, a myriad of interconnecting features shape learning environments. Other aspects that influence student writing practices and their writing identities, such as writing undertaken outside of the school environment, writing in other subjects and the relationship between reading and writing were beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, the research took into account the importance of assessment in framing identity, however, due to time restrictions, it did not analyse assessment practices in depth.

This thesis relied upon the principles and theoretical framework of the Australian or Sydney School genre tradition (Christie, 2002a, 2004b, 2005a; Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Martin, 2001, 2002, 2009) to examine the social purposes and

structures of the texts constructed by students. This theoretical framework also provided a valuable way to identify links between the texts constructed by students, the discursive nature of their immediate learning environment and aspects of the broader social and cultural context. Aspects of systemic functional linguistics have been utilised, however, this thesis does not provide a rigorous account of the linguistic resources employed by teachers and students. Rather, a selection of linguistic resources were studied to provide an insight into the ways contexts made resources available to students, how students appropriated these resources and how both contributed to the construction of student writing identities.

1.7 Outline of the study

This thesis is structured in nine chapters. **Chapter Two**, the literature review, presents significant past and emerging traditions in the field of writing in subject English and their influence upon writing and textual practice. Additionally, the review examines the theoretical framing of writing as a social semiotic system composed of multiple resources. In particular, the literature review examines recent theoretical considerations and practical applications of the ways discourses shape student identity and forms of participation, selection of writing practices and in turn the construction of the student writer.

Chapter Three begins with a description of the ethnographic and case study methodology informing the research. It outlines the central features of the case study and justifies the ethnography as an appropriate tool for analysis and interpretation. In particular, it explains the overall research methodology, data collection tools and analytical strategies including codes, categories and the development of themes and patterns.

A description of the learning environment begins in **Chapter Four**, which interrogates institutional notions of genre and writing identity as reflected in informing policy and curriculum documents. Incorporating Bernstein's (1990, 1996, 1999a, 2000) notion of pedagogic discourse, significant policy and curriculum initiatives are described and analysed in terms of the ways they position particular groups of English students.

Chapter Five describes in detail the construction of writing identities in the first case study, Barry's class at Woodlands Senior High School. It does this initially through an investigation of the learning environment and the ways curriculum is enacted. Additionally, the chapter focuses on the selection and presentation of genres and the ways this provides access to a range of semiotic resources. The chapter identifies those specific resources outlined in the literature review, namely the ideational

resources of subject matter and abstract and technical language and transitivity processes, the interpersonal resources of appraisal and modality and textual resources of conjunction and reference. An investigation of the ways school classes are regulative environments in which genres and texts are constructed was undertaken. The chapter finishes with a description of the dominant forms of writing identity as apparent in students' written texts.

This same process takes place in **Chapter Six**, which investigates the construction of writing identities in the second case study, Frances' class at Altona High School. **Chapter Seven** explores this construction in the third case study, Erin's class at Alexander Heights. **Chapter Eight** examines the similarities and differences in the ways classes frame and shape the construction of writing identities and the ways students accept, negotiate and resist these. Finally, **Chapter Nine** discusses the findings of the project as they apply to stakeholders in the field of subject English. The chapter also identifies implications for policy makers, researchers and practitioners in the broader context of secondary subject English.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One provided an overview of how student writing identities in senior English classrooms may be framed, constructed and in some cases marginalised by multiple layers of discourse. This chapter, as outlined in Figure 2.1, explores dominant research trends in the field of the English subject area. The chapter constructs a theoretical framework that incorporates elements of: 1) a semiotic understanding of genre and writing, 2) the notion of discourse community, 3) student positioning through participation in discourse communities, discourse roles and their exposure to pedagogic discourse, 4) analysis of policy, curricula and classroom organisation as instances of pedagogic discourse, 5) interpretation of subject English as a discourse community and 6) linguistic analysis of text.

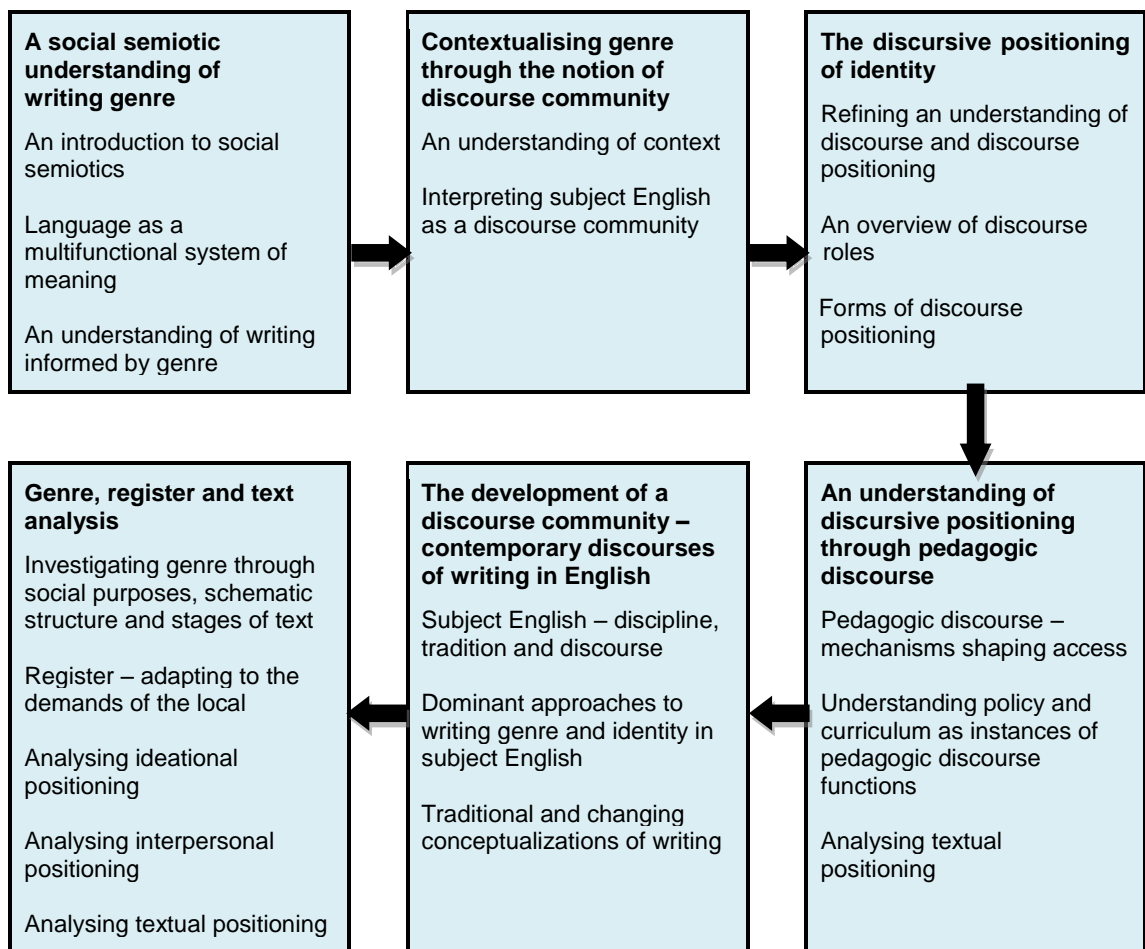


Figure 2.1 An outline of the Literature Review

2.2 An introduction to a social semiotic understanding of writing genre

2.2.1 *An introduction to social semiotics*

Semiotics gained prominence in academic circles during the 1970s and 1980s as part of the 'social turn', a philosophical perspective that views human behaviour as largely shaped by cultural and social conventions (Doecke & Parr, 2005). The 'social turn' challenged understandings dominant for some fifty years that language acquisition, and therefore writing development, is largely an innate human behaviour. This paradigmatic shift signaled an increasing interest in the relationship between language, society, culture and the role of language in socialisation (Hodge & Kress 1988). Proponents challenged the idea that writing could function independently from the contexts of its production and consumption. Explicitly, socially orientated views reacted against the behaviourist approaches that emerged in the 1930s, which interpreted writing as the result of a discrete set of behaviours such as handwriting, spelling and the correct use of grammar.

Semiotics, the study of how meaning is constructed, challenged academics, teachers and researchers to contemplate reality as a system of signs, a notion of meaning making which asserts that every act of communication integrates content (signified) and the form by which meaning is achieved (signifier) (Peirce, 1940/65; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Two schools of theory dominated semiotic study in the twentieth century. The version of semiotics postulated by Saussure (1974), known as traditional or structuralist semiotics, accentuates that semiotic systems function through underlying structures and rules (Saussure, 1974; van Leeuwen, 2005; 2008a).

That signs can only be understood in the contexts in which they are produced is a central tenant of a social semiotic framework. For this reason, the study of signs in the contexts in which they are used characterises the social semiotic approach (Halliday, 1978, 1985; Hodge & Kress, 1988). This is because "the social dimensions of semiotic systems are so intrinsic to their nature and function that the systems cannot be studied in isolation" (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p. 1). For social semioticians, the study of signs means an orientation to the ways meanings are conveyed through their use and the activities surrounding them (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Contemporary social semiotic thought owes much to Halliday (1985) and Hodge and Kress' (1988) contention that groups and individuals make meaning to achieve social purposes and to 'get things done' (Halliday, 1985). This means that semiotic systems, such as written language, can be understood as resources (Halliday, 1985; Kress,

2005; van Leeuwen, 2008b), which groups and individuals use in response to the communicative demands of specific situations (Hodge & Kress, 1988), rather than the result of adherence to sets of rules. This is not to suggest that the activity of writing does not demand conventional uses of linguistic and grammatical resources, rather that successful writing is a matter of using these resources in conventional and appropriate ways to achieve social purposes (Kress, 2005).

A perception of meaning making as a social activity leads to questions about the extent to which social structures determine meaning and the degree to which it is the result of human agency. On one hand, humans exercise agency as they choose communicative resources to serve their needs in particular contexts (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Iedema, 2003b). In this respect, individuals and groups have some control over the resources they appropriate and the way they make meaning with them (Kress, 2005). However, broad cultural forces and structures, such as genres, serve to shape systems such as written language and spoken language. For this reason, Van Leeuwen (2005a, 2008a) has argued that semiotic research should not only investigate semiotic and sign systems, the structure and organisation of systems, it must also pay attention to the ways systems and signs are utilised, transformed and contravened. To achieve this, he suggested that social semioticians consider the way social practices, or habitual social actions and ways of behaving (2008a) shape the use of semiotic systems such as writing.

2.2.2 *Language as a multifunctional system of meaning*

In the 1970s and 1980s, Halliday (1978, 1985) incorporated Firth's concept of context as a "set of options in a stated environment; in other words, a choice, together with a condition of entry" (1978, p. 45) with the linguistic principles of the Prague School and its view of texts as instances of language, culture and cognition. The result was an interpretation of language as a social semiotic system that both derives from social contexts and through its repeated uses, actively constructs them. From a Hallidayan (Halliday, 1978, 1985; Halliday & Matthiesen, 2004) perspective, language is one of a number of sign systems that contribute to the construction and maintenance of meaning in human cultures. Each instance of language use serves multiple functions, which Halliday categorised in terms of:

Ideational functions – which use language to encode and convey experiences of the world through knowledge, facts, information, events and discourse;

Interpersonal functions – which express role relations, represent social interactions and express attitudes; and

Textual functions –which frame and manage the communicative act through particular media and structures.

However, as Martin (1992, 2009) explained, not only is language a multifunctional system, it is also a multilayered system, as outlined in Figure 2.2. On one level, writers use language encoded in alphabetical inscription – the level of phonology/graphology. Writers also draw on distinctive syntactic structures (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Kress, 1994, 2005) which distinguish it from oral language. Individuals and groups construct meaning by drawing upon various words and the grammatical structure of language. In addition, individuals and groups draw upon discourse when using language by which to convey and reinforce (Martin, 1992, 2009) broad social and cultural meanings. In this endeavour, writers select resources from the language system to represent aspects of experience and knowledge, to construct, reinforce and negotiate relationships and to build text (Halliday, 1994). For this reason, writing is far more than a process of adhering to a set of predetermined rules, rather, it can be defined as “the production of new signs from existing and available resources” (Kress, 1995b, p. 69) in a way that conforms to conventional practices. In this process, writing is not a “container” of meaning; it is itself an essential process of meaning making and communication (Kress, 1994).

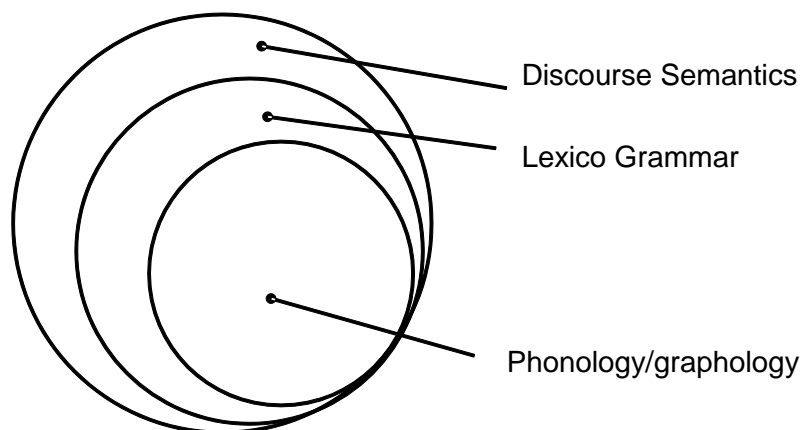


Figure 2.2 Language as a metafunction consisting of three interrelated layers (Adapted from Martin, 2009)

Such a view of meaning making as essentially a social endeavour can be applied to an understanding of text. According to Halliday (1985), humans use texts to make sense of their world, to construct actions and to maintain human relations. Texts are semantic units, basic units of meaning, of living and symbolic language, whether spoken, written or in symbolic form that are the product of social activity. An adequate theory requires

that texts be considered as product “in the sense that it has an output, something that can be recorded and studied” (pp. 10-11) and as process whereby groups and individuals draw from the resources of a particular environment.

Such an approach frames the relationship between meaning making and the contexts in which texts are produced as interactive, “a social exchange of meaning” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 11). A text derives from the relationship between the context and social environment in which it is produced and the “functional organization of language” (p. 13). From such a perspective, the texts students construct in the course of their senior English studies reflect the contexts in which they are constructed and provide clues about the nature of those contexts (Johns, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002). In this way, the process of using language, and any other semiotic system, may be described as dialogic (Kostouli, 2005a, 2005b) in that context and text are simultaneously shaping each other and that individuals and groups construct contexts and environments by granting significance to certain texts and features of text.

2.2.3 *An understanding of writing informed by genre*

Whilst the notion of genre has been used to describe literary texts for over a century, in the past thirty years the term has also been applied to the study of texts produced in schools, universities and the workplace. Three major schools or approaches, each with its own theoretical, methodological and pedagogical perspectives, dominate contemporary understanding of genre (Johns, 2002). An orientation to the contexts in which texts are constructed characterises the American New Rhetorical Tradition (Johns, 2002), whilst a concern for the demands of specific genres such as the business letter and report dominates the English for Special Purposes school (Gunnarsson, 1997) and an interest in the linguistic properties of genres dominates the Australian Sydney School.

The Sydney School evolved from studies at Sydney University and a series of interventionist strategies and programs associated with the New South Wales Disadvantaged Schools Program during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Central to this program was a focus on broadening the variety of writing tasks undertaken in schools, to furnish teachers with a metalanguage for describing the functioning of texts and with pedagogies to support the development of writing skills (New South Wales Department of Education, 1994; Rose, 2009). In the 1990s, this investigative work was extended into secondary schools and workplaces (Christie & Martin, 1997), as Coffin (1997) examined the types of genres written in school History, Veel (1997) mapped genres used in Science and Rothery and Stenglin (1997) scrutinised the structures and stages of narrative texts typically presented in school English. This work provided the basis of

continuing investigations of genres in selected school disciplines such as Science (Coffin, 2006) and English (Macken-Horarik, 2006a; Christie & Derewianka, 2008).

That texts can be classified and categorised according to their structures is an underpinning premise of both the New Rhetorical and Sydney School traditions of genre (Devitt, 2004). Specifically, members of the Sydney School maintain that genres and texts can be categorised according to a series of communicative moves and shifts (Macken-Horarik, 2005, 2006a; Martin, 2002). A level of predictability in terms of structure, stages and uses of linguistic resources for particular genres underpins the model (Macken-Horarik, 2005, 2006a). For example, Macken-Horarik (2002) and Rothery (1989) have mapped the schematic structure of the report genre to include:

General statement ² Description of aspects ^ Descriptions of activities

A language based view of genre, such as that represented by the Sydney School, combines the idea that genres are communicative templates characterised by typical structures, stages and linguistic features with the notion that genres achieve social purposes. In this integrated model, genres are “staged goal-oriented social processes” (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin, 2009, p.11) and communicative templates that frame and structure “recurrent configurations of meaning” (Martin, 2009, p. 16). The social and communicative norms of a culture legitimise these communicative templates and as such, they are imbued with connotative and ideological meanings (Martin, 2002). In this way, genres are abstractions or blueprints of what a text might be, abstractions that provide frameworks for the construction of texts in specific social and cultural environments (Feez, 2002) and in doing so, they shape the communication in which we take part through frameworks and guideposts.

2.3 Contextualising genre theory through the notion of discourse community

2.3.1 *An understanding of context*

Until the 1970s and 1980s, empirical research based on psychological and rhetorical concerns dominated research into writing (Barton, 2000). However, social practice and context-specific investigations of writing, influenced by the theories and methodologies of anthropology, emerged during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s in the work of Street (1984), Heath, (1986) and Barton (2000). This research, which explored how social and cultural institutions determine, restrict and shape writing practices (Brandt &

² The symbol ^ signifies that features are being described in order which is a convention of Australian genre school analysis of text structure.

Clinton, 2002) gave rise to increasing levels of holistic investigation into writing (Beaufort, 1999b). During this time, researchers explored the social and cultural environments in which writing took place by integrating anthropological strategies such as the ethnography and sociological approaches which investigated the place of discourses in shaping what and how students wrote (Luke, 2002). The period witnessed the growth of writing and composition studies as disciplinary fields and a concern with learning and writing in the school environment (Schultz & Fecho, 2000). This led to an expansion of qualitative, ethnographic and case study methodologies (Birnbaum, Emig & Fisher, 2003; Luke, 2002) which served to make research in the field increasingly descriptive and interpretive (Schultz & Fecho, 2000). This period also saw increasingly multidisciplinary approaches and methodologically blended research strategies which integrated quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (Luke, 2002).

During this era, the notion of context gained prominence as a way of identifying and interpreting the environments in which writing takes place and the social practices and behaviours that contribute to the activity of writing. Whilst the concept of context was a growing intellectual and ideological paradigm, particularly in the field of education, discussions of context remained characterised by a lack of agreement and clarity (Chin, 1994). A major reason for this, inevitably, is that theoretical positions, methodological approaches (Piazza, 1987; Johaneck, 2000; Barton, 2000) and intentions (J. Halliday, 2004) influence conceptualisations of context. Interest in context was not new; it had been a feature of the rhetorical tradition since the time of Aristotle (Graff, 1986). However, the social turn marked a shift from context as a background or stage against which writing is constructed to a critical communicative resource. Increasingly texts were seen in co-productive, constitutive and reflexive relationships with context (Kostouli, 2005a).

Halliday's (1978) early work made an important contribution to an understanding of context, which he framed as a 'semantic environment', a location of semiotic resources and a resource in itself. In later work, Halliday (1985) further defined the notion of context as a dynamic multi-levelled phenomenon, where meaning arises out of the interaction between an immediate situation and a broader cultural environment. Throughout his work, Halliday maintained the importance of examining and analysing texts in the contexts in which they are produced, given that texts largely reproduce the social structures of contexts. This is, Halliday contended, because individuals and groups respond to and enact contexts through the choices made as they construct text. From this perspective, then, writing may be seen as a responsive social behaviour and a series of communicative and social choices about such things as how to address a

reader, what to state in the text, where to begin, and what to call something (Brandt, 1986, p. 36).

From Halliday's (1985) perspective, human contexts are multidimensional, that is, they are comprised of two levels, a broader cultural level in which genres are located, and a more specific context of situation in which texts are constructed. A semiotic interpretation of culture as an interrelated "set of semiotic systems" of meaning informs Halliday's framework of context of culture. Contexts of culture are multilayered and multifunctional abstractions (Leckie-Tarry, 1995), providing possibilities of meaning in a given context of situation, privileging some meanings over others. These interrelated 'systems', composed of abstract and ideological forms of meanings, and possible ways of doing things, serve to regulate meaning making in specific situations.

In an endeavour to 'get things done', individuals and groups adapt these broader cultural meanings and resources to meet their needs in more immediate contexts. Halliday (1978, 1985) based his conceptualisation of immediate contexts of situation on Malinowski and Firth's proposal that cultural and social forms of language use are adapted as individuals strive to meet their needs in particular situations. A context of situation is primarily a social environment that:

...does not consist of things, or even processes and relations; it consists of human interaction, from which things derive their meaning (1978, pp. 140 -141).

In the process of getting things done, writers continually make decisions about how to achieve goals as they react to the demands of particular environments. In this way, the activity of writing is mutually shaping (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, Hodge & Kress, 1988) or dialogic (Kostouli, 2005b, 2009) in the sense that individuals and groups do more than react to contexts; they also shape those contexts by privileging particular genres and ways of constructing texts and appropriating and utilising semiotic resources. Additionally, within individual classrooms, teachers and student writers shape the contexts in which they construct texts by bringing forms of knowledge, preferences and abilities to bear on a context and by granting significance to certain features and aspects (Kostouli, 2005a, 2005b).

However, contextual research, represented in socio cultural models such as the New Literacy Studies, has attracted criticism for concentrating on the immediate context, such as the classroom and family home, at the expense of broader cultural discourses and practices (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). According to Brandt and Clinton, such a privileging has resulted in a simplifying of the complex relationship between the levels of context and an exaggerated view of the power and significance of local contexts in shaping meaning. In their view, practices of literacy and writing derive from sources other than the local, "infiltrating, disjuncting, and displacing local life"(p. 343) and that

the practices that take place in local contexts, such as school classrooms, have broader impacts as they enact, resist and modify broader social and cultural discourses and practices. They propose following:

...the many Ariadne threads at the sites of reading and writing, exposing the ways that a localising literacy event in one context might be a globalizing accomplishment in another (or vice versa). (p. 347).

Following their advice, this thesis coordinated the local and the global. Achieving this, however, required a link between levels of context and a strategy for identifying how these levels of context were connected. Halliday (1985) advocated that institutions such as education systems and schools constitute the interface between context of situation and context of culture, and that, "these in turn are instances of, and derive their meaning from, the school as an institution in the culture" (p. 46). For this reason, this study uses the notion of discourse as a way of linking these three levels through exploration of discursive patterns. Figure 2.3 provides an outline of the interactive relationship between text, context of situation and context of culture that informs this study.

More specifically, discourses are systems of signs, which reproduce and represent the meanings and values of a culture (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 6). To interpret the ways the English subject area positions students, this thesis drew upon Gee's (1999, 2002) definition of discourse as:

... ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing and using symbols, tools and objects in the right places and at the right times so as to enact and recognise different identities and activities... (Gee, 1999, p. 13).

In doing so, discourses support and mirror social structures and institutional processes and are in turn supported by institutional structures (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Discourses are powerful and pervasive resources that construct ways of seeing the social and natural world and mediate social relations and identities (van Leeuwen, 2005a). They are, as Luke (2002) highlighted, about more than what we do, they explain why we behave in certain ways.

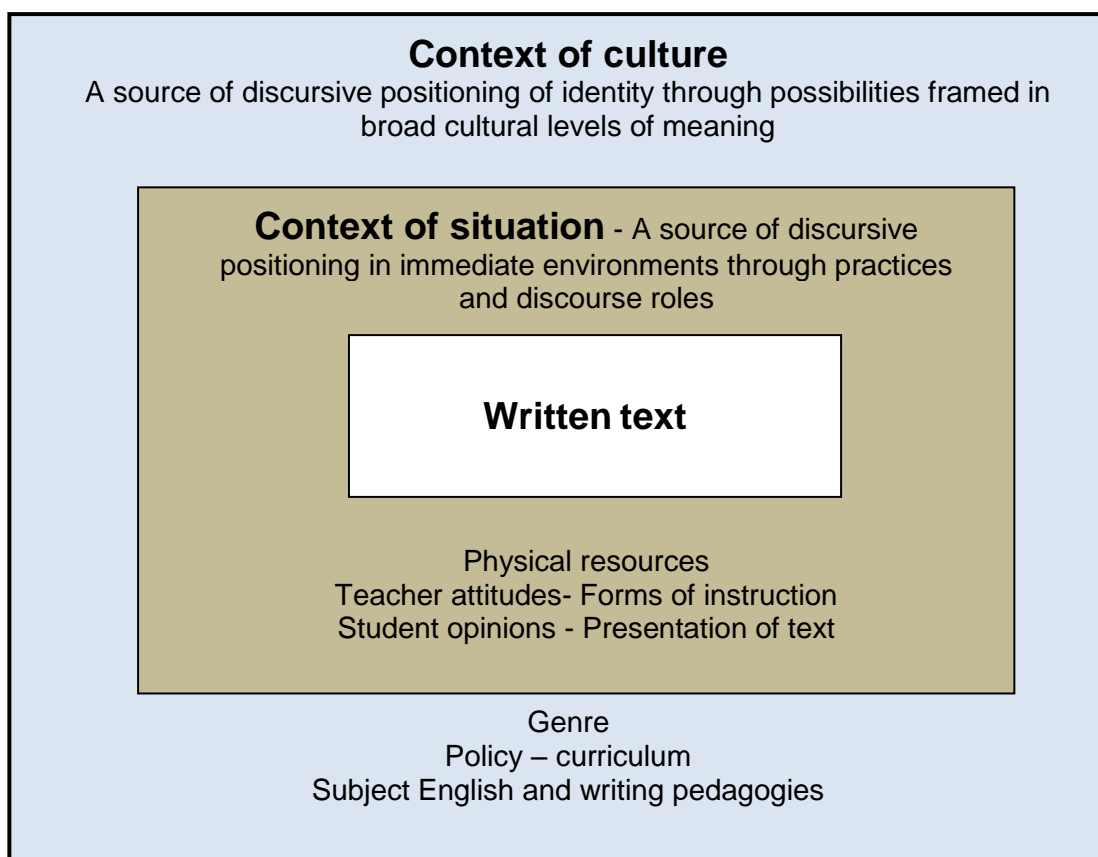


Figure 2.3 Writing and textual practices in contextual layers

2.3.2 *Interpreting subject English as a discourse community*

An understanding that business, academic and education communities can be interpreted and understood through their goals and values, communicative practices and genres emerged in the 1980s and 1990s through the notion of discourse communities (Beaufort, 1999a; Hyland, 2010; Swales, 1990). For Swales, discourse communities are socio rhetorical networks that function to achieve common social and public goals. Additionally, as Beaufort (1999a) explained, they are social entities, “...within which a distinctive set of writing practices occur and beyond whose borders different writing practices occur” (p. 57). According to Beaufort, discourse communities can be conceptualised through a synthesis of community goals and values, the material conditions of text construction, the input of individuals, communication modes, genres and roles and tasks assigned to writers as elucidated in Figure 2.4 below.

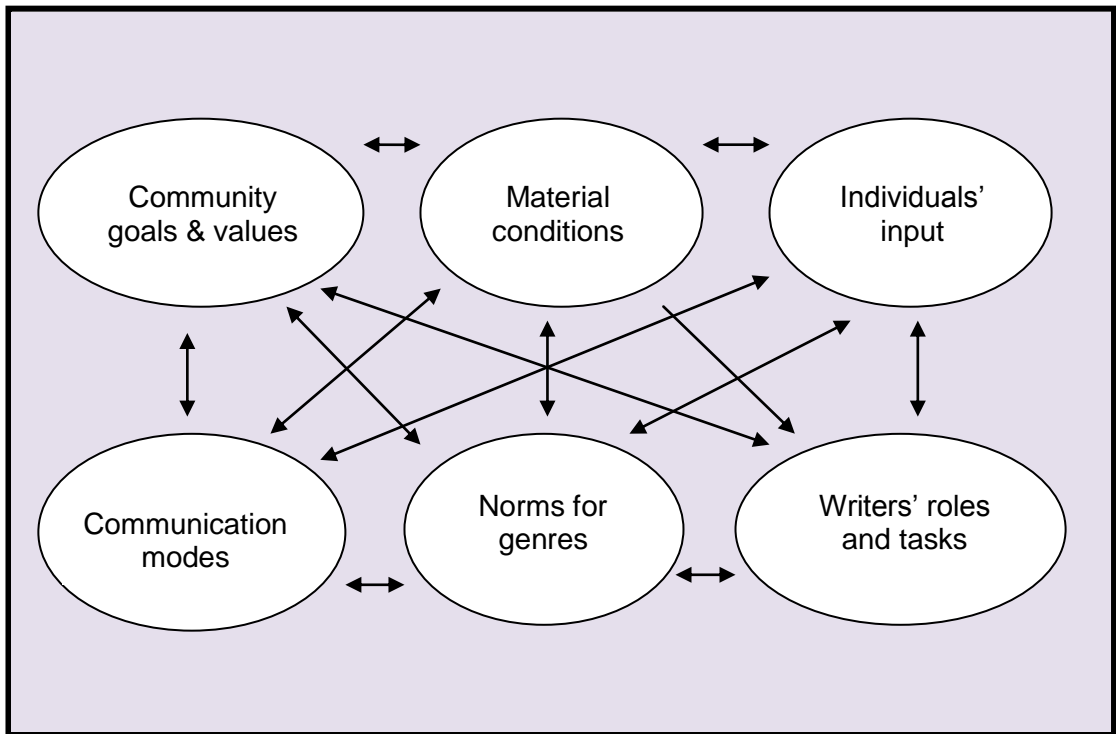


Figure 2.4 Dynamic elements of a discourse community
(Based on Beaufort, 1997)

The notion of discourse community helps to identify those features of the English subject area and individual classrooms that influence student writing identities through examination of community goals and values at the broader cultural and institutional level. In this study, those values and goals, deriving from the context of culture, are examined through governmental educational policy and state based curriculum evident at the time of this research and set against a background of established and emerging subject discipline discourses as outlined in Table 2.1. Additionally, obvious material conditions of learning, such as the layout of classrooms and uses of computers are identified and interpreted. Data from a number of sources provide an insight into the discourse patterns (Christie, 2001) that help shape the norms for genres and writer's roles. In this process, each classroom environment will also be examined as a discourse community with its own unique framings of the student writer achieved through a range of discourses, tasks and norms for genres.

Table 2.1 Elements of discourse community and sources of data

Element of discourse community	Sources of data
Community goals and values	Subject discipline traditions and discourses Teachers' beliefs and expectations Governmental educational policy State – based curriculum Selection and presentation of genres Construction of select genres Regulative environment and discourses
Material conditions	Aspects of the physical environment of the classroom
Individuals' inputs	Teachers' beliefs and expectations State – based curriculum Students' beliefs and classroom experiences Selection and presentation of genres Construction of select genres Teacher and students uses of select linguistic and modal resources
Communication modes	Subject discipline traditions and discourses Selection and presentation of genres Regulative environment and discourses Instructional discourses
Norms for genres	Subject discipline traditions and discourses Teachers' beliefs and expectations State – based curriculum Selection and presentation of genres Regulative environment and discourses Instructional discourses Construction of select genres Teacher presentation of linguistic resources
Writers' roles and tasks	Subject discipline traditions and discourses Teachers' beliefs and expectations State – based curriculum Students' beliefs and classroom experiences Selection and presentation of genres Regulative environment and discourses Instructional discourses Construction of select genres Student use of linguistic and modal resources

In a discourse community, the process of recognising and constructing genres esteemed by the community plays a significant role in the achievement of its goals and values (Beaufort, 1997). Particular genres are entrenched in communities (Beaufort, 1999a; Coe, 2002) and reinforced by their dominant discourses. Beaufort (1997) and Swales (1990) maintain that discourse communities 'own' their genres. Additionally, school subject areas such as English adapt and refine existing genres to serve their needs, particularly as they respond to external influences and their own changing values (Weldon, 2007). However, individual features may be shared with other related communities (Beaufort, 1999a) and as demonstrated in the English subject area, incorporate the valued genres and discourses of other communities such as the academic Literature and Cultural Studies disciplines (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Schleppegrell, 2004). Such sharing is evidenced as education systems; curriculum designers, examiners and teachers appropriate these texts in pursuit of particular goals within their own communities, such as the demonstration of particular forms of knowledge and skills in preparation for tertiary education. In that process, aspects of the genres valued in university disciplines are reproduced and others are adapted to the demands of senior school English, such as the necessity for students to write particular forms of essays and responses in tertiary entrance examinations (Macken-Horarik, 2006b).

Successful participation in a discourse community, for this reason, means recognising and constructing particular genres and incorporating the forms of knowledge, ideological meanings and linguistic and communicative resources that accompany them (Beaufort, 1999a; Hyland, 2010; Swales, 1990). Within discipline areas, and in school faculties and classrooms, genres act as gatekeepers affording access to particular forms of communication, resources and opportunities for status (Coe, 2002; Johns, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2004). Christie and Derewianka's (2008) research into senior school writing in Australia and Schleppegrell's investigation into senior school writing in the United States revealed that particular forms of texts not only act as gatekeepers in particular subject areas, but also that construction of texts such as expository essays also function as gate keeping milestones (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 77). Such milestones signal students' ability to use a range of communicative resources and their participation in a number of discourses.

The interpretation of contexts, such as school disciplines and individual classrooms, as discourse communities has been criticised for imposing an artificially homogenous view of contexts upon what are complex and often disparate environments. Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff (2003) make the point that such groups do not necessarily share common purposes, and that the labelling of groups of individuals or institutions as communities distracts from the diverse social practices and distinctive differences in power within

them. However, as Beaufort (1997) has elucidated, discourse communities are complex entities, composed of groups and individuals brought together in one aspect of their lives to achieve common goals. This does not, however, mean that they are always homogenous groups, or that all participants willingly engage in the community. Rather, discourse communities may have hierarchical structures which afford differing levels of status and influence to individuals and groups through segmented access to genres (Beaufort, 1997).

This thesis aimed to interrogate the ways discourses operating at multiple levels of context position student writers by exploring discourse patterns across these levels. To do this, it conducted a polycontextual investigation (Bourne, 2002; Kostouli, 2009) which views specific environments as created out of multiple interacting contexts (Kostouli, 2009) and recognises that all levels contribute to the discursive meanings and resources of that context. A polycontextual approach recognises the complexity of social environments and encourages researchers to take into account the multiplicity of discourses that shape writing practices and writing identities. Whilst discourses are institutionally imposed on situations, such as through curriculum documents, a polycontextual approach suggests that multiple interacting contexts, such as the classroom also serve to shape the roles students are presented with and the roles and identities they adopt (Bourne, 2002). As such, the thesis considered writing identities as suggested by grand narratives, cultural discourses and institutional norms, and as being shaped by local circumstances (Kostouli, 2009, p. 102).

2.4 The discursive positioning of identity

2.4.1 *An overview of discursive positioning and writing discourse roles*

This section builds upon the previous discussion of discourse and discourse communities and examines key contemporary research into the ways writing identities are constructed. It draws upon nascent research into the shaping of identities in subject English by Jewitt (2005a), Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Hardcastle, Jones and Reid (2005) and Bourne (2001, 2003) and research into the construction of writing identities in academic settings (Burgess and Ivanic; 2010; Hyland, 2002, 2010; Ivanic, 1998, 2006). The section provides an overview of key theoretical concepts that can help describe, analyse and interpret behaviours in the classroom and the ways discourses function to create particular types of writers.

An interest in explaining how individuals engage with the culturally framed genres and text types that they encounter in institutions such as school has given rise to various

theories explaining how individuals are positioned to behave in particular ways (Bakhtin, 1986). A number of theorists and researchers are inspired by Bakhtin's (1986) perspective that identities derive from the complex relationships between the values and beliefs of the societies writers inhabit, the expectations of specific environments and writers' own concepts of who they are or want to be in their writing (Davies & Harre, 1990; Hyland, 2010; Smidt, 2005, 2009). Bakhtin's concepts of 'discourse roles' and 'positioning' help to describe how student writers engage with the genres they meet at school. Smidt (2009) uses Bakhtin's concept of positioning to describe the shaping of writing identities through available discourses and genres and how individuals adopt and resist the positions offered by available culturally framed 'master narratives' or broader social and cultural discourses (Davies & Harre, 1990; Smidt, 2005, 2009). Specifically, Smidt has described 'genre positioning' as the process where:

...writers adopt and negotiate social discourse roles available to them in the genres of school writing and social interaction between actual participants in particular classrooms... (2009, p. 117).

The value of the notion of positioning lies in its focus on the ways discourses and discourse roles privilege and marginalise particular ways of writing.

The notion of 'discourse role' advanced by Smidt (2002, 2009) goes some way to explaining how student writers are positioned to be specific types of writers through the texts they write. Discourse roles are "the discursive presentation of selves offered by culturally patterned ways of writing as student writers try their hands at being political commentators, entertainers, philosophers, writers of fiction, or journalists" (Smidt, 2002, p. 119). They offer students in particular subject areas apprenticeships into the roles writers undertake in the world of work and in further education. For example, senior school students who undertake the discourse role of the academic student are likely to have access to academic genres such as the persuasive essay. This in turn increases the probability that they will have access to the linguistic resources associated with academic writing, such as forms of technical language.

Such a view assumes that identities are malleable and capable of change. They are, according to Hodge and Kress (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress, 2006), mediated by language and other symbol systems. They are shaped by the availability of potential meanings and resources in immediate social and broader cultural contexts (Kress, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2008b). Student writers, therefore, are influenced by patterned exposure to discourses about what it means to be a successful writer, the importance of particular types of writing such as academic and business writing and the value of

particular genres. In this way, Kress (1985) maintained, individuals are “institutionalised in a multiplicity of ways” (p. 37).

Additionally, Australian research conducted by Jones (2008, 2007) and Gilbert (2001, 1989) highlights that local acts of writing, conducted in the classroom, insert student writers into broader cultural and social discourses. Jones (2007) examined how two teachers responded to identical curriculum and policy documents and how aspects of their local environments could account for some substantial differences in pedagogy and student outcomes. In particular, Jones identified that access to professional development, teachers’ language and genre knowledge and scaffolding approaches to student learning marked substantial differences between the teachers.

Moreover, Gilbert (2001) made the point that within the English subject area ‘English literacy has been defined and appropriated by various discourses operating in the post-compulsory schooling arena’ (p. 139). Her research into Queensland’s English programs revealed highly differentiated forms of textual practice between vocationally orientated subjects and literary and cultural studies streams of English. Both types of curricula make distinct assumptions about student subjectivities, and, as she maintained, vocationally orientated subjects in the English area have the potential to restrict access to knowledge, values and skills (p. 149). As a result, subject areas such as English are ‘complicit in the social differentiation of young adult learners in terms of economic and social privilege’ (p. 139). In this respect, student access to resources of meaning making in the senior school context, and in the English area is politically significant in terms of shaping potential destinations. For both researchers, individual acts of writing serve as forms of ideological formation. Gilbert (1989) explained that:

the language that people use at a local level inserts them into discursive patternings associated with wider social institutions...and that these wider patternings encode particular conceptions of truth, knowledge, power and subjectivity’ (p. 202).

As such, the “practice of writing then, is a key stage in the ideological formation of all individuals in contemporary society” (p. 256).

2.4.2 The classroom as discursive environment

Ivanic’s (1998, 2006) extensive research into writing identities highlights that writing identities are constructed as individuals ‘affiliate’ with particular discourses and practices (Ivanic, 2006, p.11). Her seminal work, *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*, explored how the academic discipline and department environment helps to shape student writing identities as they adapt to the demands of academic writing. Through her research, Ivanic identified that students’ growth as writers was shaped by the social and discursive demands of their disciplines

and the views they had of themselves as writers. She identified the struggles students experienced as they worked to apply writing strategies learned in secondary school and to construct themselves as tertiary writers and authors. One particular way that students constructed themselves as academic writers was through the process of affiliating or identifying with particular discourses, genres and language uses. This notion of affiliation can be applied to an understanding of student writing identities in senior English as students use texts and linguistic features to position or construct themselves to be particular types of writers. In addition, students in the school environment construct identities by aligning with particular discourses that are made available to them, whether they are from academia, more general Cultural Studies or the world of business. In this way, writing identities are creative and generative, the 'strategic making and remaking of selves' (Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007, p. 4) within existing social and institutional structures. For students and teachers, such acts of affiliation result in students' orientation to certain practices which in turn serve to differentiate groups of writers (Bourne, 2002, Ivanic, 1988). In any particular environment, one discourse is likely to prevail and therefore to be more visible (Smidt, 2009) so that writers are likely to accept the identity possibilities that such a privileged discourse offers.

In a practical sense, successful affiliation with particular discourses relies upon 'recognition work' (Gee, 1999; Hyland, 2010) as outlined in Figure 2.5. Gee has made the point that successful writing depends on recognition of discourse. This means that students must be able to recognise the complexities of particular discourses and patterns, rhetorical strategies and linguistic resources that constitute that discourse. Additionally, Bernstein (1990) explored the notion that text production depends on writers being able to recognise the demands of a particular context or environment and on their having acquired the resources to reproduce that in text (Bernstein, 1990; Morais, 1994, 2002). It is therefore only after successful recognition of the demands and resources of a particular context that students are able to realise, to use, the particular forms of meaning.

Macken-Horarik's (2006b) research into Australian senior English examinations revealed that success in the senior years depends on students' ability to recognise a number of implicit demands such as how to read tasks in terms of institutional expectations. Macken-Horarik highlights how a successful student is able to respond to set examination tasks, such as interpretative essay questions, in ways that clearly reflect the student's ability to 'read' the demands of the context of subject English. For this reason, she maintains, success relies upon interpretation of the social and discursive nature of the English context as much as upon students' linguistic abilities. As Macken-Horarik's (2006b) research indicates, success in English is also dependent upon students' ability to 'realise' appropriate responses to tasks. Successful students

have the capacity to understand and integrate recognition rules: they are also able to successfully realise appropriate meanings and reproduce these in text. That means that writers must 'realise' the demands of tasks through the selection of acceptable meanings and the production of those meanings (Bernstein, 1990; Morais, 2002).

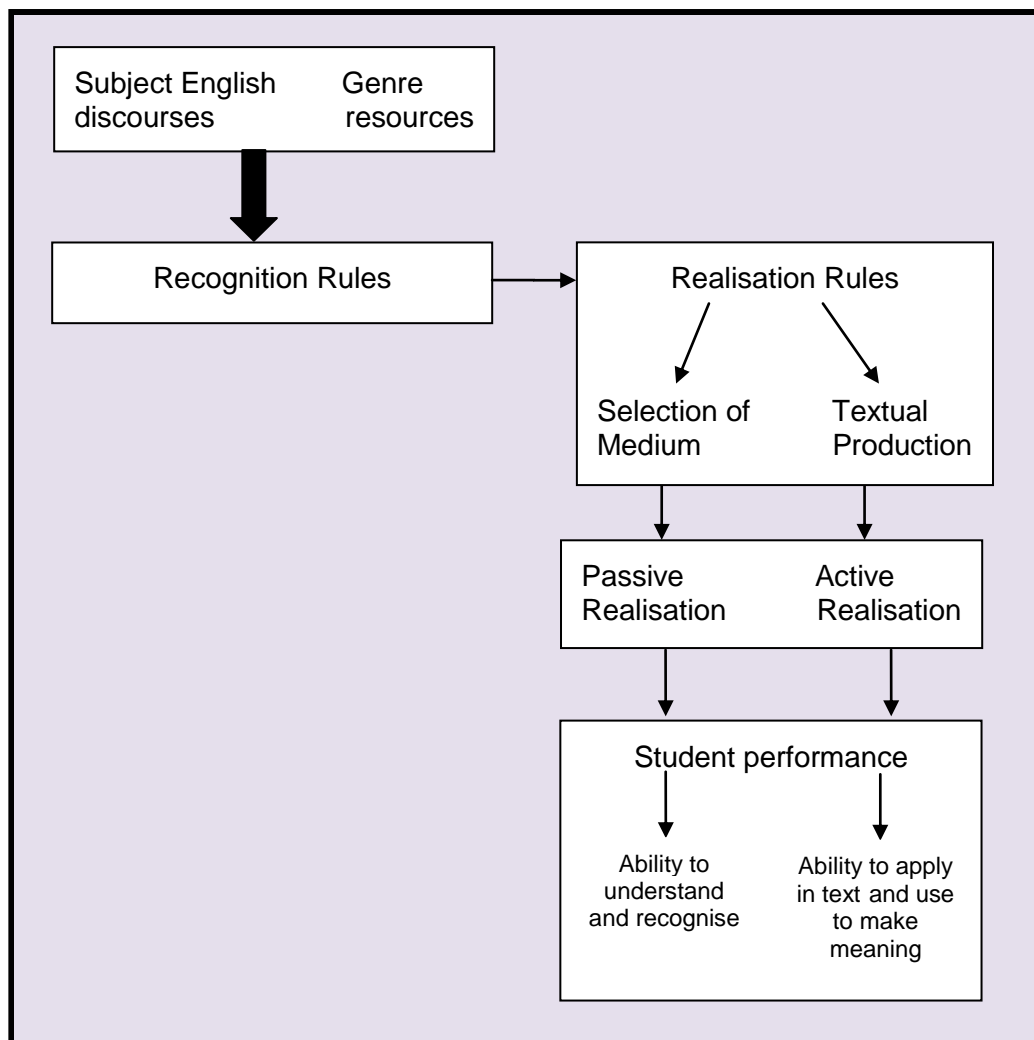


Figure 2.5 Recognition and realisation rules applied in writing
Adapted from Morais, Neves, Davies & Daniels (2001)

Using the concept of 'filtering', Gee (2002, 2004) explained that discourses are adapted to the demands of local environments. Broad cultural discourses, such as academic discourses, or discourses of business writing, take on unique forms in local environments and may be adapted for a myriad of reasons, such as to meet the demands of curricula, the interests and capacities of students, and the beliefs and values of teachers. In this respect, teachers' frames of reference shape and limit what is relevant and correct in the construction of texts (Edwards, 2005). This becomes evident through the interaction between teacher and students, the social activities and

practices involving writing and the legitimisation of affiliations with various discourses, genres and practices.

To achieve this, teachers act as semiotic markers, giving legitimacy to certain practices and marginalising others (Iedema, 1996). In this way, "Teachers' everyday practices semiotically mark objects, texts, spaces, time and material culture as significant" (Iverson & Duveen, 2005, p. 630). Such ceremonies of the classroom, as described by McHoul (1990), discursively position students and frame conformity to both the articulated and discrete rules of the classroom. This may include the length of time devoted to writing in a typical lesson and planning and drafting of written texts using pen or pencil and writing of a final draft on the computer. Such ceremonies constitute forms of apprenticeship into the practices within a classroom, and to some extent within a subject area.

Classrooms may also be environments where alternative writing identities are made available to students (Bourne, 2002). As such, discourse roles and practices surrounding genres offered to students in a particular classroom environment may not be uniform, but rather based upon teachers' perceptions of a myriad of factors. For this reason, Bourne argued, researchers of classroom writing practices need to bear in mind that classrooms are discursively complex and dynamic environments, and that student writers are positioned and repositioned as subjects as they are exposed to competing and not always compatible discourses.

Additionally, as Ivancic's (1988) research into academic writing by beginning university students demonstrated, students may align themselves with particular genres, and model their writing significantly on that genre, regardless of the demands of particular tasks. In her research, Ivancic identified how new university students identified with the genres they had written successfully in senior school, or college, and integrated aspects of those genres into the texts they were required to write. She observed that whilst writing reports some students had applied linguistic, analytical and persuasive strategies associated with expository texts. Students' perceptions that successful writing of university texts should incorporate elements of the analytical and persuasive academic writing used in senior school or college were integrated into all texts they constructed.

This practice stems partly from the fact that individuals bring preconceived notions of themselves as writers to the act of writing and their interaction with genres (Bakhtin, 1986; Burgess, 2004; Hyland, 2010; Ivancic, 1998, 2006). Ivancic refers to this as the 'autobiographical self', a perception of the self as writer derived from previous life experiences, earlier opportunities for writing and practices associated with writing.

Such perceptions can influence writers' decisions about the selection of genres, use of resources and relationship with the reader.

Additionally, Ivanic (1988, 2006) recommended that the student writer be considered in terms of the self as 'author', the extent to which a writer claims authority over his or her writing. It is in effect the way writers project themselves through their writing. The authorial self is indicative of the extent to which the writer has positioned him or herself as responsible for a text's content and the extent to which the writer intrudes into a text and claims responsibility for its content. In this way, writers assume roles in relation to the audience, subject matter, discourses and textual conventions. For example, a student may wish to project himself or herself as a writer who comfortably engages in analysis and intellectual engagement and may do this by adopting a number of strategies such as extensive use of evaluative modifiers to accentuate his or her opinion.

Bourne's (2002) research also indicates that individual student writers can have multiple and at times contradictory goals and engage in a multitude of writing practices. For this reason, the activity of writing can be a site of struggle in which writers negotiate various forms of identity (Bourne, 2002; Gomez, 2007; Hyland, 2010; Ivanic, 1998). This is inevitable, as Bourne observed in her research into the ways primary school students affiliate with multiple and at times divergent classroom discourses and practices. In her research, she identified that teachers may offer alternate writing positions and identities to students within the one class. In this way, students may reject discourse roles and identities, or may simply oscillate between the positions available. Additionally, students may adopt and prioritise particular roles.

However, young writers are much more than the products of their classroom environments. External factors, such as the writing practices students engage in out of school, for example the writing of song lyrics, and more recently email correspondence, influence how students respond to the discourse roles offered to them and the forms of genre positioning available and privileged in the subject area and in individual classrooms. Research has identified how identities outside the classroom can influence students' responses to discourse roles, of, for example, academic writing in the classroom (Burgess, 2004; Burgess & Ivanic, 2010; Ivanic, 1988) as they bring preconceived notions of writer into the classroom. In the act of writing students may engage in an ongoing dialectic (Bourne, 2002) between their identities as writers in the classroom and in a range of activities in their social lives (Heath, 1986; Moss, 2001).

Important questions about how the English discipline constructs environments for learning and in doing so, how it provides access to resources necessary for effective writing and text construction, are raised in research by Kress et al (2005), Jewitt

(2005b) and Bourne (2003). A semiotic study of senior English classrooms in the United Kingdom, under the umbrella of a national curriculum (Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Hardcastle, Jones & Reid, 2005) highlighted the uniqueness of English classes as a myriad of interacting semiotic resources. That research introduced a framework for studying the physical environments of English classrooms that included visual displays of student work and their contribution to shaping writing practices, framing access to resources and reinforcing forms of student identity into studies of English classrooms. The research highlighted that the interaction of discursive features of policy and curricula with, for example, physical resources such as computers, influence available meanings, textual resources and textual practice for particular groups of students such as the young people attending a variety of schools in central London.

On a concrete level, writing identities are realised through stable and regular patterns of language use (Hyland, 2010). The repeated use of particular linguistic resources helps to stabilise writing identities, so that students will identify with academic discourses through repeated use of resources associated with that discourse. Such identities may be reinforced through the consistent use of technical language and abstractions associated with the discourses of particular disciplines such as that found typically in Literature and Media Studies (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Coffin, 2006; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin, 2007).

Importantly, writing identities are relational entities (Ivanic, 1988, 2006), in that they do not exist in isolation, but in social activities and relationships, ways of learning and physical environments. Identities are shaped as students negotiate social and discursive roles (Bakhtin, 1986; Smidt, 2009), such as the academic writer or workplace writer, through the unique and changing stances produced by the norms of schooled writing and by the social roles produced by engaging with particular genres and not engaging with others. In this respect, student writers make choices that help them to project writing identities. As Ivanic (1988, 2006) explained, individuals project notions of the self through their writing, which reveal values, beliefs, and power relationships in the social contexts in which they write. To examine this in particular examples of student writing, the thesis has integrated Halliday's (1985) notions of multifunctional levels of meaning and Ivanic's (1988) concepts of ideational, interpersonal and textual positioning to explore how students position themselves through the act of writing and the texts they construct. In this way:

- *Ideational positioning* results from perceptions and choices about subject matter and knowledge;
- *Interpersonal positioning* encapsulates the positioning of role relationships between writers and readers such as status, power, confidence and social

distance. It incorporates concepts such as voice, formality and distance, modality and appraisal;

- *Textual positioning* derives from an individual's perception of how a text should be constructed and may include aspects such as coherence, cohesion and generic structures.

2.5 An understanding of positioning through pedagogic discourse

2.5.1 *Instructional and regulative discourses*

One of the aims of this study was to examine patterns of relations between broad cultural and institutional discourses and the immediate environments in which students write and construct text, and the ways both influence student identities. It did this by examining discourses that move, according to Luke and Luke (1995) as:

a system of signs and representations that traverse laterally through a synchronic grid: from the academic article, to the policy document, to curriculum specifications, to staffroom 'common sense', and to the classroom text and student worksheet. (p. 364).

To do this, the thesis used Bernstein's (1990, 1996, 2000) broad theoretical concept of pedagogic discourse as a way of identifying and drawing attention to the privileging of particular discourses (Christie, 2002b; Evans & Davies, 2002) at more than one level of context.

Bernstein's social theory of education, grounded in the work of Marx and Durkheim (Sadovnik 1995), assumes that knowledge is a social and ideological construct, and that the institution of school produces and maintains hierarchical relations such as social class and forms of economic and social control through the distribution of knowledge. Bernstein (2000) described such hierarchies as embedded in educational discourse such that:

How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control (p. 125).

As Bernstein argued, the institution of education selectively reshapes and distributes discourses from fields of study outside the education system, such as Economics, Literature or Cultural Studies. Three features characterise this view of educational discourse:

- a field of production where new knowledge is constructed,

- a field of reproduction where pedagogic practice in schools occurs,
- a field, in between, called a recontextualizing field (Bernstein 2000, p. 113).

Each field, or school discipline, has its own “rules of access, regulation, privilege and specialized interests” (p. 113). These rules, or pedagogic discourse, guide the production and reproduction of specific types of knowledge (Christie, 1999b; Bernstein, 2000). A pedagogic discourse is in effect, a system of specialist communication rules through which ‘pedagogic subjects’ or students are constructed. They function, as Christie (2002b) explained, to achieve educational goals in patterned and predictable ways.

For Bernstein (1996), discourses fall into two categories. Initially regulative discourses frame the social, moral and ideological environment. They shape instructional discourses which frame the content, sequencing and pacing of what is taught and the strategies used for transferring knowledge and facilitating the development of competencies and skills. One of the key premises of Bernstein’s theory of education is that levels of education, from policy and curriculum to the classroom, sanction particular forms of social behaviour. Classrooms are thus essentially social and moral environments, where as Atkinson, Davies and Delamont (1995) explain, “under the gaze of pedagogic discourses and practices pupils’ abilities become visible, are constituted, sanctioned and corrected” (p. 107). They are also locations where discourses regulate and shape the forms of linguistic resources and genres made available to students and the form that access takes (Thesen 2001).

Regulative discourses regulate social interaction and construct “characteristic discourse patterns” (Christie, 2001, p. 316) through rules of:

- conduct
- order
- identity
- relationship

In effect, learning and participation in the classroom are predicated upon students becoming firstly, “the kind of people capable of attending to and governing their own conduct” (Hunter, 1994, p. 88). Such discourses frame the goals and the direction of learning. Instructional discourses, initially framed by regulative discourses, transfer knowledge and facilitate the development of competencies and skills (Bernstein, 1990).

In a number of instances, Christie (1991; 1999; 1999; 2002; 2004; 2005) has drawn on Bernstein’s notion of pedagogic discourse to illuminate the ways English classes

position students. Christie has used Bernstein's framing of regulative and instructional discourses to delineate and interpret the framing of the English subject and discourses and practices in the subject, such as writing. She has made the point that schools do not intend to produce reflective, self-actualizing individuals but rather that classroom discourse serves to teach children how to behave as school subjects, for much broader socio-political reasons. As such, there is a distinctive pedagogic subject position in each school discipline and that 'the pedagogic subject position is realised in characteristic discourse patterns' (2001, p. 316). The relationship between regulative and instructional discourses is significant in that regulative discourses, the discourses of social and moral behaviour, position students morally and socially. They inculcate students into the values of discipline areas.

2.5.2 *Recontextualization*

To a significant extent, what students learn in school subjects has its origins in a variety of sources outside education systems. However, as forms of knowledge, practices and genres are brought into school systems, they are selectively reshaped and distributed (Christie, 1999b; Bernstein, 2000). In the English area, for example, discourses find their way from university based discipline areas such as Cultural Studies into the senior English programs. In this process of recontextualization (Christie, 1999b; Bernstein, 1999b, 2000), signs and resources are 'imported' from one context to another, such as from the domain of business writing to the senior school curricula and classroom. In the process of recontextualization, curricula designers and teachers emphasise particular ideas, discourses, practices and resources at the expense of others. In this process, they prioritise particular discursive aspects about, for example, what is successful writing, the form of appropriate genres and linguistic features.

The concept of recontextualization has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of learning (Meurer, 2004) and the social significance of what students learn. It offers an understanding of how texts transcend boundaries into new contexts as text producers carry knowledge and resources from one location to another. This is because, as Bernstein (1999b) argued, the process of selecting discourses from contexts outside schools for specific purposes, such as school examinations, is a power imbued activity and a form of symbolic control. Such processes may be embedded with moral overtones, whereby for example teachers make decisions about the value of particular discourses, practices and select practices that are most appropriate and worthy.

Curricula are one of the key mechanisms by which discipline knowledge, discourses, resources and genres are brought into schools in a reconstructed form (Bernstein,

1999a, 2000; Chien & Wallace, 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Kress, 2005). In this respect, the content of curriculum has powerful social consequences as it is, according to Kress (1995), fundamental in shaping forms of identity by promoting forms of text production and writing for particular groups of students. The contemporary curriculum landscape highlights how curricula serve multiple educational and social purposes (Collins, 2002; Griffiths, 2006; Harris & Marsh, 2005; Petrina, 2004). Collins highlights that four key aspects constitute contemporary curriculum:

- an instrumental curriculum concerned with the accumulation of skills for life and work;
- an incoherent curriculum in the sense that there is little clear framing of what constitutes legitimate knowledge and forms of identity in particular discipline areas;
- valorisation of subject curriculum for the purposes of self development and pathways to prestigious careers;
- a values curriculum that accentuates tolerance as a mechanism for accepting working and living with others in an increasingly globalised world.

However, an analysis of curriculum also requires frames or concepts that help explain its structure and composition. Applebee (1995) has identified five key composition structures of typical literature courses. He provides the following as examples of types of formal curriculum that can be applied to an analysis of English subjects:

- Catalogue – an independent series of items or experiences that are not linked throughout a curriculum document;
- Collection – identification of a topic and selection of loosely arranged elements;
- Sequence – a series of topics arranged in a sequential, chronological or hierarchical order;
- Episodic – an overall topic that provides a focus for knowledge and concepts, tasks and assessments;
- Integrated – a curriculum composed on independent and interacting experiences (p. 77). New topics are linked to those that precede it.

2.5.3 *Invisible and visible pedagogies*

Bernstein's (1990; 1996) notion of visible and invisible pedagogies, examples of which are provided in Table 2.2, provides a valuable tool for describing the nature of regulative discourses and highlighting the differences between pedagogical strategies. Visible pedagogies are strategies where the rules and criteria of what is learned are made explicit to learners and the learning experience is clearly framed. In doing so, teachers control content through clearly defined sequencing and pacing. Alternately, invisible strategies lack explicit sequencing and pacing of activities and largely lack overt transmission of content, relying instead upon students' ability to learn about genre and writing through various forms of experiential, project based, student centred and problem based learning. As Bernstein argued, invisible pedagogies derive from theories of child development and psychology that view language learning as innate. Based on this assumption, successful educators construct environments where students can develop these abilities. Such strategies give students substantial autonomy in selecting the content of their learning and the pacing and sequencing of the tasks completed.

Table 2.2 Examples of visible and invisible pedagogies

Visible pedagogies	Invisible pedagogies
Explicit instruction	Immersion in environment
Scaffolding	Experiential forms of learning
Modelling	Project based and student centred learning

The selection of instructional strategies employed by teachers in the classroom is partially influenced by dominant discourses which emphasise particular approaches to learning, to writing in general and the student writer. An examination of pedagogic strategies employed by teachers provides an insight into their views of particular student writers. Teachers may use explicit strategies to ensure that student writers gain a substantial understanding of particular types of genres, texts and linguistic features of these genres. Equally, teachers may use specific strategies to create particular social environments. Strategies will provide valuable information about the extent to which teachers aim to construct the types of identities that are made available to students and the choices they can make about how they affiliate with particular identities and the extent to which they are free to make their own choices.

2.6 The construction of a discourse community – contemporary discourses of writing in the English subject area

2.6.1 *Subject English – discipline, tradition and discourse*

2.6.1.1 Historical perspectives and issues in senior subject English

A survey of English professional journals, edited books and indeed, the popular media, reveals school English to be a contested field (Bourne, 2003; Christie & Humphrey, 2008; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Doecke & Parr, 2005; Durrant, 2003; Kress, Howie & Sawyer, 2006; Macken-Horarik, 2009; Sawyer, 2005). Much of this very public debate revolves around uncertainties about the subject's core business, about what knowledge, skills and attitudes should constitute the enterprise and how it should be taught. As a number of academics have contended (Bourne, 2003; Durrant, 2003; Macken-Horarik, 2009), this unease not only encapsulates concerns about language teaching, literacy standards and the impact of emerging technologies, it also relates to fundamental questions about the type of person and citizen the discipline should aim to produce.

For Hunter (1988, 1994, 1997), such controversies reflect the subject's unique heritage which can be traced back to the eighteenth century English Sunday School. In this environment, English played a key role in the school's pastoral traditions, where it served as a vehicle for bringing moral training to the masses. As Hunter explained, reading and writing practices in the Sunday School supported moral instruction through reading of the scriptures and exposure to religious teachings. As popular schools developed in the nineteenth century, these practices were normalised in the English subject. In Hunter's view, elements of this pastoral tradition remain at the core of contemporary English, which he described as a social mechanism concerned with the moral guidance of the young and formation of social identity.

This position is largely supported by Patterson's (2000) post structuralist interpretation of the subject. Indeed, Patterson maintained that English has been less subject to diversity and change throughout its history than has been recognised by a number of scholars. She contended that despite new paradigms, discourses and models, the subject has consistently been characterised by a concern with the moral and social education of the self rather than with pedagogies or approaches to reading and writing.

Alternately, scholars such as Kress, Howie and Sawyer (2006) and Beavis (2006) perceive the subject to be intrinsically broadly based and its propensity to move beyond discipline boundaries as one of its strengths. They maintain that the business of English is largely the evaluation of meaning and construction of various types of texts. In such a framework, the learning area is capable of responding to communicative,

social, and cultural change. From such a perspective, new discourses and practices, such as those reflecting cultural studies and multimodal orientations, represent the discipline's responses to change.

2.6.1.2 The shaping of writing practices in senior school English

In such an environment, writing presents unique challenges for English teachers. It captures public concerns about perceived declining literacy standards, particularly in the areas of spelling, grammar and the use of Standard Australian English (Beavis & Charles, 2005). For teachers, contemporary curricula often create tensions between social expectations of formality, traditions of academic writing conventions and the need to incorporate popular culture. Even more challenging for the teacher is an emerging tension between formal academic forms of writing and new forms of multimodal text such as the website. The trend towards new forms of text, and the study of texts in terms of a range of semiotic features, such as images and font, has shifted the study of text away from writing to a broader concept of text.

Some research highlights how, contrary to expectations, English classrooms may be locations where inadequate attention is given to student construction of written text (Beavis & Charles, 2005; Beavis, 2006; Kress, 2001). Researchers such as Beavis and Charles and Kress have made the point that in the English classroom, students may spend considerable time studying literary texts such as the novel and cultural texts such as the feature film. In this process students deconstruct and analyse generic and often linguistic features of the text studied, however generic and linguistic features of the texts students use to convey knowledge and understanding about these texts, such as the essay and report, are often neglected (Beavis & Charles, 2005).

Some researchers contend that English has consistently offered students a limited range of written genres. Research during the 1990s revealed that schooled English writing was characterised by four key genres: the observation-comment, recount, narrative and report (Rose, 2009). More recently, Christie and Derewianka (2008) also identified that six genres: the recount, narrative, personal response, review, character analysis, and thematic interpretation dominate the subject. Of concern for scholars such as Christie and Derewianka is the proliferation of the response genre in the senior English classroom in a form that calls for high levels of evaluation and reflection about the values represented by texts (p. 58).

Research by Christie (2004b, 2005a) suggests that some of the challenges facing the teaching of writing stem in part from the ambiguous place language occupies in the English classroom. By this, Christie means that whilst language is the dominant medium of the discipline, teachers do not always explicitly demonstrate how language is used in particular texts to achieve specific genres, such as discussions, or to meet

the conventions of formal academic language traditionally used in essay writing. This inclination is also revealed in earlier research conducted by Kress (2001), Rothery (1989, 1991) and Gilbert (1989, 1991, 2001), which identified considerable resistance amongst teachers to addressing language and compositional features of texts. Their research in the English classroom also highlighted an inconsistent approach, where the language used in studied texts such as the novel, took precedence over language use in students' written texts.

Equally, research conducted by Macken-Horarik (2002, 2005, 2006a), Martin (2002) and Rose (2003, 2009) has identified the need for greater explicit teaching of writing and text construction in the classroom and particularly the need for explicit instruction in the linguistic demands of texts. Their research reflects the findings of research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the Disadvantaged Schools *Write it Right* Program which examined the use of genre based teaching strategies for students experiencing difficulties in the early years of secondary school English (New South Wales Department of Education, 1994; Iedema, 1995). Rose (2009) has also raised concerns that instruction in contemporary Australian English classes is characterised by a lack of attention to structure and the linguistic and grammatical features of texts. From his perspective, a legacy of weak genre practice, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, still influences approaches to the teaching of writing.

More recently, Christie and Derewianka (2008) and Christie and Humphrey (2008) make the point that a lack of specificity in the presentation and teaching about written text has the potential to trivialise practices such as writing. By this, they mean that a lack of detailed attention to the conventional uses of resources such as schematic structure, abstractions or syntax may result in a lack of knowledge about particular genres and an absence of practice dedicated to reproducing those texts accurately.

Research into writing over the past five years has pointed to the need for educators and researchers to identify differing stages of writing development as students progress through school. Christie and Derewianka (2008), Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007) and Myhill (2008, 2009) identify the need to map and discern milestones of successful writing if students are to successfully enter adult life. Explicit in their framework is the need to articulate the genre, linguistic and multimodal resources of each stage of their progression. Also underpinning this work is the recommendation for a theoretical framework for teachers of writing that ensures that they have an adequate understanding of the texts they teach.

Additionally, writing practices surrounding the construction of texts in English classrooms need to be seen in the context of a broader school and school discipline environment. Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) made the point that school subjects, as

arenas for practice³, “possess different features, histories, and status’ that affect teachers’ work” (p. 6). In their research into contemporary American schools, using predominantly quantitative survey methodologies, Grossman and Stodolsky identified English teachers’ concern with professional status and its impact upon their teaching styles and attitudes. Teachers who taught particular subjects to particular groups of students were afforded higher levels of status and were deemed to possess more sophisticated forms of knowledge than others. Within teaching departments, hierarchies based on teaching programs and student groups, operated. Such findings are relevant to this study because they indicate that English teachers may have professional and emotional investments in the subjects they teach and this may have a bearing on teachers’ attitudes to the courses and students. In this capacity, Green’s (2004; 2006) concepts of *English as Literature* and *English as Work* need to be seen in terms of the demarcations within the subject. These labels not only reflect subject matter, discourses and practices, they are also indicative of levels of status within the discipline.

Issues of status, according to Caughlin and Kelly (2004), influence teachers’ pedagogical choices. In their case study research tracking the progress of two senior classes, Caughlin and Kelly examined the instructional strategies of two teachers delivering English to two markedly different groups. Their research identified that teachers are predisposed to use explicit forms of teaching, such as scaffolding and modelling, in higher level and more academic subjects than when teaching students in vocational and cultural studies programs. In less academically orientated subjects, teachers were less focussed on conveying and structuring knowledge and subject matter and inclined to use invisible and student centred strategies. They concluded that hierarchical perceptions of curriculum areas and associated professionalism of teachers who deliver in these areas exist within the English area and can have a significant impact on teachers’ approaches to teaching and learning.

This overview of the dominant issues in the subject area has highlighted aspects of the discursive and professional environment in which English teachers conduct their work. In doing so, the section provided an initial description of the particular discursive features of the discipline, such as its strong regulative or pastoral orientation. It also identified some of the significant challenges facing English teachers and the historical and social forces shaping the environments in which teachers’ position student writers and that have shaped their own values and practices as teachers of English.

³ Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) maintained that school subjects such as English are not only sites where particular practices are located, they are also sites where practices and discourses are prioritized, negotiated, discredited and valorised.

2.6.2 *Dominant approaches to writing, genre and identity in subject English*

Both Ivanic (2004) and Locke (2005, 2006) have made the point that teachers' choices about writing instruction are influenced by what they perceive writing to be and the functions it serves. Additionally, a myriad of factors influence the choices teachers make, their initial teacher training; access to resources, professional development; professional journals and their participation in communities of English teachers. This combination of factors exposes teachers to a range of discourses, which over time they integrate in unique ways into their teaching practices. As Ivanic and Locke suggest, it is helpful to view discourses of writing as waves of influence, each emerging from particular social and historical circumstances, and each underpinned by assumptions about language, textual practice and identity. This section provides an overview of the subject's dominant discourses about writing, and the access to resources, writing pedagogies and writing identities shaped by them.

2.6.2.1 A skills based and grammar approach to writing

For the first half of the twentieth century, a perception of writing as a set of linguistic and grammatical rules dominated its teaching. In this approach, learning to write meant becoming competent in identifying and using sound-symbol relationships which generate words, syntactic relationships and sentences, and cohesion in larger texts such as paragraphs (Kress 1994). A perception of writing as sets of rules and patterns underpinned this model.

A view of language as autonomous and largely unaffected by the circumstances of its use or the purposes of text construction also framed this approach. For this reason, the model accentuated accuracy at the level of punctuation and grammar and spelling. The successful student writer displays formal mastery of textual practices such as sentence construction. Such an approach lends itself to the explicit, or visible teaching of rules of grammar and a highly teacher centred approach. At worst, it lacks a consideration of context and the social and cultural conditions in the teaching of writing.

2.6.2.2 Writing as a response to cultural heritage

An emphasis on cultural heritage assumed that exposure to good literature provides access to the values and wisdom of Western culture and the capacity to participate in its social, intellectual and aesthetic traditions. From this perspective, the process of writing and constructing meaning is an individual and creative act (Locke, 2005, 2006). The successful student writer is an inspired individual expressing an appreciation for the best of Western literature through writing. In recent years, the cultural heritage model has expanded to include an understanding of the broader cultural environment beyond that reinforced in the literary canon.

2.6.2.3 Writing as personal growth and expression - a focus on the author

The Dartmouth Conference of 1966⁴ reinforced English as a vehicle for the development of personal expression and demanded that writing in the English classroom be authentic, giving individual writers the status and freedom of authors. Heralded as progressive and student-centred in the 1970s, personal growth strategies were notable for their privileging of student responses. A psychological base, drawn largely from the work of Chomsky (1986) and a view of language as an innate ability, underpinned the rationale for writing as a personal and individual endeavour. Successful student writers emulate the sensibilities of the individual author, demonstrate the capacity to use unique concepts and innovative narrative strategies and communicate sincere sentiments. Represented in the work of Britton (1975), this model emphasized the importance of motivating students to take part in engaging writing activities through access to relevant and authentic content. Of central importance was the understanding that successful writing contributed to students' confidence as participants in the adult world. As Britton argued, students should write as someone with something to say to the world in general (p. 192). The personal growth model emphasised writing as authorship. It advocated learning to write through strong readership in the belief that effective writers model successful authors. As such, it assumed that successful writers are also strong readers.

Drawing on the work of Bernstein (1990), Christie et al (1991) argued that progressive pedagogies, such as those represented by the personal growth paradigm, have disadvantaged students from low socio-economic backgrounds by failing to make explicit the generic and linguistic demands of texts. They maintained that "School practices which leave invisible the actual linguistic demands that schooling places on students serve to disadvantage many students most in need" (p. 21) as they do not necessarily expose students to the linguistic resources needed for the successful construction of a range of texts. Thus, progressive pedagogies have the potential to disadvantage students who do not bring appropriate levels of skills, knowledge and language or valued ways of seeing the world to their understanding and construction of text.

As result of extensive research into writing practices in Queensland English classes in the 1980s, Gilbert (1989; 1991) contended that this model was characterised by a lack of emphasis on text, in which the text figures as a necessary, and almost unfortunate barrier between the speaker or author and listener and reader. The social world

⁴ At Dartmouth College in 1966, over fifty educators participated in the first Anglo-American conference on the teaching of English. One significant conclusion of the conference is that language is learned through the experience of using it in rich and varied contexts.

provides inspiration, it is not a determining factor in the construction of text. Gilbert argued that the cumulative effect of 'personalist' and author-oriented approaches to writing practices was to accentuate the creation of nurturing and supportive environments for learning at the expense of the transmission of skills and knowledge. The notion of the student writer as author also suggests that writing is an innate ability developed through encouragement and the construction of appropriate learning environments. Gilbert maintained that emphasising authenticity of the author and personal growth through creativity, personal expression and personal response confused the area of writing pedagogy in the classroom, leaving no real theoretical base for its teaching. In particular, this model of the school writer combined concepts of authorship with individuality through the metaphor of the professional author (p. 68), one where the student writer as creator of original literature dominates considerations of writing pedagogy.

2.6.2.4 An understanding of writing as process

Emerging in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the work of Flower and Hayes (1981) and Graves (1983) emphasised the relationship between writing and psychological processes and the importance of long term memory in the development of writing. Their work formed the basis of models of writing and teaching strategies that came under the broad heading of the 'process' model. This model viewed language use as an innate ability and for this reason, immersion and exposure to successful practices and exemplary texts formed the basis of successful writing pedagogies. Whilst theorists and practitioners recognised the importance of guidance through the construction of an engaging and supportive environment, it was their view that explicit instruction constituted a restrictive and inhibitive intervention that interferes with students' innate abilities. This was in part because the student writer was seen to be an imitator, capable of acquiring the skills necessary for successful writing through immersion in varied writing experiences (Locke, 2005, 2006).

For these reasons, proponents recommended that student should be supported through sequential approaches to the production of written text and the application of processes such as planning, drafting and reviewing. This approach to the teaching of writing attracted controversy in academic circles because it failed to acknowledge the significance of social and cultural processes in the construction of meaning (McIntyre 2000a, 2000b). Equally, researchers raised concerns about its lack of explicit guidelines for writing beyond generalised concepts of planning, construction and editing (Macken-Horarik, 2002). Viewed by critics as reflecting principles of the personal growth model, it has also attracted criticism for failing to theorise language (Faigley 1989) or language teaching.

However, researchers have identified strengths of the model. Guleff (2002) has made the point that it supports practices such as the writing workshop, where students learn to construct text in a methodical if somewhat limited approach. As a result of research conducted in the 1980s, Martin and Rose (2008) also identified that students benefited from the allocation of time for writing as a part of classroom routines. Christie (2004b) has also made the point that the model's strength lies in its commitment to providing meaningful writing opportunities.

2.6.2.5 Genre- based approaches to writing and writing pedagogy

The genre approach to the teaching of writing first appeared during the 1980s in response to perceived weaknesses in the process and personal growth models. For genre theorists, these models disempowered students by failing to teach explicitly the structures and linguistic resources necessary for the construction of valued texts. In Australian states, genre approaches developed into an influential set of strategies for representing and teaching writing in both primary and secondary school systems. To varying degrees, some features of functional linguistics were incorporated in the representation of text. Macken-Horarik (2005) posited that the strength of the genre model lies in its description:

in systematic detail of how the language system is organized so people can use it as resource to construct texts that vary in response to the demands of different social contexts (p. 44).

Genre-based pedagogies are motivated by the belief that students who lack the knowledge and skills necessary for text production need a visible and explicit curriculum and pedagogy (Feez, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2005). Thus, the pedagogy accentuates the explicit teaching of text structure and language as it serves a number of social purposes in a variety of social contexts. Successful students are aware of the importance of text purpose and text conventions.

Australian proponents of the genre approach emphasise that learning to become a successful member of one's society means mastering the genres of one's culture and the conventions of a range of genres deemed to be socially significant in particular contexts. Because of that, it is socially irresponsible not to teach genres of power to all students and specifically more so to disadvantaged students. Their argument is that it is not only a matter of students constructing the appropriate genre; it is a matter of responding to the demands of specific situations through genre, of recognising and understanding the conventions of socially valued genres and using a range of linguistic resources.

Australian genre pedagogies, emerging from the Disadvantaged Schools Program, represent one notable example of contemporary visible pedagogies. Genre based

pedagogies associated with the Sydney School were based on the principle that students, particularly struggling, disadvantaged or at risk students, need a visible curriculum (Macken-Horarik, 2005, 2006b) so that what students needed to know should be made explicit (Feez, 2002). The teaching and learning cycle (Martin & Rose, 2005) reflects the pedagogical perspective that learning is an apprenticeship into expert performance and explicit forms of instruction and framing are necessary if students are to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for successful performance. In this process, teachers need to identify the gap between what learners already know and what they need to learn to complete tasks (Hammond 2001; Jones 2001). Specific applications of the model to writing incorporate a structure of deconstructing contextual elements, modelling, joint construction, scaffolding and independent construction (Feez, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2005, 2006a). The model acknowledges the need for metalanguage by which teachers can talk to students about the features of texts as they are critically evaluated and constructed. An outline of the model based on the ideas of Macken-Horarik, Feez and Hammond is outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 A teaching and learning cycle

Strategy	Details of strategy
Deconstruction of task and demands of text	The teacher establishes the relevant field knowledge and knowledge of genre as serving social purpose, schematic structure and language features.
Modelling	Teachers model the various demands of text construction
Joint negotiation of text	Teacher and student construct features of text together
Independent construction	Students construct their own texts using practices such as editing and conferencing.

Based on Hammond (2001), Feez (2002) and Macken-Horarik (2005, 2006a)

2.6.2.6 Writing as a critical practice

Critical literacy discourses have positioned the successful student writer as one who examines ideology and power in the process of text construction. Currently a driving force in the English curriculum, the discourse emerged from a conglomerate of discourses and knowledge bases derived from cultural studies and new literacy studies (Barton, 2000, 2010; McIntyre, 2000). The model takes an understanding of culture beyond the valued texts of the literary canon to the world of media and encourages students to participate in and understand a number of deconstruction practices. Critical writing approaches encourage an understanding of how writing and text production

serve cultural, political and ideological interests through critical discourse analysis⁵. From this perspective, the student writer achieves social transformation through the process of writing and text construction (Kamler, 2001). McIntyre (2000) argued that the critical literacy discourse positions language use as a form of empowerment in that:

Knowing **that** you are positioned by language as well as **how** you are positioned by language is both a survival technique and a means of empowerment (p. 38). (Author's emphasis)

In this way, students successfully participate in English by understanding how they are positioned in the world, and understanding the connection between culture and representation (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997). Confident students are skilled ethnographers as they observe textual production in a number of contexts, and have developed capabilities in deconstructing the intentions of text producers. As well, they have control over textual practices, particularly those that facilitate critical evaluation and response.

2.6.2.7 Writing viewed as a social practice

A growing emphasis on context, and the environments in which writing takes place, has found expression in the social practices model of writing. Represented largely in the New Literacy Studies, it is influenced by the work of Barton (2000), Hamilton (2002) and Gee (2000, 2004) and underpinned by the assumption that literacy practices and text production are dependent on where and when they are used. Ideally, students learn to write in socially situated literacy events where writing serves relevant and meaningful social goals. Authentic activities, such as job application letters or participation in newspaper blogs about contemporary issues and events, are more meaningful than tasks designed to measure students' knowledge and skills levels, such as essay writing. Student writers are discursively positioned as independent learners who engage in ethnographies as they research the communicative demands, genres and writing practices of particular contexts. The ideal writer is one who is responsive to the needs of his or her environment.

Such an emphasis on situational context to the exclusion of text construction has consequences (Ivanic, 2004, p. 237). As Ivanic explained, for teachers it may bring about ambivalent attitudes towards pedagogy generally, to the explicit teaching of text and language use and to the importance of assessment. The result is an often tentative relationship between the demands of educational environments, curriculum and community expectations of language and literacy development and with the endeavour to recreate 'real life' situations.

⁵ Critical discourse analysis - analysis concerned with forms of representation, the social and cultural shaping of representation and forms of inequality.

More recently, a cultural studies orientation (Beavis & Charles, 2005; Beavis, 2006; Green, 2004; Saukko, 2003; Sumara, 2004; Turner, 2007) extends an understanding of writing from a situated practice to a broader social and cultural practice. In this model, writing and textual practice are clearly positioned as social and cultural acts. Students and teachers are researchers and ethnographers engaged in the activity of investigating contemporary communication practices (Sumara, 2004). This model finds expression in contemporary English curriculum through semiotic analysis of contemporary media, cultural and literary texts and the study of contemporary textual forms such as the text message (Carrington, 2005). The student writer is a producer of text immersed in the broader cultural and social context that understands textual practices and is skilled in contemporary technologies.

2.6.2.8 Writing as a multimodal and design practice

Emerging in the work of Kalantzis and Cope (1997) and later in the work of Kress (2003b, 2005), van Leeuwen (2006, 2008) and Maun and Myhill (2005) is a view of the ideal writer as one engaged in a semiotically aware design process. In this model, writing is one communicative mode used simultaneously with other modes and therefore is part of a broader textual composition. This discourse takes into account material practices, such as access to technology and communication practices, where writing is one of a number of semiotic modes. The successful writer is a technologically astute designer who can use a number of modes confidently. Additionally, Maun and Myhill (2005) contended, successful young writers not only engage in practices of design, they also engage in processes of theorising design in that they possess an understanding of how various modes coalesce to construct meaning. A multimodal framework emphasises stylistic choices associated with writing such as font and layout (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Myhill, 2008). Implicit in this model is a writer viewed as producer and designer of text, one who understands the relationship between language and other modes. Significantly, and reflective of changing technologies and forms of communication, the text producer and designer has replaced the notion of the author as responsible for text construction.

2.6.2.9 Writing as a developmental milestone process

Furthermore, Christie and Derewianka (2008), Schleppegrell (2004) and Myhill (2008) have advocated a view of successful writing as the completion of a series of milestones that students achieve as they progress through school to emerge as capable writers. Promoted in the work of Christie and Derewianka's *School Discourse: Learning to write across the years of schooling* (2008), the model proposes that each developmental stage of schooled writing can be measured by students' ability to write texts based on a particular range of genres using specific linguistic resources. Influential work by Myhill (2009), Maun & Myhill (2005), Myhill & Jones (2007) has

similarly proposed that teachers need to identify the linguistic requirements of particular milestones of writing development. For example, her research has identified that successful senior high school writers can apply a range of sentence types depending on the needs of particular communicative events and can successfully use these to achieve specific purposes. Christie, Derewianka and Myhill have emphasised the importance of teachers and students recognising and utilising the generic linguistic features of particular texts, and the need for teachers to support students through visible pedagogies. They also point to the need for a theoretical basis for interpreting linguistic resources and, for Christie and Derewianka, a functional linguistic framework provides a theoretical basis for interpreting and teaching texts and supporting students at various stages of schooling.

Additionally, Christie and Derewianka (2008) identify key linguistic and discursive practices of successful senior school writing. For example, the successful adolescent writer has command over abstract and technical language by which to participate and make use of various discourses, such as the cultural studies discourse. Critical in students' participation in such discourses is their capacity to use resources such as grammatical metaphor where largely verbal and material processes are converted into nominal or noun groups (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007). Equally, successful senior English student writers are able to establish confident authorial identities through practices such as the construction of detailed evaluation and argument. Successful writers at this level are able to use a range of linguistic strategies to elaborate upon the points they make and use resources valued in particular discourses, such as a cultural studies discourse found commonly in universities and in concepts that are adapted for senior school English studies, such as ideology and positioning.

The discourses and practices underpinning these models reach teachers in a myriad of ways where they construct powerful ways for controlling, classifying, and distributing discourses about writing in the classroom. This section has provided an overview of the dominant discourses of writing that the teachers in this research study encountered as part of their participation in the community of English teachers. Each of these discourses is underpinned by perceptions of the successful writer. Some, such as the model of personal expression, assume that students share an homogenous background which is devoid or free from differences between culture, language and social status (Kress, 1999). Others frame a student writer who is engaged in processes of critical discourse analysis through writing and text construction. Such discourses apportion responsibility for the construction of text and appropriation of resources differently. For some, the students, and their accompanying innate abilities and cultural and linguistic understandings are largely responsible for the acquisition of writing skills.

For others, the teacher, the subject area and the education system play a large role in shaping student writers.

2.6.3 *Traditional and changing conceptualisations of writing*

The research reported in this thesis took place in a period viewed as one of change and instability in the area of communication (Kress, 2002, 2005, 2006), one which, according to scholars such as Bull and Anstey (2005) and Vincent (2007), has led to a lack of certainty in our understanding of writing, genre and text construction. Despite these changes, however, written language remains a highly regarded form of representation, one that has dominated Western notions of literacy since the advent of writing in 3,000 BC (Graff, 1986).

For well over a century, the print text has dominated reading in English classrooms and provided models of successful and valued writing for English teachers and students. In senior school English for example, the academic essay has emulated forms of writing valued in academic journals and books. In this capacity, the print text has contributed to the shaping, structuring and organisation of meanings, forms of knowledge, creative expression and cultural meanings. As Green (2004) argued, print and writing are, “powerful organizers of what we do and who we are: quite fundamental, in fact, as conditions of possibility – historically, epistemologically and technically” (p. 297).

Bezemer and Kress (2008) also support this view and explain that ‘alphabetic’ Western cultures have been dominated for over three hundred years by the mode of writing and the medium of the book and page. They contend that writing and the book have shaped forms and representations of knowledge, reading practices, forms of storytelling and other expressions of imagination. The book in particular, has enabled the concept of the author and ownership of ideas, information, stories, experiences and modes of expression to flourish. Similarly, they argued, the book has facilitated ordering of information and knowledge into discrete and logical units of the chapter. Smaller units of meaning, such as the paragraph and sentence, derive from the logic, purpose and structure of the larger text. The mature adolescent writer, capable of participating in the valued texts of particular academic discourses is able to emulate aspects of this logical structure in the academic essay.

Currently teachers find themselves located between established and new approaches to making meaning in the wake of widespread changes in technological and communicative practices. This is made problematic by the fact that, as Kress (2002) argued, many current theories of textual practice are the result of the preceding period of relative stability. The preceding 50 years, they contend, was marked by strong

generic conventions and by an understanding of writing practices that had not taken into account the growing access to information. Additionally, Iedema (2003b) maintained that we inhabit a period witnessing the transformation of traditional representational practices, where knowledge and discourse are embodied in mixtures of the old and the new. As such, an emphasis on the linguistic features of texts has resulted in a simplification of the complex and often multilayered choices made in the process of constructing meaning.

Given the growth of computer technology and the increasing use of applications by students both within and beyond the school environment, it is vital to consider how students are using visual modes when constructing text. For this reason, it is important for the researcher investigating writing and genre practices to consider the semiotic choices made by students, with the conscious or unconscious intent of providing visual cues and at times, of marking their individuality as writers (Jewitt, 2005b). In this capacity, it is also important to consider how students use available visual resources to position themselves as creators of texts and how they align themselves with particular traditions such as those found in the world of business.

2.7 Genre, register and text - interpreting discursive positioning

2.7.1 *Investigating genre through social purposes, schematic structure and stages of text*

By recognising and interpreting the ways student writer's produce meaning in the texts they construct, researchers can achieve an understanding of the ways contexts position student writers. This means examining contexts through their artefacts and predominantly their written genres, because, as Beaufort (1999b) contends:

Genre acquisition involves the writer pulling together in one artefact...all of the social and cultural issues of ... the discourse community ... the specific content issues, and the exigencies of the rhetorical situation (p. 105).

Because of this, Bernstein (1999b) asserted, it is possible to 'work back' from the production of text to identify elements of the social relationship in which they were constructed. Through textual analysis, it is possible to generalise from texts how students structure discourse, use resources and interpret their contexts (Barton, 2000). Such analysis also provides an opportunity to interpret how students position themselves as writers who use particular resources and their responses to contextual features. By identifying some of the ways in which student writers produce meaning, we can develop a broad impression of school English discourse as an interaction

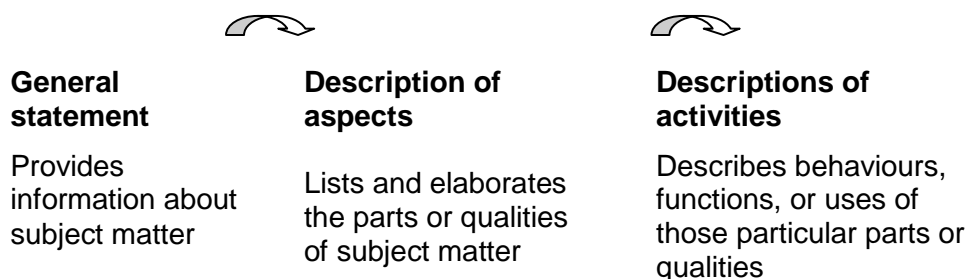
between layers of context: discipline-institution-classroom-student-writing (Donahue, 2005). This section provides an overview of the strategies employed in this thesis to analyse texts produced by students, and presented to students, and outlines the specific resources examined in that process.

This section expands the initial discussion of genres as typically composed of social purposes, schematic structures and rhetorical stages. Table 2.4 provides an overview of genres and register commonly found in Australian secondary schools.

1 - Social purpose – Writers use genre to achieve social purposes

2. Social location – Writers adapt and shape the communicative practices and conventions associated with genres to meet their needs in specific locations through the construction of registers.

3. Schematic structure – Writers reproduce relatively predictable structures and sequence of stages (Macken-Horarik, 2002; Martin, 2002). Whilst these have been very generally identified in the Table 2.4, immediately below is a very brief example of Rothery’s (1989) interpretation of the schematic structure of the report.



4. Description of stages

Structurally, genres incorporate a series of stages referred to as moves (Derwianka, 2003; Macken-Horarik, 2006a, 2006b; Martin, 2002, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2005c) which have the following characteristics:

- The succession of stages is linear;
- Staged boundaries mark shifts in the use of semiotic resources;
- Stages incorporate distinct strategies to reach the overall goal;
- Stages are marked by distinctive uses of linguistic and visual resources (van Leeuwen, 2005c).

A detailed analysis of choices made by students as they construct texts can provide valuable insights into the ways environments position them as writers. First, it provides

information about the genres made available and privileged in learning environments. Second, text analysis can provide insights into the levels of control students have over the genres they draw upon and the resources they appropriate. Third, it provides an insight into the ways students affiliate with discourses, through the content presented in texts and the use of resources. Fourth, it provides an insight into the degrees to which students conform to, resist and challenge conventions of particular genres.

Table 2.4 A sample of genres and registers found in senior schools

Genre type	Social purpose	Register (Social location)	Schematic structure	Textual features
Recount	Retells events to inform	Personal letter Written history Police record Insurance claim Excursion write-up	Orientation Record of events Reorientation	Mental and behavioural processes, specific participants, personal pronouns, additive and temporal conjunctions, general use of past tense
Report	Describes and classifies characteristics	Information packages Government reports Investigative reports	General statement Description of aspects Description of activities	Material and relational processes, present tense, technical vocabulary and use of formal language
Explanation	Accounts for the nature of things – particularly processes	Elaboration Explanation	General Statement Implication Sequence (sets out the logical steps of a process)	Generalized non-human participants Material and relational processes Variety of clause themes Temporal and causal conjunctions
Exposition	Presents an argument on an issue- supported by evidence	Argumentative essay Analytical essay Newspaper editorial	Thesis Argument Elaboration Reiteration	Generalized participants Variety of verb processes including mental and relational Nominal expressions Abstractions
Critical response	Responds to and interprets a range of situations, activities and text	School based critical responses Thematic study Character analysis	Text evaluation Text deconstruction Challenge to text evaluation	Present and past tense Academic and formal language Lexical density Nominal expressions Abstractions Syntax requiring subordination Conjunctions indicating relationships of contrast, causality and sequence

Table 2.4 (Cont.)

Genre type	Social purpose	Register (Social location)	Schematic structure	Textual features
Personal response	Responds to and interprets a range of situations, activities and text	Personal letter Email and blog response	Orientation Text description Comment	Material and behavioural processes Technical vocabulary Medium level modality Informality
Promotional	Promotes a service or product	Newspaper advertisement Flyer Leaflet	Orientation Enticement Specific information Action	Visual symbols – Graphics Headings Picture and illustrations Declarative clauses Centrality and horizontal features High level modality
Procedural	Reports on a series of events, directions and instructions	Request letter Order letter Response letter Purchase letter	Orientation Elaboration Action	Material processes – simple present tense Temporal conjunctions Technical vocabulary
Transactional	Directs readers and listeners on how to do something through a logical order of steps	Operating manual Training manual Instruction Safety manual Notice Duty statements	Goal Steps Results	Material processes, simple present tense, declarative clauses

Sample of genres found in the school environment (as relevant to the dominant texts analysed in this study) incorporating research of Bhatia (1993, 2002), Christie and Derewinka (2008), Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007), Feez and Joyce (1998), Macken-Horarik (2007), Martin and Rose (2007, 2008) and Schleppegrell (2004).

2.7.2 Adapting writing to the demands of local environments

In the process of constructing text in the classroom, students regularly need to adapt genre conventions, such as those found in the response genre, to more specialised texts such as argumentative and analytical essays (Feez, 2002, p. 243). This is because the circumstances shaping each instance of text construction are not uniform, rather they are a coalescence of unique circumstances such as the demands of curriculum. Response genres are used in differing ways depending upon these circumstances. On particular occasions, they may serve as avenues for students to demonstrate their knowledge of, for example, literary concepts and their ability to analyse literary texts. In another classroom, the analytical essay written as a response may emphasize the development of argument and the capacity to make ethical judgments and to explain how a text offers 'ethical principles for living' (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 71). Alternately, in another classroom, the analytical essay may serve to demonstrate students' understanding of essay writing conventions.

The concept of register helps to explain these differences. Registers are specific text forms, such as the argumentative essay or analytical essay that writers construct in response to the immediate needs of a situation (Christie, 1999b; Macken-Horarik, 2002). In effect, they constitute adaptations of the blueprints offered by genres. They are part of a hierarchical or strata system, as outlined in Figure 2.6, and in Table 2.5. The notion of register provides a valuable mechanism by which to explain the interplay between context and text (Halliday, 1978, p. 126).

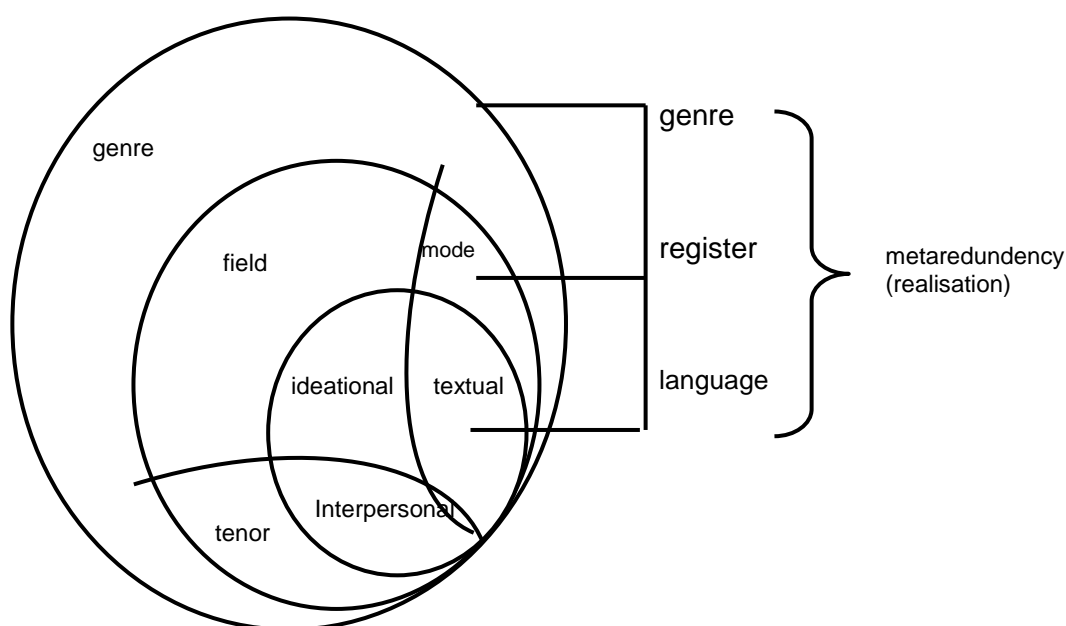


Figure 2.6 A metafunctional and multilayered approach to register and genre (Based on Martin (2009)).

Register analysis is pivotal in identifying the relationship between the resources students use when constructing texts and those made available to them. The analytical essay is a significant text in many English courses and classrooms (Scheppegrell, 2004), and may be based upon particular genres, such as the personal response (Christie & Derewianka, 2008). More specifically, for example, the analytical essay may incorporate the social purpose and schematic structure of the response genre and more specifically the thematic interpretation. Within senior English, the thematic interpretation abstractly reflects upon texts and their values. For this reason, it is often used to induct students into the values of the texts and assess their ability to interpret and evaluate the message of the text (ibid). A typical schematic structure of the thematic interpretation (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007) is:

*Theme identification ^ Preview of theme elements ^ Element evaluation
^ Reiteration of theme*



In this study, the notion of register helps explain the features of written text constructed in differing classrooms even if they are informed by a common curriculum and largely consistent with national and state based social and cultural circumstances. The concept of register highlights how the construction of text results from a dynamic interplay between the contexts of the available semiotic resources as outlined in Table 2.5. The thesis draws upon Halliday's (1985) framing of register to explain how the demands of specific situations shape the use of ideational, interpersonal and textual resources, explained in greater depth in Sections 2.7.3.1 to 2.7.3.3, through the notions of field, tenor and mode:

Field –describes the social activity and representation of experience and knowledge 'reality' in a particular context. These meanings are the most fundamental in determining the meaning of a text and exert considerable influence over other elements (Martin, 2009; Leckie-Tarry, 1995).

Tenor - outlines the social roles and relationships inherent in an act of communication in a particular context (Halliday, 1978, 1985).

Mode – articulates the possible medium of the communication event and the textual strategies employed.

Table 2.5 An outline of social semiotic functions and layers of context
Adaptation of Macken-Horarik's (2006) model.

CONTEXT OF CULTURE – GENRE		
		
CONTEXT OF SITUATION – REGISTER		
		
Field	Tenor	Mode
Ideational resources (Content, ideas, processes)	Interpersonal resources (Relationships)	Textual resources (Text construction)
Subject matter, knowledge and discourse Abstract and technical concepts and language Transitivity processes	Role relationships Appraisal Modality Authority	Textual cohesion References Visual resources

Research into senior school English is yet to provide an exhaustive overview of its dominant genres and registers and lacks the extensive mapping of genres and registers evident in studies of History (Coffin, 2006) and Science (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Rose, 1997). A number of factors account for this. First, as has been outlined in Section 2.6, English is a diverse subject area informed by a number of discipline areas and an accompanying diverse range of genres. Second, the subject is characterised by the study and practice of textuality, and its response to communicative change can make a mapping of key texts an ongoing process (Macken-Horarik, 2009). Third, the distinctive nature of Australia's state based systems has meant that each state aligns with discipline-based forms of knowledge and genres in unique and at times idiosyncratic ways.

Given the time restraints of this project, it was not realistic to review all genres found within English studies in depth. For this reason, the thesis primarily examined academic and workplace registers, and explored uses of the ideational, interpersonal and textual resources associated with both. Table 2.6 provides an overview of the linguistic resources used in the construction of academic registers based on the work of Christie (2002a, 2004a), Christie and Derewianka (2008), Macken-Horarik (2006) and Scheppegrell (2004). A broad overview of workplace writing conventions is also

provided based on the research of Bargiela-Chiappina (2002), Beaufort (1999a, 1999b), Devitt (2004), Forey (2004), Joyce (1992), Kell (2003) and Loos (1999). The thesis takes into account research into workplace writing practices in schooled writing, particularly the contributions of Forey, Gilbert (2001) and Beaufort.

Table 2.6 An overview of academic and workplace writing conventions

Writing conventions associated with academic registers	Writing conventions associated with workplace registers
Demonstration of knowledge and a range of analytical and communicative skills	Social purposes and writing embedded in social action
Framed by complex texts such as the essay which are largely consistently framed	Framed by an extensive range of texts including simple transactional and complex professional texts
Thematic progression which supports an argument - Capacity for thematic development and use of interpersonal resources to evaluate behaviour and phenomena based on social and institutional norms	Generic hybridity Understanding and analysis of workplace practices
Valuing discourse-appropriate abstractions and technical terminology of narrative and film - a growing command over grammatical metaphor	Elaboration – integration of text from multiple sources Collaborative authorship
Modality presenting claims as possibilities - an authorial presence and engagement with diverse perspectives and possibilities	Intertextuality through elaboration and importing of text Ability to interpret and write context
Variety of clause types and conjunctions	Uses of technical language Formality and emphasis on the use of interpersonal resources
Variety of verb processes including mental and relational	Largely simple conjunctions and material and relational processes

A senior student, for example, may write a thematic interpretation of the themes of a novel typically studied in English, such as Tim Winton’s *Cloudstreet* (1998) in the form of an analytical essay. In doing so, she chooses particular phenomena and concepts to convey the experience of identity shaped by landscape; enacts a particular type of relationship with the reader and organises the text in a particular manner. In this way, she will draw upon the generic blueprints of the thematic interpretation that are commonly produced in English. A summary of a register analysis may look like:

Field: resources may include identification of dominant themes as ideas and values; construction of identity; and analysis, which shows the ways narrative techniques and ideas and values, are connected or patterned together (Kress, 1994). It may

incorporate extensive use of abstract and technical language to communicate concepts and phenomenon, and extensive use of nominalisation and grammatical metaphors (Scheppegrell, 2004).

Tenor: resources may include an authoritative presentation of an argument (Scheppegrell, 2004), use of evaluative judgments about the meanings and strategies employed in the text (Christie & Derewianka, 2008), reflective strategies, or the ability of the writer to distance him or herself from the text through positioning using strategies associated with formal writing and use of a variety of appraisal resources.

Mode: resources may include the written language medium, a range of syntax and clause types, control of cohesive devices and conjunctions that signal an argument such as adversative conjunctions.

Alternatively, a register analysis of a job application letter, based on Text 6.1⁶ (Section 6.3.1) might yield the following results:

Field: resources may include extensive use of technical language such as 'work ethics' (Bargiela-Chiappina, 2002; Beaufort, 1999a, 1999b; Devitt, 2004), that support discourses of the workplace generally and more specifically, those associated with employment practices. There is a strong focus on achieving social purpose such as securing employment and a necessity to have an understanding of context (Kell, 2003).

Tenor: there are variations in social distance: at times technical language results in the text being relatively formal and at times it is personal.

Mode: key textual resources include simple sentence types and largely additive conjunctions, references to world of employment through phrases such as 'willing worker' and repetition of personal pronoun 'I' to keep the focus on writer.

⁶ I am applying for this position as, from a very early age I have always known that this is the career path I wanted to pursue. I hold keeping my body physically and mentally fit in high regard, therefore I believe serving the community would be the ideal way for me to achieve this ambition, whilst still maintaining a high job satisfaction. I am an honest, reliable and willing worker who has learned valuable communication and leadership skills through sport. My work ethics are unquestionable and I am really keen on joining your team.

2.7.3 *Framing textual analysis through metafunctions and linguistic systems*

The analysis of linguistic features of text in this thesis is informed by the three aspects of register, field, tenor and mode, a selection of linguistic systems and relevant linguistic features as outlined in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 An overview of metafunctions and linguistic systems relevant to this study

Metafunction	Linguistic systems	Relevant linguistic features
Ideational		Lexis
	Transitivity processes	Material, mental, relational, behavioural and projecting verbal processes
Interpersonal	Appraisal	Attitude (Affect, Appreciation and Judgement); Engagement; Graduation
	Modality	Probability, usuality, obligation and inclination
Textual	Theme Cohesion	Topical/Interpersonal/ Textual Themes Reference Conjunction Ellipsis Substitution Connectives Lexical Cohesion (repetition, collocation, synonyms, antonyms, part-whole relations, class-subclass relations)

An understanding that business, academic and education communities can be interpreted and understood through their goals and values, communicative practices and genres emerged in the 1980s and 1990s through the notion of discourse communities (Beaufort, 1999a; Hyland, 2010; Swales, 1990). For Swales, discourse communities are socio rhetorical networks that function to achieve common social and public goals. Additionally, as Beaufort (1999a) explained, they are social entities, “...within which a distinctive set of writing practices occur and beyond whose borders different writing practices occur” (p. 57). According to Beaufort, discourse communities can be conceptualised through a synthesis of community goals and values, the

material conditions of text construction, the input of individuals, communication modes, genres and roles and tasks assigned to writers as elucidated in Figure 2.4 below.

2.7.3.1 **Analysing ideational positioning in texts through abstract and technical lexis, and verbal processes**

An analysis of ideational meanings provides an insight into the ways particular school disciplines, classes and students construe reality, knowledge and discourse (Martin, 2002). Through technical and abstract language, a discipline constructs an inventory of the phenomenon it can talk about and the technical and abstract language it can use to do so (ibid). This study identified a selection of resources, which realised, or made concrete, these types of meanings. One way to gain useful insights into the resources employed as a text evolves is through investigation of ideational metafunctions (Halliday, 1994; Meyer, 2010). They establish and develop meanings and present information associated with notions of subject matter, knowledge and discourse (Forey, 2004).

As students write complex texts, they employ patterns of ideational resources. An analysis of these patterns can provide the researcher with an insight into a text's "method of development" (Halliday, 1994, p. 61) or logical structure. For this reason, an analysis of ideational resources can help identify the key ideas and their development in a text. Below is a segment of a text written by a Year Eleven student about Winton's novel *Cloudstreet* (1988):

Life is about facing challenges,
supporting others
and finding one's sense of place,
and the novel *Cloudstreet* is about all of these.

In Winton's novel, the central character Fish encourages the reader
to view the house in which he lives
and the landscape of 1960s Perth
as shaping his sense of who he is.

In this extract, the student argues that the novel provides an insight into the ways place, landscape or environment can influence the development of the individual or self. This is constructed in part through a number of key words and phrases⁷, which constitute themes, such as *supporting others*, *finding one's sense* and *as shaping* help. The repetition of key ideas such as *sense of place* develops and progresses the argument emerging in the text and establishes links between the concept of a sense of self as represented through the values, attitudes and themes of the text. An

⁷ Key words that serve as examples are italicised.

examination of the ways subject matter, knowledge and ideas are represented can provide an insight into how particular environments position students to take up forms of identity (Martin, 2007). In the above example, the very broad notions of the nature of life and facing challenges, indicates a largely pastoral or ethical perspective, such that it reflects text analysis driven in part by the moral lessons it offers students.

Terms such as *character* and *landscape* serve to locate the text and its writer in the discourses associated with literary analysis. Many expectations are attached to writing about the phenomena of characterisation in senior school English, such as considerations of motivations, construction of characters and representation of ideology (Moon & Mellor, 2004). The passage conforms to this valued discourse in its analysis of relationship between characterisation and landscape.

In the school English context, discourses are largely established and maintained through language (Christie, 2002a; Martin, 2001b). Learning to participate in a particular discourse means controlling its abstract and technical language and being able to interpret and reconstruct its associated phenomena and concepts (Martin, 2001b). For example, in a review of contemporary film students may demonstrate their ability to use the abstractions of *theme* and a range of technical film terms such as *juxtaposition* and *montage* to explain strategies employed in the making of the film and to demonstrate their knowledge of contemporary film language.

Christie and Derewianka's (2008) research into adolescent writing in senior subject English highlights how important it is that students successfully use grammatical metaphor if they are to develop the technical and abstract vocabulary necessary for participation in the dominant discourses of the discipline. This is particularly relevant in those disciplines which rely upon high levels of abstract language. Grammatical metaphor is the process of drawing upon grammatical resources, such as verbs or adjectives, and rearranging them into new grammatical resources such as nouns (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Martin 2001b). For example, verbs such as *classifying* or *to classify* may be converted into the concept of *classification*. Such a process extends the activity of *classifying* to the phenomenon *classification*, giving it an element of abstraction, and facilitating the construction of associated practices and boundaries. The use of such grammatical resources is central in constructing knowledge, developing argumentation and enabling the flow, accumulation, compacting and foregrounding of information. They therefore aid in the construction of specialised forms of experience (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin, 2008).

A description and analysis of students' use of process or verbal resources (Eggin, 2004; Halliday, 1994) can reveal much about the resources students draw upon in the construction of text. Transitivity is a way of accounting for actions. An investigation and

analysis of students' use of processes or verbs can provide an insight into the types of activities encouraged in the contexts in which they write. As Jones (2001) explained, they can provide an insight into writers' perceptions of the world, and the ways they frame and represent the knowledge and experience to which they are exposed. This is because process types reflect particular types of activities. For example, the use of relational processes, which indicate relationships between ideas, actions and individuals, may provide an insight into the ways students form links, as outlined in the table below. Table 2.8 highlights dominant process types and gives examples of how they are commonly used.

Table 2.8 Common process types

Process type	Description and examples
Material	Material processes are largely physical actions. These processes relate to statements of action in the external and material world; for example, 'I read the novel twice', as differentiated from psychological or emotional actions.
Mental	States of mind or psychological events and processes of reaction, perception and cognition - 'I was to learn that that the character of Fish'.
Relational	Description and identification of relationships - processes of being, that is, of processes in which entities are assigned relations in terms of attributes or identity. 'Winton clearly presents and embellishes how the notion that landscape and home determine who we are'.
Behavioural	Processes of psychological and physiological behaviour - 'I am getting anxious at the prospect of writing an essay'.
Projecting	Processes which project the inner world by speech or thought - -- may be speech, thoughts or mental processes.

Based on the work of Bloor & Bloor (2004); Butt, Fahey, Spinks, & Yallop (2000); Halliday (1994); and Schleppegrell (2004).

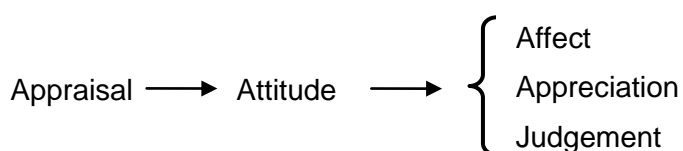
The field of discourse analysis has highlighted how meaning is constructed through recurring statements and wordings within and across texts (Gee, 2004; Beaufort, 1999b; Martin & Rose, 2007). To interpret the ways students are encouraged to incorporate elements of discourse into their texts and how they in fact do this, the thesis turned to Martin and Rose's (2007) notion of '*foregrounding*'. As they maintained, when students represent discourse they emphasise particular forms of information, they apply vocabulary associated with discourses and they differentiate

between differing values and beliefs. In this way, they foreground particular discourses and aspects of discourse.

2.7.3.2 Analysing interpersonal positioning in texts through appraisal and modality

An examination and interpretation of interpersonal resources is another way researchers can articulate how students present themselves as writers. Interpersonal resources shape the kinds of interaction taking place between writers and readers at the level of status, authority and sentiment (Macken-Horarik, 2005, 2006a) and the ways writers establish authorial identities. This section explores two key aspects of functional linguistic interpersonal theory, namely the notions of appraisal and modality, and explains how they are used to identify the ways in which interpersonal resources are presented to students and how those resources are applied in student texts.

An analysis of the interpersonal resources of attitude and modality can provide researchers with an insight into the ways students position themselves as writers. When writers assume an attitude or position towards an idea, an action, person or thing, they are using the resource of appraisal. As Martin and Rose (2008) explain, “Appraisal is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (p. 25). It is an important resource for constructing textual personas and authorial stances (Martin & White, 2005) as reflected in the diagram below.



Attitudes are resources that communicate values (Martin & Rose, 2008). Attitude resources may express, explicitly or implicitly, positive or negative attitudes (Martin & Rose, 2003). They are composed of affect, judgement and appreciation resources. Affect resources communicate emotional reactions to behaviour, to texts and phenomena such as in the example, ‘I **strongly feel** that *The Matrix* is a film that really challenges viewers to consider the nature of reality’. Judgement is a resource for communicating assessment or sanctions of behaviour, often based on cultural and ethical values, such as in the example, ‘It was **the cruelty** of the character...’. Appreciation resources construe attitudes about texts, performances and natural phenomena as in the example, ‘**It’s an innovative and enlightening** representation of the nature of reality’.

Modality is another interpersonal resource that researchers can draw upon when exploring writers' "control of attitudinal expression" (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 244). Modality refers to speakers and writers' opinions and attitudes expressed through a range of linguistic resources such as evaluative adjectives and adverbs (Halliday, 1994). Halliday and Matthiesen (2004) identified four types of modality: probability ('may be'), usuality ('sometimes'), obligation ('is wanted to') and inclination ('wants to'). Modality values may be described along a continuum as high – median – low (Halliday, 1994, p. 358). Words such as *definite*, *forever* and *requisite* are considered to have a high level of modality; likely, typically, hypothetically have median level, and *potential*, *occasionally*, *tolerable*, are considered to have a low level. In the example below the word *perhaps* reveals a low level of probability:

Perhaps [Probability -] Steinbeck is suggesting that this constantly devoted [evaluative adjective] loyalty of the older George towards the vulnerable and marginalised [evaluative adjective] Lenny is one of the central features *Of Mice and Men*.

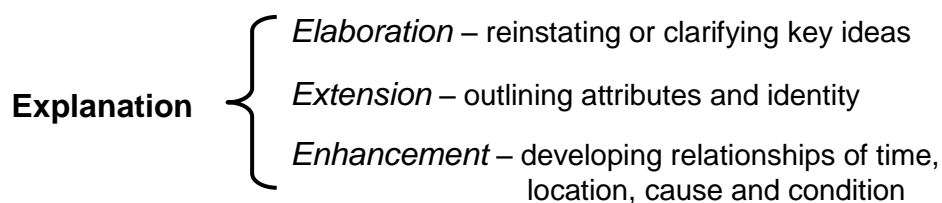
This example demonstrates how words and phrases with a low level of probability can communicate ideas and content without making a committed and strong statement of opinion. The choice indicates a more conciliatory approach to the subject matter and serves to position the writer as one still considering possibilities. It may also be a way of alluding to the possible ambiguities and uncertainties in the narrative text and in this way, indicates a tentative approach to analysis.

As Christie and Derewianka (2008) propose, mature adolescent writers use a number of interpersonal resources to establish themselves as successful writers capable of building appropriate relationships with readers and constructing an authorial presence. Student writers, for example, may attempt to position themselves authoritatively by using modal adjectives and adverbs that reflect a particular view towards the subject matter as is expressed in the above example in the modal adjectives of *devoted* loyalty and *vulnerable and marginalised* Lenny. Christie & Derewianka (2008) also make the point that modal resources indicate and signal culturally valued moral positions and in that respect are often indicative of the broader discourses and ideologies at play in the subject itself and in particular English classes.

2.7.3.3 Analysing textual positioning in texts through cohesion and referents

Ideational and interpersonal levels of meaning can only be realised in the overall construction of text (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Hasan (Halliday & Hasan,

1985) proposed that one of the most significant features of text is unity: unity of structure and unity of texture, which are achieved through various forms of cohesion or linkages between clauses, sentences and larger units of text. Cohesion resources link clauses into sentences, sentences into larger units of text and larger sections of text (Butt et al, 2000; Halliday & Hasan, 1975). A number of linguistic strategies including lexical cohesion, conjunctions and referents achieve cohesion. On one level, repetition of words and use of words from a common knowledge base or discourse achieve cohesion (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). Depth of explanation can also help achieve cohesion through practices such as elaboration, extension and enhancement (Bloor & Bloor, 2004), as outlined below:



Conjunctions express logical relations between clauses and between different parts of a text to “demonstrate a meaningful relationship between them” (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 97). Common conjunctions (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Butt et al, 2000) are outlined below:

Additive - Include additional information, using words such as: in addition, and, on the other hand likewise, similarly, at any rate, furthermore, alternatively, for instance.

Adversative - Provide an alternative viewpoint using words such as: unlike, in spite of, instead, on the contrary, alternately, despite this, however, on the other hand.

Causal - Logically develop one point after another, using words and phrases such as: for this purpose, because of that, therefore, for this reason, as a result.

Temporal – Demonstrates developments through time, using words and phrases such as: then, next, at the same time, up to that point, meanwhile, afterward.

References outside the text, to earlier parts of the texts or to parts of the text yet to come (Brandt, 1986; Fairclough, 1992) can also achieve cohesion. There are four reference devices:

- Exophoric references which refer to meaning outside the text.
- Edophoric references which are internal references that are crucial in developing ideas within a text (Hasan, 1985, p. 76).
- Cataphoric references that look forward looking.
- Anaphoric references which refer to something already mentioned.

Exophoric referents are particularly useful indicators of writers' notions of the world and the relationship between text and context in a particular instance of writing (Brandt, 1986). This is because exophoric references provide connections between a text and its context through references to other events, ideas, texts and ideas. Brandt argued that such references to the external world of the text are indicative of socio cultural circumstances and semantic choices a writer has at their disposal. Because of this, an analysis of exophoric references can provide an insight into the world which, in a sense, pre-exists a text, the domain of prior experience to which a writer has chosen to link a text and the domain of shared experience through which the text is understood (p. 96).

In this way, Brandt explained that exophoric referents "are especially pertinent to text and context relationship because they are an index to the given reality that a text participates in: both the 'real world' domains that underlie a text and the 'text world' a writer assumes a reader shares by virtue of reading a text" (1986, p. 96). They can reveal the role the writer is able to adopt in a particular context, the options for meaning making and sources of meaning making. Such an analysis can reveal how students may refer to the information, ideas and attitudes provided by their teachers or information gathered outside the class such as that taken from the Internet.

For example, two exophoric references are used in the following sentence, 'Eventually, on May 7 1945, Germany surrendered to *the Allied Forces* and *World War Two* was finally over'. The noun phrases the *Allied Forces* and *World War Two* are exophoric, referring to events that readers are likely to be aware of and needing no further explanation. More generally, the resource is used significantly and extensively in English, when students use concepts such as characterisation, narrative strategies and filmic techniques in a way that assumes a shared knowledge with the teacher as reader. In this way, using such resources can help students to position themselves as confident writers who share various forms of knowledge and discourse with their readers.

This selection of linguistic resources provides a framework by which to identify the resources made available to students in the environments in which they write. It provides a framework by which to examine the availability of linguistic resources at multiple levels such as curriculum, those framed in the genres selected and their

presentation to students. It allows for an examination of the texts students write in terms of the choices they make, the various linguistic resources they appropriate and the relation between those resources and the environments in which they write. Importantly, these resources provide a framework by which to examine how students construct identities by incorporating resources, affiliating with the conventions of discourses and conforming to the conventions of particular genres.

2.8 Conclusion

Chapter Two has provided a discussion of the current issues facing subject English and outlined the key theoretical concepts used in this study. Initially, it described how a social semiotic view of writing as primarily concerned with meaning making can help interpret the act of writing as largely a response to the demands of broad cultural and ideological demands and more particular classroom environments. In this thesis, it provides an underlying premise that all elements of a context contribute to the shaping of meaning and provide resources that may or may not be used. Such an approach provides the researcher with the freedom to approach all aspects of an environment, such as the physical layout of classrooms, through to the selection of genre, as contributing to the shaping of identity. A language based approach to genre, based on the Sydney School (Christie, 2006b, 2007; Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Martin, 2009, 2010) provided a framework for interpreting how the texts students construct are a response to particular contexts. Such an approach helped forge links between what students were writing and the reasons they were constructed in particular ways.

The contexts in which students constructed text were explored as being largely discursive, and for that reason Swales' (1990) notion of discourse community has been incorporated to help explore the complexities of the environments in which students write. This was based on the understanding that identities are largely discursively constructed. An overview of contemporary understanding of discursive positioning, particularly that shaped in the work of Smidt (2002, 2009) and Ivanic (1998, 2005, 2006), helped frame an exploration of specific concepts such as affiliation. This provided the opportunity to not only view student writing identities as shaped by the resources provided to them, but also considered students own roles and agency in this process. Bernstein's (1990) notion of pedagogic discourse has been employed to help explain how learning environments are essentially social environments. It also helped to identify how the act of learning was also the process of constructing an identity.

Finally, the chapter explained how student texts can be examined in terms of specific linguistic resources.

This thesis aimed to expand upon existing research findings and theoretical framings that are relevant to the study of subject English, and the ways it discursively positions student writers. It aimed to utilise and expand upon Kostouli's (2009) notion of polycontextual studies; that is, studies of phenomena such as discourse across multiple layers of context. Additionally, the study aimed to apply an understanding of school English as a discourse community with concomitant rules, discourses and genres as a way of articulating how student writers are constructed, and providing an indication of how diverse groups of teachers, teacher educators and curriculum developers help to shape students in particular ways. In this respect, the thesis aimed to expand our understanding of what is meant by a learning environment, and to provide a model for examining the influences upon student writing from both within and beyond the classroom.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the research approach, methods and analytical and interpretative strategies that have informed this research. The chapter also justifies the selection of ethnography and case study, and outlines the processes of describing, coding, analysing and interpreting data.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Framework, Methodology and Interpretation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to describe, analyse and interpret the discursive positioning of students in three Year Twelve English classes. The methodology builds on the premise established in Chapter Two, that in the activity of constructing meaning, writers access, appropriate and transform semiotic resources in an effort to achieve social purposes. More specifically, the thesis investigated how the selection, presentation and construction of genres influence the shaping of writing identities. Significantly, it examined how discourses can be examined at multiple levels as a way of exploring how student writing identities are constructed. To achieve this, the thesis examined data collected from policy and curriculum documents, classroom observations, teacher and student interviews and student texts to answer the following question:

What environmental and discursive features shape the writing identities of senior secondary English students?

This question was addressed more specifically through these key questions:

1. What is the interaction between the physical and discursive learning environments, and the selection, presentation and construction of particular genres?
2. What writing practices were evident in the focus classes?
3. What writing identities were students positioned to affiliate with in these contexts?

An outline of how the various data and research methods are used to answer the above questions is provided in Figure 3.3.

To describe, analyse and interpret the data, the thesis utilised the multiple case study (Yin, 2003) and elements of interpretative ethnography (Lillis, 2008; van Leeuwen, 2005a) as appropriate research methodologies for addressing the research questions. This chapter presents the research framework, an overview of the research methods and the overall analytical and interpretative strategies, as outlined in Figure 3.1.

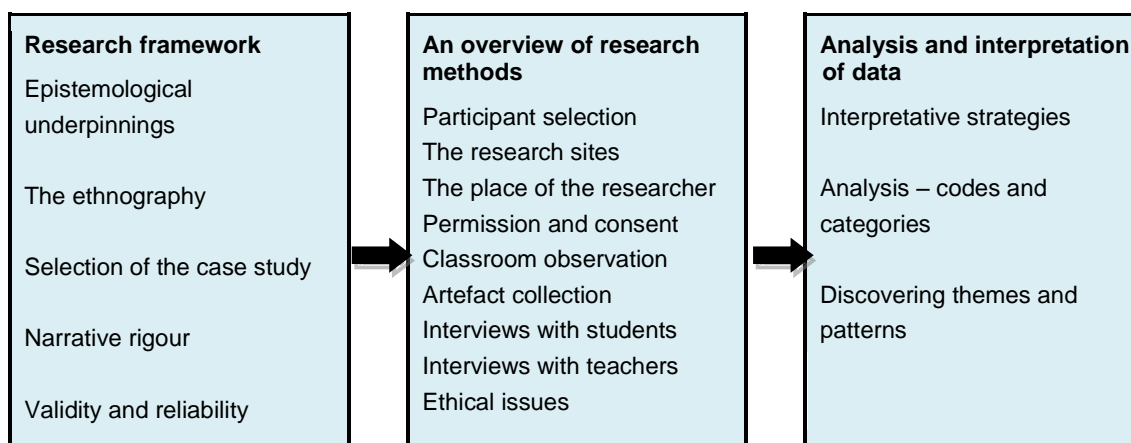


Figure 3.1 An outline of Chapter Three

3.2 Research Framework

3.2.1 *A foundation in qualitative research*

This thesis is located within the qualitative research tradition which is an essentially naturalistic form of inquiry offering researchers the opportunity to investigate a phenomenon through extended and concentrated contact with a “life situation” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 6). Qualitative researchers approach the contexts of their study intending to achieve a ‘holistic’ or ‘integrated’ understanding of its logic and rules (ibid). For such researchers, this may be captured from the inside through empathetic observation, a ‘process of deep attentiveness’ and the inclusion of participants’ insights (ibid).

The key features of qualitative studies are that:

- Researchers identify and analyse the meanings that individuals and groups make and in doing so, how they understand their world and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Merriam, 1998);
- Data collection generally involves some form of fieldwork and contact with participants which provides the opportunity for an ‘empathetic’ engagement;
- The researcher is a primary instrument of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).
- It is richly descriptive as it attends to meanings, understandings and processes.

The qualitative inquiry, according to Silverman (2001) and Schwandt (2003) is shaped by a constructivist paradigm which recognises reality as a mental and social construct (Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005). It is based on the assumption that social, political and cultural landscapes influence human experiences. Equally, individuals

exist in constant states of meaning making as they seek to 'construct' meaning from that which surrounds them and to understand their world and their place in it. Researchers guided by a constructivist view acknowledge that any investigation of human activity, such as writing, needs to capture the 'messier' reality of that behaviour. They are also inspired to incorporate research methods and analytical interpretations that recognise that 'reality' is not easily discernible; rather, it is complex and constructed by a myriad of interconnecting factors.

3.2.2 *Viewing the world from inside - shaping of an ethnographic framework*

Ethnographies offer the opportunity to capture the 'messier' side of life and explore a phenomenon in its social context. For this reason, one of the core attributes of ethnography is the collection and analysis of empirical data drawn from "real life contexts" (Lillis, 2008, p. 358) through:

- a prolonged engagement with the site of investigation
- an incorporation of participants' opinions and interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation
- recognition of researcher participation
- an emphasis on detailed descriptions and explanations.

In this study, elements of ethnographic methodology were used to capture the phenomenon of writing in the particular contexts of these classes in senior English. In particular, elements such as an incorporation of participants' opinions and interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation, and an emphasis on detailed descriptions and explanations were included.

Teachers' perceptions of the learning environment and their attitudes towards students, their writing and the curriculum were explored. Additionally, student perceptions of the genres they constructed, the experience of constructing texts that formed a part of this study, provided a valuable insight into the ways contexts shape the ways students perceive themselves as writers and how they strive to position themselves as particular types of writers.

Ethnographies are particularly suited to studies seeking to investigate phenomena such as the construction of genre and writing identities, through both a text based, or linguistic analytical lens coupled with investigations of the context of writing. In this thesis, for example, students' use of technical language in the texts they constructed was examined in terms of the ways they positioned themselves as writers. References

to such language uses were identified in curricula documents, in classroom teaching and examples. By using multiple data sources, and by consistent involvement in the context, the researcher was able to identify complex and at times contradictory practices and understandings surrounding particular forms of language use, and to explore how this use contributed to the ways students writing identities were developed, reinforced and at times challenged.

To interpret the complexities of contexts, ethnographers may integrate or combine ethnographic methodologies with theoretical frameworks. A more recent application of the ethnography encourages a “deep theorizing” in which particular phenomena are investigated in both text and context (Lillis, 2008) by incorporating linguistic theories to help interpret the texts constructed in a particular context. Both van Leeuwen (2005a) and Vannini (2007) have brought together the theory of social semiotics and the methodology of ethnography. In doing so, they emphasise the need to look to the features of context and the experience of participants and their attempts to make meaning in those contexts. They argue that the ethnography needs to extend its focus beyond participant observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Vannini, 2007) and incorporate participant experience more extensively as this will provide a deeper insight into the subtleties of the ways individuals respond to their environments and how their beliefs and values may influence those environments. As explained by Vannini:

Discourses are visible and present in everyday life, and sociosemiotic ethnographers must be sensitive to how they inform what people do (actions, or practices), how they do what they do (manner), where (spaces) and when (times), who these people are (social actors), how they present themselves in interaction with others (presentations), and what semiotic resources they use throughout their interactions with others (p. 134).

However, according to Vannini, the strength of an approach which combines a social semiotic study and ethnography lies in a description, analysis and interpretation that incorporates multiple perspectives and ‘theoretical voices’ that respond to features of the context.

3.2.3 *Role of the case study*

Additionally, the case study provides a practical framework for investigating phenomena, such as writing and genre, through multiple sources of data. Case studies are useful for studying multiple levels of context as constructs set in time and place (Birnbaum, Emig, & Fisher, 2003). In an examination of writing practices, Michaels (1987) argued that case studies are a successful model for the study of phenomena such as writing because of their capacity to integrate a number of methodologies. She examined writing practices in multilayered locations, such as the classroom and

broader social and cultural values as revealed through policy and curriculum. She made the salient point that researchers need to examine a central phenomenon to capture the complexity of the immediate context and broader social and cultural context. To achieve this end, Michaels combined an indepth analysis of classroom interaction surrounding writing with linguistic analysis of texts constructed by students through the phenomenon of the writing conference. She also argued that it is essential to bring together the product and social or process elements of writing and develop ways of studying writing in schools that link institutional forces, such as curriculum and the structure of the school day, with the tangible written products generated. To achieve this end, she brought together an ethnographic study and a linguistic analysis on the basis that an integrated approach provided the type of multilevel information required to ask and ultimately answer questions about the influence of discourses, policy and curriculum, schools and teachers on students' writing practices. Ultimately, she maintained, the case study allows examination of how environments shape texts and how environments, or contexts, are shaped by the texts constructed.

Importantly, case studies provide a framework for investigating phenomena in environments where the boundaries are not always delineated (Yin, 2003). As Miles and Huberman (1994) explain, they provide the opportunity to capture data "from the inside" through intense observation of a case's "logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules" (p. 6). In doing so, they allow retention of many of the meaningful features of a real life event or environment and have the advantage of pursuing 'how' or 'why' questions about phenomena in environments where the researcher has little control (Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2003).

However, whilst case studies facilitate examination of a phenomenon such as writing in depth, the potential exists for the single case study and single ethnographic study to be limited by the particularities of that case (Wolcott, 2001; Yin, 2003) . For this reason, multiple cases facilitate a more accurate description and interpretation of phenomena as they facilitate greater generalisability of findings beyond the one situation. This is largely because comparison across local contexts allows identification of similarities and differences. It encourages a balance between context bound extrapolations and generalizations gleaned from across the cases. For this reason, the multiple case study provides an effective strategy for the examination of trends emerging in the areas of secondary education, English and writing.

Additionally, case studies have the ability to deal with a full variety of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, in a particular context. Luke (2002) described the importance of emerging multidisciplinary or "methodologically blended research" in the fields of literacy and areas such as writing. He argued that the value of multidisciplinary

studies lies in their capacity to implement a range of data collection and analytical strategies without being limited to either quantitative or qualitative strategies and to allow a number of perspectives on a common phenomenon.

Users of case study methodologies highlight that cases need to have boundaries (Birnbaum, Emig, & Fisher, 2003; Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton & Oakes, 2002; Yin, 2003). As such, successful case studies are “fixed in time and place and have identifiable confines such as a program, an event, an activity, or an individual” (Wells et al, 2002, p. 192). For this reason, this thesis has been limited to a focus on discourses present in policy, curriculum, the physical layout of the classroom, selection of genre, and to the ways in which the presentation and construction of genres contribute to the construction of writing identity (Kress et al., 2005). Following the advice of Samraj (2002), a taxonomy that bounds and limits this research has been constructed, as outlined below:

- governmental educational policy
- state-based curriculum
- teachers’ beliefs and expectations
- students’ beliefs and educational experiences
- selection and presentation of genre
- instruction about genre
- aspects of the physical environment of the classroom

3.2.4 *Narrative description and eloquent rigour*

Reliance upon evocative and eloquent narrative description to present the complexities of the research cases and phenomena characterise both case study and ethnographic research. As Newkirk (1992) explained, the narrative function of authoring and representing experiences in culture is one of the most significant features of the case study. Additionally ethnographies demonstrate a commitment to “cultural descriptions” and observable “social realities” (Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005, p. 290). This deep and rich depiction of an event or location, referred to by Geertz (1973) as a “thick description” is a seminal feature of the ethnography, which he defined in terms of “our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to” (p. 9). In this respect, successful case studies and ethnographies, according to Lincoln and Guba (2002), are powerful, elegant and creative narratives that present to the reader the world as seen through the eyes of the participants and researcher.

For both case studies and social semiotic methodologies, this is a strength, as writers incorporate narrative elements to describe participants, events and findings from the field. When underpinned by narrative elements, case studies and ethnographies become stories of struggle, resistance and transformation and, in doing so, may provide an insight into a precarious experience (Merriam 1998).

However, this is also an area of vulnerability for both methodologies as the narrative impetus may lead to possible exaggeration and to making phenomena appear more significant and more 'whole' than the findings of the research would indicate. This is even more the case, as Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) argue, as researchers' experiences, socio-cultural contexts and philosophies influence the constructions of cases and their vulnerability to having researchers' values and judgements imposed upon them. Additionally, researchers are instrumental in translating the experiences of participants and the framing and construction of context (Moss, 2003). This tension between the need for both analytical rigour and narrative eloquence is not easily resolved and it is imperative that the researcher be aware of their potential to subjectively interpret contexts and individuals within those situations.

3.2.5 *Ensuring validity and reliability*

For this reason, Yin (2003) posits that successful case studies be conducted meticulously in all dimensions to avoid the inherent risk that analysis of a small number of case studies may limit the generalisability of the findings. A number of techniques enhance reliability and validity and help ensure the trustworthiness or authenticity of the study (Cresswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Following the advice of Yin, this research begins with an initial theoretical framework. A congruent theoretical framework under a broad social semiotic framework was used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2005a) to achieve this. Additionally, triangulation of data, the process of examining data about a single unit of phenomena from multiple sources, was vital in understanding how a phenomenon such as discursive positioning functioned in specific contexts. However, Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998) explain that successful triangulation means more than using multiple sources of data; it also means using multiple sources of data to identify and interpret particular events, categories and emerging patterns and themes. For this reason, the thesis used multiple and consistent investigative and analytical methods and numerous literature sources and theoretical framings to both arrive at and confirm findings (p. 205).

As outlined in Section 3.4, all data were coded, using the NVivo programme and placed into emerging categories, themes and patterns. Iterative processes of analysis which combined and moved between data and theory, helped to build explanations. This

involved “reading against the literature” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Vannini, 2007) so that emerging categories and themes were read against selected research and theoretical works. Whilst a social semiotic framework was used to provide initial categories, replication of logic was used in the early stages of analysis replication of logic was used (Hubermann & Miles, 1994). In this endeavour, data and codes from the first case study formed the basis of themes and categories that were in turn applied to other case studies. A detailed pilot study, in which data collection instruments, processes of data collection and analysis were trialled and adjusted, provided the opportunity to help ensure validity and reliability.

3.3 An overview of the research design

Research designs serve as blueprints or roadmaps of research. Successful research designs address four main areas - what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results (Miles and Hubermann, 1994; Yin, 2003). Figure 3.2 provides an outline of the research design of the thesis.

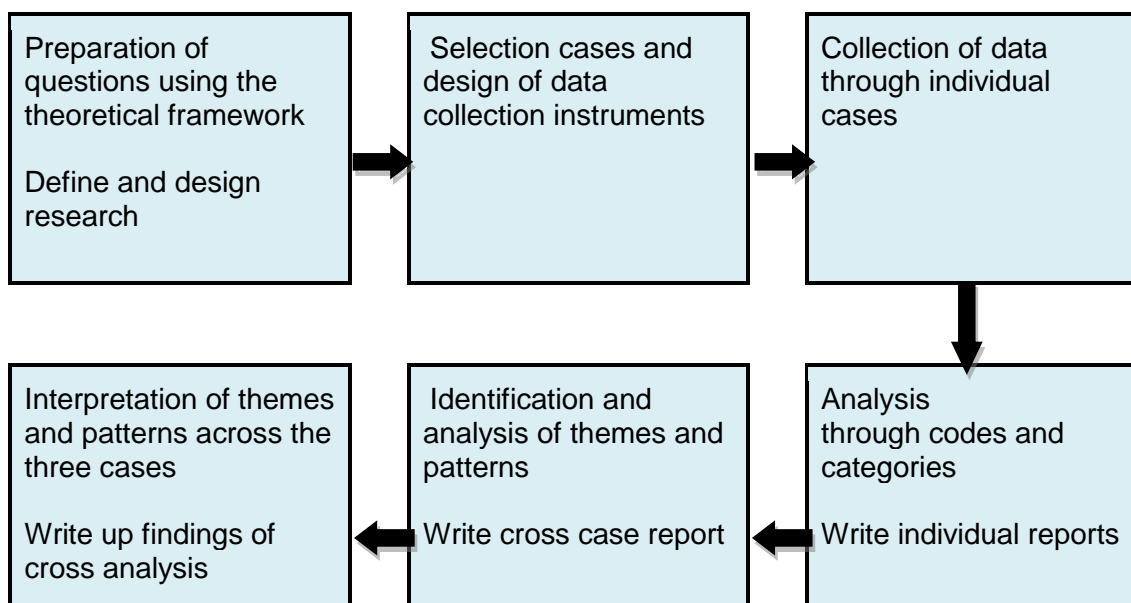


Figure 3.2 An overview of the research design

3.3.1 Use of a pilot study

A pilot study, conducted over a two-month period prior to investigating the three cases was used to trial instruments of data collection and analysis. The pilot served as an opportunity to refine data collection instruments and revise interview questions for both

teachers and students. For example, teacher interviews were refined to clarify questions that contained words and terms that were open to interpretation so that terms such as text and genre were clarified. Based on the responses gained from the teacher interview, the interview questions were adjusted to include a number of more specific questions that were based on the concepts in the guiding literature. The teacher's working day is a busy one, and the researcher was obliged to accommodate and be sensitive to the demands on teacher's time. For this reason, after the initial pilot study, a structured interview was designed (Appendix B) that provided more direction on the topics to be discussed. It also helped identify points of similarity and difference between the cases.

Student questions remained largely unchanged; however, there were some changes to documentation to allow more ease with note taking and recording. Additionally, for this researcher, one of the greatest benefits of the pilot study was the opportunity to 'rehearse' the recording of classroom interaction. Balancing the demeanour of the invisible observer with the presence of recording equipment, and setting up and packing up equipment with minimal disruption to the classes, was a practice that more often than not amused students. Despite endeavours to be an invisible presence, students judged the researcher in terms of efficiency, ability to stay calm whilst inwardly working frantically and by the quality of technical equipment brought into the classroom. The pilot study was a timely reminder that the classroom is an environment of unspoken conventions, and that a presence in the world of the secondary school student meant compliance with rules surrounding technology, efficiency and social interaction.

In addition, the student text analysis commenced with a large number of genre and linguistic elements to be identified in student writing. The pilot study revealed this to be a cumbersome and not always fruitful task. For this reason, the number of genres examined was limited to those identified in Table 2.4 and the linguistic features identified in Table 2.7.

3.3.2 Participant selection

The intention was to randomly select four classes to take place in this study. This proved to be a more difficult task than originally anticipated as many schools were unable to accommodate a researcher in the classroom. After having gained permission from regional managers from the Education Department of Western Australia, secondary schools in the Perth metropolitan and surrounding areas were invited to take part in the project through letters to principals. After a period of three months, it became apparent that there were going to be difficulties getting schools to take part, and contacting all schools in the sampling area replaced random selection methods. A

second round of invitations was sent to all metropolitan secondary schools in the education department, this time addressed to head teachers, and which were followed up with telephone calls. After a six-month period, four schools accepted the invitation to take part in the project, however, the data collected from only three classrooms was included in analysis.

3.3.3 *The research sites – the teachers, the students and the researcher*

3.3.3.1 Woodlands

In the busy day of the school, teachers and students experience the physical characteristics of their schools and classrooms and participate in a number of social, pedagogic and textual routines. Woodlands Senior High School is typical of many Western Australian high schools, offering academic and vocational programs and specialist courses in Japanese and French Languages, Music, Dance and Aviation. In interview, Barry identified his trade experience and proficiency in supervising apprentices as a source of experience, knowledge and credibility when teaching his class and felt strongly that his experience assisted in adapting the curriculum and students' aspirations for work into the practicalities of the English course. Seeing himself as having an affinity with the students, he identified his capacity to build strong relationships with the students as a benefit in terms of classroom management and successful outcomes for students.

A number of students attended the local Technical and Further Education College or took part in Structured Workplace Learning outside the school environment, which exacerbated the existing poor attendance patterns of some students. Starting with 21 students at the beginning of 2005, numbers had declined during the year as students secured employment and started courses elsewhere. Through the later part of the data collection period, class attendance averaged ten to twelve students, although there were occasions when the numbers were as low as five or six.

Barry (pseudonyms are used for all classroom teachers and students) viewed Daniel as one of the strongest English students in the group. Attendance at an art course at a local TAFE college and Structured Workplace Learning⁸ took Daniel away from the school for part of the week. He planned to finish a Certificate course in art when completing school and aspired to work in art education. Matthew, considered one of the weaker students in the class, had a largely vocational program. He planned to

⁸ Structured Workplace Learning is a subject in the senior school curriculum where students participate in the workforce. Students may attend in a number of ways, such as attendance at a business on a designated day each week or as a block during the semester.

undertake an electrical trades or automotive trade apprenticeship when finishing school and chose subjects that would help him gain employment and prepare for work. He viewed subjects such as computing as valuable in this respect and generally appreciated the role of school in preparing him for work, although he did not attend courses outside the school environment or structured workplace learning. Kirsten, considered to have a medium range of ability, undertook Structured Workplace Learning and studied Mathematics, Computing, Food Production and Photography. Passionate about photography, she had no definite plans for the following year, but was adamant that she was not going onto further study.

3.3.3.2 Altona

Frances had been teaching in the English subject area at Altona High School for over ten years and her teaching program had consisted of subjects aimed at tertiary entrance and English subjects for students undertaking vocational pathways. She had taught the academic extension program for a number of years. Actively involved in many school programs, Frances was a mentor in the Behaviour Management Program administered by the Western Australian Department of Education and actively supported student teachers undertaking placements in the school.

Identified as the highest achieving student in the class, James was a confident and enthusiastic student. Having completed Year Eleven and having decided not to pursue university education, he had moved from an academic pathway in a number of subjects to a non-academic pathway at the beginning of year twelve. James had no fixed plans for the following year, although during part time work, he developed an interest in the world of business.

Bryony, one of the livelier students in the class, enjoyed a school program dominated by Media Studies and Sport. In addition, she took part in Structured Workplace Learning at a local hairdressing salon, which she described as comprised of “sweeping up and washing hair and spending a lot of time talking”. Her studies also consisted of a school based hospitality traineeship. Whilst generally enthusiastic about school, especially for Media Studies and Sport, Bryony also had no plans for life after school. Despite finding English challenging, Bryony enjoyed the subject and especially valued the opportunity to demonstrate her film and media knowledge. Having identified Bryony as an average achieving English student, Frances described her as committed to her work and as an active participant in class activities and discussions.

Whilst enjoying English, Michael, a softly spoken and articulate young man, also enjoyed Media Studies. Michael did not take part in any specific vocational programs available at the school or participate in Structured Workplace Learning. He intended to undertake a trade apprenticeship after completing Year Twelve.

3.3.3.3 Alexander Heights

Erin articulated, that, throughout her teaching career, she had been particularly interested in supporting students she described as 'needy' through an emphasis on literacy. She had embraced information technology in her teaching, demonstrated by construction of her own website, made with the purpose of making resources available to her classes. Mark, a quietly spoken and polite young man, had experienced difficulties at the beginning of the year, particularly in English, and had truanted from school for three weeks. Reluctant to return to school after Year Eleven, he had initially felt uncomfortable with a change of teacher and a new teaching style. In addition to English he studied Foundation Maths, Work Studies and Woodwork, attended Structured Workplace Learning and was interested in pursuing an apprenticeship when finished school.

Christopher, an average achieving student in the class, also studied Maths, Woodwork, Photography and Work Studies. For the first half of the year his participation in school was characterised by poor attendance, and difficulties in managing tasks and completing assessment items. Describing his experience of school as one of disinterest, and with a touch of resentment about having to return to school after Year Eleven, his highlight of the week was Photography. He had no fixed plans after completing school. Get had migrated from Thailand during primary school. He studied two English subjects, Maths, Work Studies and Science. After completing school, he planned to take a year off study before pursuing further education at TAFE. He aspired to become a teacher assistant and after improving his language skills looked forward to becoming a specialist primary school teacher supporting children from non-English Speaking Backgrounds.

Data had also been collected from a Year Twelve class at Berringa High School over a three-month period from a series of observed lessons, teacher and student interviews (see Appendix C) and student texts. After careful examination of the data, it was felt that some data, particularly that collected from classroom observations, contained very little information on writing practices and revealed very little about the learning environment. For this reason, Berringa was not included in the thesis.

3.3.4 *The place of the researcher in ethnographic and case study research*

The presence of the researcher in the classroom is always a potential source of disruption. This researcher was aware that students, not always successful in the academic streams of school and for whom the senior years of schooling had not

always been a rewarding experience, were present in the classes. Two teachers were concerned that possible episodes of disruptive behaviour or lack of engagement might reflect negatively upon their schools and students in general. For this reason it was critical that transparency and anonymity was maintained at all times, practices which enhanced and facilitated the project's underlying ethos of seeing the experience of writing through the eyes of the students and teachers.

Additionally, considerable time was spent explaining to teachers, and at times students, that the purpose of the research was to describe the types of writing taking place and was not intended as a critical or judgemental exercise. For this reason, there was an initial period of contact between the researcher and teachers, which took place over informal meetings and coffee. During these visits, the purpose of the project was explained and teachers had the opportunity to raise any concerns about the process of collecting data, the nature of visits to the class, the types of material that would be collecting and the types of analyses conducted.

In this period of immersion (Faulkner, 2002), every effort was made to establish a presence in the classes as an objective and 'invisible' observer. Data collection, particularly filming of classes and collection of texts from a sample of students, did not take place until the presence of the researcher was largely ignored. This initial period of making contact and immersion took place throughout February and into March. Brief field notes taken during this time spent in class were expanded upon within 24 hours of the observations.

Traditionally, the role of the researcher in ethnographic research has been that of a participant in the environment through a considerable period of immersion and involvement in the phenomena being examined. The role of invisible observer and outsider was chosen to 'capture' the experience of the senior school writer and the elements influencing their identity as authentically as possible. Whilst it was important that the researcher make connections with participants (Lillis, 2008), particularly in terms of accurate and meaningful feedback in interviews, and to not be seen as judgemental in any way, priority was given to objective and impartial collection of data.

3.3.5 *Ethical issues addressed in the research*

The thesis met with ECU Human Research Committee Guidelines⁹. The first step to achieving this was to inform principals and teachers about the purpose of the study and to provide them with an overview of the various stages and strategies of the project.

⁹ The approval to conduct this research is recorded by the ECU Human Research Committee - code number 1621.

Before class observations or interviews took place, students were provided with letters outlining the purpose of the research and disclosure statements to read and take home to their parents and guardians. The letters and statements detailed the aims of data collection, the researcher's involvement and their participation. In particular, the letters alerted students and parents to the fact that some classes would be videotaped, samples of written work would be copied and for some students, interviews would take place. Through these letters and consent forms parents and students were advised that participation was anonymous, that students could withdraw from the project at any time and that representatives of the university could be contacted for further details of the project and to raise any concerns. During the research period, pseudonyms protected the identities of all research participants and their schools and guaranteed anonymity. All data continues to be stored securely in a locked area.

3.3.6 *Gaining permission and consent*

Securing permission from parents and guardians for students to take part in the research project was a lengthy process. Letters explaining the project and seeking permission to film students taking part in classroom activities, interview students and collect samples of their work, along with consent forms (see Appendix D), were given to all students (see Appendices). Principals and teachers received an explanatory letter, accompanied by consent forms, requesting permission to record teacher interviews and a number of their classes. Teachers selected three students from each class whom they considered were representative of the breadth of ability in the class. These students were then asked to take part in interviews and to allow their writing portfolios to be copied.

Students in two classes resisted taking part in the project as originally designed. Students at Woodlands were comfortable with having a researcher in the classroom; however, they were reluctant to have any classes video recorded or audio taped. For this reason, field notes recorded classroom activities.

Of the three students at Alexander Heights invited to take part in the study, one student did not wish to take part in the project at all. Another student agreed to take part in the research, however, given the small number of students in the class, the portfolios examined were not necessarily representative of the spread of abilities in the class.

Whilst negotiation with students was at times a slow process, and one often mediated by the classroom teacher, establishing the foundations of trust and respect that the researcher was not there to judge them or their work, and valued their opinions, proved invaluable. It was more effective to have the classroom teacher briefly introduce the researcher and then answer questions as needed. Overall, the researcher avoided

speaking directly to the group, although she was more than willing to answer questions from individual students. The experience from the pilot study was that this served to make the researcher's presence less visible and distinguished her role from that of a teacher.

3.3.7 Data collection procedures

Data collection began in February 2005 and continued through to August 2005. A longer period of observation was preferred, but the twelfth year of school is a busy one and it was not always easy to accommodate the presence of the researcher, particularly one wanting to collect data specifically on writing by interviewing teachers and students and bringing recording equipment to class. Table 3.1 outlines the data collection procedures used in the project. Table 3.2 outlines the number of times data were collected.

Table 3.1 Data collection strategies

Level of data collection	Data collection strategies
Beyond the classroom	National and state based policy documents Curriculum documents
In the classroom	Classroom observations Teacher interviews Student interviews Ethnographic images Surveys Research journal Classroom teaching documents
The products	Samples of student texts

Table 3.2 Data collection timeframe

Research site	Month of research	Types of data collected
Pilot	February	Teacher interview trialled and reviewed Student interview trialled and some adjustments
	February - March	Four trial classroom observations and analysis of data Trial analysis of text - minor adjustments
Policy and curriculum documents	January – March	Policy and curriculum documents Additional trial coding and categories and some changes to coding
Woodlands	March	Three classroom observations – field notes
	April	Three classroom observations
	May	Three classroom observations, collection of student writing portfolios, teacher interview, one student interview
	June	Three classroom observations Two student interviews
Altona	March	Initial informal meetings with teacher
	May	Three classroom observations, collection of teaching resources
	June	Three classroom observations, collection of student writing portfolios, two student interviews
	July	One student interview, three classroom observations, teacher interview
	August	One classroom observation
Alexander Heights	February	Informal meeting with teacher Five classroom visits – field notes
	March	Collection of teaching documents
	April	Two classroom observations
	May	Four classroom observations, teacher interview, one student interview
	June	One student interview, collect student writing portfolios, teacher interview
	August	One classroom observation

3.3.8 Collecting data from the classroom

Very early in the data collection process, it became apparent that each research site presented a unique set of circumstances and for this reason, the process of classroom observation demanded a level of flexibility. Field notes documented classes at Woodlands. At both Altona and Alexander Heights, classes were initially recorded with field notes and most were videorecorded and transcribed. As data recording using one video camera did not always capture the subtleties of classroom interaction, wherever possible handwritten field notes supplemented videotaping. Whilst recording classes at Altona and Alexander Heights, on a number of occasions, additional sound recorders placed around classrooms improved the quality and reliability of the data.

3.3.8.1 Observations

The use of observation as a data collection technique was guided by the view that ethnographic research requires that the researcher be part of the world that is studied. However, as Wolcott (2001) notes, the concept of observation is broad and often fails to reflect the subtleties of the researcher's interaction with the site. The intention was that the researcher would observe the class passively and interact with participants as little as possible. Whilst always maintaining a courteous and friendly demeanour, the researcher did not take part in classroom interaction and made very little eye contact with students. The intention was to be immersed in the context of the class and observing and recording unobtrusively the practices of the classes. It had been hoped that classes could have been attended more regularly, however given the demanding schedules of these classes, and the high levels of catch up work done as students progressed towards the end of the year, classroom observations were restricted to two visits each week over a three month period.

Elements of functional linguistics (Christie, 1999b, 2002b) helped identify, code and catalogue teaching instruction surrounding the selection, presentation and construction of genre. As Christie explained, an analysis and interpretation of teacher talk, student writing tasks and classroom discussions reveals a great deal about regulative and instructional discourses that operate within particular classes. Moreover, classroom tasks enact various regulative and instructional pedagogies and serve as ways of apprenticing students into particular ways of working and learning (Christie, 1999b). This study incorporated aspects of Christie's classroom discourse analysis, in particular, her use of mood in teacher and student talk.

On one level, references to genre, ideational, interpersonal and textual resources, as outlined in Section 2.7, in classroom teaching and interaction were mapped. Additionally, following advice from Christie (2002b), the ways these resources were

used in conversation, particularly through themes, was applied to capture information about regulative and instructional discourses dominant in particular classes. In the following example based on Christie’s explanation, analysing linguistic patterns can provide an insight into the knowledge and skills presented in class and the nature of relationships in the class. In this example, the use of ‘I’ and ‘You’ indicate a personalised and authoritative approach:

Well now these people are back,
 I want you to listen to another short story, similar to the one we read yesterday
You know we looked at ‘The Test’
And then we made

Additionally, as Christie (2002b) explained, the use of process types can reveal the nature of teacher and student relationships.

I won’t tell (behavioural) you everything that needs to go in your essay, however, I will provide (material) an overview of the essay introduction and the types of things I want you (projecting) to write about.

In the outline below, teacher talk reflects the use of a range of processes including behavioural and projecting processes which highlight the teacher’s command of the content of this lesson and her dominance in controlling its direction. Additionally, the example reveals the use of mood resources, which influence the status and authority of speakers and writers based on types of interactions are outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.3 An outline of mood resources

Strategy	Description
Mood - Declarative or giving of information	and you may prefer to read a selection of short stories The history of Western Australia is one of struggle against the landscape.
Interrogative - Questioning	Why did students prefer to present all of their assignments...? In what ways do the characters in the novel express the human struggle...?
Imperative – issuing a command	Ensure that that the watch is returned with a receipt

3.3.8.2 Hand written notes

Handwritten field notes were used extensively at Woodlands and in the early visits to Altona and Alexander Heights. They recorded classroom activities, roughly in five - minute segments. Given the slowness of handwriting, priority was given to recording the beginning and end of activities associated with writing and some classroom dialogue. Field notes prioritised the recording of classroom activities, such as details of texts written and discussed, sketches of conversations, movements around the classroom and teaching strategies. Field notes at Woodlands also sketched the physical layout of the classes and movement within the classes. A lesson summary protocol supplemented field notes with details of writing activities, materials used, location of writing, teacher instruction and texts written and discussed.

3.3.8.3 Video

Video-recorded sessions provided a rich source of data about classroom instruction and the subtleties of communication. They provided a valuable insight into practices such as students' use of computers, in the construction of text. Transcribed classroom lessons provided the opportunities to explore for example how talk about writing and use of computers interacted to shape identities. It allowed close examination of the relationship between writing practices and talk and the positioning of writing identities in conversations about writing and about text. It provided the opportunity to identify and analyse participants' movement and talk around practices associated with writing (Jewitt, 2005a; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, Jewitt et al., 2005; Silverman, 2001).

3.3.8.4 Journal

A research journal provided the opportunity to record additional observations, make preliminary links between data and record reflections on emerging themes during the period of data collection and analysis. The journal was included as a source of data and was transcribed, printed out for review and an electronic version of the journal imported into NVIVO for coding. The journal provided an opportunity to review and evaluate the researcher's responses to experiences in the field, interactions with participants and observations. It allowed a vehicle for the researcher to be self-reflective and critical and maintain some awareness of personal responses and interpretations to the events encountered. It also provided the opportunity to record experiences from the researcher's perspective and in that process captured the authentic experience. A number of the researcher's initial comments in the journal later became memos during the analytical and interpretation stage. Additionally, the journal provided an opportunity to record early considerations and responses to the data.

3.3.9 *Artefact collection and analysis*

3.3.9.1 Policy and curriculum documentation

The processes of collecting and coding data from these documents began early in the research process as they provided an opportunity to identify the contextual features at the larger cultural and macro level. The processes included the construction of brief summaries of all significant documents including key policy documents, curriculum and support materials. It was identified early in the research that an investigation into relevant and framing policies constituted a substantial historical and discursive study. Selection of policy documentation was a pragmatic activity, where only key documents were included for coding. Curriculum documentation, including materials framing the English subject area and the particular subject were both summarized and incorporated electronically into the NVIVO database for more extensive coding. Course materials provided by teachers, were summarised and incorporated into contextual materials for each case. Support materials, were briefly summarised and imported electronically into NVIVO for a more detailed examination.

3.3.9.2 Student texts

At the time of interview, student portfolios were collected, photocopied in the school and original copies returned to teachers. All student texts were indexed under students' names, categorised in terms of genre such as the investigative report, and further in terms of register. Table 3.3 outlines the texts collected from all classes.

Student texts were analysed for the primary purpose of identifying the resources used in construction of those texts and linking those resources with writing practices surrounding their construction. Difficulties students experienced in the construction of texts were identified and analysed in terms of the writing practices the students engaged in, not in terms of their success or failure (Kress, 1994; Myhill & Jones, 2007; Pardoe, 2000; Shaughnessy, 1977). It was critical for the researcher to suspend judgement in favour of understanding the meanings and resources made available in particular environments. In this way, errors provided a valuable insight into students' processes of composition. The thesis recognised that writing practices viewed as unsuccessful in the school environment may be successful in another and for that reason rejected a deficit view of writing in which mistakes are viewed primarily in terms of students' lack of ability (Comber, B., Badger, L., Barnett, J., Nixon, H., & Pitt, J., 2003).

Table 3.4 A summary of student texts

Categories of genre	Woodlands	Altona	Alexander Heights
Feature article			3
Essay		3	
Investigative Report	1	3	2
Expository report	1	1	
Job application forms and letters		2	2
Resumé		3	3
Business invoice	2		
Order forms	2	3	1
Facsimile	2		
Work schedule	2	3	1
Job card	1	3	1
Business cards	1		
Staff roster	1		
Menu	1		
Memo	2		
Flyer	1		
Advertisement	3		
Leaflet	3		
Meeting agenda and minutes		3/3	3/3
Business letters	10	15	2
Promotional flyer		3	
Surveys	3		
Interview proforma			3
Maintenance program	1		
Summary		6	

3.3.10 Interviews with teachers and teachers

Interviews with teachers were designed to elicit their views on successful writing, pedagogic practice, perceptions of teaching and learning about writing, student identities and interpretations of curriculum. To help facilitate coding and analysis of teacher responses, interviews were taped and transcribed and teachers had the

opportunity to view the transcripts of interviews. Teachers were encouraged to discuss additional topics; however, the structured interview was the primary means of collecting data because it helped compare data across cases and to reduce the amount of time required for interviews. Teacher interviews were divided into four sections. First, teachers were asked general questions about the genres constructed in their classes and details such as the length of texts, expectations, purpose and audience. Second, attitudes towards curriculum were gleaned. Information about the places and times writing took place and the media, such as computers, was collected. Third, teachers were asked to discuss their instructional strategies. Fourth, teachers were asked to explain their views on the factors that influenced students' writing ability. The interview concluded with an opportunity for teachers to talk freely about any topics of their choice.

Teachers were asked to complete questionnaires at the completion of each lesson to assist in the collection of data associated with pedagogical strategies employed by teachers and the goals they were planning to achieve in lessons. By ticking boxes, the survey could be finished quickly. On most occasions, teachers were unable to complete the survey as they were proceeding immediately to another lesson. In most instances, teachers volunteered to complete the survey at a later time and return it to the researcher on a later visit. Over the duration of the period of collection, teachers misplaced a number of surveys and at the end of the site visits, approximately 60% of forms were completed, many of them weeks after the lesson in question. As such, the data collected from these lessons were largely unreliable, as teachers' responses may have been distorted by a time gap of weeks. For these reasons, data collected from the surveys were not included in analysis. A copy, however, is included as Appendix H.

Three students from each class took part in semi-structured interviews of 45 minutes, composed of set questions intended to gauge students' attitudes: first towards the enacted curriculum and instructional methods; second, towards the significance of writing; and third towards processes of text construction. Student interviews focused on participants' intentions, feelings and judgements in relation to writing in general and text construction, their perceptions of individual identities as writers, interpretations of writing pedagogy and elements of text construction. Students were asked to explain their interpretations of the writing tasks and choices made regarding language such as vocabulary and subject material. In interview, students answered questions designed to gauge their application of accepted practices of writing such as drafting and editing, and understandings of contextual features such as knowledge of audience. They were encouraged to explore the challenges they faced and identify the types of support they received in construction of the text.

However, researchers incorporating student opinion need to proceed cautiously as students may be influenced by institutional attitudes towards their subjects (Scherff & Piazza, 2005). Scherff and Piazza have made the point that students' perceptions of their abilities may influence their responses in interview and that underachieving students are often the most critical in terms of their own abilities and the environments in which they learn. However, in an endeavour to represent student opinion authentically, to represent student voices, interview transcripts have been not been edited or sanitised.

3.4 Analysis and interpretation of data

The processes of analysis and interpretation are both intellectual and creative in the sense that data are used to intricately and explicitly explore the phenomenon under study. The fundamental practice has three stages: an initial process of coding data, establishing categories and identifying and explaining themes. Figure 3.3 outlines the relationship between the research questions, data and purposes of analysis.

It was the original intention of this thesis to use all forms of data to help answer all questions. This was successful up to a point, but the pilot study revealed a necessity to frame some data collection instruments, in particular the teacher interview, more rigorously. Although the methodology employed in this thesis was such that a research framework based on the literature review was established, it was also designed to have flexibility as codes and categories emerged. One example is the development of the category of computer technology, which was originally intended to investigate how visual modes were incorporated into students' text construction, how students conformed to business practices, and where students derived information used in their written texts. However, as data collection and coding progressed, it was clear that the use of technology served a number of purposes and some of these were of a social nature. Figure 3.5 provides an outline of the final category of computer technology and highlights the pervasiveness of computers in text construction, learning strategies and the social environment of classrooms.

Some research instruments were clearly designed to collect particular types of data. Below are some of the interview questions, and an example of how one question was expanded to probe further.

Question 21: Are there any ways the subject is adapted to meet the needs of the students in this particular class?

Some of the key points raised by Frances (Altona) indicated the ways in which, and the extent to which, curriculum was adapted to meet the needs of the students. Thus Question 21 was expanded by adding the following probe: "You've mentioned that that none of them are doing work placements so there's a need to adapt the subject to accommodate the fact that they're not bringing work experience of their own into the class. Is there anything else?"

Additionally, Question 15 was designed to elicit ideas and information about the extent to which aspects of writing practices helped students undertake the activity of constructing text.

Question 15: What are the critical areas of knowledge about writing, such as planning, proofreading and knowledge about audience that the students need to consider?

Questions were also designed to elicit information from students about their experiences of teacher instruction methods, and the impact of those methods on their learning, as for example, in student Question 3 below:

Question 3: What sort of activities do you think help develop generic language skills, such as sentence structure, paragraph structure and spelling?

Through systems of coding and categorising and the development of themes, the activity of constructing text was examined through: a) teacher questions; 2) student questions; 3) classroom observations; and 4) samples of student texts, particularly those discussed in student interviews.

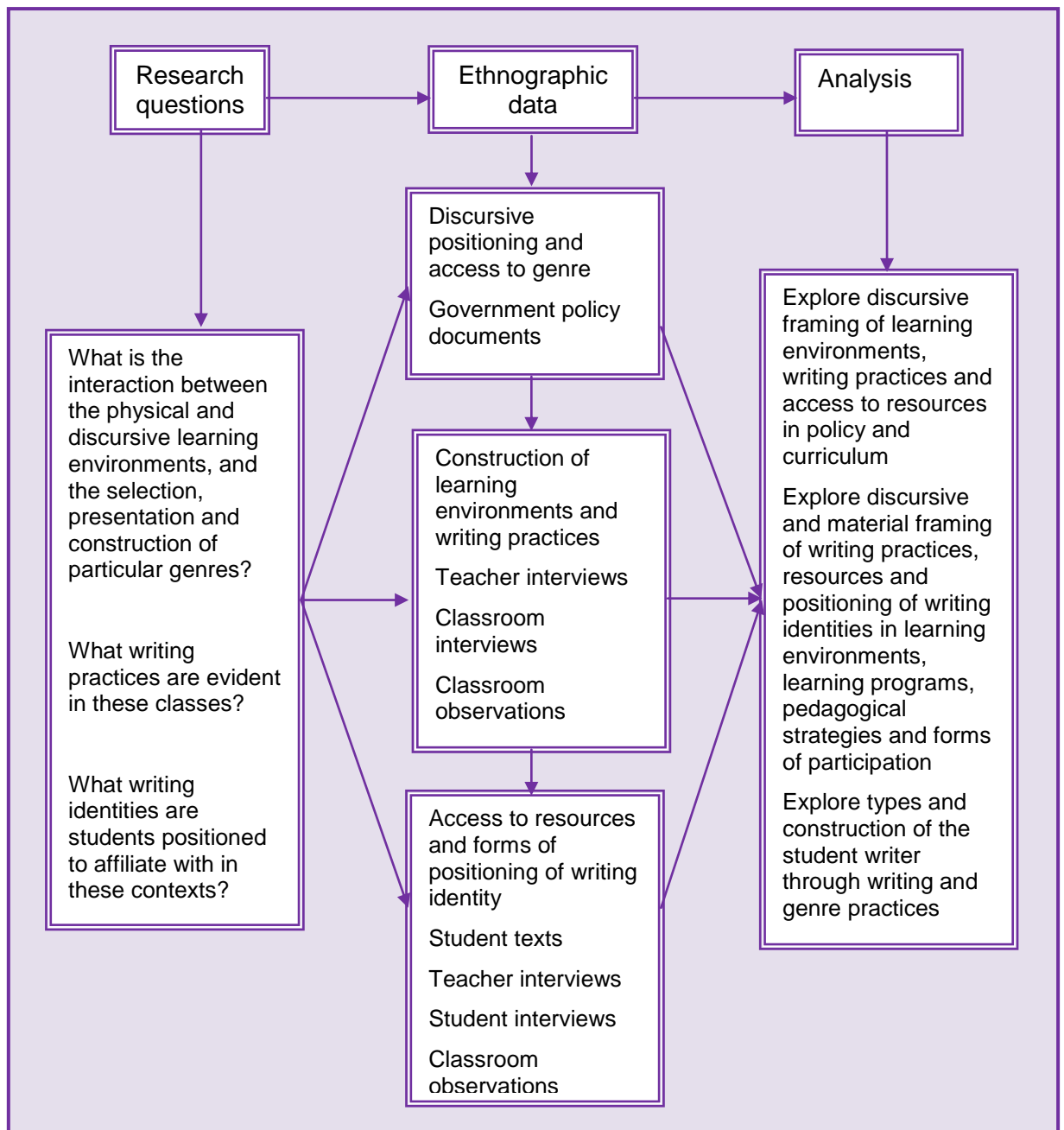


Figure 3.3 Research questions, data and purpose of analysis

3.4.1 Analysis – codes and categories

The data analysis process, as outlined in Figure 3.4, began with the creation of preliminary categories, informed by the literature and findings of the research conducted by others, designed to reflect the purpose of the research and the research questions. Coding was approached as a way of organising the data into meaningful ‘chunks’ (Cresswell, 2003), and as a way of constructing inventories (van Leeuwen, 2005a). As data were analysed and read against theoretical concepts derived from the literature, the initial categories were modified and extended. Initially, categories and codes were developed in the first case study, Woodlands, and later replicated in

analysis of data from Altona and Alexander Heights. Categories, such as discourses, underwent continual renewal in the process of coding.

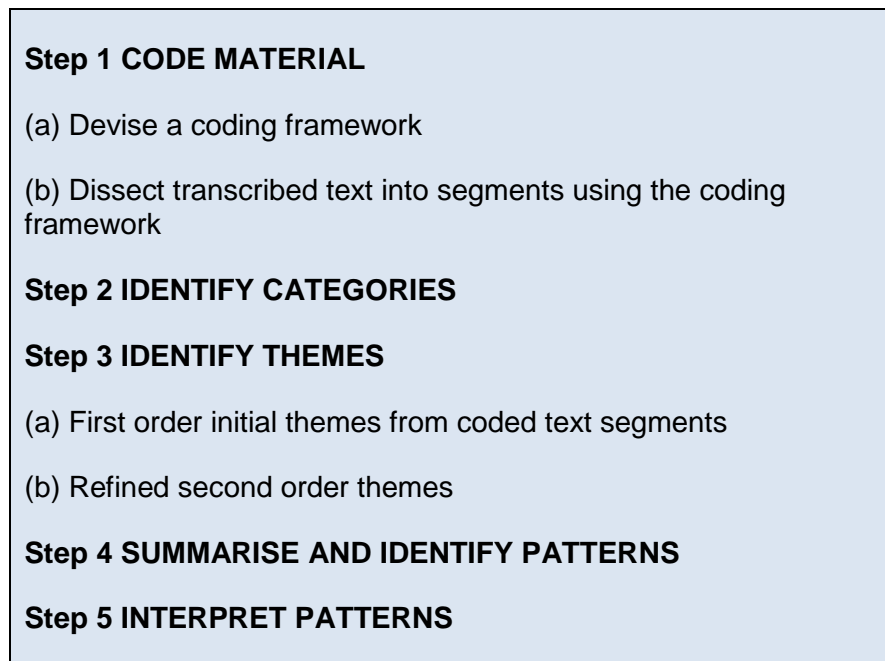


Figure 3.4 Steps in analysis

Coding was critical in the early stages of the analysis. Initially this was developed from a broad pre-existing framework based on the literature and theoretical framework (Grant-Davies, 1992). The process of coding is very similar to the activity of reading in that it is a continual practice of constructing and interpreting meaning (ibid). The initial and critical process of coding meant dividing the raw data into manageable segments and classifying it according to a coding framework using the theoretical framework, and therefore, to an extent, pre-established criteria (Attridge - Stirling, 2001) which served to support the research questions. Initially, approximately 80 codes were derived on the basis on particular theoretical interests and concepts and emerging points in the data. Using the NVivo software program, all data were dissected into units at the level of clause and entered against particular codes. At that stage, all data could be classified under more than one code. Initially 20 clusters of codes, or categories, were developed. However, during classification there were continual shifts in the numbers of categories and codes. Categories were used to allow generalisations to be made about the data and in order to stress similarities (Grant-Davies, 1992). Following Merriam's (1998) advice, categories were used until the data were exhausted in that all relevant data could be placed into a category, and generally, only one category. Some of these early codes and categories are outlined in Table 3.4.

Table 3.5 Some examples of preliminary coding

<p>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS Post compulsory education Literacy Subject English Vocational Education and Training School organization School values and structure Department values and structure</p>	<p>GENRE TYPES Narrative Report Exposition Persuasion Response Transaction Recount Procedure Explanation Discussion</p>	<p>IDEATIONAL RESOURCES Subject matter Knowledge Context Abstraction Technical language Verbal processes</p>
<p>SUBJECT ENGLISH DISCOURSES Academic writing Genre Cultural studies Critical literacy Literacy Pastoral discourses Personal expression</p>	<p>GENRE FEATURES Social purposes Schematic structure Stages of genre</p>	<p>INTERPERSONAL RESOURCES Modality Appraisal</p>
<p>PHYSICAL PRACTICES Location Technology Time spent writing</p>	<p>WRITING DISCOURSES Academic Workplace</p>	<p>TEXTUAL RESOURCES Reference Conjunction Ellipsis Connectives Lexical Cohesion</p>

All transcribed or imported data (such as policy and curriculum documents) were classified and coded using the NVivo program. Initial segments of transcribed texts that did not belong in existing codes were placed in free nodes that did not belong to any particular category. For example, a collection of events, textual and writing practices and attitudes provided evidence of the influence of technology on classroom practice, as outlined in Figure 3.5. Additionally, following the advice of Miles and Huberman (1994), matrix displays of categories were constructed to assist in the process of interpretation. Table 3.5 provides an example of how matrix displays can be used to highlight developing patterns about the three physical environments (Kress, Jewitt et al., 2005, p.75).

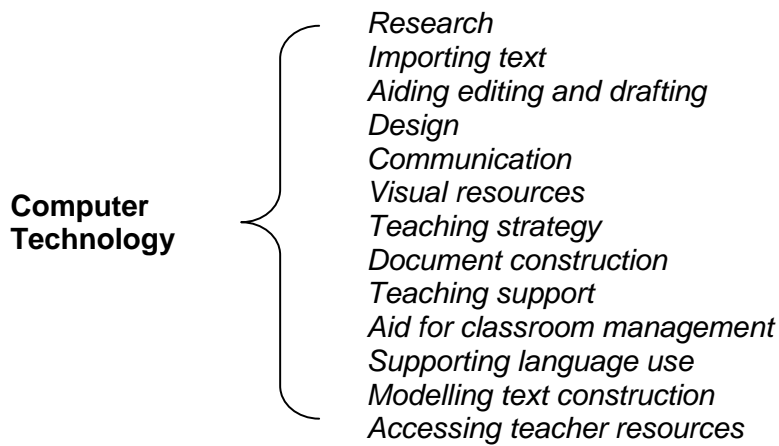


Figure 3.5 Development of the category of computer technology

Table 3.6 Matrix display of the learning environment (segment only)

Aspects of environment	Woodlands	Altona	Alexander Heights
Rooms	Computer lab	Classroom and computer lab	Classroom, computer lab and multi-purpose hub
Computers	Available constantly	Intermittent – in computer labs only	Variable – in classroom, hub and computer labs
Wall Displays	None	Teacher design – photos of landscape and cultural sites	Teacher and students – mind maps, teaching aids
Furniture layout	Large tables in centre and computers facing walls	Double rows facing front of classroom – podium at front of room and computer lab – computers facing walls	Group tables in classroom, computers facing walls and lounge chairs in hub, computers facing walls in labs
Gaze	Sees all students from front of room except when supporting students one on one	See all students – direct eye contact from front of room – closely monitors students in labs	Interaction based on one on one and small group – intimate and personal interaction

3.4.2 *Discovering research themes and patterns*

Research themes were identified through a process of further refining codes and categories and elucidating salient and repeated ideas and premises (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). At this stage of interpretation, a significant amount of attention was given to categories and coded text, original transcripts and conceptual framing. Much time was spent reviewing classification and coding and examining possible explanations for the findings. Subsequently, the themes

were explored to find deeper patterns. Interpretation of concepts, such as the shaping of identity, depended on extensive iterative processes between research data and the literature.

As Attridge – Stirling (2001) argued, it is critical to explore patterns systematically. This was achieved by consistent reviewing of codes and categories, an iterative practice between the literature and the outcomes of classification and return to transcripts and at times original data. For example, as analysis progressed, the following themes emerged:

- Writing as a mediated practice
- The writer as worker
- The aspirational writer

As the analysis and interpretation progressed, patterns reflecting deeper levels of meaning were gleaned from the themes and categories, so that, on a number of occasions, concepts were explained partly using metaphors such as *the aspirational writer*, *the writer as learner* and *the writer as worker*. Additionally, themes were divided into two groups; an initial first order group of themes based on interpretation of codes, and a deeper second order level of themes based on the relationships between codes and categories. An example of first and second order themes is provided in Table 3.6, and a more detailed outline of first and second order themes is provided in Appendix A.

Table 3.7 Sample first and second order themes

Initial First Order Themes	Refined Second Order Themes
<p>Regulative discourses of writing</p> <p>Social justice – expresses concern that students experience equitable opportunities and can recognise the need for others to be treated fairly</p> <p>Personal empowerment – gains the ability to negotiate the demands of a modern world</p> <p>Remediation – addresses writing and genre weaknesses to ensure social participation</p> <p>Working and employability– secures and maintains employment</p> <p>Achievement – participates to ensure and demonstrate social, educational and discipline success</p> <p>Maturity – actualises the mature young adult through approved forms of behaviour</p>	<p>Regulative discourses – the regulative expectations of policy and curriculum and teachers’ values shape what students write and how they write.</p>
<p>Student writing identities are discursively and socially constructed and positioned</p> <p>Conformity –conforming to the forms of identity made available to them</p> <p>Resistance –resisting forms of identity made available to them</p> <p>Motifs – viewing student writing identities through motifs such as the worker or achiever</p> <p>Autobiographical self –bringing experiences and perceptions to the activity of writing</p> <p>Enacting – enacting views of the self as writer in activities and appropriation of resources</p>	<p>Identity – identities are shaped through patterns of affiliation and differentiation</p>

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research methodology. It began with an explanation of the research design and the reasons for selecting ethnography and the case study. The sampling techniques and the challenges faced in securing appropriate cases in an environment where Year Twelve students were preparing for examinations and final year assessments were outlined. The chapter also provided a rationale for the selection of the research instruments. The analytical framework and procedures chosen for the analysis of data have been explained and examples of the codes, categories and themes have been included.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven present the results of the research and some preliminary discussions. Chapter Eight provides a detailed comparison of the three cases.

CHAPTER FOUR: Results - Policy and Curriculum

Contextual Factors Affecting the Discursive Framing of Writing

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes some of the dominant contextual features that shaped the selection, presentation and construction of genre and writing identities in each of the three classes. In doing so, the chapter uses data collected from policy and curriculum documentation, teacher interviews and classroom observations to answer aspects of the following primary and secondary questions:

What is the interaction between the physical and discursive learning environments, and the selection, presentation and construction of particular genres?

- How did policy, curriculum and classrooms discursively shape writing and genre practices?
- How did selection and presentation of text frame genre and writing practices?
- In particular, how did these contextual aspects frame access to particular ideational, interpersonal and textual resources?

An identification of those features of context furthest removed from the classroom, namely national and state based policies associated with literacy, subject English and senior school education, as relevant to this study, opens the chapter. Later sections present an account of the Western Australian curriculum environment at the time of data collection, and provide an insight into school and departmental traditions in each of the cases.

4.2 The Australian educational policy landscape

4.2.1 *The National Educational Policy Landscape – 1995 – 2006*

In the period between 2004 and 2006, the provision of educational pathways for young Australians was a major consideration for Australian national and state based governments. Concerns about young people's participation in education and Australian society and economy found expression in a range of national and state policy statements. At the time, Australian states endorsed the extension of post compulsory

education and advocated increasing senior education for young Australians not destined for university education.

The emergence of an Australian tradition of literacy research, policy and practice began in earnest in the early 1990s. During this period, policies aimed to both define literacy and articulate the place of literacy in a contemporary and internationally competitive Australia. In 1991, one of the early seminal literacy policy statements, *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (Department of Employment, 1991) advocated that:

We should all aspire to an Australia whose citizens are literate and articulate: a nation of active and intelligent readers, writers, listeners and speakers. The knowledge, values and skills of Australian people will enable Australia to be well-educated, cultured, humane and purposeful (p. iii).

The policy promoted a critical role for literacy, which it defined as “intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic” (p. 5) involving “the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing” (p. 5). Presented as pivotal in reshaping and improving the performance of Australian education systems, literacy also formed part of the nation’s response to the challenges of globalisation and an employment skills shortage (p. 1).

Later reports such as *Aspects of Literacy* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997) and *Mapping of Literacy Achievement* (DEETYA, 1997; Comber, Badger et al., 2003) expressed concerns about literacy levels in Australia. The *Mapping of Literacy Achievement* project (DEETYA, 1997), which considered the literacy performance and achievement of students in Years Three and Five, found that students from lower economic groups were likely to perform at levels below students from higher socio economic backgrounds. It also echoed earlier concerns about the literacy levels of indigenous students and students for whom English was a second language. Released subsequently, and using the same data, *Literacy Standards in Australia* (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1997), presented findings that approximately one third of Australian students were performing badly in the area of literacy and advocated the introduction of benchmarking for various year groups (Comber, Badger et al., 2003).

Such an emphasis on literacy policy at the national level in Australia contrasted with the limited national interest in subject English that was administered by seven separate state and territory based boards. However, an attempt was made in 1997, with the establishment of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (now referred to as MCEETYA) (Ministerial Council on Education, 1999), whose membership included State, Territory, Commonwealth and New Zealand education

ministers, to facilitate national and state relations on education. *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty - First Century* (Ministerial Council on Education, 1999), developed in 1997, was intended to frame or chart State responsibilities with the dominant purpose of “strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community...” (p. 2). The goals promoted the contribution of young Australians to the nation’s social, cultural and economic development and their rights and responsibilities as citizens in that:

Australia’s future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society (p. 1).

The Declaration maintained that schooling should be socially just (p. 4) and provide access to pathways to employment, further education and training. In doing so, it represented an early attempt by state based governments and their education boards to articulate the place of subject English in the nation’s economic, social and cultural advancement.

The policy *Literacy for All: the Challenges for Australian Schools* (DEETYA, 1998), which was released in 1998, reiterated many earlier national literacy policy concerns and highlighted the dominance of literacy policies over considerations of subject English. Positioning literacy as central to Australia’s future economic, social and cultural development, the policy accentuated its importance in economic participation and citizenship. Reflecting earlier literacy policies, it also reinforced the importance of foundational (early years) literacy development, of choice in education provision and of accountability and measurement.

In these respects, the policy reflected many of the key tenants of the MCEETYA goals (Ministerial Council on Education, 1999). However, it also aligned literacy and literacy education with other educational discourses such as privatisation of the school sector, by recommending that students and their parents would benefit from a choice of schools. The report acknowledged the individual needs of students and foregrounded the importance of all students having an opportunity to learn. The policy recommended that successful schools prepare students for work and participation in Australia’s social and cultural life (p.6) through a number of international discourses such as literacy, lifelong learning, privatisation and school participation. Parents fully informed about their children’s education, better educational accountability through improved assessment and reporting and quality teaching were presented as pivotal to improving literacy standards.

The policy drew legitimacy from OECD reporting on international literacy levels, which positioned literacy levels as markers and predictors of national economic success and strength (Christie & Mission, 1998; McIntyre, 2000b). Explicitly, teachers and schools were held accountable and responsible for literacy performance and by implication national progress. Use of prior research, such as Freebody and Ludwig's (1995) investigation of literacy practices in schools from lower socio economic areas, supported the policy's position that teachers were highly influential in determining the literacy outcomes of students. The study argued that teachers were inclined to draw upon certain pedagogic practices for particular students, to take moralistic attitudes to students from lower socio economic backgrounds and undertake a pastoral role of instilling the importance of literacy rather than devoting time to the development of literacy skills.

Whilst the policy document foregrounded the importance of economic success, it marginalised issues of access to literacy and writing practices through a number of omissions. It clearly maintained that in the school environment the development of foundational literacy skills was the key to addressing disadvantage:

Australia will go a long way towards countering other forms of educational and social disadvantage if strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills are successfully taught to all children (p. 7).

In doing so, it subtly ensured that literacy outcomes were not linked to economic and social circumstances. They were, rather, associated with schools and teachers:

If schooling fails to overcome educational disadvantage the Commonwealth bears the cost of this failure through its budgetary provision for unemployment benefits and social programmes (p. 29).

In this way, the document ideologically constructed the individual student as distanced from the myriad of social environments that formed the life and experiences of the learner.

The policy clearly emphasised reading at the expense of detailed references to writing. A social practice model underpinned the policy's recommendations for learning about writing "in a wide range of contexts, for many different purposes ... to communicate with a variety of audiences" (p. 6). In the tradition of this model, the policy acknowledged the importance of technology in shaping forms of writing and that:

written language is always-already technologised, in the sense that it comes into being only in and through available technologies of information and communication... (Lankshear & Knobel 1997, p.20)' (p. 14).

However, these very general comments suggested a perception of literacy shaped by technology and the purposes it should achieve as opposed to considerations of writing and language use.

A lack of theorisation of language and its positioning as a foundational skill dominated the policy. Somewhat at odds with the general thrust of the policy, language was presented as a potential barrier and for this reason, classroom teachers needed to ensure the accessibility of classroom texts. As such:

There are equity issues related to the increasingly complex and often abstract forms of texts which students encounter as they progress through school. Often, the school subjects most highly valued for purposes of tertiary entrance are those which are most demanding in terms of literacy requirements (p. 40).

Such sentiments served to reinforce differentiated forms of literacy, language and writing so that, to an extent, learning experiences and literacy accommodated the capabilities of students. From this perspective, texts constituted potential barriers to student learning and success and for this reason:

It is important that teachers, at all levels of schooling, give consideration to the accessibility of classroom texts for all learners, and where necessary, provide explicit teaching to enable students to deal competently with these texts (p. 40).

Such references compartmentalised and distinguished language use and language users as either academically or vocationally orientated by clearly labelling some activities as less demanding, and by implication, demarcating between less able students and the more able. This was further supported by references to two dominant categories of language use, abstract uses of language associated with traditional academic disciplines and technical language with practical learning and vocational outcomes.

Whilst the policy did not refer directly to genre, it did however, draw upon a framing of writing that emphasised the importance of writing appropriately for a number of purposes, for a variety of audiences and in a range of contexts. This alone does not constitute a genre approach to writing, but it does echo an approach where the purpose of writing is a determining aspect of successful writing, as opposed to a prescriptive model emphasising language, writing and text construction based upon adherence to a set of rules.

4.2.2 *The Western Australian Education Policy Landscape – 2000 – 2005*

In 1998, the Western Australian state government mandated that by 2004, school sectors would conform to the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council of Western

Australia, 1998) by implementing a series of overarching outcomes for all learning areas. These eight statements emphasised a range of communicative strategies, such as the use of "...language to understand, develop and communicate ideas and information and interact with others" (p. 18). It articulated the capacity to "recognise when and what information is needed, locate and obtain it from a range of sources and evaluate, use and share it with others" (ibid). Specific English outcomes included the capacity to "understand that the way language is used varies according to context" (p. 84) and to "write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms using conventions appropriate to audience, purpose and context" (p. 84).

Additionally, during the period from 2002 to 2004, the state government and Curriculum Council advocated an increase in the school leaving age. In order to provide for the changing nature of the senior school cohort, significant reports recommended flexible and diverse pathways including traditional discipline based subjects, vocational subjects and learning programmes incorporating work experience and community participation (CCWA, 2002). Of particular note were the reports:

- *Our Youth, Our Future: Post Compulsory Education Review* (CCWA, 2002)
- *Creating the future: Creating the future for our young people: raising the school leaving age: A Consultation Paper* (Carpenter, 2004)

The first of the above reports outlined the Western Australian government's commitment to post-compulsory education. After identifying difficult transitions from school to work and further study for a number of students, the review stressed the importance of lifelong learning. It acknowledged the need to maximise opportunities for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and those in rural and remote areas. Drawing on agencies such as the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1995) and the MCEETYA National Goals for Schooling (1999) for authority, the review positioned Western Australia in an international context by identifying how the state's completion rates compared poorly with other OECD countries. It asserted the importance of post-compulsory education in preparing young people for productive and participatory adult life, for further education and for employment (p. 13). The review promoted the development of individual well-being and self-confidence by:

...equipping young people to develop a stronger sense of themselves as active players who have some responsibility for the direction of community life, and who can take a role in decision making about major social and environmental issues and the ethical implications of human activity and knowledge (p.15).

The retention of students who previously would have left school was clearly viewed as the primary challenge of senior education in Western Australia at this time.

In a vein similar to the *Literacy for All* (DEETYA, 1998) policy statement, references to English Language Competencies and literacy discursively framed language, language learning and writing. Responsibility for language learning was positioned in both the English subject area and, reflecting recent paradigms of cross curriculum literacy learning, embedded in other learning areas. The review drew upon a series of consultations between various stakeholders about the necessity for compulsory delivery of English language competencies and the location of that delivery (Reid, 2002) to recommend them as the domain of the English subject area.

In this environment, writing was clearly positioned as a form of literacy and part of a broader concern with literacy and English Language Competence, emphasising “typical” text types, “conventions of these text types” and the “specialised vocabularies of particular disciplines” (p. 61). Language use itself was weakly framed, highlighting a lack of theoretical underpinning, and broadly described as a measurable competence associated with specialist uses. Reflecting attitudes towards language found in national policy statements, there was reference to text types and specialist uses of language, and by implication, discourses indicative of the social practice approach to literacy and suggestive of genre strategies. Additionally, the document referred to critical literacy skills as a requisite for successful participation in the modern world.

Ambiguity dominated its references to literacy and the place of the English subject area. Whilst it reflected discourses of literacy as a critical feature of contemporary social and economic life, it also problematised literacy and imbibed it with dilemmas and potential crises, citing research findings that only half of the adult population had acceptable literacy levels (p. 23). The review was ensconced with discourses of lifelong learning, a largely constructivist pedagogy and strategies of problem solving and student centred and independent learning. Its underlying grammar accentuated pathways through varying contexts for learning and different forms of knowledge. In this construct, knowledge, the resources of writing and text construction were framed, acquired, and assessed in the school, training organization, workplace and in the community. Consequently, they were no longer strictly the domain of the educator or the school.

Additionally, conceptions of student identities, learners, pathways and destinations encoded the review. On one level, it advocated access to a broad general education for students that “offers breadth of study, enhancement of values and development of generic capabilities” (p. 18). A closer analysis revealed differentiated student identities polarised around practical or academic knowledge. However, to ensure equity, the

policy recommended “opportunities exist for all groups of students to participate in VET in schools, particularly for those under-represented in education and training” (p. 9).

Many of the discourses framing this environment, as indicated in Figure 4.1, had their origins in the international arena as nations and organisations framed responses to the changing social, economic and communicative landscape. Such discourses influenced and framed the development of a number of national policies including:

1. *Lifelong learning – Key Issues* (National Board of Employment Education and Training, 1996)
2. *Learning for the Knowledge Society: An Education and Training Action Plan for the Information Economy* (DEETYA, 2000)
3. *New Frameworks for VET in Schools* (Ministerial Council of Education, 2000)
4. *Participation in post-compulsory schooling* (DEETYA, 2000)
5. *School innovation: pathway to a knowledge society* (DEST, 2001).

GLOBALISATION¹⁰ ^ KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY¹¹ ^ LIFELONG LEARNING¹² ^ NEW WORK ORDER¹³ ^ LITERACY

Figure 4.1 Key discourses in the international educational environment

4.3 The Western Australian curriculum landscape

In 2005, five subjects, Tertiary Entrance English, Literature, Senior English, Vocational English and English as a Second Language (CCWA, 1998), framed the Western Australian senior school English curriculum. Literature and Tertiary Entrance English subjects provided students aiming for academic destinations with the opportunity to demonstrate subject knowledge and language competencies. Both subjects included

¹⁰ Globalisation – it is the emergence of new economies, cultural diversities and mobility in response to changing technological and communicative practices (Johnson & Kress, 2003).

¹¹ Knowledge economy – the discourse reinforces the importance of the learner, and literate citizen in a global economic and social world where characteristics of flexibility, citizenship and mobility are encouraged. This is achieved by the use of information technology, codified forms of knowledge and the capacity to transfer types of knowledge and confidence in the use of a number of textual forms (Farrell, 2001a).

¹² Lifelong Learning – stresses individual responsibility in learning for primarily economic futures. Such a strategy serves to reinforce limitless possibilities (Grundy, 1994) or languages of possibility through potential various destinations and models of school participation.

¹³ New Work Order – this concept is used to describe new forms of work and particularly new and idealised understanding of the worker. In this paradigm, the new worker is independent, able to learn and adapt, particularly to new forms of work and regulation. They must continue to be learners maintain skills and have high levels of communication in a changing global and technological environment (Farrell, 2001a).

discipline based Literature, Cultural Studies and various forms of academic writing and discourse. Alternatively, the Senior English and Vocational English subjects, reflecting a greater level of multidisciplinary, drew on subject matter and textual practices from disciplines such as Literature, Cultural Studies and incorporated elements of workplace communication. English as a Second Language provided the opportunity for students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds to build skills for participation in English language and literacy and to gain entry to university.

As the curriculum document outlined, the *Vocational English (CCWA)* subject catered for students viewed as destined for employment and vocational education. The document itself did not provide a rationale for the subject, other than presenting a strong orientation to the workplace, the importance of context and recommending, where possible, the integration of the subject's outcomes into students' vocational subjects. Emphasising practical approaches to learning, it stated that concrete practical applications in a range of different learning contexts would provide students with the opportunity to grasp theoretical concepts associated with language learning and writing. Additionally, the subject outcomes, drawn from the English subject area, reflected the critical areas of the Western Australian English curriculum: reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Five of eight subject outcomes, those that are explicitly relevant to writing, are outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Writing outcomes outlined in the curriculum document

	Curriculum outcomes
E1	Comprehend ideas, arguments, propositions and opinions
E2	Produce text in which there is organisation, development and evaluation of ideas and information appropriate to the task requirements
E3	Use a range of written, graphic or other visual means of expression to present ideas and information
E4	Use language which shows an understanding of the nature and requirements of audience, purpose and context
E5	Write using the conventions of Standard Australian English

Five of the subject's eight assessment tasks, listed in Table 4.2, were directly relevant to writing. Assessment tasks framed as performance criteria allowed students' work to be allocated grades of Satisfactory Achievement, High Achievement and Very High Achievement.

Table 4.2 Curriculum writing tasks and associated texts

Task relevant to writing	Learning outcome	Sample written texts
TASK ONE – Design and complete at least three different workplace texts according to specific needs	E3, E4	Order Form, Facsimile, Email, Promotional Flyer
TASK TWO – Write workplace communications requiring a response and/or an action	E1, E2, E4, E5	Request letter, Complaint letter, Job application, Request for pay rise, Resignation letter
TASK THREE – Plan, organise and conduct a meeting/formal discussion	E1, E2, E4, E5	Meeting agenda, Minutes
TASK FIVE – Written presentation based on information gained through structured investigation	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5	Surveys, Investigative Report
TASK SIX – Written analysis of a media text	E1, E2, E5	Summaries and notes, Expository essay
TASK EIGHT- Participate in an interview situation	E2, E3, E5	Job application letter

Considerations of context dominated the curriculum document. Knowledge of the workplace was a critical feature of its underpinning logic and served to prioritize content and context, and by implication, concepts such as relevance and authenticity, over textual production and language competencies. The curriculum provided the opportunity for production of, as outlined in Table 4.3, operational level texts such as the job card and worksheet and complex texts, such as letters, written presentations, investigative reports and critical analyses. Operational and transactional texts¹⁴ dominated the initial tasks.

¹⁴ Transactional genres facilitate basic communication exchanges such as those found in business transactions (Joyce, 1992).

Table 4.3 Texts made available by the curriculum

Genre	Register
Request	Request letters and responses to requests
Persuasion	Purchase letters Complaint and courtesy letters Invitation letters Resumé and job application letters
Information	Facsimile and email Agenda and minutes Invoice Job card and schedules Business cards Memorandum Staff Roster
Procedure	Order form Incident report and interview sheet Employment application form Maintenance program
Record	Summary and notes Survey Palm Cards
Exposition	Essay
Report	Investigative Report
Promotion	Flyer and safety poster Newspaper advertisement Leaflet
Review	Feature article

Tasks, however, became increasingly complex and provided greater opportunities for students to utilise a range of genre and linguistic resources. Task Five, a written presentation, gave students the opportunity to write on a range of topics and write using a number of texts including the investigative report. Task Six provided the opportunity for students to write an expository essay. Throughout the curriculum document, transactional texts were more rigorously framed in terms of the types of purposes they could achieve. Texts at the lower level of construction were tightly framed in terms of production and performance and there were much clearer expectations about the types of genres to be taught and assessed. However, written presentations very generally framed the more complex writing tasks and gave teachers the opportunity to select texts that could accommodate student interests and abilities.

Whilst the document accentuated the workplace, it did not articulate in any depth contemporary workplace communicative practices, or the realities students were likely to encounter in workplaces, a characteristic of many contemporary studies of workplace communications (Castleton, 2003; Gibbs & Costley, 2006; J. Halliday, 2004; Yates, 2003). With the exception of the facsimile, there were no references to communication through contemporary technologies. Whilst the document gave students the opportunity to design a series of documents in Task One and apply technology in the design and construction of texts, the emphasis in the curriculum document lay with print based expectations of text and writing. Such understandings of communicative practices in modern workplaces contrasted with the curriculum's stated purpose of preparing students for the workplace. Whilst strongly classifying the workplace as the primary source of content, context and interpersonal meaning, the document provided teachers with an abstract concept of the workplace, something also identified by Castleton (2000), Forey (2004) and J. Halliday (2004) as a common weakness in much contemporary teaching of vocational education and workplace practices.

Teachers were encouraged to give students the opportunity to achieve outcomes both within the schools and where possible in the workplace, representing a weakening of the school as the site of writing and learning about writing and realigning the workplace and the practical with demonstration of capabilities and skill. Whilst not explicitly classifying or framing pedagogical strategies, a practical or situated practice model of writing pedagogy was implicit in the document. Writing activities that appeared authentic, replicating real life situations were accentuated with the intention of capturing the interest of the writer, preparing the writer for likely destinations and the capacity to identify the nature of writing practices in particular contexts. Compatible with social practice orientations to writing, emphasis was placed on contexts, purposes, technology, practices, and visual and physical aspects of texts (Ivanic, 2004, p. 237).

4.4 Conclusions and preliminary discussion

The central focus of this chapter was to identify and interpret the learning environments, which have shaped the writing, and genre practices in three English classes at the level of policy and curriculum. This chapter also offered an examination of key policies which influenced and reflected the national cultural and discursive educational environment. The discursive features of curriculum documents and the way they framed writing and genre practices for particular groups of students were also explored.

Whilst the *Literacy for All* (DEETYA, 1998) policy document is characterised by a lack of theorisation of language it presents a strongly reinforced, yet undefined, relationship between language and literacy, describing language as a repertoire, language features primarily as a foundational skill posing difficulties for young Australians and a challenge in later years of schooling. There is a demonstrated lack of authority regarding language in the document, overshadowed by the discursive construction of literacy (Christie, 1998). At the level of national and state policy, a largely social practice paradigm of literacy framed conceptualizations of successful writing.

The curriculum document conceptualised successful writing predominantly as a functional workplace literacy embedded in a range of simulated and real workplace activities. Also described in terms of English Language Competence, writing was aligned to language use in terms of appreciation of audience, purpose and context, production of text to develop, organise, and present information and ideas, and conventions of Standard Australian English. Discourses of learning and text construction represented both the English area and the vocational education and training sector. Central in the curriculum document was evidence of instructional discourse favouring competency based training, contextual pedagogy, relevance and authenticity.

This subject occupied a somewhat ambiguous position in terms of participation in institutional subject areas of secondary school education. Originally, a subject written for vocational programs, it had become over time a part of the English subject area and had been reviewed to ensure it conformed to the expectations of that area. Selection of texts, orientations to literacy and writing and pedagogies reflected a configuration between the vocational orientation of the official pedagogic discourse, the traditions of the English subject area and allowed individual teacher framing of practices. In each classroom, the subject had the potential for a distinct orientation to the English subject area and the academic traditions at its foundation. The eclectic nature of the subject area itself encouraged a level of autonomy unlikely to be found in subject areas such as science and maths (Christie, 1999, 2004; Grossman, 1995; Hunter, 1988, 1884).

In conclusion, it is important to consider how the successful student writer of Year Twelve Vocational English is constructed and viewed. The successful student has a strong sense of the workplace, far greater than an understanding in abstract terms. They have experience in the workplace and are likely to go straight from school into the workforce at operational level work. They possess a strong sense of values respected in the workplace: loyalty, conformity and respect for authority (Gilbert 2001).

Recognising the importance of understanding the context in which one lives, works and

writes, they are receptive to ideals of lifelong learning, the knowledge economy and of literacy.

They are predominantly functional writers, and understand that writing is a critical feature of achieving goals, particularly in the workplace, but also in their daily life and in the community. They can produce a broad range of texts; however, do not necessarily have a detailed, or articulated, understanding of the successful linguistic and generic features of that writing. Much of what they have learned is through practical application, and this remains their preferred way of learning. Primarily they engage in writing practices at an operational level in the workplace, are comfortable with simple and routine tasks, and have limited exposure to writing practices at a professional, abstract or academic level.

CHAPTER FIVE: Results and Discussion of Writing at Woodlands Senior High School - an Emphasis on the Vocational

In a communication era, more and more employers are expecting some level of literacy so that they can assign a task to a young person and expect them to carry it out independently. An employer does not want to be teaching literacy in any basic form to someone who has just completed Year Twelve.
(Barry - Woodlands Senior High School).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the discursive positioning of student identities in the first case study, Barry's Year Twelve English class at Woodlands Senior High School, and the role of selection, presentation and construction of genre in that process. This investigation revealed how a myriad of interconnecting factors contributed to student writing identities by examining the distinguishing features of this case through the lens of the theoretical framework expounded in the literature review. In particular, it used Bernstein's (1990) notion of pedagogic discourse to arrive at an understanding of how the version of English taught in this class framed the student writer. Australian genre theory (Feez, 2002; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin, 2009, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2008) was used to study and interpret how genres were presented to and constructed by students. Figure 5.1 provides an overview of the chapter. It is divided into two main sections: Sections 5.2 through to 5.6 present the findings of the research. Section 5.7 concludes the chapter by offering an interpretation of some key results.

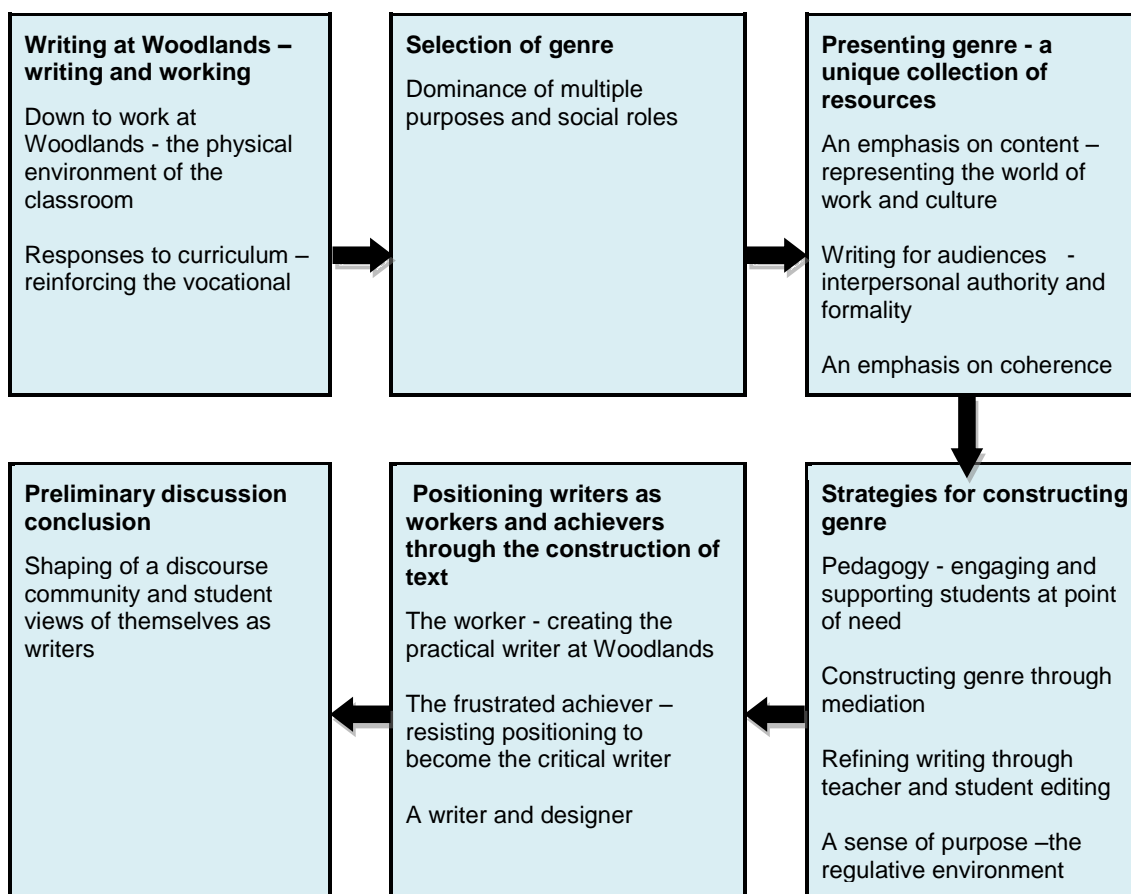


Figure 5.1 An outline of Chapter Five

5.2 Writing at Woodlands – writing and working

Woodlands Senior High School is located in Perth’s north-west suburban heartland. Very much in keeping with the landscape of the area, the school has extensive grounds, an array of sports fields, native vegetation gardens and outcrops of eucalyptus trees. At the time of data collection, the school buildings, a little stained with bore water, were in need of renovation. Replicating the university faculty design, each learning area had its own distinct area of the school with accompanying block of classrooms and staff room.

Visitors were welcomed by the school’s mission statement, which was clearly displayed in the school foyer and on the school website:

To develop cognitive, social and physical skills of students so that they can develop an informed, balanced attitude to life and can participate as effective members of society.

To achieve this, the school offered general academic and vocational programs and specialist programs in Japanese and French Languages, Music, Dance and Aviation.

A full time Vocational Education and Training Coordinator supported vocational training in the Performing Arts, Information Technology and Design Technology. During the period of data collection, the English subject area offered three of the five senior subjects available in Western Australia. Tertiary Entrance English, providing a pathway to university was offered along with Senior English and Vocational English. Insufficient student interest meant that Literature was not offered in 2005. English as a Second Language was not a part of this school's English program.

5.2.1 *Down to work at Woodlands - the physical environment of the classroom*

In the tradition of the large school, students sauntered from various locations and gathered outside the classroom, waiting to be invited inside. Daniel, Kirsten and Mathew watched as Barry nonchalantly shifted his attention away from marking papers to the gathering group of students. He glanced up at them, nodded, and in a serious tone invited students into the class. After spending four periods a week with Barry, the students had learned the hidden meaning of such a quiet entrance, understanding that behind a seemingly nonchalant demeanour lay expectations of punctuality, attitude and politeness. As the students walked through the door and entered Barry's territory, his authority lessened as students scrambled to sit at 'their' computer and next to 'their' mates. Students organised assignments, battled with computers and began their work.

This English class met four times a week and had the luxury of using two adjoining rooms, one being the teacher's homeroom¹⁵ and the other a computer laboratory used exclusively by the English Department. Most classes took place in the computer laboratory, represented in Figure 5.2, with the exception of presentations held in the classroom next door.

The computer room was a converted classroom where computers faced three dark bricked and stark walls. Large tables filled the centre of the room and a white board (no longer usable), chalkboard and teacher's desk framed the front of the room. The computer lab was full of symbols of production such as sets of computers, printers and large working tables. Reminiscent of the trade workshop, students worked independently on computers, managing their own workload, soliciting support when needed. In this workshop environment, students moved between computers, large desks and Barry's desk as they asked questions. Barry waited for students to approach

¹⁵ A homeroom is a classroom used predominantly by one teacher.

him, to ask for assistance in preparing survey questions, to choose the correct words for the business letter, to check their report was on track. They were very much the lone learner, the lone writer, seeking expert advice when needed.

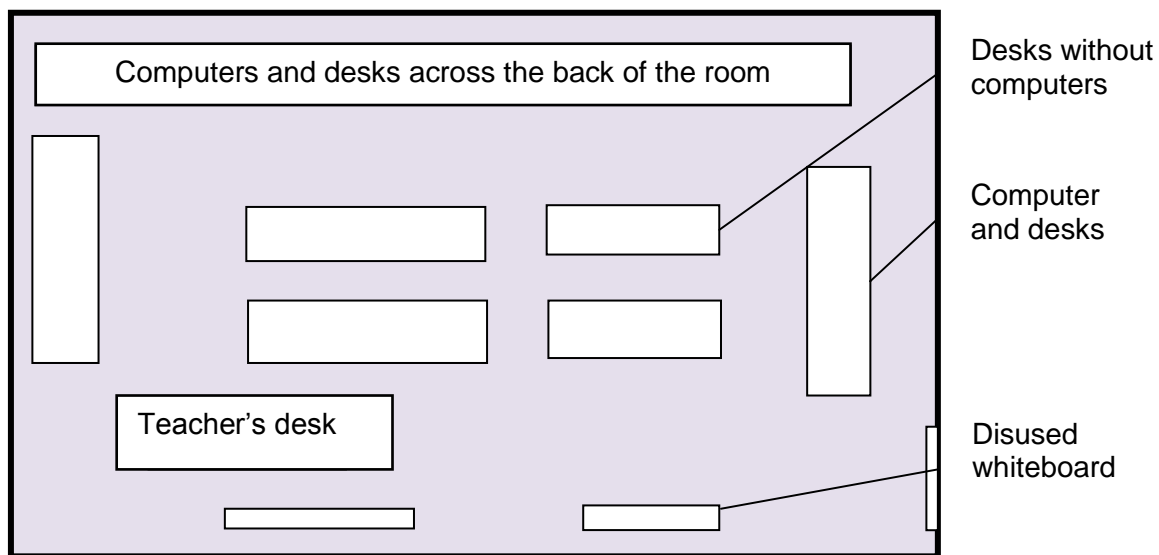


Figure 5.2 Layout of computer classroom used by Barry's class

5.2.2 Responses to curriculum - reinforcing the vocational

Over the four months of classroom observation, students worked concurrently on four of the subject outcomes involving writing as outlined below:

- Designing and completing workplace documents
- Writing workplace communications requiring a response and/or action
- Preparing written presentations based on information gained through structured investigations
- Preparing a written analysis of a media text

A series of tasks formed the basis of the course and students had the freedom to work independently through the course outline. For this reason, students could be undertaking more than one task simultaneously as they completed written texts to present in their course portfolio.

Writing in Barry's class was characterised by construction of a large number of texts as outlined in Table 5.1. Students wrote up to eight texts as they completed Task One which consisted of a number of transactional texts such leaflets, business cards and menus. Students wrote eight letters and at least one memo in response to the Workplace Communications task. Throughout the year, students completed at least

two investigative reports, a response to a media text and letters associated with job seeking and resumé.

Table 5.1 Dominant texts in curriculum and those written in Barry’s class

Subject outcome	Texts
Workplace documents	Business invoice, order forms, facsimile, work schedule, job card, business card, staff roster, advertisement, leaflet
Workplace communications	Memo, request letter, complaint letter, response letter, order letter
Preparing a written analysis of a media text	Investigative report
Written presentations	Surveys, investigative report
Employment practices	Job application letter

With one notable exception, the course offered to students largely reflected the content of the curriculum document. The document (see Section 4.3) framed the outcome *Analyse and Respond to a Media Text* such that students could write an expository essay on the media, and by this means develop the capacity for argument and potential for critical analysis. In Barry’s class, students were free to investigate a topic in the media or on a workplace topic represented in educational media. However, students were required to write an investigative report as opposed to an essay.

In interview, Barry explained his view that the curriculum needed some adaptations as a way of increasing opportunities for student success. This was because, as Barry explained:

... if you change the tasks so that they can be successful you’ve got a higher chance of them actually applying themselves and staying on task... That gives me some sort of range to look at, where they’re applying their skills in a range of different circumstances.... there’s not that much depth and complexity in what they produce. There’s quantity to offset that, so they’re kept busy and focused on their vocational choice.

Barry’s decision to adapt the curriculum was influenced by his perception that the students were largely unsuited to analysis and that:

They don't have analytical minds and the more you try and hammer them to try and get them to produce something analytical the more difficult your task actually is and that analysis of text is furthest from my priorities in this course.

In two respects, the course at Woodlands was adapted to meet Barry's perceptions of his students, first, through the large number of texts constructed and second, a preference for the report over the essay.

5.3 Selection and presentation of genre - dominance of multiple purposes and social roles

The result was that transactional, report and promotional genres, as outlined in Table 5.2, dominated writing in this class. With the exception of the investigative reports produced by students, texts were principally one page in length and constructed using computers. Students produced a range of procedural and informational genres. Some were facsimiles consisting of one message written in no more than five or six lines. Letters associated with job seeking included job applications, requests for apprenticeships and requests for referees.

Table 5.2 Genres and texts constructed at Woodlands

Genre type	Genre	Register
TRANSACTIONAL	Explanation	Request letter Response to request Purchase letter
	Information	Facsimile Agenda Minutes Invoice Job card Business cards Schedule of opening hours Memorandum Staff roster
	Procedure	Maintenance program
REPORT	Record	Survey Notes Palm cards
	Report	Investigative Report
PROMOTIONAL	Advertisement	Flyer Newspaper advertisement Leaflet
	Explanation	Resumé Job application letter

All students wrote an investigative report (Macken-Horarik, 2005) in response to the *Analysis and Response to a Media Text outcome*. The class had viewed Moore's (2004) *Fahrenheit 9/11* and had the freedom to write a report on it. The teacher's approach had prioritised a general description of the content of the documentary such as the political climate at the time, the controversies surrounding the bombing of the towers and the actions of the American administration. Additionally, students had the freedom to write about workplace issues, as long as they incorporated elements of media. Kirsten chose to write about public speaking based on information gathered from a series of videos. At the time of research, Matthew had yet to undertake this section of the course.

Daniel's report summarised in Table 5.3, and reproduced in full in Appendix G, highlighted how he responded to this task. Daniel's report concentrated on a single phenomenon (Martin, 1985), the failures of the American President Bush's administration in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack. In doing so, Daniel outlined Moore's interpretation of the Bush election in 2000 as essentially a corrupt event that disenfranchised many Americans, in particular the African American population. Additionally, Daniel reiterated Moore's interpretation of Bush's response to the 9/11 terrorist bombing as incompetent and commented upon the failure of Bush's war on Iraq and the subsequent search for Bin Laden. Each of these three concerns was signalled with headings as indicated in the first column of Table 5.3.

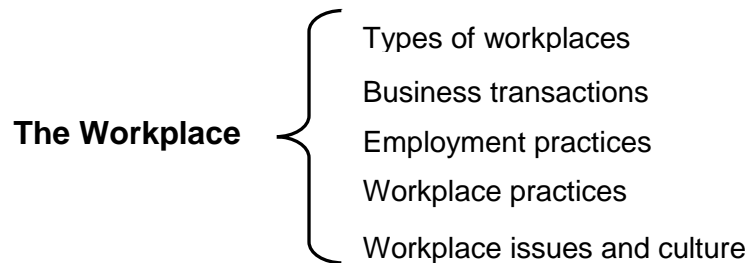
Table 5.3 Schematic structure of Daniel’s report

Schematic structure	Illustrated in text
Orientation	Introduction to the documentary
INTRO	Structure of report Introduction to filmic techniques used in the documentary
Description of aspect	The controversy surrounding the Bush election
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	Disquiet amongst the African American voters Corruption of the election Animosity after the election and lack of responsibility on President Bush’s part
Description of aspect	Use of images and sound in the documentary to highlight the trauma and public responses to the 9/11 attacks
9/11 ATTACKS	President Bush’s response to the 9/11 attacks Censorship and incompetence in the aftermath of the attacks
Description of aspect	9/11 encourages fear of terrorism
THE WAR ON IRAQ	American troops move into Afghanistan Inadequacy of American involvement in Afghanistan Failure of the hunt for Bin Laden Failure of the American involvement in Iraq
Reiteration	Reiteration of the purpose of the documentary to reveal the corruption of the Bush administration
CONCLUSION	

5.3.1 *Discursively representing the world of work and culture through content*

The investigation of the subject matter associated with the workplace revealed that a conglomerate of facts, segments of information, attitudes and phenomena served to construct a complex notion of the workplace. Five key phenomena, represented diagrammatically below, characterised subject matter associated with the workplace. On one level, types of workplaces, industries and potential vocations helped to define the workplace. Most extensively, trades such as plumbing, plastics, engineering and electrical industries represented typical workplaces. However, sports based industries such as fitness and personal training, creative industries such as photography and large-scale industries such as hospitality added to a diverse assortment of workplaces. Additionally, business transactions formed the basis of a large proportion of content. Students spent time writing about, and enacting, various forms of customer service, such as providing information and answering inquiries, initiating financial transactions

and making inquiries about purchases. During the course, students applied their knowledge about particular workplaces, such as jewellers and electrical service companies. Additionally, concepts such as cultural sensitivity and customer relations in the hospitality sector helped to frame understanding of workplace culture.



The study of employment practices occupied a central place in the class. Supported by text construction, students acquired knowledge about how to apply for jobs, about employment practices in large organisations, ways of canvassing job opportunities and the function of references and referees. As outlined in Figure 5.3, the phenomenon of employment practices incorporated a study of standard job application practices in twenty-first century Australia, which accentuated gathering information about particular industries, about particular jobs and understanding the written application through resumé and job application letters. To an extent, students gathered information about particular types of industries, such as the hospitality industry, which was the vocational focus for some students in the class. However, employment practices were about more than finding out about jobs and writing application letters. Of real importance was a concern with the ways young people, could, and should, present themselves to potential employers. In this respect, discussions about seeking employment were infused with references to qualities such as *diligence*, *appearance*, *literacy*, *education*, *motivation* and *enthusiasm*.

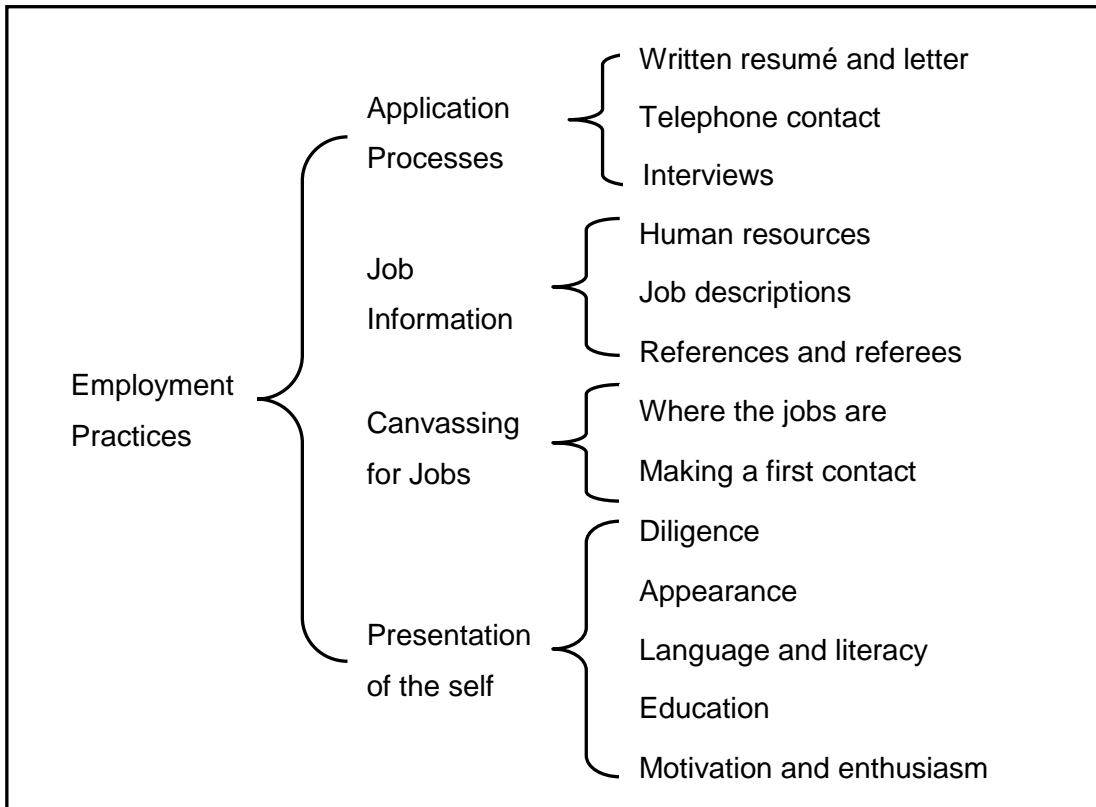


Figure 5.3 Framing of employment practices

Writing in this class emphasised ‘real life’ activities, such as writing texts found typically in particular industries, researching how those texts are best constructed, and understanding social behaviour around those texts. In this way, students were encouraged to question what it meant to write in particular types of workplaces and particular situations. Additionally, during the course of the year, students produced investigative reports that required the design of questionnaires and incorporated information from schools and workplaces.

The only other content area was media studies. In particular, students studied the documentary film in terms of thematic concepts, filmic structure and techniques such as music and camera shots. Daniel’s report reflected this. In the following segment of his report, Daniel represented the film’s content and recounted the events as recorded in the documentary. Throughout this paragraph, Daniel interspersed reporting of events associated with the bombing with comments on Moore’s use of music as a way of constructing mood and thereby encouraging the audience to criticise the Bush administration.

Text 5.1 Daniel's investigative report (Segment only)

The opening scene to this segment is *designed to awe* the audience. The vision of the 9/11 attacks where the aircraft slams into the building has been *plastered on the news* and has since lost any real impact. *To re-create* the impact, Michael Moore blanked out the images and only played the sounds. The first visions reveal the people standing in the streets staring blankly upwards or with anguish written in their features and tears in their eyes. The music is high pitched and *repetitive* as a background to Moore's voice.

An analysis of ideational resources, some are indicated with double underlines, (Christie, 2002; Halliday, 1994) highlighted that Daniel had selected and emphasised information that recreated the events of the bombing, such as *the aircraft slams into the building* and Moore's attempt to capture the mood of the events as one of anguish. Daniel's account stopped short of providing any discussion of the reasons why Moore aimed to awe the audience. In this way, the paragraph provided little insight into Moore's reasons for positioning the viewer. In this way, also, the report stopped short of identifying the key ideas and themes portrayed in the documentary.

Throughout the course, research was conducted into an eclectic range of topics including public speaking, the use of tools and equipment in particular industries and more generally into a variety of possible career paths. Field and ideational resources, namely information, ideas, knowledge and phenomena found their way into the class in a myriad of ways. On one level, the curriculum document itself gave research a high priority through an outcome devoted to investigation. Framing the course in terms of students' own vocational interests required ongoing research as they worked through the tasks. The Internet dominated access to information. Additionally, students drew on the knowledge and skills acquired in other school subjects. Throughout the course, students were encouraged to draw from their personal interests, such as cricket or football, for topics for reports and as sources of information. On a number of occasions, the subject matter was shaped into vocational content associated with sport, health and fitness coaching.

Additionally, students were encouraged to use technical and abstract vocabulary as a way of constructing workplace texts authentically and authoritatively. For example, Kirsten incorporated abstractions and technical language, outlined in Table 5.4, into her investigative report on public speaking. The report is reproduced in full in Appendix F. More specifically, in Text 5.1, Kirsten used technical vocabulary associated with the field of business communications, such as references to the *preparation* and

presentation of speeches and notions of *entertaining* and *persuading audiences*. As a result, the use of such technical and abstract terms positioned Kirsten as a participant in the discourses of business and public speaking. Whilst Kirsten did use every day terms, in this example they were strategically placed to explain and reinforce complex meanings. For example, Kirsten’s reference to *The basic content of writing a speech is the what, who, where/why and how* revealed her striving for clarity, rather than an inability to use technical and abstract language.

Text 5.2 Kirsten’s Report Introduction

The general content of a *speech* is what you want to say, you should make it clear and confident, remembering to plan it carefully. *The preparation and presentation* of your speech should be clear, simple, straight forward and distinctive, remembering to *pause* in-between talking. *The basic content* of writing a *speech* is the what, who, where/why and how. You need to make sure you can identify the *purpose of communication*, which means to *entertain and persuade the audience*.

Table 5.4 Abstract and technical lexis in Kirsten’s report on public speaking

TEXT	ABSTRACTIONS AND TECHNICAL TERMS
Investigative report on Public Speaking	<p>ABSTRACT CONCEPTS: communication knowledge, persuasion and analysis</p> <p>TECHNICAL LANGUAGE: prepared speech, impromptu speech, background information, open ended questions and active listening</p>

Similarly, Daniel used abstract and technical language in the report (Sample Text 5.1). In this segment, he utilised vocabulary associated with analysis of film techniques and positioning such as the abstract phrases of *awe the audience*, *lost any real impact*, *images* and *The music is high pitched and repetitive as a background to Moore’s voice*. Their use reflected his confident use of abstractions such as *images* and *background* that are dominant in cultural studies and within school English studies (Sumara, 2004). Additionally, colloquial and everyday uses of language such as the *aircraft slamming* and *plastered on the news* were dispersed through the text.

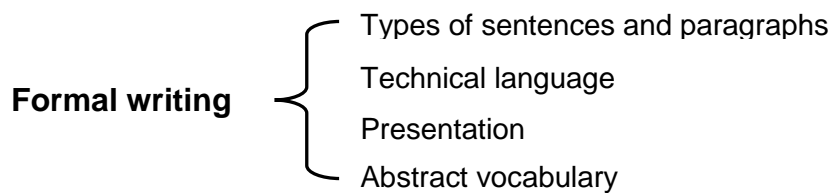
The predominance of transactional genres and one page texts resulted in the dominant use of material processes (Bloor & Bloor, 2004) in student texts, and as outlined in the samples in Table 5.5. This was largely the result of course content that prioritised transactions conveying information such as requests for information. The predominance of material processes also resulted from construction of texts composed of small pieces of information. They also dominated a number of letters, such as those ordering products. Relational processes, representing relationships (Butt et al, 2000; Halliday, 1994) were, however, more apparent in letters which served purposes such as applying for a job.

Table 5.5 Material processes used in a sample of texts

Process type	Restaurant menu	Letter – request for reference (Kirsten)	Letter – request for reference (Matthew)
Material	Served, topped, marinated, tossed, tossed, served, seared, marinated	Send, attach, gain	Completed, now looking for, need to supply, can contact, working, learnt a great deal, give your name
Relational		Have completed, I am now looking, I will need to supply, I have worked, I would like,	I am applying for, to speak
Mental		I have enjoyed - would like	

5.3.2 Tenor – building relationships and authority

The notion of formality served as a key discursive construct that separated business and academic language from the everyday. An examination of student interviews and classroom interactions identified that the notion of formality was based on the use of technical and abstract language, business presentation and appropriately constructed paragraphs and sentences, as outlined in the model below. In this respect, the capacity to frame writing for particular audiences was one of the most highly valued features of writing generally and writing for the workplace for more specifically. Its valued status was reinforced by it being one of the most heavily edited features of student writing. An examination of student texts revealed that students did not always use appropriate personal pronouns to construct social distance as needed in texts such as application letters (Smith, 1986). Whilst not a discernible problem in the construction of transactional texts at an operational level, formality proved difficult for many students when constructing more complex letters and reports.



Additionally, students such as Daniel drew upon appraisal resources (Martin & Rose, 2008; Martin & White, 2005) to position themselves as confident writers. In the following sentences, taken from Daniel's report (Text 5.1), he interspersed value judgements about Moore's portrayal of the 9/11 bombing, the actions of the Bush administration, and the behaviour of the media.

The opening scene to this segment is designed to awe [appreciation+] the audience. The vision of the 9/11 attacks where the aircraft slams [judgement -] into the building has been plastered [appreciation -] on the news and has since lost any real impact [Judgement -].

In this process, he commented positively on Moore's strategy of using particular footage to awe whilst conveying disapproval through his selection of the media through the verbs *slams*, *plastered* and *lost*. Through such strategies, Daniel positioned himself as a writer capable of serious commentary on social events and their portrayal in the media.

5.3.3 *A limited view of textual resources - syntax and conjunction*

In many respects, student access to various sentence types depended on the nature of the texts constructed. The large number of short transactional texts resulted in a predominance of simple and compound sentences. The dominance of transactional texts meant that on a number of occasions, students appropriately selected simple sentences and used minimal cohesive strategies. However, this did not account for the minimal used of paragraph and sentence cohesive resources in larger and more complex texts. Devices of extension and enhancement dominated their texts and sentences. At the clause level, additive conjunctions prevailed. Texts constructed by students showed an overall absence of conjunctions that signalled interpretation, analysis, and relationships.

In the following letter, Matthew requested a reference from a company where he had undertaken work experience. To do this, he structured the letter using an Orientation ^ Elaboration ^ Action sequence. Additionally, he drew upon abstract and technical terms such as *character*, *experience* and *suitability for this type of work*. Additionally, Matthew

combined conventional references to apprenticeships and referees using the conventions of the business letter with informal expressions of friendship such as *you are a good mate of the family*.

Text 5.3 Matthew's letter requesting a referee

It has been 7 months since I completed my three weeks work experience at your company Devlin's Electrics, and in that time I have completed a Certificate 2 in Electro technology. I am now looking for an apprenticeship and I will need to supply the names of people whom employers can contact regarding my character, experience and suitability for this type of work.

As you are a good mate of the family and I have worked at your company for a number of weeks, I would like to ask you to speak on my behalf as a referee.

I have enjoyed working for your company very much, and I would like to thank everyone there for their help and friendliness during my work experience. Just working there was made easier through everyone being nice to others and I learnt a great deal during the time I was there. I would greatly appreciate it if I could give your name as one of my referees when I am applying for positions.

Throughout the letter, Matthew used a variety of sentence types; however, he constructed simple and compound sentences most consistently. This partly reflected the need to communicate a series of facts and to provide information about the purposes of the letter, such as what the writer had been doing since finishing work with the company and his intentions for the future. In this process, Matthew used mostly the additive conjunctive *of* and *rather* than the complex syntax structures that frame relationships.

5.4 Strategies for constructing genre

5.4.1 *Invisible pedagogies - engaging and supporting students at point of need*

A number of factors influence the pedagogic choices teachers make as they go about the business of teaching. During interview, Barry explained that considerations of students' attendance, classroom management and student engagement in writing influenced his selection of instructional strategies. Additionally, he reiterated the importance of supporting individual students at various points of need:

... each individual student has a different vocational area the workplace documents that they choose to do will be different, and so require different instruction, their reports will be on different topics and need a different approach. So one on one is the normal way that I work and this seems to work for me because I'm able to tap into their strengths and weaknesses that way.

The recording and coding of instructional methods employed by Barry, outlined in Table 5.6, highlighted the ways students were monitored as they progressed through stages of preparation of task, selection of topic, establishment of content and knowledge required for the task, familiarisation with the demands of the genre, planning and constructing text and revising and editing.

A series of 'conversations' designed to elicit student progress toward completion of tasks and to provide specific feedback on emerging difficulties and challenges framed much instruction in the class. In this way, learning about texts and writing in Barry's class was characterised by progression through a series of stages. This he described as:

... my normal practice is that they have a go at it themselves and they bring it to me and I have a go at it with them one on one to point out where their sentences are not working, where their grammatical skills need to improve, where their structure needs to improve and I generally make those marks on their document which then becomes a draft. They take it away, they give it another go.

During a number of 'conversations', Barry elucidated the specific needs and requirements of each writing task. Established as normal practice, learning and writing development resulted from independent writing euphemistically referred to as 'giving it a go'. Instructional methods favoured a one on one communicative approach and adaptation of the tasks to accommodate individual student destination, student interests and student ability and scaffolding support based on point of need.

Table 5.6 Pedagogical strategies employed in the teaching of writing

Strategy	Stages of text construction
Initial conferencing and deconstruction of tasks and selection of texts	Film content, social issues, workplace behaviours, selection of genre
Individual conferencing and scaffolding	Provision of examples of successful texts written by previous students Initial outline of the schematic structure of text Selection and understanding of abstract terms and ideas
Point of need teaching	Joint construction Consistent joint editing of student texts Vocabulary Schematic structure Paragraphs and sentences
Monitoring	Examination of student progress All stages of text construction Extensive repetition of drafting and editing
Staged progression and independent construction	Student content and field knowledge applied to new text and some application of genre features

5.4.2 *Expanding the notion of constructing genre through technology*

Quite intentionally, students were encouraged to write using computers as Barry endeavoured to reduce the amount of handwriting and to restrict the amount of handwritten work students submitted. Computer programs such as Windows Word and Publisher supported students in the construction of text. Very generally, students used computers to edit:

- vocabulary
- grammar
- spelling
- text design

Additionally, computers served a myriad of purposes in the day-to-day function of the classroom. The computer and Internet offered students access to a myriad of visual

symbols that were incorporated into production of texts such as letters and flyers. Throughout lessons, the computer provided a way of focussing student attention. Barry also considered it a successful way of ameliorating the potential for these classes to be highly social environments by limiting student interaction as they worked independently on their own tasks. Socially, their use reinforced the sense of classroom as a workplace by supporting student control over their work. This was reinforced as students had to organise themselves at the beginning of each class, log onto their computers and continue work from the previous session, in every observed lesson.

5.4.3 Refining writing through teacher and student editing

Mediation of text construction, particularly through processes of editing and production of drafts, was a highly valued writing practice that influenced the allocation of grades. From Barry's perspective, only students who had the capacity to revise and edit on an on-going basis were candidates for an A grade. It was a significant feature of writing, as he explained, "Really, the writing is very much step by step and by trial and error and by draft and draft and draft and draft again". As Barry also explained:

Some students will sit at a desk and write a draft, most of them will prefer to write a draft, bring it to me, have it checked through and then go back and do another copy. Or I tell them to type a draft, go through it themselves, and then do another copy.

An examination of edited features of work available in student portfolios, references to editing in student and teacher interviews and class observations revealed distinctive patterns of teacher editing. The most common aspects of student texts edited were:

- technical and abstract vocabulary
- spelling
- sentence construction
- generic structure
- formal styles of writing

Samples of work collected included predominantly the work for three tasks. Texts written for Task One, a series of single page workplace documents such as advertisements, brochures, faxes and job cards showed no evidence of editing. Those written for Task Two comprised of a selection of business letters and similar texts, and were all edited, particularly in Daniel and Kirsten's portfolios. Larger texts, such as reports, were edited to varying degrees, particularly Daniel's texts, where some were

edited and rewritten six times, and on three or four occasions by Kirsten, and once or twice by Matthew.

Editing processes also formed a part of classroom dialogue, particularly in the form of one on one discussions initiated by both teacher and students with the intention of reviewing written work. In the day-to-day practice of writing in Barry's class, students negotiated and made choices about appropriate words and phrases. In doing so, they appropriated various common or everyday expressions and abstract and technical words and phrases. This resulted, for example, in vocabulary choices about texts used in hospitality workplaces. In a discussion on cultural awareness, Barry questioned some of Kristina's assumptions about *culture* and asked her to consider what the term really means, particularly in terms of cultural awareness. During this feedback session, there was considerable discussion about vocabulary choices and she was reminded that words can 'minimalize', especially in terms of description of culture in the workplace, and that she should avoid sounding colloquial. As such, Barry explained, the meanings of terms such as continent and nationality need to be clarified "to ensure that the correct meaning was made". Kirsten was encouraged to use appropriate language, and discourse, such as *cultural awareness* and *cultural sensitivity* in order to position herself as knowledgeable about the field and to position her reader to consider the importance of her topic.

All three students identified a combination of editing and talking to Barry about the process of writing whilst editing as a valuable way of learning about writing. All appreciated the process of identifying, correcting and explaining errors. Daniel consistently reviewed and edited his written texts. A number of texts were jointly edited either by way of notes being made on written work in consultation with the teacher or in general discussion. A review of Daniel's portfolio revealed larger texts were edited more than three times: at times he edited work independently and on other occasions in consultation with his teacher.

5.4.4 *A sense of purpose –the regulative environment at Woodlands*

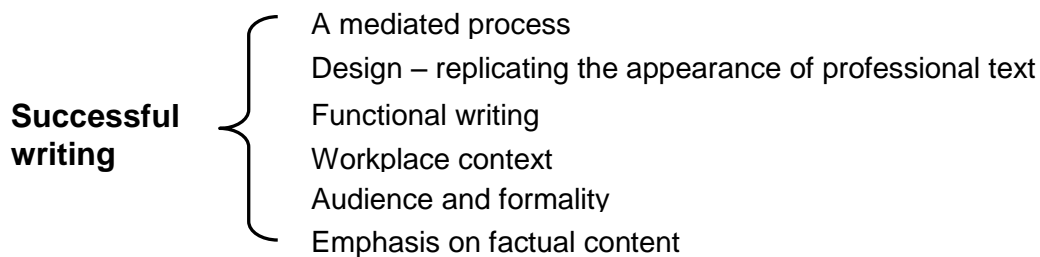
Barry described the dilemma he faced as students, often unsuccessful at school, and reluctantly returning to school after the previous year, needed to complete an English subject to graduate or to gain entry to further studies. Barry viewed the majority of students undertaking the subject as not necessarily lacking in ability, rather, as lacking "desire" and "ambition" as indicated in the quote below:

So they may have the skills but he doesn't have the determination and the diligence required to succeed and they're two separate things. It's all very well

being able to write but the desire to and ambition to, and the get up and go, are usually lacking in the kids that make it into the vocational stream.

Coding and analysis of classroom teaching and teacher interview highlighted that this environment was dominated by discourses about *success, the future* and *personal responsibility*. Classroom discourses about identities were built around motifs of *aspirational learning, employability* and *performance in the workplace*. In the class, much discussion revolved around the need for students to secure employment, either immediately after completing school or after a period of additional study.

Significant expectations of successful writing and genre construction also shaped this learning environment. Through an examination of teacher and student interviews and classroom interactions, expectations of successful writing were identified. Primarily the student writer in this class was one capable of conforming to the generic demands of a range of transactional and factual texts that did not demand any level of analysis or creative expression. However, the strong writer was able to access and reproduce factual content acquired from numerous sources. Additionally, strong writers wrote confidently and knowledgably about the workplace. In doing so, they replicated content and knowledge using appropriate technical language and maintained suitable social relationships by writing formally. By using a number of mediating strategies, such as editing and the computer programs, strong writers refined their construction of text. Successful writing at Woodlands may be summarised as follows:



Students largely accepted the regulative discourses of the class and rarely demonstrated any forms of explicit resistance. In interview, students identified the value of studying English in terms of its contribution to employability and its usefulness in the workplace. Daniel perceived its value in terms of securing employment and the skills acquired as a way of performing well in the workplace. Similarly, Matthew identified the usefulness of English in terms of securing employment and of progressing in the workplace and building a career. Conversely, Kirsten offered a comparatively ambivalent judgement of English, arguing that it offered her little in terms of employability and performance at work.

In this context, therefore, it is valuable to examine students' views of their writing and their perceived strengths and weaknesses. Daniel perceived himself as a strong writer who was able to "express meaning". Kirsten and Matthew articulated their strengths as writers in practices associated with writing and text production, such as research and the organisation of information. Whilst students recognised the value of constructing texts for the purposes of securing employment, students were in general agreement that learning about writing that takes place in the workplace did not constitute a beneficial way of learning about writing generally. Students identified that the subject's vocational focus distracted from acquiring knowledge about language and a suite of skills associated with spelling, grammar and punctuation. Students explained that, in regards to language learning, that "if you ask, you get help on that but it's not something that's taught". Additionally, they perceived the emphasis to be upon the types of texts constructed, or as Daniel explained, "doing one just as an exercise". Daniel equated text construction with exercises, jobs to be done, unlike his previous experiences of English, where "in Year Ten we used to just do practice reports to be able to get it right". Matched against their experiences of lower school English, the subject was, in Matthew's words, "pretty cruisy".

The students generally aspired to high levels of generic integrity through representation of generic conventions, particularly generic structure. Daniel described this intention in report writing as:

I wrote this just the way I would write a TAFE report; at the end, you're allowed to put your own opinions. But it's not opinionated, it's just straight, the facts, explaining the opinions in the video, the video itself, the way the video was formatted to appeal to its audience, which is what we were told.

Observed in interview and in class interview were students' concerns to be seen as constructing genres according to 'rules' and as being aware of those rules. In one observed lesson segment, when the teacher was not present, students discussed the formatting and structuring of reports. As the conversation turned to the reports students were working on one student, Darren, asked:

- Darren: How many pages is yours?
Ellen: Two and a half
Gareth: Two and a half!
Darren: I'm up to my conclusion – almost finished
Gareth: (addressing Darren) How long is your introduction?
Darren: One page (Darren shows Gareth his introduction).
Gareth: Elle's is four lines
Darren: I wanted to make everything one page. It can't be done.
Ellen: I'm putting photos on every page
Darren: I'm trying to make sections the same length and it's not working. (He handed her his report and after she had spent some time looking at it, he asked her):
Darren: Not a bad report, hey?

Elle: Where's your Table of Contents?
Darren: You don't need to do one for a two-page report
Elle: You need to show you can do it – it's part of a report
Darren: I'm not wasting paper for two pages

In this classroom interaction, there was on-going discussion between Darren and Elle on the merits of using a Table of Contents. Darren expressed a very strong opinion that a Table of Contents page for a two-page report was "ridiculous", that this would never be done in the real world and in fact, you would look like an idiot if you did. He explained that it would look stupid, as it would have hardly anything on it. Generally, as this dialogue indicates, students expressed a concern to construct genres correctly and conventionally.

Revealed in student interviews was a connection between beliefs and attitudes towards writing and preparedness to engage in writing. Daniel attributed a high value for writing, seeing himself as a strong writer, engaging in writing activities to demonstrate his knowledge and capabilities in the area of writing and actively engaging in writing practices, such as revising, that were highly valued by his teacher. Kirsten and Matthew reflected a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards writing itself and did not anticipate it being a significant part in their working lives, although important in terms of gaining employment. Neither viewed themselves as effective writers, a belief demonstrated by their difficulty in identifying strengths as writers and framing their strengths in terms of their capacity to research.

5.5 Positioning writers as workers and achievers through the construction of text

As students constructed texts, they drew on a repertoire of resources to establish discursive and authorial identities. Three motifs captured students' differing perceptions of themselves as writers: the writer as worker, the writer as frustrated academic achiever and the writer as designer.

5.5.1 *The worker - creating the practical writer at Woodlands*

5.5.1.1 Kirsten – an understanding of genres of power

In interview, Kirsten chose to discuss an investigative report on the topic of speeches and interviews (Text 5.1). The report, a typed document of three pages, began with an outline of the purpose of her report, which was to present the basics of writing and delivering speeches and participating in interviews. Kirsten approached these two phenomena in way that reinforced the purpose and schematic structure of the

investigative report, which is to classify (Macken-Horarik, 2005; Martin, 1985; Rothery, 1986) the phenomena of successful speeches and interviews. Clarity in presentation and confidence was the primary criteria for a successful speech. Thorough preparation helped to achieve this. Additionally, Kirsten structured her report in terms of various aspects and activities associated with phenomena of successful public speeches and interviews. In this process, Kirsten examined aspects of successful speeches and interviews and recommended particular activities and behaviours such as the importance of writing for the audience and providing background information and dressing- up information.

Table 5.7 provides an overview of the structure of the report and the specific areas of content organised under each. Under each heading, specific aspects and activities are classified:

- THE BASICS:
- PREPARED AND IMPROMPTU SPEECHES:
- INTERVIEW SKILLS:

Additionally, the components of each of these sections were expounded in terms of *Content*, *Purpose* and the practicalities of delivery labelled *How You Say It*.

Table 5.7 Schematic structure of Kirsten’s report

Schematic structure	Illustrated in text
General statement	The basics of speeches and interviews Introduction to topics of the basics, prepared and impromptu speeches and interview skills in terms of 1) the content 2) purpose 3) how you say it
THE BASICS	Clarity and confidence in content of speech
Description of aspects	Importance of preparation and presentation
Description of activities	Identifying the purpose of entertaining and persuading Writing for the audience – providing background information and dressing- up information Use of effective body language Guiding process of conversation through listening and concentration
PREPARED AND IMPROMPTU SPEECHES	Preparation, content and presentation Positive attitude
Description of aspects	
Description of activities	Use of palm cards Transferring knowledge in speeches Brainstorming Focus on audience Control of voice through tone, pace and plain language
INTERVIEW SKILLS	Strategies for successful interviews: predicting questions; listening, analysing purpose of questions; acquiring background information
Description of aspects	
Description of activities	Active listening and speaking skills Use of open and closed questions Use of body language

In the first major section of the report, entitled THE BASICS, Kirsten introduced each major component of the report, THE CONTENT, PURPOSE and HOW YOU SAY IT. Each section, presented in a single paragraph, began with a clear reference to the intended content of that section. For example, the opening paragraph (Text 5.1) begins with a reference to *The general content of a speech*. In this paragraph, Kirsten drew upon discourses associated with speeches in business communication studies that accentuate the dual criteria of *preparation* and *presentation* (Bargeiela-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken, 2007; Dwyer, 1999) that were represented in the video she had viewed. Additionally, successful speaking performances were framed in an array of

physical and communicative aspects such as *verbal skills, body language, listening, concentration, movement, reading and anticipation*. More specifically, the activity of delivering or taking part in successful speeches and interviews was framed predominantly through two key activities, control and performance (Martin & Rose, 2007), as outlined below. In this respect, the report accentuated not only a body of content, it also emphasised activities and types of behaviour and in that way conformed to the broad social purpose and schematic structure of the report.

Control	Plan, clarify, distinctive, purpose, persuade, entertain, include background information, guide
Performance	Guide, simplify, dress-up message, use effective body language, concentrated style, maintain confidence

Cohesive devices, particularly those of elaboration and repetition helped develop the report's central points. Throughout the report, control of confident speaking was presented through a series of causal relationships and repetition. In the opening of Text 5.1 for example, clarity, confidence and planning contributed to successful public speeches. Underpinning this logical structure was Kirsten's attempt to position herself as knowledgeable through references to external sources of authority such as professionally made videos. This was exemplified in the introductory line, *My report is based on three Speaking and Listening videos, which are called 'The Basics', 'Prepared and Impromptu speeches' and 'Interview Skills'*. In this capacity, Kirsten took information, ideas and discourses from locations outside the school and recontextualized (Christie, 1999b; Bernstein, 1999b, 2000) them into the realm of the classroom and indeed into the realm of the English text. However, this presented some challenges for Kirsten, as she presented content based on information and concepts gleaned from the videos. This may explain why some of the content of her report did not reflect the intentions signposted in the headings; for example, under the content heading of the prepared and impromptu speeches, Kirsten explained the value of using palm cards as *a great way to cure your nerves as you can just jot down reminder points*.

5.5.1.2 Ideational positioning through content, discourse and vocabulary

Kirsten sought to position herself as a knowledgeable and authoritative writer by using an array of technical and abstract terms (Bargeiela-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken, 2007; Dwyer, 1999). In the process of constructing the following paragraph, Kirsten chose abstractions that reflected contemporary communication discourses and concepts of entertaining, persuasion and understanding of audiences.

You need to make sure you can identify the purpose of **communication**, which means to **entertain** and **persuade the audience**. When writing *your* speech the audience may not know anything about the subject you have chosen, so *make sure you* include some **background information**, and dress-up the message to keep the **audience** interested.

Such use of abstract terms, such as *communication* and *audience*, intermingled with direct addresses to the reader, revealed Kirsten's endeavours to position herself as having a degree of authority in the area. Such broad uses of abstract terminology and very broad concepts such as references to communication also served to reinforce her participation in the discourse.

Kirsten also used grammatical metaphors and nominalisations. Abstract terms such as *preparation* and *presentation* converted processes into concepts, which, in this context were associated with speeches, and other formal practices associated with the transference of information, ideas and concepts. For example, Kirsten translated the activity of preparing into the concept of *preparation*. In this process, she made associations between concepts and activities, such as preparation of content and preparation of palm cards. Equally, the action of presenting was converted into the concept of *presentation*, which in this report was associated with ideas, the structure of information and verbal and non-verbal skills. The early references to the concept of preparation and presentation, in the opening paragraph of THE BASICS section, established them as unifying concepts. Additionally, the opening paragraph of the report referred to a prepared speech, which throughout the report did not represent a type of speech; rather it was a critical concept synonymous with constructing successful speeches. She confidently assumed a level of shared knowledge between herself and the reader.

However, there were shifts between nominalisations and more everyday or colloquial language forms. This was indicative both of Kirsten's reliance on research material and the difficulties she experienced in translating and converting these into her own words. In the following example, Kirsten combined technical terms such *tone of voice* with the less formal and specific reference to *happy* levels.

Control your tone of voice to a *happy level* rather than a boring one tone sound, making sure you take short *breathers* in between sentences.

In this respect, Kirsten drew upon the notions of voice quality and tone found in discourses of communication and the more restricted and less specialist use of *happy*. This use of abstractions and nominalizations was also indicative of her intention to

position herself as a knowledgeable and capable writer and show a depth of understanding of communicative concepts.

Kirsten made extensive use of material verbal processes which are typically found in the report genre and which are reflective of the genre's emphasis on action (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Macken-Horarik, 2005; Martin, 1985). Material processes, verbal processes that achieved an action, such as *called - present - provided - writing - cover - plan - pause - sitting* served to emphasise the practical activities associated with speaking which framed performance and control. To a lesser extent, Kirsten drew upon relational processes which established relationships of description and identification (Butt et al, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004) as exemplified in her use of *take you through – giving a speech – videos are divided*. Through their use, she aimed to demonstrate the relationship between concepts such as preparation and entertaining.

5.5.1.3 Using multiple voices – distance through the use of abstractions and informality through direct appeals to the reader

Whilst Kirsten strove to position herself as knowledgeable and authoritative using abstract and technical language, she also aimed to maintain a close relationship between herself and the reader. To do this, she also used particular second person pronouns such as *you* quite extensively, constructing a more intimate relationship with the reader that in part contradicted the use of abstractions and nominalisations. However, formality presented one of the most important features of writing generally and, as revealed in interview, one of the most valuable aspects of writing that Kirsten had learned from her English course. Her approach to writing revealed the challenges she faced in the process of preparing texts such as reports, and her understanding of what it meant to be a writer and a successful writer.

Throughout the report, she oscillated between the use of language she viewed as formal, such as technical and abstract language, and a declarative use of *you*. The sentence, *When it comes to interview skills, you have to prepare and communicate the content and purpose of predictable questions*, exemplifies how Kirsten combined the use of declarative statements and personal pronouns with concepts, discourses, phrases and abstractions. Through the extensive use of *you*, Kirsten appealed directly to the reader, as she positioned herself as authoritative and knowledgeable through direct reference to the actions that the reader, as successful speaker, should engage in. The consistent use of *you* exerted an authorial pressure on the reader in conjunction with the use of strongly declarative statements such as *You need to make sure you include* and actions to be directly undertaken by the speaker.

In this respect, much of her report personalised the activity of public speaking by references to *your tone of voice* and *your speech* and where speaking slowly is

preferable because *you are less likely to twist your words than if you were speaking at a faster pace*. The use of *you* was indicative of the strategies employed by Kirsten as she endeavoured to make the report and its content accessible to a general audience. High levels of modality were therefore evident in the report with evaluative modifiers strongly encouraging the reader to approach speeches in terms of what *should* be made clear, what must *never* be used, what you *have to do* to be successful.

5.5.1.4 Positioning herself as writer through shaping of the text

During interview, Kirsten identified one of her strengths as the capacity to format documents and to present them in a professional manner. At the paragraph level, Kirsten relied primarily upon elaboration to expand and connect her ideas, and to expand upon her original contention (Martin, 1985). In the following example, the use of elaboration strategies built a link between preparation, presentation and confidence. Throughout the paragraph, she built a logical structure such that confident speaking was achieved by control and performance and in this case was supported by avoiding quotes, using palm cards and reminder points. Kirsten established the purpose of her paragraph in the opening sentence. In the sentence, the benefits of preparation and its link to confidence were established using **By**, as causative conjunction, to establish a link to previous ideas. Similarly, the final three sentences of the paragraph established causal connections between successful speeches and the importance of predictable openings, originality and maintaining a visual connection with the audience.

ELABORATION By being prepared you will think positively and stay comfortable and confident.

CONTRAST Never use a predictable opening that the audience will get bored of hearing.

ELABORATION To be able to capture the audiences' attention, avoid any quotes and don't reinstate the subject over.

ELABORATION Having palm cards is a great way to cure your nerves as you can just jot down reminder points about what you are going to say, but never read off from them as the audience will become disinterested.

In this final sentence, Kirsten described the effectiveness of palm cards as a way of reducing nerves through the conjunctive *as* and as an alternative or contrast to reading from the cards. Kirsten also linked the elements of text through causative conjunctions that not only served to link meaning; they also served to link those meanings to a personal pronoun and direct references to the audience.

Having palm cards is a great way to cure your nerves as you can just jot down reminder points about what you are going to say, *but* never read off from them, as the audience will become disinterested.

The process by which she constructed her report indicated some of the strategies employed in the class, such as mediation through editing and programs on the computer. In interview, Kirsten described editing support from Barry as a safety net, where:

I started typing it up on the computer and did a draft from that and a good copy then Mr S... went over it for the spelling and I did a draft there....he went over what was wrong and what sentences would sound better.

The content of her report also highlighted how students used content and ideational resources that were not always under the control of the teacher. This allowed Kirsten the freedom to construct investigations into topics of her own choosing and to make her own decisions about the representation of information and ideas. Under guidance from Barry, her report, did however, conform to the broad aims of the curriculum document, which emphasised workplace content, investigation, and an understanding of genre at a broad level which emphasised social purpose. As such, the content of the report and the process of its construction, conformed to the ideological content of the curriculum (Kress, 2007) which prioritised the workplace.

The content of Kirsten's report also demonstrated some of the dilemmas facing teachers incorporating writing practices from the world of work that are not always compatible with the social purposes and practices valued in the English subject area. Strategies that caused consternation in the classroom setting may in fact constitute valued practices in the work environment. Certainly Kirsten's concerns over using material from other sources and approaches to reworking that material, to claim ownership and authorship over content and generic and linguistic expression from elsewhere, was contrary to writing practices that may be found in workplaces where the use of material from other documents is commonplace and acceptable (Devitt, 2004). Kirsten's concerns over using material from other sources were also especially problematic in the environment of the school where privileging of individual authorship has been in conflict with workplace practices.

5.5.2 *The frustrated achiever – resisting positioning to become the critical writer*

In interview, Daniel discussed the process of viewing, interpreting and writing an investigative report on the Michael Moore (2004) documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* as one of the most rewarding parts of the course as in particular it:

It involved a bit of research actually, you had to work on writing....It wasn't exactly directed writing; you had a bit more freedom there.

The purpose of Daniels' report was to explore how Moore's documentary exposed corruption in the Bush administration and the strategies employed by Moore to achieve this. In the opening paragraph (Text 5.1 – Section 5.4.1 and Table 5.8), Daniel referred to techniques used by Moore, in particular the use of voice over, irony and music. In the paragraph, Daniel began by positioning the reader to view the Bush administration as corrupt, which he explicitly expressed as *high level corruption*. From this initial point, he positioned the reader to view these events critically and in this capacity to see them through a strongly negative lens. The report opening offered the reader a number of purposes: 1) an explication of the content of the documentary, 2) positioning the reader in what was to emerge as a critical interpretation of Bush's behaviour and 3) foreshadowing an analysis of the relationship between ideas and techniques.

5.5.2.1 Positioning the self as critical thinker through the use of language

This investigative report provided an opportunity for Daniel to apply his analytical skills and demonstrate his skills as a writer. In the process of constructing the report, Daniel incorporated discourses from the fields of media and film studies and cultural and political commentary (Sumara, 2004) as outlined in Figure 5.4. Daniel adopted concepts significant in filmic analysis such as *imagery* and *voice over*. For example, Daniel discussed and made judgments about Moore's process of constructing a dramatic impact through the selection and presentation of images, voice-overs and music. In the process of commenting upon Moore's filmic strategies, Daniel positioned himself as knowledgeable: for example, his comments that Moore *re-creates the impact*, position him as critic of Moore's strategies and as possessing an understanding of the practices of film construction. He interpreted the construction of this scene not only in terms of the filmic strategies employed by Moore, but he also discussed, and positioned the images used by Moore in terms of *visions*.

Genre – the exposition

Political commentary and discourse – motivations of Bush administration – controversial nature of election – role of judiciary in elections - democracy and political representation – legal justice – imperialism

Film studies – filmic strategies of voice over – irony – music – imagery – capturing of historical points in time

Cultural studies – role of the media in representation – positioning of viewer – propaganda

Critical ideological and discourse analysis – nature of corruption – nature of representation – imperialism – representation of social groups such as terrorists and conservative politicians –representation of the democratic process

Figure 5.4 Sources of discourse in Daniel's report

Daniel's report was characterised by an interpretation of the political and cultural climate of America of the time. He identified this as a period of political uncertainty and change, dominated by a controversial national election and the trauma of the 9/11 terrorist bombing. Throughout the report, Daniel commented upon the disenfranchisement of a number of voters, particularly African American voters, and implicitly commented upon issues of race and marginalisation in America society. Daniel also commented upon the behaviour of Bush as president, and on expectations of the role in a time of crisis. In the section on the 9/11 attacks, Daniel presented his own criticisms of Bush by reiterating Moore's views. He was critical of Bush as president, particularly, his failure to investigate the bombings in an accurate way and drew a critical contrast between his inadequate investigation and those that took place after President Kennedy's assassination.

In these ways, Daniel positioned himself as a critical thinker. Throughout the report, Daniel explored the nature of corruption as a form of social and political behaviour. Additionally, Daniel identified the representation of particular social groups, such as terrorists and conservative politicians. In this capacity, Daniel explored and commented upon the role of the judiciary in what he clearly identified as an undermining of the democratic process. In doing this, Daniel positioned himself as ideologically aligned with democracy. His adoption of Moore's view and an authoritative and critical stance towards the actions of the administration positioned Daniel as a supporter of democracy that contrasted with the stereotype of the incompetent and corrupt conservative politics represented by Bush. In this respect, Daniel's report might be more appropriately described as a thematic interpretation than as a report (Christie & Derewianka, 2008).

To an extent, cohesive structure supported these multiple purposes. Loss of faith in democracy was attributed to the corrupt election and the failure to manage the terrorist attack attributed to the weak leadership of the Bush administration. Moore's effective use of filmic techniques is highlighted in the following example, where scenes were designed to *awe* the audience. Additionally, a lack of public confidence was attributed to a failure to investigate the bombing in any transparent way. This is apparent in the following section of the report, outlined in Table 5.8, which reflected the following points of critical analysis:

- awing of the audience is influenced by the opening scene;
- re-creating the impact of the attack is attributed to blanking out images and playing only sounds;
- lack of response to bombings attributed to Bush's incompetence;
- lack of integrity in response of 9/11 bombing attributed to corruption of Bush administration;
- failure to acknowledge existing security reports or conduct investigations was viewed as the result of incompetence and corruption.

To an extent, Daniel drew on the technical language of film and narrative analysis and included concepts such as *documentary*, *irony*, *image* and *parody*. Daniel thus positioned himself as knowledgeable and capable of analysis and critical thinking. However, it also contrasted with Daniel's predilection to describe or recount the events of the time. Daniel's attempts to position himself as a capable writer, and as knowledgeable in terms of current events, led him at times to use words and concepts in unique ways. For example, Daniel used the *House Representative* in a way that suggested some awkwardness and a lack of familiarity with the term. Evident in Daniel's writing was an attempt to incorporate abstractions and nominalisations such as *irony* and *parody* which he adopted to position himself as a critical thinker and as participant in the academic discourse of subject English.

Daniel's report demonstrates the dilemmas of integrating or combining elements of the report genre with the expository text and the limitation this placed upon both. Whilst Daniel expressed concern that his report not be opinionated, the text oscillated between expression of opinion and positioning of the reader to accept the writer's argument. Exophoric references (Brandt, 1986) were also used extensively throughout the report and references were made to the US action in Afghanistan and also to opposition to the proposed war in Iraq. This indicated a higher level of concern with the events of the time than with the documentary itself. This slippage between two generic forms resulted, in part, from the divergent purposes of the report.

Table 5.8 Schematic structure of a segment of Daniel’s report

Schematic structure	Illustrated in text
Description of aspect 9/11 ATTACKS	The opening scene to this segment is designed to awe the audience. The vision of the 9/11 attacks where the aircraft slams into the building has been plastered on the news and has since lost any real impact. To re-create the impact, Michael Moore blanked out the images and only played the sounds. The first visions reveal the people standing in the streets staring blankly upwards or with anguish written in their features and tears in their eyes. The music is high pitched and repetitive as a background to Moore’s voice.
Description of aspect	George Bush was on his way to a primary school for a photo shoot when the news came that the trade centre had been hit. His limousine continued. While at the school while Bush was reading the children a book, the second while bush was reading the children a book, the second plane hit the trade centres other tower. The president’s chief of staff approached and whispered in Bush’s ear –‘the nation is under attack’. Bush went completely silent and stared blankly at nothing. Moore takes the opportunity to explain Bush’s thoughts in a voice dripping with sarcasm ‘who would do this? Maybe I’ve been hanging out with the wrong crowd...’ Bush continued to read the children ‘My Pet Goat’ for a whole 7 minutes as the trade centre burned. He was escorted out of the school when the pentagon was attacked.
Description of aspect	After 9/11 Bush put an embargo on all flights. ‘Who would want to fly anyway?’ asks Michael Moore. The only people who were flying were the Bin Laden family. The entire American section of the family was escorted out of the country on a private jet. This is disputed and it is believed that investigations should have been held. Several private investigations were established but the government shut them down. When President Kennedy was assassinated, many private investigations were carried out. Moore raises the question: ‘why were no private investigations allowed now? Maybe Bush should have read his secondary briefs’. Bush shut down investigations to draw attention away from the incompetence in his ranks i.e. Bush’s chief of staff taking no notice of a report titled “Bin Laden plans to attack Somewhere in the US”, considering it too vague. A full security report was released by the F.B.I but the government censored a full twenty pages of it before it reached the public.

This was however complicated by the way Daniel used evaluative modifiers to position the reader to reject the behaviour of the Bush administration. A number of terms and phrases indicated a high level of modality and clear expression of the writer’s personal opinion, such as *confirmed culprit*, *fear is a powerful tool for manipulating the public* and *the Iraqi’s will fight back as they are a proud people*. This is particularly evident in terms such as ‘confirmed culprit’ and ‘powerful tools’ and use of the word ‘manipulation’ which can have strong emotional connotations. This inconsistency was also compounded by uses of colloquial language and phrases which served to shift the level

of formality of the report, and resulted in rather awkward shifts between the different social purposes of the report. At times, writing strategies aimed to achieve dramatic effect through phrases such as *aircraft slams* and *plastered on the news*. This is reflected in a growing level of suspense as the report progressed and personal opinion of the events of 9/11 and US foreign policy were prioritised over the original purpose of the report which was to examine the relationship between the documentary and filmic techniques used.

Daniel described this intention in report writing as:

.... it's not opinionated, it's just straight, the facts, explaining the opinions in the video, the video itself, the way the video was formatted to appeal to its audience, which is what we were told.

In interview, he expressed concern that his report conform to general conventions such as formality and objectivity. He was determined to write in a way that did not express emotion, which in this instance not only signified his success as a writer, but also served to separate him from other students in the class. A close examination of Daniel's report in conjunction with his opinions expressed in interview demonstrated his resistance to the dominant regulative positioning for this class, particularly its emphasis on presenting facts and information and avoiding forms of analysis. Daniel saw himself as a strong writer, engaging in writing activities to demonstrate his knowledge and capabilities and actively engaging in writing practices that were highly valued by his teacher.

5.5.3 *A writer and designer*

In some texts, writing was one of a number of semiotic systems at play, interacting with various forms of visual representation such as symbols and images. For example, Matthew's flyer (Text 5.4) was constructed with a combination of techniques including images, written language and symbols. Such visual images interacted with written phrases that expressed high levels of appraisal such as *We love what we do*. An examination of the composition of the flyer shows that written codes largely supported the message of the visual text. Vertical and horizontal structures, images, and highlighting of the business name (Stenglin & Iedema, 2001; Iedema 2003b), reinforced the persuasive message of the text. The flyer promoted a family business. Idealised representations of the family business in image, and in large, capitalized and bold text **30 YEARS AND STILL THE BEST** dominated the top of the flyer.

In this example, the visual text reflected contemporary communication practices. In the tradition of much contemporary visualisation, particularly in the world of advertising, the visual features of the text represented important and highly persuasive messages (Stenglin & Iedema, 2001; Iedema 2003b). Images reinforced the interpersonal purposes of this flyer, promoting the family company, loving the work it does, and providing a service to the community for 30 years. The flyer integrated written, visual and symbolic codes effectively and at the level of promotion and advertisement, might be considered an effective example of the genre. Construction of this text required a reasonable level of knowledge about the electrical services industry and promotion of those services. In constructing this text, Matthew utilised information he had gathered from his Structured Workplace Experience in an electrical services business and his observations of customer service and promotional and marketing practices. Some of the technical information and language in this flyer derived from this workplace experience and demonstrated confidence with the technical terms, such as *cable installations* and *maintenance checks*.

30 YEARS AND STILL THE BEST

Wilson's Electrics

30% off all electrical services!

Wilson's Electrics

We offer a wide range of services from cable installations, all types of fittings, maintenance checks and new housings. We have been in the business for more than thirty years now and we love what we do, For a great one time chance we will offer 30% off our general 1 hour billing, this will save you enormously and it is all done by our A grade electricians.

Wilson's Electrics
420 Balcatta rd
Balcatta WA 6060
Phone: 9 343 1234
Fax: 707-131-6666
Email:
wilson_electrics@hotmail.com

Wilson's Electrics

Text 5.4 Matthew's promotional flyer

As a promotional and advertising text, many linguistic features of this text represented an intentionally constructed close relationship between reader and writer and a high level of modality in terms of positively positioning the product and company. Evaluative modifiers and descriptive adjectives, such as *great one time chance* and *save you enormously* and emotive phrases such as *love what we do* position the reader.

The flyer also indicated Matthew's determination to use visual and symbolic codes and computer based templates in that process. Additionally, he relied on photographs of employees, symbolic use of a lightning bolt as representation of the company, and bold and large print for effect. The structure of the text structure established a relationship with the viewer that promoted a positive attitude to family businesses. This worked effectively by associating the 'father and son' images, representing visually the family nature of the business with the high levels of emotion associated with close relationships.

This text reflected Matthew's intention to position himself as technically competent, which he described in interview as one of the areas in which school was preparing him for work. Additionally, he perceived using a template for the flyer as a demonstration of his ability to take advantage of technology, and one that reflected his overall interest in technology. Matthew appreciated the opportunity to apply and demonstrate his knowledge of the electrical services industry, knowledge gained from previous work experience, and appropriate uses of language that represented his expertise in the field.

5.6 Preliminary discussion and conclusions

Students in this class wrote in an environment that emphasised the practical and the pragmatic. In practices reminiscent of the trade workshop, students worked independently on computers, managing their own workload and soliciting support when needed. As found typically in workshops, social interaction and talk were tolerated as long as students worked. Imitation of these behaviours associated with workplaces supported discourses about the value of work, and, in this process, the simulated physical experience of the workplace contributed to a version of English emphasising production and industriousness. This meant that activities such as investigating and collecting information, writing reports and representing public speaking and preparing assessment tasks supported engagement in workplaces.

Barry's use of the curriculum both strongly reinforced the vocational features of the document and minimised some aspects of the document's concern with language. This reflected his prioritising of discourse about the workplace and those associated with

VET, such as context and practical learning, at the expense of textual analysis and the production of complex texts. In this environment, writing was strongly classified as a functional workplace and employability skill (Farrell, 2001a, 2001b), contributing to successful performance in the workplace and securing employment. It also served to reinforce a perception of writing as separable from analysis. This was achieved in part by the filtering of discourses (Gee, 2004) in the curriculum document to reinforce a discursive construct of the writer as worker.

Moreover, the selection, presentation and construction of genre helped to construct the notion of the worker and in this way served as a gatekeeper (Coe, 2002; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004; Johns, 2002). Students wrote predominantly one page transactional genres. This was a product of the framing of the curriculum and its emphasis on simulating workplace practices by using texts typically constructed in those environments. Additionally, writing a large number of texts was valued as successful writing and replicated the notion of writing as work. Specifically, students did not produce genres associated with academic writing or that required the use of analytical and critical skills (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004). There was limited deconstruction of content or discourse in class: consequently students did not investigate the ideological implications of information and its use.

A notion of functional writing (Farrell, 2001a, 2001b) framed much text construction. In this respect, processes of text construction reflected Barry's concerns that students should possess a level of literacy that would help them function in the workplace. Writing practices in this class reiterated policy considerations, particularly those represented in *Literacy for All* (DEETYA, 1998), and *Our Youth, Our Future* (Carpenter, 2004), which prioritised literacy as a critical feature of economic participation. However, they also restricted access to knowledge and forms of textual construction.

This chapter described in detail the writing practices that took place in one Year Twelve English class at Woodlands Senior High School and revealed how social and regulative attitudes, aligned with perceptions of student identity, influenced production of written text. This examination revealed highly regulative discourses of aspiration, performance at work and employability.

CHAPTER SIX: Results and Discussion of Writing at Altona High School – Positioning Writers as Diverse Achievers

Whenever I heard the word essay I freaked out, but doing this has been easy ... (Bryony, aged 17).

It's quite amazing that you'll get students into Year Twelve who've never written an essay and they're quite amazed that they can actually do it (Frances, Altona High School).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the discursive positioning of student writers in Frances' Year Twelve English class at Altona High School. It outlines concepts of successful writing and, in doing so, explores the ways students are positioned as writers through the genres they write. Teacher interpretations of curriculum and practices surrounding writing are identified and the dominant processes of text production are highlighted through an analysis of textual features. Figure 6.1 provides an overview of chapter six.

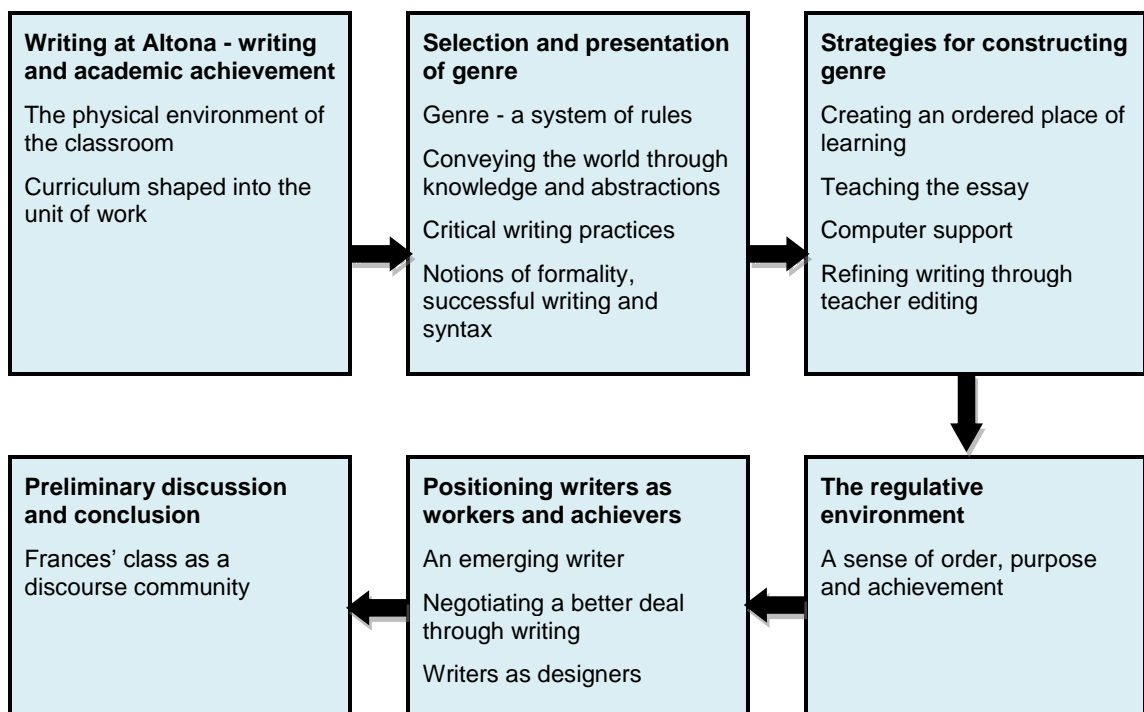


Figure 6.1 An outline of Chapter Six

6.2 Constructing writing as academic achievement at Altona

6.2.1 *Writing at Altona - the physical environment of the classroom*

Altona High School, the first secondary school built on the southern side of the Perth Swan River, commenced classes in 1940. Whilst planned in the late 1920s, the economic depression of the 1930s delayed building of the school for over a decade. Today, the school is a mixture of modern and rustic 1930s and 1940s buildings characterised by large wooden verandas and high ceilings and surrounded by lawn courtyards and playing fields.

On a warm May morning, a group of 15 students waited to enter Frances' classroom as she established order from the previous group. This Year Twelve English class was held in Frances' homeroom, shown in Image 1, a room lit by large windows overlooking an outside garden. It was freshly painted and decorated with scenes and characters from around the world. A smallish desk, an extremely popular gas heater, a chalkboard and a wooden podium, indicative of an earlier era of teaching, framed the front of the room. The classroom presented very clearly as the domain of the teacher, with no displays of student work and little expression of student presence. Board work was often prepared before class, presented to students throughout lessons, and at times copied for future reference. Symbols of teacher authority such as the podium dominated Frances' room.



Student desks arranged in rows of pairs facing the front of the room facilitated extended periods of teacher talk, instruction and question and answer sessions. In this environment, Frances monitored student behaviour for distractions and levels of engagement and understanding. At no time were students permitted to move around the room or talk to other members of the class without permission. All weekly classes, except for one, were held in this room.

Each Wednesday, a small group of students who did not attend work placements and vocational courses outside of the school worked in a computer laboratory. This weekly session, with no more than five or six students, gave students regular access to computers and to individual support from Frances. However, apart from this single session, classes requiring the use of computers were held in a number of locations. For example, construction of the investigative report, conducted over a three-week period, had resulted in students writing in different computer laboratories across the school and in the library.

6.2.2 Curriculum shaped into the unit of work

In contrast to the largely task orientated nature of the curriculum document, thematic units of work, outlined in Table 6.1, framed delivery of the curriculum in Frances' class. In the first part of the year, the 'corporate package' unit designed to represent a simulated and typical business, framed much student writing where:

... it could have been a restaurant, anything, they had a complete choice and then they have to design a package of workplace documents. So they have to do a logo, letterhead, that type of thing...and using the common theme, going through using the company name or whatever... would be typical of that particular workplace.

Students constructed texts associated with the world of business, such as the promotional flyer, the order form and the letter designed to replicate activities, such as ordering goods.

Table 6.1 Units of work and associated texts

Unit of work	Associated writing texts
Corporate Package	Order form, facsimile, email, promotional flyer
Workplace Communications (also included in the corporate package)	Request letter (booking), Complaint letter (also included in corporate package)
Film study - analysis of and response to <i>The Shawshank Redemption</i>	Summaries and notes, expository essay
Occupational health and safety – workplace practices and culture	Survey, investigative report, agenda, minutes
Managing customers	Complaint letter, response letter
Community participation - the Tsunami and community activity	Notes, report
Employment practices	Job application letter, application for pay rise, resignation letter, resumé

By midyear, students had largely completed Unit Two, *Workplace Communications*, comprised predominantly of letters written in response to customer complaints or inquiring into a delayed order. Students wrote faxes to simulate ordering goods such as computer parts and letters to complain about workplace behaviours such as the late delivery of goods. In order to make this unit as authentic as possible, Frances modelled the selection and range of workplace texts on the school's administration.

Students also used written texts to facilitate a community based or work based social function such as a football club **Best and Fairest Award** and requests for venue bookings. The class also reviewed the place of letter writing in contemporary employment practices. This consisted of up to six different letters such as the application letter, the resignation letter and request for a pay rise. One of the key texts of the course was an analysis of a media text and writing a thematic interpretation (Christie & Derewianka, 2008) in the form of an essay.

As the period of data collection finished, students prepared an investigation of workplace culture and workplace practices associated with Occupational Health and Safety and subsequently were to write a report on this topic. An example was the unit represented in Figure 6.2, which was based on an investigation and understanding of workplace cultures, particularly those surrounding occupational health and safety,

conformity to legislative requirements and administration in the workplace. In doing so, students undertook research into Occupational Health and Safety legislation and prepared surveys by which to investigate procedures and practices in their own workplaces. Results of the research and recommendations were presented in an investigative business report (Dwyer, 1999; Macken-Horarik, 2005). In turn, recommendations based on research formed the basis of discussion and decision making in a formal meeting conducted by individual students. In this process, students prepared a meeting agenda, drafted scripts of their participation in meetings and recorded the outcomes of the meeting in formal minute documents.

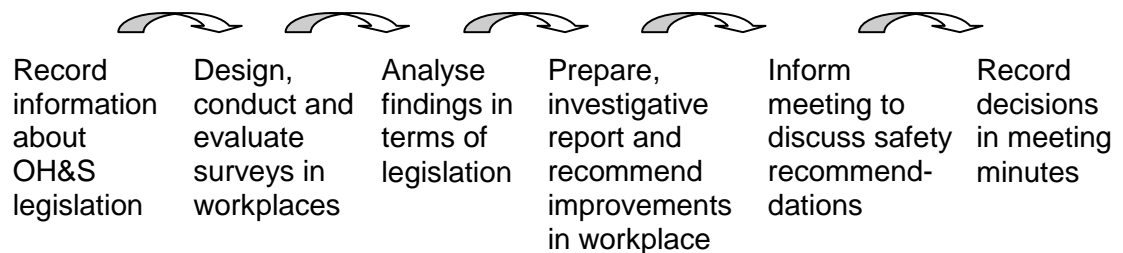


Figure 6.2 An outline of the occupational health and safety unit

6.3 Selection and presentation of genre – striving for diversity and achievement

The genres constructed in this class were largely determined by the opportunities presented in the curriculum. An investigation of the course program and texts completed in student portfolios, as outlined in Table 6.2, revealed a predominance of texts belonging to explanation, information and recording genres. The program was dominated by transactional texts designed to convey information and facilitate basic procedures in the workplace. There was also construction of more complex explanation genres in the form of letters such as job applications, responses to complaints and requests for a pay rise. Factual genres (Martin, 1985) were highly represented through reporting and recording of information in summaries and surveys, and the multifaceted factual texts of the investigative report and the essay.

Table 6.2 Genres and texts constructed

Genre type	Genre	Register
TRANSACTION	Explanation	Request letter Complaint letter Invitation letter Courtesy letter
	Information	Facsimile Email Agenda Minutes Memorandum
	Procedure	Order form
REPORT	Record	Summary Survey Notes
	Exposition	Essay
	Report	Investigative Report
	Advertisement	Flyer
	Explanation	Resumé Job application letter

6.3.1 Presenting genre as both systems of rules and systems for achieving purposes

In the majority of instances, texts were selected and constructed in support of broad social purposes (Christie & Martin 1997; Rose 1997) such as securing employment and maintaining occupational health and safety within workplaces. Frances explained the place of texts such as requesting a pay rise in the context of contemporary employment practices:

Some of the actual tasks that they perform, such as writing a letter of resignation, are actually quite complex, and I've never had to do it, and I think how I would handle that. By discussing it and having feedback, they handle it extremely well. So they deal with complex issues, it's not just applying for a job, it's far beyond it.

Students were actively encouraged to consider the social purposes of the texts they constructed and to judge their success in these terms. During a recorded lesson segment where students were preparing to write an application letter, they revised strategies for successful letter writing. In doing so, they examined practices associated with successful employment applications. As Frances led this discussion, she stressed the importance of writing with purpose in mind:

Frances: Whatever the purpose was ((moving across room)), whether that was the purpose to resign, or if the purpose was asking for a pay rise the message was clear.

Of central importance in the above example was the achievement of purpose. This suggested a prioritising of elements of genre and text construction both in terms of how students constructed text and Frances' framing of successful texts.

Data collected from classroom observations, student texts and teacher interview revealed that there were high expectations that students would conform to the outlines of texts provided to them. All letters associated with employment transactions conformed to the basic generic structure of explanation genres as outlined below. In a letter written by James (Text 6.1) in which he applied for a traineeship, the importance of social purpose is evident. To achieve this purpose, James elaborated upon his personal qualities as physically and mentally fit and as reliable worker of unquestionable ethics.

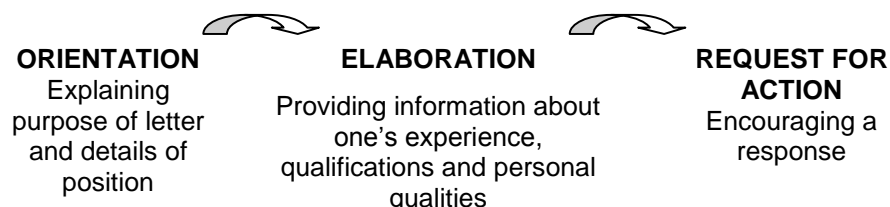


Figure 6.3 An outline of the schematic structure of the explanation genre

Text 6.1 Job Application letter (extract only)

I am applying for this position as, from a very early age I have always known that this is the career path I wanted to pursue. I hold keeping my body physically and mentally fit in high regard, therefore I believe serving the community would be the ideal way for me to achieve this ambition, whilst still maintaining a high job satisfaction. I am an honest, reliable and willing worker who has learned valuable communication and leadership skills through sport. My work ethics are unquestionable and I am really keen on joining your team.

Students also spent considerable time preparing a thematic interpretation (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2004, 2007a) in the form of an essay. The task was to analyse the themes and ideas of the film and explore how they were achieved through a range of narrative and filmic techniques, outlined in Figure 6.4. This emphasised a review of the key elements of the film including themes and techniques. Additionally, students evaluated the success of key techniques and

their contribution to the development of themes. In doing so, students examined the values of the text and viewers' likely responses and interpretations.

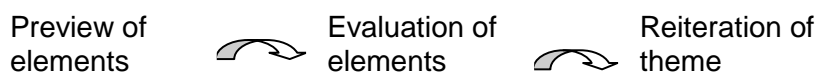


Figure 6.4 Schematic structure of the thematic interpretation

Students accessed the fundamental schematic structure of the essay in a number of ways. Frances provided students with a basic framework for their essay, outlined in Figure 6.5, which remained on the board for some weeks as students produced their work. In preparation for the essay, students analysed similar texts and in doing so built up subject content knowledge of film techniques and strategies for analysis. A print handout summarised the primary features of the essay and examples of sections of a similar essay.

<p>Paragraph 1 – Give overview or brief summary of the film</p> <p>Paragraph 2 – Give a brief account of the themes</p> <p>Identify and briefly cite examples of situations that are proof of these themes</p> <p>Paragraph 3 – Choose one character Outline their personality</p> <p>Discuss the techniques of characterisation used to help you recognise various aspects/characteristics of chosen character</p>	<p>Paragraph 4, 5 + 6</p> <p>Discuss some techniques used in constructing the text to communicate themes</p> <p>Consider the effect of the use of the techniques in shaping the viewer's response</p> <p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>Camera angles + choice of camera shots play a dominant role in conveying specific meaning throughout the film. Darabant's use of lighting in the text effectively conveys mood and atmosphere.</p>
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Figure 6.5 Essay structure as displayed on board

One of the most common practices in this class was for students to read sections of their work aloud in class after which Frances offered feedback. On one occasion, James read aloud a body paragraph (Text 6.2) which examined the ways filmic techniques helped to construct themes. In this paragraph, he outlined Darabant's use of music to build viewers' responses to the flaws in the justice system.

Text 6.2 Essay paragraph (James)

The theme that is presented to us by Darabont in the film Shawshank Redemption is that the justice system has its flaws. We see this through filmic techniques such as music. It is evident when Brooks gains parole after 50 years of imprisonment and does not seem to gain the support he needs. He is given a place to live and work but the outside world no longer feels like home to him. The world has gone and grown up without him and Darabont really explains how Brooks is feeling at the time. You see this in various moving scenes of Brooks trying to cope in the outside world. He is riding on a bus with white knuckles as he hangs on to the bus for dear life or sitting on a park bench feeding pigeons waiting for his beloved Jake to appear but he doesn't. The various scenes are accompanied by a sad piano music that really sets the scene, creating a feeling of sadness and empathy. Then the music stops as Brooks hangs himself and there is break in atmosphere.

On this occasion, Frances reminded James of the need to reiterate the purpose of the essay and demonstrate how the content of the paragraph served an overall purpose:

Frances: What is your final sentence that you are going to say about the music? That's very good. So he talked about a very tense situation? What was the whole issue with Brooks... that Brooks? ...That Brooks wasn't able to cope so he wasn't getting the support he needed. The point I'm making is that prisoners weren't getting the support once they were released. So what was that favourite word that Red kept saying, they had become?

Here, a direct link between theme and techniques supported achievement of the text's purpose. After a considerable one on one exchange, Frances provided an example of how to use vocabulary to establish relationships between theme and technique that supported the argument structure of the expository essay. This discussion further developed the process of building an argument through use of examples and evidence:

Frances: // No, further down, when you came back to it. You cited the two examples of the scenes and then you said it was through? You talked about when he was on the bus.

Student: The whole various scenes are accompanied by sad piano music that really sets the scene and creates a feeling of sadness and empathy.

Frances: Good, read that again

Student: The various scenes are accompanied by sad piano music that really sets the scene and creates a feeling of sadness and empathy

Frances: And you need something to finish, along, and an understanding. What was it you understood because of the music?

Student: That the justice system is flawed

Frances: But what was it you understood about Brooks?

Student: That he wasn't coping in the outside world

Frances: Right, that's what you need to put in there. Because remember, we don't just talk about techniques willy-nilly do we? We say what meaning has that technique brought to our understanding of themes or film or whatever that

might be, so be very careful, okay.....that you explain that vividly. I just feel that you need to emphasize that a bit more.

In this segment, Frances demonstrated how she employed examples and explanations to support the argument of the essay. She explicitly developed the relationship between areas of knowledge such as critical reading of the text's key themes and ideas, and the use of narrative and filmic techniques. She also reinforced features such as the need for evidence to support exposition and organisation of these points.

6.3.2 *Ideational meanings – conveying the world through knowledge*

At Altona, a conglomerate of subject matter and its organisation around phenomena constructed the workplace. Students understood the workplace through industries such as hospitality and retail. More specifically, within these broad categories, students investigated business transactions, employment practices, workplace practices and workplace issues and cultures. In Frances' class, learning about the workplace also meant investigating and conforming to appropriate social behaviour. The emphasis was upon examining workplace relationships and social expectations in depth and upon developing an understanding of the complexities of workplace practices such as applying for a pay rise or resigning formally. Additionally, embedded in the study of the workplace was the importance of interpersonal relationships and the capacity to respond to social situations and social cues.

Frances also explained the need for students to develop an understanding of a range of contexts. To achieve this, students explored workplace contexts, workplace experience and structured workplace learning. Frances drew extensively on student experience to build the level of knowledge about the practices and cultures of workplaces. As she explained:

I do use a lot of that linking back to their own workplaces and as I've said I've got lots of variety in here. I've got part time jobs, one has worked for McDonalds for two years, he has an induction program, he's part of the meetings, they've got a lot to offer and they love offering that, once someone says something they all start talking.

Her overall perspective was that school should facilitate students' confidence in their ability to participate in particular contexts through exposure to workplace practices, which she described as: "the whole purpose, to familiarise themselves with really what goes on a daily basis and not feel confronted, but comfortable". Frances expressed apprehensions about the lack of access to real workplaces and workplace practices, and the impact this had on students. As she maintained, successful students were

mature and responsible and had practical experiences which signified access to contextual resources, through terms such as “perspective about life” and capacity to “just get on with it”.

The unit on *Analysis and Response to a Media Text* revolved around a detailed study of film and essay writing. Initially, students examined the ‘heroic figure’ in the modern documentary. Students subsequently applied this knowledge to an analysis of Frank Darabont’s (1995) film *The Shawshank Redemption*. Students explored the representation of particular social groups, such as prisoners and prison guards and the use of narrative and filmic conventions to convey themes such as the flawed nature of justice systems and the value of comradeship. As Figure 6.6 highlights, the three phenomena of themes, narrative conventions and filmic conventions dominated the film study.

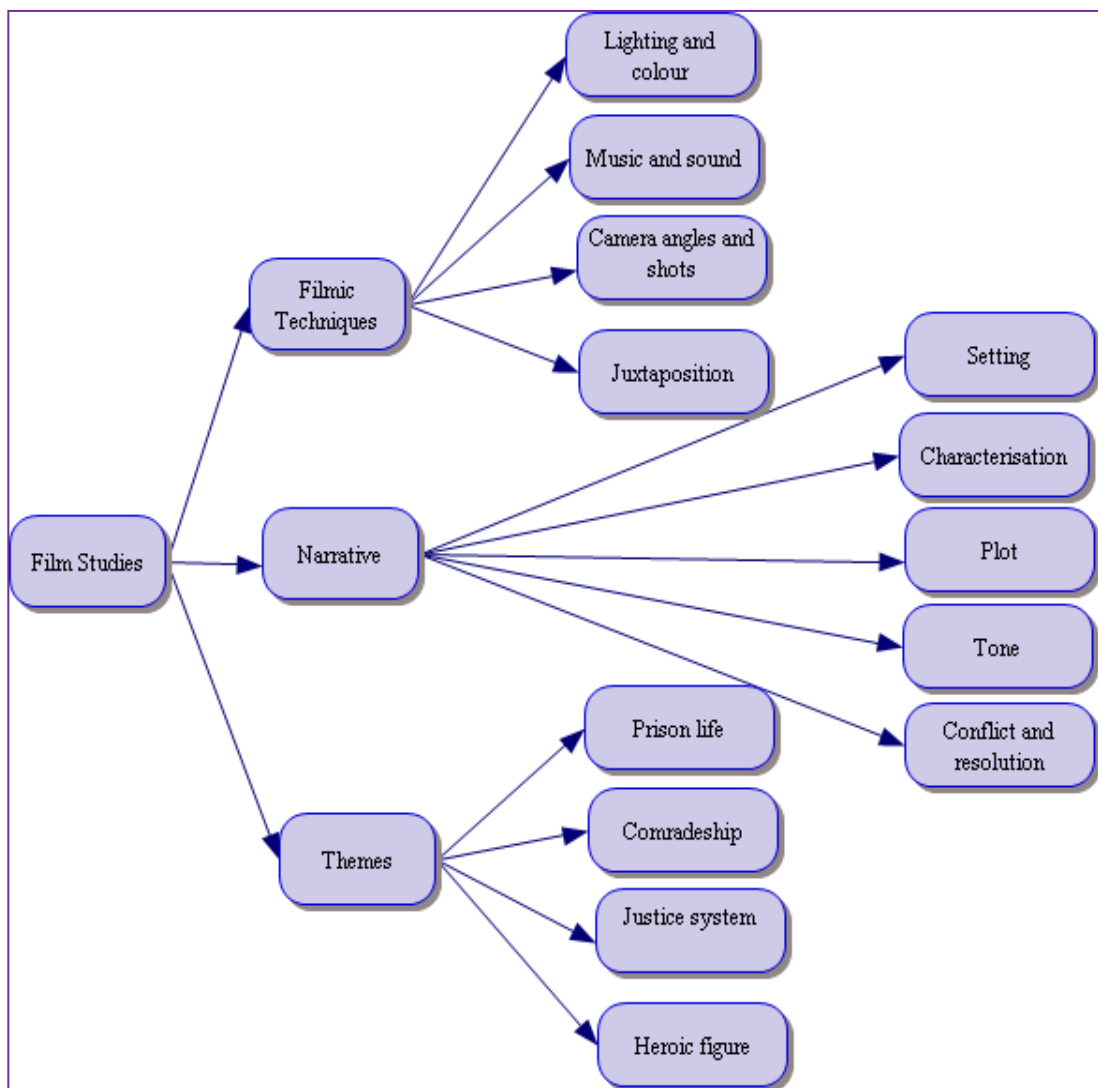


Figure 6.6 An outline of film analysis at Altona

These categories are clearly apparent in James' essay introduction (Text 6.3) in which he analysed how filmic and narrative techniques conveyed the themes of the heroic and tragic figure, prison life, comradeship and the flaws of the American justice system. His opening sentence prioritised the notion of individual ownership of creative process through reference to Darabont and the name of the film. Additionally, his introduction emphasised key traditional elements of narrative and analysis of narrative as found in the English subject area, such as character, setting, conflict and resolution (Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2006b; Moon & Mellor, 2004, Sumara, 2004). Furthermore, it reveals how the use of specific concepts and abstract concepts such as characterisation and setting constructed the phenomenon of narrative.

Text 6.3 James' essay introduction

The Feature Film, *The Shawshank Redemption*, directed by Frank Darabont, relies heavily on the traditional elements of character, setting, conflict and resolution to develop the narrative. Darabont has used both narrative and filmic techniques in constructing this film, which has enabled him not only to tell a story, but also to communicate a theme and evoke a response in the viewer. Technical, symbolic and audio codes have been used in shaping this text and allows us, as viewers to recognise the theme, that there is corruption in the justice system.

6.3.3 *Critical practices as a part of writing*

Through the analysis of a feature film and the construction of an expository essay, students were exposed to the concepts of positioning and construction of point of view within contemporary texts (Sumara, 2004). Frances' strategy was to expose students to the ways that media texts represent particular points of view and perspectives. As Frances explained:

... the idea there is to alert them to the fact that if film is constructed using those filmic and narrative techniques, then obviously what they will receive in different forms of media, like the news, like documentaries, is in fact a construct and shaped and it is somebody's interpretation and I think they're alerted to this.

In her class, the capacity to interpret situations, in depth, indicated maturity and signified potential success in the adult world. A paragraph from Bryony's essay reproduced below (Text 6.4), and shown in full in Appendix E, exemplified some of the analytical practices encouraged by Frances. Initially Bryony explained that the use of camera angles and shots contributes to the construction of meaning in film. She elaborated, with the use of examples, that the use of these techniques also contributed

to the idea of control and power in such a restricted and authoritarian environment. Furthermore, the paragraph concluded with an explanation of what she perceived to be Darabont's (1995) intention behind the use of these techniques. In the concluding sentence, she drew attention to a dominant theme in the film and explained how portrayal of the theme and the conventions used to convey it, positioned viewers. The text highlighted critical practices dominating the class. These included analysis of relationships between forms of knowledge, such as between the development of themes in filmic texts and narrative and filmic conventions. Additionally, students explored representations of particular social groups such as prison populations. In this text, for example, Bryony explained how the prisoners were represented as being largely disempowered in this environment. Such representations of the prisoners were evident in classroom discussions and displayed in other students' essays. On a number of occasions, Frances alerted students to the brutality of the prison experiences as represented in the film and the vulnerability of individuals within the system regardless of their guilt or innocence.

Text 6.4 Essay paragraph written by Bryony

Darabont's use of camera angles helps us to get a better understanding of each character and their place in the prison. The use of low camera shots, show us that the guards are the authority figures and are always in control. The best example of this is when one of prisoners asks Hadley: "When do we eat?" His reaction to this comment, via the close up on his face, conveys his feeling of aggression and intolerance towards the prisoners. "You will eat when we tell you to eat, you shit when we tell you to shit and you piss when we tell you to piss". Darabont is trying to show us that the guards not only hold all the power, they abuse their power as well.

6.3.4 *The power of abstractions in academic and workplace discourse*

Additionally, at Altona, the use of technical terms demonstrated knowledge of the workplace and appropriate social cues. During the course, James wrote a series of letters associated with workplace practices such a request for a pay rise (Text 6.5) and a resignation letter. Within the context of this class, successful construction of these letters depended upon appropriate uses of language and particularly technical terms that demonstrated an understanding of workplace practices and culture. As James demonstrated the capacity to apply language associated with the practices of managing employment, he positioned himself as experienced and competent through language choices such as *Customer Service*, *Team Work* and *Leadership*. Equally, James demonstrated the same level of confidence in his choice of vocabulary in a

letter applying for a pay rise. Positioning himself as aware of conventions of employment transactions, James engaged confidently in the world of employment through terms such as *Award Rates* and *Job Description*.

TEXT	ABSTRACTIONS AND TECHNICAL TERMS
Resignation letter	Employment, resignation, customer service, career, occupation, hands on experience, team work, leadership
Request for a pay rise	Sales department, award rate, overtime, appointment, executive position, duties, promotion, job description

In the following segment of his letter requesting a pay rise, James demonstrated an understanding of the nature of workplace relations and the forms of knowledge and social understanding that lie behind the effective process of applying for a pay rise. An analysis and interpretation of this segment highlights James' capacity to use key concepts and phrases such as *my new role* and *extra duties* to promote his case for a pay rise. Through continued references to *these extra duties* and their position in sentences and phrases, he supported his argument that his growing levels of responsibility should result in a pay increase. Additionally, James aligned his new position and the expanded responsibilities it entailed with the legal obligations of employers through references to *award systems* and *job descriptions*. He also drew upon interpersonal resources, such as the use of first person and cognitive processes exemplified in *I believe* with evaluative adjectives such as *I have never hesitated* to present his position from a strongly personal perspective. However, he interspersed these with references to official and legislative forms of information, which suggest an understanding of the Australian award system.

Text 6.5 James' request for a pay rise (Segment only)

My name is James Croydon and I have been working at your store for the past three years in the sales department, on an award rate. During this time I have readily taken on overtime, while working conscientiously and always tried to minimise my sick leave and holidays. I have recently been appointed into a Junior Executive position. This new position is a far more challenging role and entails extra duties than my previous role. With the demands of my promotion I believe that I am entitled to a pay rise. I have never hesitated in taking on extra responsibilities and my new role entails more responsibilities than ever before. These extra duties exceed my original job description.

The use of technical and abstract language helped shape notions of academic writing and academic genres. Considerations of appropriate abstract vocabulary use, as well as its use in sentences and paragraphs, dominated essay writing instruction. The following classroom dialogue demonstrates how Frances ensured that students had an understanding of the abstract concepts of context and theme and were confident in the use of appropriate vocabulary:

- Frances: What do we mean when we say theme?
Student: Like surrounding circumstances
Frances: What else?
Student: The point the movie is trying to make
Frances: What might the surrounding circumstances be called?
Student: Context
Frances: The other definition is the underlying message. What was one of the themes?
Student: Corruption of the guards
Frances: How could we put that in a sentence? (After a pause Frances continued)
Prison life is violent
Comradeship is important
Not all convicts are guilty
What is that telling up about the justice system?
The justice system is not flawless?
Good

In this example, Frances familiarised students with the meanings of abstractions such as *context* and *theme*. Through a question and answer session, she explained that themes could be understood as “the point the movie is trying to make” and secondly as “the underlying message”. Additionally, Frances reviewed student knowledge of the themes and demonstrated how to express them in pertinent phrases such as *prison life is violent*. For example, Bryony’s essay introduction (Text 6.4) incorporated a large number of abstractions that served to position the introduction firmly within the academic discursive tradition. The paragraph applied literary and cultural studies discourses such concepts as *resolution*, *narrative* and *symbolic codes*. It applied

features of textual analysis, with references to aspects of the text as evoking a *response in the viewer* and *shaping this text*. This also allowed the construction of phenomena such as narrative, which in turn is composed of complex concepts such as *characterisation, setting* and *symbolic codes*.

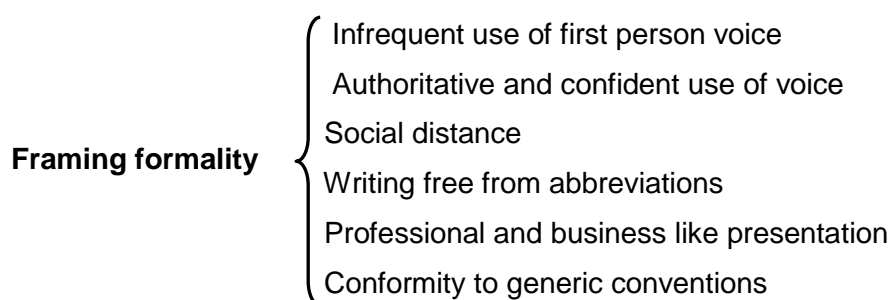
Additionally, the use of abstractions in James' introduction (Text 6.3) highlighted how abstract language constructs discourse and facilitates critical practices. The paragraph used dominant discursive features of textual analysis, such as construction of text described in terms of evoking a *response in the viewer* and *shaping this text*. Abstract concepts of literary, media and film and cultural analysis clearly represent the English subject discourse. A tightly crafted paragraph, it featured a strong argument statement, supported by abstract concepts and the capacity to write abstract discourse to support critical analysis (Martin, 2001) of their world as represented in contemporary text. James explained in his essay that, *Darabont has used both narrative and filmic techniques in constructing this film, which has enabled him not only to tell a story, but also to communicate a theme and evoke a response in the viewer*. In this sentence, he addressed the idea that certain types of text convey themes or particular views of certain topics. The sentence explained that films such as *The Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont, 1995) not only told stories, but were also concerned with the business of portraying ideas and themes. By using the term *constructing*, James identified how texts use particular strategies and techniques to do this in specific ways. Central in this endeavour was the capacity to forge links and associations (Kress, 1995a) between ideas, response and the techniques that were used to achieve this. This also required confidence in the use of grammatical metaphor and nominalisation, as for example, in the use of the terms *narrative, theme* and *response*.

Whilst Frances generated a significant amount of the information and knowledge used in this class, students still used information from a range of sources. Predominantly, government agency websites provided preliminary information used in the occupational health and safety unit in which students investigated 1) workplace cultures and practices, 2) legislative requirements and 3) administration in the workplace. Significantly, students used the Internet to research and access workplace texts that they then imitated as they constructed the corporate package. Students explored workplaces through classroom interaction, workplace experience and structured workplace learning. Frances drew extensively on student experience to build the level of knowledge about the practices and cultures of workplaces. Similarly, Frances encouraged students to collect samples of written texts and to observe writing taking place in their workplaces whenever possible.

During the course of the year, students produced investigative reports that required the design of questionnaires and incorporated information from schools and workplaces. Additionally, students used skills and knowledge acquired from the Media Studies and Interactive Media programs offered at the school. In particular, students such as Bryony used the knowledge she had acquired to assist her in film analysis and in formatting documents for the corporate package. Additionally, discussion of student experiences in their workplaces, in community organisations such as sport clubs and in other subject areas was actively encouraged.

6.3.5 *Representing the self as writer through the notion of formality*

Additionally, the notion of formality served as a discursive strategy which framed particular types of language use as outlined below. An analysis of classroom interaction, student texts and editing of student work indicated that the concept of 'formality' served to separate it from other language uses and gave it prestige and authority.



Students were encouraged to position themselves as courteous and responsible through their writing. For some students this posed a challenge as they sought to maintain appropriate social distance through minimal references to personal opinion or use of appraisal and modal resources. Bryony experienced difficulties with this aspect of transactional texts, as her texts were characterised by brevity in the form of short sentences and lack of consideration of interpersonal relationships. A facsimile to a supplier inquiring into a delayed delivery of computer parts, reflected this tendency:

I'm inquiring as to why order number 32 has not been sent. I placed the order on March 5, 2005. This was due to arrive March 19, it is now March 21, 2005 and still no sight of my order.

In a letter concerned with the same business transaction, Bryony expressed a high level of emotion and strongly positioned her organisation as the victim of poor treatment, rather than an oversight. She wrote that *It is now two weeks and still no reason or explanation of why this order has been so badly treated*. Generally, Bryony's writing for business expressed a high level of modality, which did not reflect standard conventions of courteous business etiquette (Dwyer, 1999; van Nus, 1999). An examination of Bryony's portfolio indicated consistent editing to maintain appropriate levels of authorial confidence and appropriate forms of interpersonal relationships with her simulated readers.

Constructing appropriate relationships in more formal texts, and the capacity to position oneself as a capable writer, were significant features of writing performance in Frances' class. Whilst not a discernible problem in the construction of transactional texts, formality proved difficult for students when constructing texts such as letters, required as middle management levels, and which involved direct interaction with customers or clients.

It was in essay writing however, that the notion of formality distinguished academic discourses from other types of writing. The most common requirements of formality associated with essay writing were restricting the use of a first person voice and expressions of personal opinions in essay conclusions. Additionally, students were encouraged to use appraisal resources to demonstrate their capacity to argue in academic texts. The use of appraisal resources was generally discouraged in the simple transactional texts as their primary concern was with the transference of facts and information. The following sentence from James' job application highlights how appraisal resources of attitude were used effectively.

I am an honest [judgement+], reliable [judgement+], and willing [judgement+], worker who has learned valuable communication [appreciation+], and leadership skills [judgement+] through sport. My work ethics are unquestionable [judgement+] and I am really keen [affect+] on joining your team.

In both James and Bryony's essays, the use of attitude resources contributed to their capacity to convey opinions and attitudes about the use of techniques and their relationship to the themes represented in the essay (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2006a). A realisation of the impact of film score – *the sad piano music*

– and phrases such as *a feeling of sadness and empathy*, were incorporated into the students' interpretation of text.

The various scenes are accompanied by a sad [appreciation -] piano music that really sets the scene, creating a feeling of sadness and empathy [affect -].

6.3.6 Successful writing through cohesion and syntax

An examination of texts produced by students revealed that their success in sentence construction was reflected in the ability to develop and maintain a consistent theme in sentences, use a variety of sentence types and embed clauses (Myhill, 2008). This depended significantly on the type of text being constructed and the complexity of its ideational and interpersonal functions. On a regulative level, Frances placed great importance on the appropriate construction of sentence as a key to success in the English subject generally. Additionally, sentence construction emerged as strongly associated with achievement of purpose reinforcing Frances' view of syntax as a critical component of clarity. Frances explained:

The essence of it all is that they need to make themselves clear and I think ... students that have failed, and I use that term lightly, but it's a reality, have not been able to construct sentences adequately.

The large number of shorter transactional texts, particularly those in the corporate package, limited the capacity for sentence variation. However, as the course progressed, texts became increasingly complex which allowed for greater variation in syntax and paragraph construction. Texts such as letters for employment provided the opportunity for students to construct a variety of sentence types.

James demonstrated his capacity to use a variety of sentence types, including the compound sentence and complex sentence, and to apply sentence types for impact in his application letter requesting a traineeship (Text 6.1). In the following sentence, James used an embedded clause to incorporate additional and valuable, although not critical, information to convey the central message of the letter.

I hold keeping my body physically and mentally fit in high regard, therefore I believe serving the community would be the ideal way for me to achieve this ambition, whilst still maintaining a high job satisfaction.

Additionally, he employed conjunctions at the level of the sentence to forge relationships between segments of information. For example, after introducing the fact that he is physically and mentally fit as a result of actions he takes, he causally linked this to the idea that sharing this incentive and motivation would be something that he could share with the community. James also used an adversative conjunction to show that he can maintain a high level of job satisfaction as he achieves his ambition of serving the community.

Effective sentence construction was supported by the instructional strategies of modelling and joint construction. Frances drew upon personal experiences and examples from student texts to demonstrate the importance of sentences in achieving social purpose. In this sample of classroom dialogue, Frances used the work of a student to highlight the place of sentences in the construction of meaning:

- Frances ... there was corruption within the prison. These things are presented by the filmic techniques, setting, lighting, camera angles and the techniques of characterisation.
((Directly to student)) Particularly the techniques of characterisation, that's fine, but keep your line in there about filmic techniques but you don't have to. Now all I'm going to suggest is that paragraph, because you've identified some very good themes, is that you just give a little bit of one or two sentences as an example of that.
So give us one of them and I'll give you an example
- Student: Comradeship was a valuable thing in prisons
- Frances: Comradeship is a valuable thing; could we make that a little bit clearer? Comradeship was a valuable?
- Student: ((Another student interjects)) I wrote something about comradeship was evident within the inmates
- Frances: ((Facing previous student)) Evident within the inmates of the prison, within prison life if you like. Now can you give me examples in one or two sentences; 'This was most evident...' Just think about the film. This was most evident... This was shown clearly through the friendship that built up between?
- Student: Red and Andy
- Frances: Exactly, yes, that's a very good example to show that. Is everyone clear on that?
- Students: Yes
- Frances: It's just an extra bit of explanation and it doesn't have to be a whole paragraph on each one, just one or two sentences explaining it, backing it up with evidence ((Returning to the board)).

Not only were students reminded of the importance of developing meaning at the level of the sentence, they were also alerted to the importance of making connections through various strategies such as elaboration and extension.

6.4 Strategies for constructing genre

6.4.1 *Creating an ordered place of learning through visible learning and teaching strategies*

During interview, Frances expressed her belief that once placed in a productive environment, most students would perform well. She did not articulate her pedagogic strategies as being derived from any philosophical or educational tradition; however, her overall approach to teaching was based on students “doing something within their reach perhaps, and scaffolding, modelling and scaffolding”. In this way, Frances explained that the teaching of writing is:

...about students understanding exactly what they're supposed to be doing, and you have to do very, very careful modelling, so that they have something to base what they're expected to do on.

Frances advocated explicit and detailed modelling of writing and text construction and clearly articulated guidelines to assist students that when:

...given guidelines, and a model to follow I don't find that students have any difficulty...whatsoever. It's very important from the very outset that they know exactly what they are doing.

Frances perceived herself as responsible for constructing a productive environment based on establishing high standards and tightly framing the pacing and sequencing of tasks. Her teaching and learning strategies, detailed in Table 6.3, highlight the predominance of scaffolding strategies, modelling and forms of joint construction in her pedagogic practice. The one-on-one conference, the extensive use of questioning and the tightly controlled general discussions formed the basis of much of the modelling that took place in the class.

Table 6.3 Pedagogic strategies employed in the teaching of writing

Strategy	Specific details of pedagogic strategy
Deconstruction	Reading student work aloud, discussing use of words, content, syntax, points made in explanation, evidence, examples and elaboration, use of teacher's experiences, deconstruction of student texts in terms of achieving purpose, employment practices and social interaction in workplace
Scaffolding	Reshaping knowledge from students' workplaces Film analysis Understanding of film techniques Language practices linking content and form Building upon common sense uses of language to construct abstract and technical language
Modelling	Use of student work, recommending adjustments to student work, refinement of stages of text, input from other students on student work, examples of student paragraphs deconstructed and discussed extensively in terms of 1) content 2) structure and stage of text 3) contribution to overall purpose of text Use of teacher and student personal experiences Extensive use of metalanguage
Joint Construction	Discussion and question and answer forum Detailed use of student text
Independent Construction	Students work independently in computer laboratory once each week Individual support and assistance from teacher

6.4.2 Teaching the essay as register

An analysis of course documentation, classroom observations and teacher interviews, indicated a patterned and routine approach to the media unit outlined in Figure 6.7. Sample texts from a range of sources, student and teacher experiences and significantly the work of students formed the basis of text deconstruction. It was also common practice in this class for students to contribute to discussions about construction of their own essays and read samples of their work for review and advice. As such, a considerable amount of class time was spent exploring and examining choices in areas of analysis, text construction, genre and language.

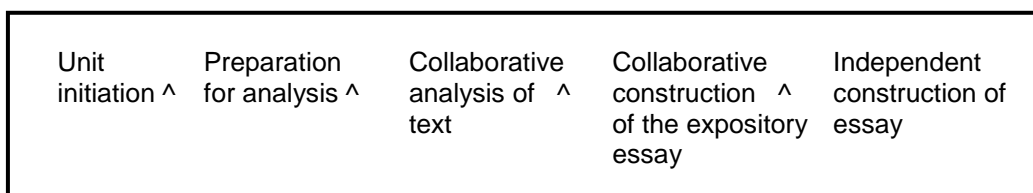


Figure 6.7 Structure of essay writing unit

Throughout the unit, outlined in more depth in Table 6.4, students spent a number of lessons deconstructing, analysing and expanding paragraphs written by individual students. Paragraphs were deconstructed in terms of content, construction of argument and appropriate uses of support mechanisms such as evidence, examples and elaboration. At the paragraph level, students discussed abstractions, use of appropriate vocabulary and technical language. Frances made suggestions, in most cases regarding how students could more appropriately achieve their intended purposes.

Table 6.4 Structure of the essay-writing unit

Unit segments	Outcome
Unit initiation	1) analysis 2) essay construction
Preparation for analysis	1) viewing and examination of documentary <i>Seaflight: the David Dix Adventure</i> 2) examination of filmic techniques 3) initiation into vocabulary of film techniques and film analysis 4) initiation into categories of positioning 5) guided note taking and recording
Reinforcing analysis and use of discourse	1) viewing and examination of feature film <i>Mississippi Burning</i> 2) identifying and recording features of the film 3) reinforcing 'discourse' of the film analysis through vocabulary of film techniques, 'discourse' of the academic text such as the essay, 4) examination of positioning of viewer
Collaborative analysis of text	1) identification of key features of <i>Shawshank Redemption</i> 2) identification and recording of filmic techniques and use of discourse and vocabulary of film analysis 3) description of positioning of viewer
Initiation into the English academic essay	1) the schematic structure of the English essay 2) the stages of the English essay 3) standard linguistic requirements of the essay
Collaborative construction of the expository essay	1) purpose of essay – use of filmic techniques to achieve thematic purpose of text 2) schematic structure of English essay 3) stages of text 4) discourse and vocabulary of filmic analysis 5) linguistic features of academic essay and academic English discourse
Independent construction of essay	1) staged preparation of text 2) discussion and reflection of individual student text construction at the paragraph level 3) teacher support through classroom discussion, individual support and editing of draft material

In the following exchange, Frances explained to Molly how discussion of camera angles could help her to develop an essay argument about the development of themes in Darabont's (1995) *The Shawshank Redemption*. The exchange began with Molly reading a part of her essay to Frances and the class:

Molly: His actions to this comment convey his aggression, the close ups of his face capture these feelings of anger and intolerance for the prisoners. It is the tone used by the guards to talk to the prisoners that shows that they have no respect for these people.

In the exchange, Frances commended Molly for using examples and quotes as evidence and offered the following commendation and advice for the entire class:

Frances: She follows that up immediately with a quote. What I'm trying to say is that it is a very good example. She...said, the main thing I'm talking about...is camera angles.

She also highlighted Molly's use of elaboration in her argument, as outlined in the following segment:

Frances: But there's no point in saying that camera angles basically show the role of guards in the prison. It's not just the angles is it? So she then goes on and elaborates on that further. So Darabont's use of camera angles does help us get a better understanding of each character and their place within the prison. The use of low camera shots show that the guards have authority, that they are in control, evident when Hadley is beating down on a prisoner for asking when we eat. However, the actions to this comment further convey his aggression. The close up shots of his face capture his feelings of anger and intolerance towards the prisoners.

Throughout the segment, Frances modelled the relationship between areas of knowledge and the task of constructing an argument that camera angles and the development of character frame thematic considerations of authority and control.

Frances also explicitly demonstrated and modelled her own cognitive processes and the choices she would make as a writer, including content and analysis, uses of abstract and technical terms and sentence structure. In this discussion of a paragraph written by Michael, Frances explained how she would develop an argument by linking elements of theme and techniques:

Frances: So I'd aim at doing three or four different techniques, three as a minimum. Okay? You really need to do three because then you're really showing your understanding that this is what it's all about, that I understand the technique.

Student: So if you put two techniques in the one sentence

Frances: It's only one, okay?

Student: One paragraph, one technique?

Frances: No, Nadia was saying, if in this one, because I discuss camera angles and use of close ups, is that two techniques and I said no that's one.

Student: Okay

Frances: But I felt I wouldn't make my point clear if I just used camera angles because they work in relationship with one another. A bit like what you're saying with the lighting. Lighting was significant but it was also the camera

angle that worked with it. So my next topic sentence please Michael, is, Darabont's use...

- Student: Of lighting in the text effectively conveys mood and atmosphere
Frances: So I would go on and talk about how lighting was used to convey mood and atmosphere and then I'd link it back, re-affirming the theme that life in Shawshank prison can be quite depressing
Student: And be hard?
Frances: And hard, yes, yes, that would be my linking back

In this segment, Frances discussed how she would adjust the content of the paragraph in a way that modelled the processes of revision and editing. She articulated changes she would make in terms of choices of content and schematic structure. Throughout the exchange, she emphasised cohesion at the level of paragraph, highlighting relationships between techniques and themes, and in this particular example, how filmic techniques were used to construct the depressing nature of life at Shawshank Prison.

Throughout the lessons, demonstration of knowledge about the essay and particular features of discourse were central. In classroom interactions, students often repeated, upon request, explanations of generic conventions and features of text analysis and text construction. On more than one occasion, students were required to demonstrate their understanding of the essay introduction. In this lesson excerpt, Frances asked students to reiterate knowledge of the introduction, which led to a question and answer session about narrative techniques:

- Frances: Who can remember who the director is?
Student: Frank Darabont
Frances: Frank Darabont, good, and of course I must mention that in my introduction, directed by.... The other thing you had to make very clear in your introduction was the fact that any film, and this overall ((moving closer to students)), uses both narrative and filmic techniques in the construction of that text. Okay? So narrative techniques, what are narrative techniques? What are narrative techniques? ((moving to face students on other side of the room)) What does every narrative have?
Student: Story line
Student: Characters ((pointing to student))
Frances: Character, yes
Student: Setting
Frances: What's another one?
Student: Resolution
Frances: Resolution and?
Student: Conflicts
Frances: Yes, okay? So that story had all of those four things. But we know to make meaning from it we also relied on ((gesturing to board and filmic techniques section on board))?
Student: Filmic techniques

Throughout this segment, Frances reinforced the use of abstract knowledge through references to a number of narrative techniques. Through continued references, and

explanations of how to apply these abstract phrases in an essay, Frances exposed students to the use of concepts and phenomena associated with the Literature and Cultural studies discourses.

A close investigation of Frances' pedagogic practice revealed a highly patterned or 'ritualised' (McHoul, 1990) approach to scaffolding and modelling. Whilst her lessons did not follow a clearly defined strategy or generic structure, segments of lessons, particularly those concerned with modelling analysis of content, use of abstractions and concepts and applications in student writing were highly formalised. These instructional routines served to establish and build upon shared knowledge through an instructional cycle as outlined in Figure 6.8.

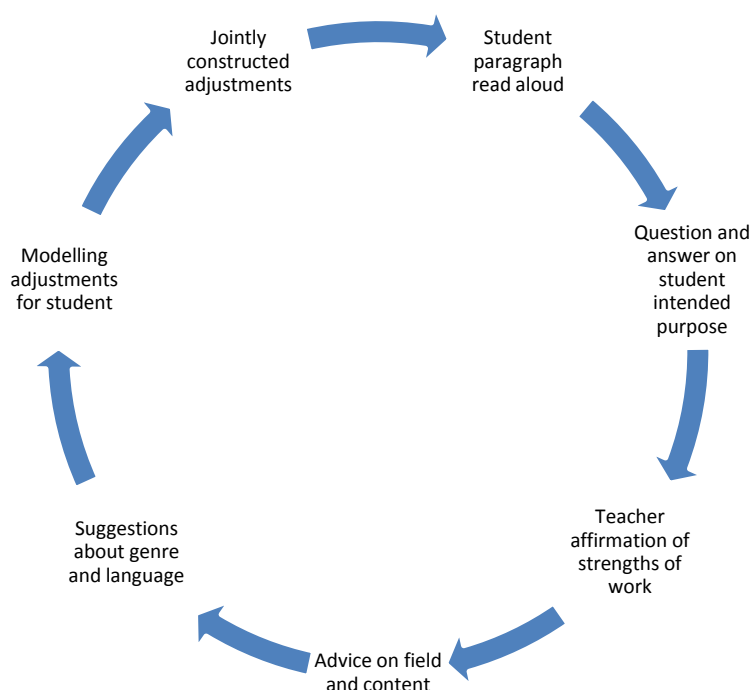


Figure 6.8 An instructional cycle employed in Frances' class

This structured approach through question and answer sessions ensured Frances was at all times directing the content of classroom discussions and influencing the outcomes of tasks. Individual sessions were used extensively to model examination of content and analysis and 'meaning making' at levels of register, sentence and lexis. They also emphasised the 'crafting' of the text through appropriate choices and the decision-making processes.

Frances used these modelled exchanges to replicate appropriate linguistic choices. In particular, elaborate question and answer sessions elicited appropriate information, understanding and opinions. Quite routinely, Frances interrupted students as they read their work to provide feedback to the entire class. Through a series of interruptions and redirecting of the conversation, Frances linked the content of student work to their language choices, and on a number of occasions, responded with questions about that choice. The following example, where Frances interrupted a student's recitation of his essay introduction, illustrates this pattern:

Frances: ((To all students)) And so **perhaps** you need to say the prisoners were presented to us rather than people, *because people is a much broader perspective isn't it* rather than prisoners or guards? So just put that in as the prisoners. Continuing, prisoners...

This example is representative of Frances' use of talk to illustrate specific features of text. It is representative of the high levels of instruction embedded in discussions and recitation of work as she sought to support students' development in a number of areas; it exemplifies how teacher talk mediated language and sign making choices, and in this example, supported transformation of vocabulary from the more general "people", to the more specific "prisoners".

6.4.3 *Design and editing support through the use of computers*

In spite of restricted access to computers, information technology supported the construction of texts. All workplace documents were produced on computer, and students were expected to be competent in applying contemporary document formatting and text lay out. Computer programs such as Windows Word and Publisher supported editing of basic vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and text construction. Additionally, computer programs and the Internet offered students access to a myriad of visual symbols that were incorporated into production of texts including those in corporate packages, feature articles and flyers. In this way, students were encouraged to apply current technologies in text construction. Whilst putting together the corporate package, students constructed a number of transactional workplace texts and used computer programs to help create business logos and business letterheads. Contemporary programs also helped students construct promotional flyers advertising community or workplace activities.

Students were actively encouraged to use technology in the construction of texts for the workplace as a way of engendering authenticity through contemporary formatting and design features. As access to computers had increased at the school, Frances had

incorporated technology as a part of the process of text construction. She explained the application of technology:

like all of us, they don't find proofreading and editing such an arduous task because, you know, they're not having to rewrite it and that type of thing. It actually pays off and fortunately, we have access to computer labs here where every child can have a computer and, I find it works across the board... since introducing this, it really makes their whole work, it's the whole concept of completing a task, being proud about what they've done, and, it's worth a million dollars actually. And this is only something I've put into place and discovered probably over the last three years because we've had access to the computers and you can see the quality of the work does increase.

Quite intentionally, technology featured as an aid to writing in terms of providing a tool for editing and proofreading, and a vehicle to help students construct formatted and professionally presented text.

6.4.4 *Refining writing through teacher editing*

Editing was also a significant feature in the level of support provided by Frances as she spent considerable time making notations on students' work and giving feedback after assessment. There was evidence of varying levels of drafting in student portfolios, with the largest number of drafts prepared by James, sometimes up to five or six copies of a text. Bryony prepared drafts of particular texts, especially texts constructed for business transactions, such as the facsimile. Michael also edited consistently, sometimes revising documents five or six times.

An examination of notes made on student work revealed a predominance of corrections in the following areas:

- vocabulary
- sentence structure
- varying constructions of formality
- transitivity (verbal) processes.

James engaged in a high level of independent editing. Particularly noticeable in his editing was revision of content and design of text. Michael, who valued editing as one of the most useful learning strategies in the class, engaged in extensive editing of his own work or elicited support from the teacher. Michael's portfolio revealed that most of the editing done by Frances was concerned with sentence structure, tenor, and effective use of first person voice, such as those in employment transactions, and that

required a high level of formality. Bryony appreciated the high level of support from Frances and summarised the value of editing as:

So you can then take the teacher's feedback and ideas and that's really good or no, I think I'll stick with what I'm doing there... and if it sounds bad you can say ((referring to teacher)) that was your idea ((laughing)).

Bryony's approach to editing varied; at times she preferred to edit her own work, on other occasions, particularly when constructing business transactions that challenged her, she relied heavily on the support of her teacher. The most consistently edited elements were spelling, format, sentence construction, formality and modality.

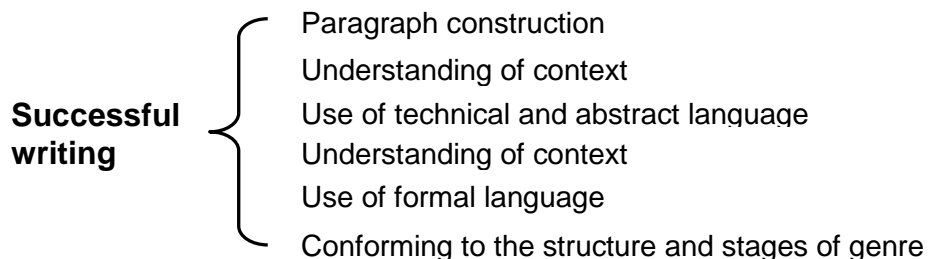
An examination of student work and data collected from student interviews indicated a correspondence between editing and student confidence in their writing capability. James was noticeably the most confident and proficient writer of the three students in this class. He not only appreciated and encouraged the support of his teacher, he also felt confident giving her samples of his work.

6.4.5 *The regulative environment – a sense of order, purpose and achievement*

In Frances' class, students constructed written texts in an atmosphere of high expectations, where the attitude of "there's no point dropping the bar with these kids" dominated. This atmosphere was in part the result of commanding discourses of *maturity, achievement and personal responsibility* that framed teacher and student interaction and instructional discourse and practice. Students were encouraged to have confidence in their ability to construct texts, and to aspire to complex academic registers in an environment that promoted achievement. In this class, student progress was consistently monitored and on a number of occasions, students were reminded of their progress. The clearly specified nature of tasks meant that students had little control over the selection, sequencing or pacing of the content and features of written tasks. There was very little evidence in classroom observations and interviews that students negotiated what they learned or how they learned, even through forms of distracting and resistant behaviours (Arnot & Reay, 2004). This indicated a high level of student compliance to Frances' instructions as students seldom attempted to influence the content of lessons by not undertaking activities as intended, or by voicing a lack of interest or talking to classmates.

Frances described public perceptions of education as a key factor in her approach to the role of teaching. She adopted a powerful discourse of the "student achiever", constructed through textual practices and performances, such as the academic essay.

Frances adapted the curriculum to reinforce her perception that whilst most students in the class struggled with the English subject and language, they were capable of achieving what Frances viewed as “reasonable writing standards”, if given the right environment and adequate support. Much of this was based on Frances’ perceptions of successful writing for these particular students which is summarised in below. She also believed it important that students complete school having completed the essay as a “rite of passage” which provided an entry into the adult world.



The capacity to interpret situations was used by Frances as an indicator of maturity and a signifier of potential success in the adult world. Identifying James as a successful and mature student, Frances described his capabilities, particularly his analytical skills as derived largely from his experience and a broad perspective about life. Successful students were described in terms that signified achievement through maturity and responsibility and linked to experience which signified access to contextual resources, through terms such as “perspective about life” and capacity to “just get on with it”.

Frances argued that student achievement should reflect positively upon the school system and the work of teachers. Student performance in Year Twelve, and then in the world of employment, was considered a reflection of the achievements of the school system and potentially indicative of its failures. Students struggling with this subject, and particularly those without the capacity to pass, were seen as having been let down in the critical areas of language and literacy. Frances described the child who could not read and write and “never will be able to”, because “we failed somewhere”. In her eyes, schools were largely responsible for what she perceived as a failure, and therefore responsible for addressing the problem. As she explained:

at the end of the day I sit back and think from an employer’s perspective, and I won’t bend the rules. Because if we send them out and we know that they cannot in fact construct an email or a memo that makes sense and yet they go into that employer and say yes I passed English then I think the employer must start to question, well, what’s going on in our education system.

Students were clear in associating English with pathways to work and further education because, as Michael suggested, “you’re actually dealing with things that happen in real

life and that you might need". All students identified themselves as having weaknesses as writers. For Bryony, difficulties in spelling epitomised her weaknesses. Two of the three students interviewed expressed concern that there was no avenue for creative or personal expression and felt that such texts should be a part of the course. Whilst Frances had raised concerns about reduced opportunities for integration with other subject outcomes, students spoke favourably of the input from other subjects. Interactive Multi Media and Media Studies featured highly, and were seen by students as providing knowledge and experience in areas such as film techniques, which Bryony described as being particularly helpful in the writing of her essay. Michael appreciated the opportunity to use computers for text production and apply what he had learned in computing in formatting letters.

All students identified letters as the most useful texts written in the course and described their usefulness in terms of securing employment and in situations such as making a customer compliant. Bryony also valued the experience of writing an essay, explaining that writing essays and letters had helped her develop organisational skills by:

not putting everything into one thing [referring to paragraphs], like spacing it out, and keeping what you're talking about in one paragraph, and ...not go to another paragraph and still talk about the same thing....to break up what you're talking about.

Student responses indicated that they were generally appreciative of Frances' approach to teaching and learning. Michael and Bryony acknowledged the value of examples used in a variety of situations such as class discussions of students' work and Frances' interpretation of their work.

6.5 Positioning writers for diversity and achievement

6.5.1 Bryony – an emerging writer

During interview, Bryony spoke of the struggles involved in writing an essay and her strong sense of accomplishment as she completed the task. In the essay, Bryony argued that narrative and filmic techniques communicated themes and evoked particular viewer responses to film *The Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont, 1995). Her essay conformed to the schematic structure of the thematic interpretation. As such, Bryony's essay presented a series of elaborations and reiterations to support the essay's argument as outlined in the opening paragraph:

Technical, Symbolic and audio codes have been used in shaping this text and allows us, as viewers to recognise the theme, that there is corruption in the justice system.

Stylistically, this sentence represented the traditional and formal argument statement that incorporates both a position on the topic and articulates the codes that shape that positioning. In support of this argument, Bryony constructed paragraphs with a central topic that supported this argument. This is outlined in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Schematic structure of Bryony's essay

Schematic structure	Illustrated in text
Orientation (Paragraph 1)	Introduction to feature film and narrative elements as opening Narrative and filmic elements tell the story and evoke a response Dominant theme of corruption in the justice system
Thesis argument	Darabont used both narrative and filmic techniques in constructing this film, which enabled him not only to tell a story, but also to communicate a theme and evoke a response in the viewer.
Elaboration – Point 1 (Paragraph 2)	Overview of context of prison life and development of themes of power, corruption and injustice Development of themes through character of Andy
Elaboration – Point 2 (Paragraph 3)	Development of the above themes through character of Red
Elaboration – Point 3 (Paragraph 4)	Technical aspects of camera angles used to show power Tone of voice and interaction between characters used to show abuse of power
Elaboration – Point 4 (Paragraph 5)	Music used to create atmosphere in film and develop the understanding that prison is a sad and lonely place in which the prisoners share a melancholy existence
Elaboration – Point 5 (Paragraph 6)	Colour and lighting used to evoke particular emotions in the audience
Reiteration (Paragraph 7)	Audience response to characters Review of narrative and filmic techniques referred to above Review of theme of justice

6.5.1.1 Adopting cultural studies and literary discourses

Throughout the essay, Bryony aligned herself with abstractions and phenomena that represent academic discourse and academic streams of the English subject. She incorporated four areas of discourse:

- the narrative tradition of Western literature dominant in novel, short story and film
- media analysis
- a cultural studies investigation of themes and their relevance to contemporary audiences
- critical discourse analysis through the interpretation of audience response

In one paragraph (Text 6.4)¹⁶, copied in footnote below, Bryony explored the use of filmic techniques, particularly the use of camera angles, orientating her discussion to the use of techniques. The paragraph highlighted the importance of explaining relationships between narrative and filmic techniques and the representation of themes found in the essay. Bryony followed a traditional structure incorporating a clear statement of purpose for the paragraph, explanation of technique and example. She linked the technical feature of camera angle and the example from the film to the themes she described as significant. Devoid of some of the confidence and capability in terms of abstractions and technical language found in other students' essays, Bryony nonetheless demonstrated her understanding of fundamental obligatory generic conventions of the thematic interpretation.

Importantly, Bryony attempted to position herself as capable of analysis and critical interpretation. Throughout the essay, Bryony adopted many of the conventions of analysis by linking and exploring the relationship between the themes such as injustices of the judicial system, and conventions, such as characterisation. Text 6.4 highlights her attempts to show the relationship between areas of knowledge (Kress, 1995a) that were needed to demonstrate a successful level of analysis. She further developed this association through the concept of narrator and the more specific *all seeing narrator*. To achieve this end, Bryony also drew upon her knowledge and experiences of the school's Media Studies and Interactive Multimedia programs.

¹⁶ Text 6.4 Essay paragraph written by Bryony

Darabont's use of camera angles helps us to get a better understanding of each character and their place in the prison. The use of low camera shots, show us that the guards are the authority figures and are always in control. The best example of this is when one of prisoners asks Hadley: "When do we eat?" His reaction to this comment, via the close up on his face, conveys his feeling of aggression and intolerance towards the prisoners. "You will eat when we tell you to eat, you shit when we tell you to shit and you piss when we tell you to piss". Darabont is trying to show us that the guards not only hold all the power, they abuse their power as well.

Text 6.4 also highlights her endeavour to align herself, albeit under firm instruction from Frances, with the academic analytical practice of using evidence from the text to support key ideas to support her argument. In this paragraph, Bryony used a specific example from the film when one of the characters asked a direct question of the prison guard which she explains in terms of camera angles and the dialogue of one of the characters. This not only provided a source of confidence, it also meant that Bryony had a knowledge base that provided a solid understanding of the framing of context in this essay.

Her use of a number of abstractions throughout the essay, such as *constructing text – evoking responses – viewers – shaping text* – represented her endeavours to position herself as a writer with a confident understanding of the subject matter central in this task (Sumara, 2004; Turner, 2007). Throughout the essay, Bryony strove to create a level of formality associated with the academic style that Frances modelled in the classroom. Throughout most of the essay, Bryony conformed to linguistic conventions of formal academic writing using third person voice, technical language and evidence-based descriptions. In her conclusion, (Text 6.6), Bryony summarised her overall interpretation of the film, emphasising the filmic techniques used in the construction of the film.

Text 6.6 Bryony's essay conclusion

Although the feature film *The Shawshank Redemption* is set in a prison, which a large majority of the audience cannot relate to, the director helps us identify with certain characters. He does this through his clever use of not only the traditional elements of feature film, character, setting, conflict and resolution, but also his clever use of narration, camera angles, colour and sound imagery. This helps us both sympathise with the prisoners in their plight for justice and forge a strong dislike for those who make their battle so difficult.

On occasions, Bryony combined the more abstract language and concepts of the academic and cultural studies discourse with non-specialist word choices. However, in the case of the above concluding paragraph (Text 6.6), and as indicated by the positive feedback provided by her teacher, Bryony combined abstract concepts such as colour imagery with less formal language such as *forge a strong dislike*. In this capacity, Bryony not only reinforced a level of authority and confidence, she also built an intimate relationship with her reader through more restricted terms and concepts such as an audience relating to a film and the director's use of narrative and filmic conventions.

6.5.1.2 Positioning the self as writer through textual features

Throughout the essay, Bryony positioned herself as a confident writer capable of using the conventions of academic writing. Bryony applied principles of the formally structured academic paragraph by using a topic sentence, forms of explanation and examples. She used elaboration as a cohesive resource to link concepts such as themes. In Text 6.6, she used elaboration to build the relationship between the filmic technique of camera angles referred to in the first sentence, and the development of authority and control evident in the prison guards. Additionally, Bryony supported the development of this critical link with a detailed example of authority and control revealed in the physical appearance, expressions and dialogue of the guards. Equally, at the level of the sentence, Bryony supported the relationship between techniques and themes through a variety of conjunctive resources. In the following example, Bryony used the contrastive conjunction *but* to highlight how one of the central characters was a critical part of the narrative of the story and played an important role in the developing the narrative.

He is a sort of mentor in the prison, **but** he is very important to the film as he also acts as the 'all seeing' narrator.

Bryony did not plan her essay in any formal way, although she did take notes whilst watching the film and used those notes to help organise information for the essay. The essay revealed the high level of scaffolding in the class in its formal structure, particularly at the paragraph level, and repetition of this structure in all paragraphs with the exception of the conclusion. In this respect, her essay is also reflective of much of the verbal scaffolding revealed in classroom observations, where students read similar paragraphs in class time which were then discussed in depth. Text 6.4 bore similarities to Molly and Michael's paragraphs, which were discussed in class and where they were also encouraged to use more specific and detailed examples as a way of developing an idea. Bryony acknowledged the value of examples used in a variety of situations such as class discussions of students' work and Frances' interpretation of their work. She found task requirements to be explicit and accessible, and took ideas and examples from demonstrations modelled in class.

Quite significantly and particularly demonstrated in the essay were experiences from the world outside the classroom. Bryony drew on this field to position herself as a skilled writer. Her approach to construction of this text reflected the strong regulative positioning in this class to the value of experience and incorporation of student knowledge into the written text. It also highlighted the extent to which student experience can contribute to the successful construction of text (Brandt 1986).

6.5.2 *Negotiating a better deal through writing*

In interview, Michael discussed a letter requesting a pay rise. In this letter, Michael wrote to his employer requesting a pay rise, a process by which he engaged in a complex set of social activities. The content of the letter demonstrates Michael's positioning of himself as having an understanding of associated workplace practices through a structured and reasoned application for a pay rise based on:

- length of service
- personal value to the organisation
- dedicated attendance
- award entitlements

Michael used technical language associated with the world of employment such as *award rate* and *job description*. His confidence in constructing this text derived in part from his ability to use the appropriate terminology as it positioned him as informed about workplace and employment practices.

Text 6.7 Michael's request for a pay rise

DEAR Mr Pilgrim

I am currently **employed** in the audio and visual department in the Kmart Belmont and believe I have worked efficiently and resourcefully over the past year and six months. While working in that time I haven't taken any sick leave and I have happily taken on any overtime.

I have recently turned 18 in the last month and I am still being paid the award rate for my previous age. I request that you adjust my pay accordingly to suit my age and job description.

I realise this may be a busy time although it would be greatly appreciated if you could consider my request and let me know your decision as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Michael

Michael also positioned himself, at the level of tenor, as confident in requesting a pay rise. He positioned himself as knowledgeable by drawing on both exophoric references to legislative obligations and his contributions to the specific workplace. In particular, Michael relied upon understandings of efficiency and resourcefulness in the workplace to position himself as a reliable employee. He did this through use of the first person pronoun and establishment and maintenance of a level of formality that reinforced

expected power relationships in this situation. However, stylistically Michael overused the first person pronoun beginning every paragraph with 'I'. This awkwardness was also apparent in Michael's repeated use of additive conjunctions in compound sentences comprised of simple clauses, for example, *I realise this may be a busy time although it would be greatly appreciated if you could consider my request and let me know your decision as soon as possible*. Michael used mainly relational processes such as *I am* which served to reinforce the emphasis on personal and interpersonal relationships in the text.

In interview, Michael discussed the support he received from his teacher whilst constructing the text and explained that examples had helped him to understand the requirements of the task. He valued advice from Frances about appropriate uses of vocabulary and expression, particularly in terms of sentence structure and clarity. Frances also provided assistance in terms of content and encouraged him to vary words and phrases used. As he explained, "she helped me out there, like some sentences had three of the same words". Michael produced five drafts of the letter, each version containing changes made after discussion with Frances.

6.5.3 *Positioning writers as designers*

James chose to discuss in interview a flyer (Text 6.8) designed to promote the award night of the Belmont Bombers, a local football club. Designed as a *Fairest and Best Award*, the flyer promoted attendance at the evening and provided information about the event and bookings. A carefully designed document, the flyer presented a humorous and positive endorsement of the event. In construction of this flyer, James took advantage of many communication and semiotic visual and multimodal conventions associated with the modern promotional flyer. The flyer offered functional details and encouraged the reader to make a booking for the function, thereby achieving the purpose of the genre, which is to persuade the reader or viewer to take a particular action.

Belmont Bombers F.C

Best and Fairest Awards

Belmont Bombers Football Club cordially invites you
and a partner to attend a prestigious formal occasion.
✓ Wine and Dine to honour our best players of 2005!

Where: Hyatt Regency Hotel

When: September 24th 2005

Time: 6pm-12am

Tickets: \$150 per/couple

*There is an open bar from 8pm-12am so buckets will
be provided if required!*

Text 6.8 James' promotional flyer

The flyer positioned James as capable of constructing text in accordance with standard generic conventions and obviously in possession of a sense of humour. Constructed to promote the night as a serious event, the flyer finishes with the statement *There is an open bar from 8pm to 12am so buckets will be provided if required!*, adding a touch of 194

irony to the flyer's invitation to the formal occasion. The text demonstrated effective use of modality markers, particularly in the use of the shaded background of campaign bottle and glasses, and other symbolic representations of celebration.

James' flyer used conventions associated with formal social functions and those associated with a casual event at a football club. His positioned the reader to respond positively as a result of high levels of modality expressed through evaluative modifiers such as a *prestigious formal occasion* and phrases intended to encourage emotive responses such as *honour our best players*. James also sought to position himself as designer and organiser of events in his local football club, combining elements of writing with visual conventions of symbolism, imagery and logo designs. For inspiration, he drew on examples of promotional flyers around the school, and imitated the flyer used a school ball. He modelled some aspects, such as layout features and lexis, from this text.

6.6 Preliminary discussion and conclusions

Writing is always more than the production of text; it exists as part of a network of semiotic, cultural and technical practices. In this English class at Altona High School, text production represented an initiation or rite of passage into the adult world of writing. Associated with a range of social practices such as standards of behaviour and social order, successful writing represented the successful and mature learner. Through production of the academic essay, and texts associated with the workplace such as the investigative report, writing served as a vehicle for students to demonstrate accumulated knowledge, analytical capabilities and use of a range of resources.

Access to ideational, interpersonal and textual resources of writing in this class was inspired by Frances' own regulative orientations to successful writing and perspectives of the students. Successful writing in this class was a function of achieving purposes and being able to construct culturally valued and powerful texts such as the essay (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004). Successful writing also incorporated clearly defined and articulated understandings of generic conventions. Students had access to conventional understandings of generic structure, stages of text and linguistic features. High levels of scaffolding and modelling reinforced conformity to these characteristics. It provided opportunities by which to mould the successful student and successful writer through approval of outward displays of conformity to Frances' expectations of maturity and social order. This was an environment of order; and mutual respect, and one in which students had little or no control over the activities of the classroom and behaviours associated with writing.

Through representations of genre and the teaching of genre, Frances acknowledged the process of making choices about content. Additionally, genres were clearly outlined in terms of structure and use of linguistic resources. This was done in an environment characterised by high levels of obligation and conformity (Ansary & Babii, 2006; Macken-Horarik, 2006a), where students were given very specific frameworks of generic structure, stages of text and linguistic features. Many of the observed lessons revealed a high level of modelling of decision-making. In many respects, there was an association between achievement of social purpose through text construction and regulative concerns of student achievement. This reflected Frances' perspective that many students in this class would struggle with texts, particularly complex texts such as essays, unless given very clear guidelines. Such clear guidelines she believed to be the key to developing the skills necessary for constructing the complex and often socially demanding texts confronting students in the adult world.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Results and Discussion of Writing at Alexander Heights SHS – ‘Boys in the Voc’ Living in an Unequal World

Students, like all of us, work from the values systems within, so why not work out what's fair, what's not fair, who's got the power in this situation and what should be done about the issue of an unequal world. (Erin – Alexander Heights SHS)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter locates writing at Alexander Heights SHS amidst a number of contextual influences. It describes how pedagogic discourses embedded in curriculum and school policy served to influence writing practices and how the social environment of the class framed those practices. It examines the influences affecting student writing and the positioning of the student writer to reflect the social justice orientation of the classroom. Figure 7.1 provides an outline of the organisation of this chapter.

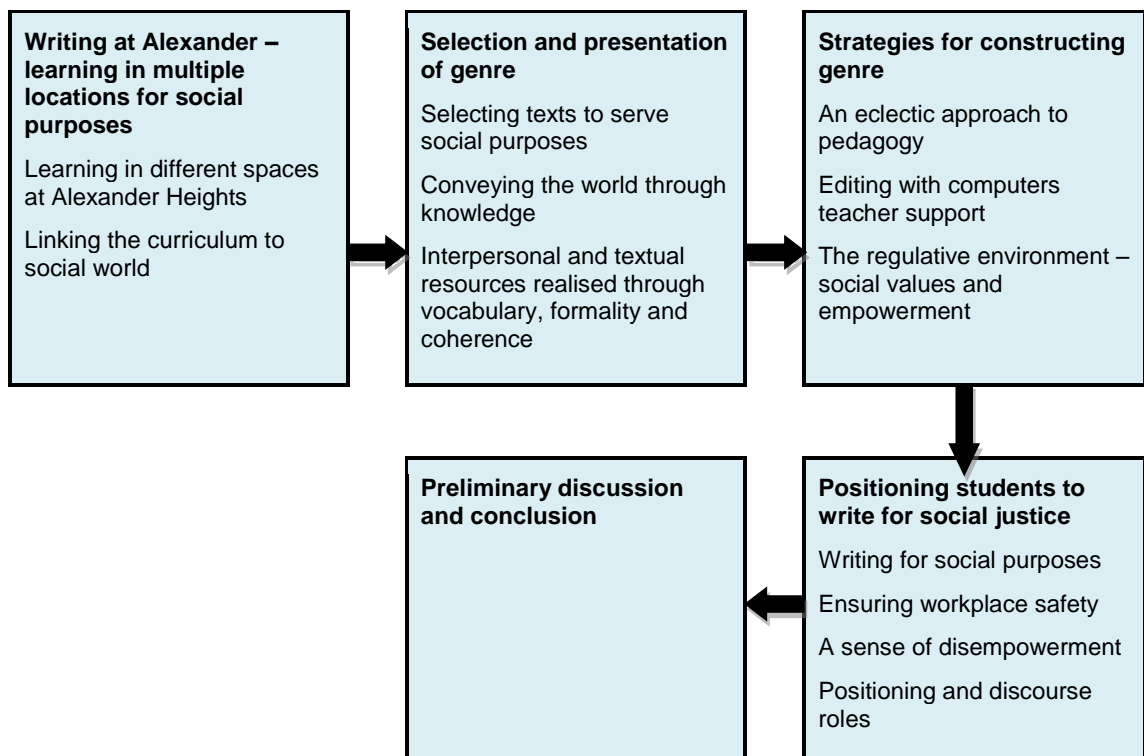


Figure 7.1 An outline of Chapter Seven

7.2 Writing at Alexander – learning in multiple locations for social purposes

7.2.1 *Learning in different spaces at Alexander Heights*

Set amongst large playing fields and native vegetation gardens, Alexander Heights Senior High School featured broad verandas and spacious clusters of classrooms, common work areas and computer rooms. During the period of data collection, the school prided itself on a strong arts program supported by a performing arts centre, visual arts centre, photography laboratory, specialist arts programs and scholarships for talented students. Languages other than English, particularly German and Japanese, featured at the school. The school supported an academic extension program and vocational educational courses in business services, hospitality and metals and fabrication. A Maritime Studies program, popular amongst senior students, provided the opportunity for practical work experience and encouraged participation from community groups and local employers. Information technology and pastoral care featured as two of the school's priorities.

Many of Erin's Year Twelve English classes took place in a spacious room with large windows facing a courtyard. A large teacher's desk, which gave the impression of business and organisation, rather than authority, dominated the room. Tables organised into groups of four ensured that Erin could observe students at all times. The room, decorated with samples of student work, mind maps and charts, had lockers and spaces for storage of student files. Three computer stations framed the back of the room. Adjoining the room was a large common work area, known as the 'hub', a room with additional computers, and where a half dozen lounge chairs, whilst worse for wear, provided an informal area for reading and watching videos. Three classrooms were adjacent to the hub, and with classroom doors seldom closed and different groups using the area, the hub was a relaxed and transparent environment for students and teachers. At times, classes were held in a computer laboratory attached to the library, which provided access to software programs. Writing took place in three distinct locations, all of which favoured particular forms of social interaction between students: in the homeroom arranged in small groups of tables; in the hub, where students worked at computers either independently or in small groups; and in the library computer laboratory where writing was a solitary activity.



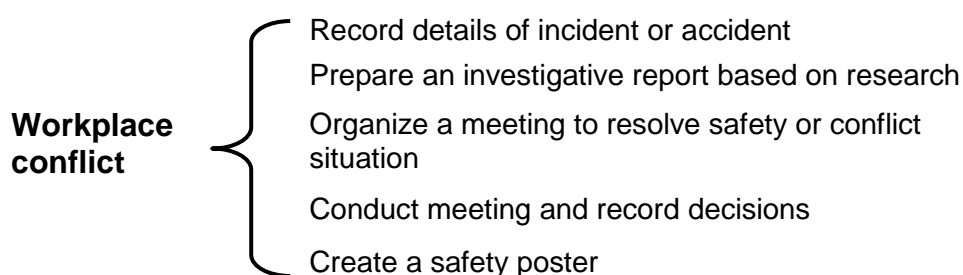
7.2.2 *Linking the curriculum to the social world at Alexander Heights*

A unit structure, as outlined in Table 7.1, with a central thematic focus, a series of activities and associated written texts framed Erin's version of the curriculum. Students completed units on workplace communication, securing employment, managing conflict and negotiating social issues. Additionally, students took part in remedial sessions designed to build their language and writing skills. During the period of research, Erin's class undertook work for two units on workplace conflict and social issues. Included in the unit on social issues was an examination of domestic violence, racism and substance abuse. These issues were examined in a range of forums and through texts, including the feature film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002), the novel *Deadly Unna?* (Gwynne, 1998), and in presentations by guest speakers. As part of their study of social issues, students constructed a personal response to the feature film, and an examination of these specific social issues in a feature article.

Table 7.1 Units of work and associated texts

Unit	Associated written texts
Workplace Communication	Order form, email, incident report
Workplace Conflict	Incident report, interview sheet, agenda, minutes, memo, safety poster
Employment Practices	Employment application form, job application letter, response to application letter, resumé
Social issues – domestic violence, substance abuse and racism	Notes, summaries, feature articles

A unit exploring workplace conflict also governed a substantial amount of work throughout the year. As outlined below, an investigation into the nature of conflict, particularly in the workplace, introduced the unit.



In the process of completing this unit, students created a potential workplace scenario where conflict might take place, such as a dispute over wages or safety in the workplace; or they drew upon their own personal experiences of workplace conflicts. This unit incorporated texts constructed for an earlier unit on workplace communication and students were encouraged to use these documents to record workplace incidents such as an accident. The most complex text constructed in this unit was the investigative report, which explored issues of workplace safety, employment conditions or business practices. The report incorporated research conducted into legislative requirements of occupational health and safety or employment conditions and details of a workplace incident. It formed the basis of a formal business meeting aimed at resolving the conflict and providing advice to employees on safety and other issues contributing to the conflict.

The unit provided a framework for a large number of texts. Erin constructed the unit in response to her concerns that the curriculum did not help link texts. As she explained, texts and ideas, "... have to be interconnected to make a meaningful scenario that the

kids can understand and for me that's the lynchpin, that's the key to the course". Students also studied the generic conventions of texts associated with these scenarios and related social actions, such as the role of the investigative report in a workplace conflict situation. Completion of the unit on workplace conflict incorporated recording details of a workplace incident, preparation of an investigative report and completion of a number of transactional texts such as the meeting agenda and incident report.

Each week Erin made room for a weekly language and writing session, framed as *remedial writing*, as an addition to the program. Through a series of brief formal teaching sessions and language and writing activities, Erin sought to address difficulties that were apparent in students' written texts or emerged from individual interactions with students. As she explained in interview, these sessions were designed to expose students to spelling strategies, vocabulary extension activities, punctuation exercises and a writing production process metaphorically referred to as the *Cheat's Guide to Writing* and *Confessions of a Lazy Writer*. The weekly routine also incorporated spelling quizzes where students monitored and charted their success at spelling words associated with the workplace, many of which were derived from sources such as the *BBC Skillwise* program (British Broadcasting Commission, 2005). Towards the end of teaching term, the program also incorporated sessions where students received individual support constructing unfinished texts.

Erin was influenced by her view that her students were amongst the most vulnerable and needy members of society and therefore needed access to practices and genres that gave them some power to negotiate in contemporary society. In an environment of increasing concern that students complete school, student engagement emerged as a crucial motivation for adaptation of the curriculum. Erin explained the orientation to social values as a significant "renegotiation" of the curriculum:

I looked for those sorts of loopholes if you like. So it meant that I could actually go and pick a text that really would help the kids to understand some of the issues I was trying to put forward, which also were values issues, which were to help them with their future life, not just in the world of work.

It also contributed to a highly regulative framing of these issues and orientation to both social justice and concern for appropriate and moral behaviour.

7.3 Selection and presentation of genre

7.3.1 Selecting texts to serve social purposes

Information, explanation and procedure genres as outlined in Table 7.2, dominated this course. In three of the four units, students constructed a large number of one page

transactional texts, such as the fax, the memo and the incident report. Recording information on social issues in the form of summaries and structured notes and reporting on workplace incidents and issues in the investigative report structured much of the factual writing. Of texts belonging to the factual genre, the most demanding and complex text constructed by students, the investigative report, was based on many of the generic features of the standard business report (Dwyer, 1999; Martin, 1985). This exposed students to some of the conventions of professional writing and the challenges of writing a complex formal text. Constructing explanation and promotional genres in the form of the job application letter and safety poster provided students with opportunities for exploring persuasive and interpersonal strategies (Bhatia, 1993; Van Nus, 1999). Students also spent considerable time preparing a personal response (Christie & Derewianka, 2008) in response to the feature film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002). Students constructed texts on computers and presented them in word processed format.

Table 7.2 Dominant genres and texts constructed

Genre Type	Genre	Register
TRANSACTION	Request	Request letter Courtesy letter Resumé Job application letter
	Information	Facsimile Email Agenda Minutes Invoice
	Procedure	Order form Incident report Interview sheet
REPORT	Record	Summary Notes
	Report	Investigative report
PROMOTE	Promotion	Safety poster
RESPONSE	Personal response	Feature article

Genre and writing practices were in part created by typical social roles aligned with contemporary workplaces and workplace behaviours (Castleton, 2003). An examination of texts constructed by students in the first part of the year highlighted that texts served to achieve social outcomes such as securing employment, resolving conflict and promoting workplace safety. Additionally, emails or memos advising staff of

forthcoming meetings, agendas outlining the content of the meeting and minutes recording outcomes were constructed.

The process by which genres were selected was designed to replicate behaviours in the workplace where writing is embedded in various forms of social actions (Bargeiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999; Beaufort, 1999b; M. Rose, 2003). Construction of texts, such as the investigative report were associated with the role of manager or director, exposing students to writing conventions found in texts at the levels of management (J. Halliday, 2004) as outlined in Table 7.3. Erin explained her reasons for placing students in roles of authority as:

The reasoning behind that was that those students could then not only understand workplace issues when they were in the workplace environment but perhaps they could also understand the processes that go on once they say put in a complaint to the foreman, and what happens to that complaint in the most perfect circumstances.

Additionally, research conducted as part of the workplace conflict unit incorporated an examination of the role of manager and the functions of that role within an organisation. Erin explained her reasons for choosing this approach as:

For instance, the purpose of the report is that they are actually putting on the hat of an employer when they're writing the report, they're at a Director's meeting. The actual gathering of information, the understanding of responsibilities, they find that difficult. So wearing the employer's hat is more difficult than that of an employee, so you're starting from the basics again.

In this context, the investigative report was presented as a formal workplace document constructed from the perspective of a company director or manager seeking to achieve a tangible social solution to a workplace situation.

This presented a significant challenge for students, many of whom had limited, if any, experience of the workplace. It required a substantial level of field or content knowledge and the capacity to apply that knowledge in simulated workplace incidents (M. Halliday, 2001; Martin, 2001). Successfully playing business roles demanded the capacity for students to position themselves as workers knowledgeable about issues such as workplace conflict (Burgess, 2004; Knain, 2005). It also demanded the capacity to position and construct oneself as an author with authority, able to represent this social role of authority through conventions associated with formality and social distance.

Table 7.3 Social roles reinforced through text construction

Social roles in the workplace	Texts associated with roles	Social purpose
Manager/ foreman	Investigative report Agenda Memo Safety poster Courtesy letter	Address complaints re: wages and award conditions Make recommendations Report on workplace incidents Organise and record meetings Respond to request for employment
Director	Investigative report	Investigate workplace issues
Administrator	Request letter– Order form Minutes from Director’s meeting	Request replacement of faulty part Organise meetings Record meeting discussions
Employee general	Incident report	Report workplace incidents
Employee – employment practices	Application letter Resumé	Apply for employment
Business owner	Investigative report Minutes	Recommend new business hours

In interview, Erin explained that her selection of the feature article in a magazine, one of the more complex texts constructed in the class, was based in part on its stylistic features and conventions. In particular, the magazine provided students with the opportunity to “learn about structure, point of view, but also language register and graphic designs and why it relates to the message in commercial texts”. However, the feature article was also framed as a personal response to the feature film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002), which dominated the unit on social issues. This was apparent as the response gave students an avenue for expressing personal interpretations and critical perspectives on social issues perceived as immediately, or potentially, relevant in their lives. It also served to privilege specific meanings, in particular personal responsibility and rights, and to accentuate the damaging consequences of these social behaviours. Additionally, it provided a vehicle for students to express opinions on issues such as substance abuse in an environment where students were encouraged to commit themselves to a moral perspective on the damaging effects of these behaviours.

7.3.2 Ideational meanings – conveying the world through knowledge

7.3.2.1 Writing framed by workplace, social justice and cultural studies

An intertwining of the workplace and social issues characterised representation of the workplace. There were various types of workplaces referred to in the class, such as the retail, fast food and landscape industries. For example, the notions of conflict and conflict resolution were examined in simulated landscape and fast food workplaces. As indicated in Figure 7.2, students examined the phenomena of conflict through concepts such as interpersonal relationships, and aspects of modern workplaces, such as occupational health and safety and the Australian employment award system. In doing so, notions of rights and responsibilities contributed to a discursive framing of the workplace. Studies of the causes of workplace accidents incorporated the importance of supervisors' responsibilities, and the value of interpersonal skills, and the need for individual workers to negotiate in the workplace in order to access and utilise relevant information.

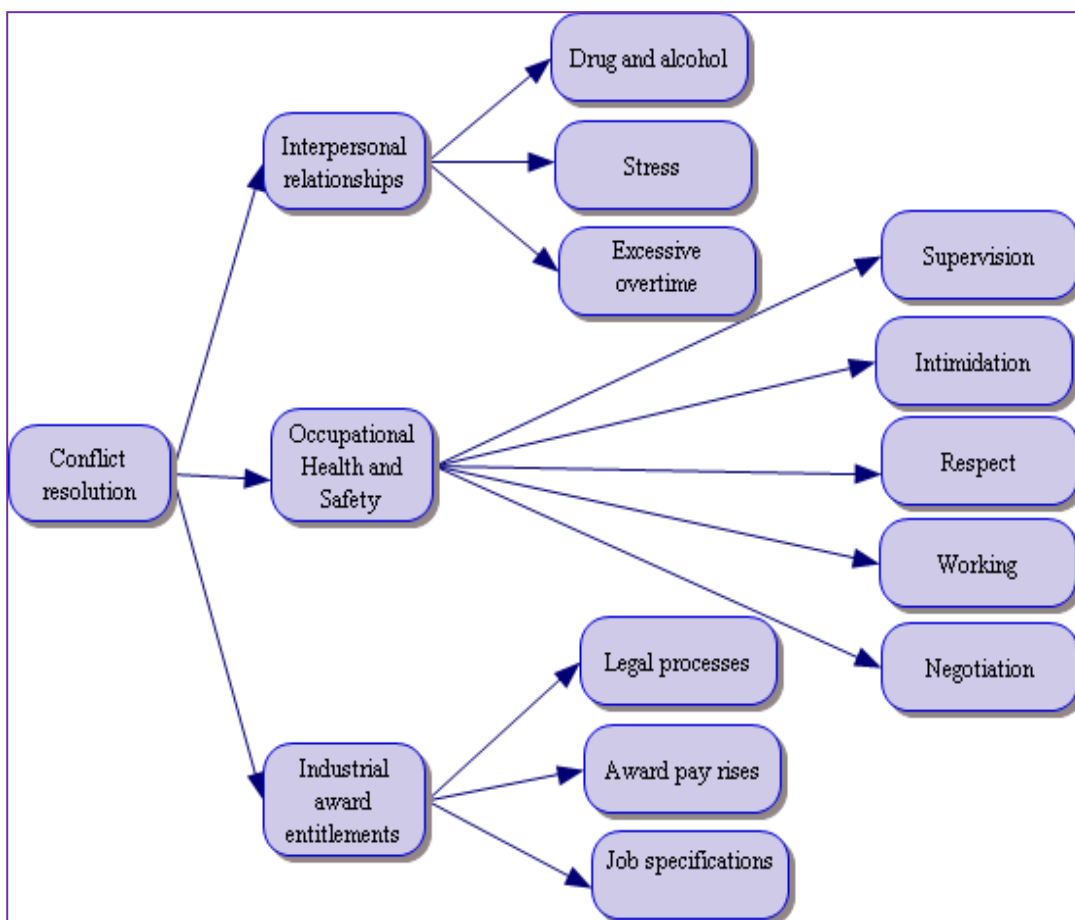


Figure 7.2 An outline of the conflict resolution unit

Students also examined representations of race and racism, gender and individuality in Gwynne's (1998) portrayal of relationships between Aboriginal and white Australian youth in the Australian novel *Deadly Unna?* and a filmic portrayal of the novel in Goldman's (2002) *Australian Rules*. Much class time was devoted to the study of the film accompanied by brief discussions of the novel. However, the emphasis was clearly upon the portrayal of key ideas identified in the film as outlined in Figure 7.3. Additionally, the class scrutinised narrative conventions, such as characterisation, which assisted in the portrayal of these themes. For example, the phenomenon of characterisation was examined through construction of character types, the events in characters' lives, interactions between characters, behaviours and consequences as a way of understanding how characters can position viewers to respond in particular ways. In doing this, students explored the relationship between the individual characters and their motivations and moral choices in the film they examined.

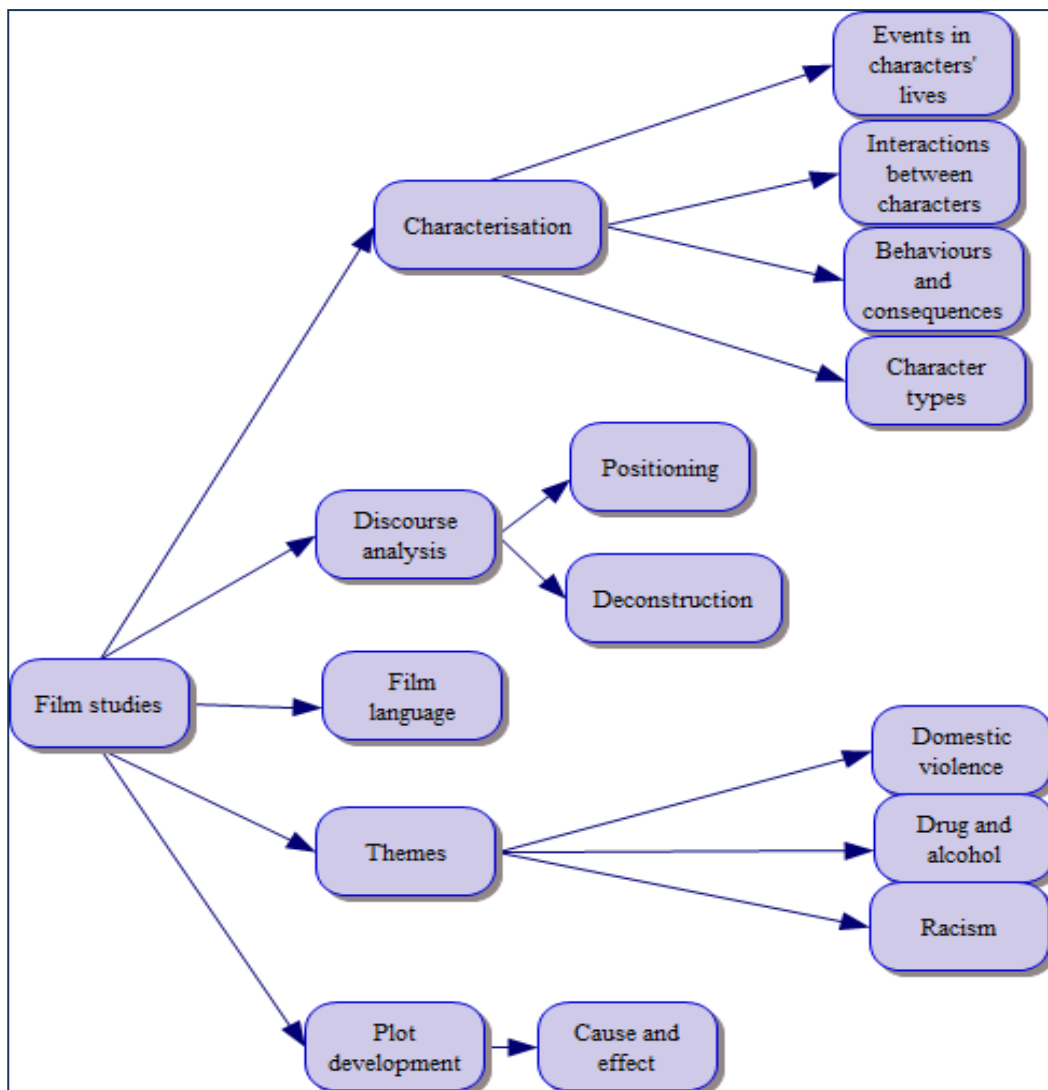


Figure 7.3 An outline of film studies

In Erin's classes, the study of techniques such as characterisation was initially a way of identifying ideas represented in texts and then concomitantly, as a way of promoting particular ideological and moral values. The feature article was designed as a personal response to both the ideas and characters represented in the film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002) and moral issues around dysfunctional family relationships, racism and alcohol abuse. The following segment of Mark's feature article provided a general description of Pickles, a key character in the film and novel. In doing so, it examined his family background and explored some of the complexities of the character. In the article, Mark presented the character's weaknesses with a sympathetic and empathetic explanation of the internal and psychological origins of his outwardly destructive and antisocial behaviour. To achieve this, Mark presented the behaviour of one of antagonists of the narrative through a series of cause and effect explanations. These explanations identified the weaknesses in his character and explained how factors, such as the absence of a father and an environment where marijuana was readily available, influenced Pickles' behaviour.

Text 7.1 Mark's Feature Article (segment only)

Pickles was always stoned, he was using weed to try and forget his dad, because his dad left him when he was a little baby so he doesn't even know what his dad looks like. He isn't growing emotionally because he's smoking weed and drinking alcohol and to try and hide his pain for his dad, but it is actually tearing him apart inside he really needs to talk to someone about it. He's depressed all the time, but he has a good sense of humour but that's just his way of coping with it. Pickles is racist, but that's only because he isn't his own person he just does what everyone else does.

Discussions of the social world explicitly emphasised discourses of social justice, social empowerment, social responsibility and equity. Particular forms of subject matter were presented to students as structured explorations of social issues and the representation of social justice. Links between social issues and consequences for the lives of young men were explicitly examined through units on managing conflict, analysis of a media text and through various classroom activities and writing tasks. This found expression in the questioning of representations of social issues and of values in the film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002), the novel *Deadly Unna?* (Gwynne, 1998) and presentations delivered by a police officer on domestic violence.

For example, the phenomenon of domestic violence exposed students to the nature of abuse and positioned them to consider their own personal responsibilities and vulnerabilities in a modern society. A police presentation and Internet research alerted

students to the differing types of domestic violence and the cycle of violence, and to the challenges young men face as perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.

Specifically, four key aspects constructed the phenomenon of domestic violence: the cycle of violence; male and female victims; forms of control and responsibilities and rights.

Intentionally, the Internet provided the dominant source of information as students gathered information about current legislation affecting workplace issues such as health and safety, remuneration and award entitlements. Students gathered this information almost exclusively from government agency websites. Additionally, studies of social issues such as domestic violence and the impact of drugs commenced with research into these topics through the Internet.

However, in Erin's class, managing large amounts of information acquired from a plethora of sources and at times complex Internet sites, required support. This took place through various forms of scaffolding as Erin and students accessed information and links to a number of sites dedicated to social issues. Additionally, Erin's own website provided access to web quests and grammar and language sites. In interview, Erin explained that the empowering nature of the capacity to access information ensured that it maintained a central place in her class:

I think to empower them because of the fact that they'll probably go without some support into the world, without any understanding of how they can get information if they have some issues in the workplace for instance.

For this reason, Erin spent time individually helping students to access relevant information from government sites and to incorporate material in their written texts. For example, during the preparation of an investigative report into employment conditions in a local fast food business, Mark researched legal aspects and incorporated these into the report. Much of this research was conducted collaboratively as Erin guided him to various websites, explained the relevance of types of information and helped him transfer information into his report plan.

7.3.2.2 Linking the critical to the social

Erin sought to engage student writers critically in the texts they encountered and to consider how workplaces were environments imbued with particular motivations, power relationships and attitudes towards particular social groups. A number of writing tasks required that students engage critically in an analysis of a workplace situation, such as conflict, and features of the context, such as employment practices. Students were also encouraged to critically interpret information and texts such as segments of legislation. Erin explained her motivation as:

So students work from the values systems within you, we've all got them, and let's work out what's fair, what's not fair, who's got the power in this situation and what should be done about it in an unequal world. That's why we tackle things like domestic violence, drug addiction.

This orientation to social justice, and critical reflection of positioning and power were noticeable features of classroom discourse and influenced the selection of genres, registers and the tasks framing their construction. This was, as Erin explained, very much a matter of empowering students:

...it's all based on bringing them to the course. They're reluctant so bringing them to the course, choosing texts and then actually deconstructing the text as well, because they are so resistant to perhaps reading and they need to have permission to say: 'hey just because something's written or on film it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to agree with it'.

During examination of the film, for example, this translated to modelling of the explanation of relationships between ideas and between themes, ideas and a select number of filmic conventions.

Erin: And I want you to think about cause and effect, like Blackie's father drank so that made him short tempered. The effect is it made him very short tempered and quite violent. So look through all the major events and maybe you could say that was the effect, what was the cause? Try and take a couple of steps back and say what triggered those people to behave in the way they did.

However, Erin viewed such critical practices as challenging for these students and for that reason; her role incorporated supporting students to understand "what's hinted at in the subtext". Students were encouraged to consider the social and thematic relevance of phenomena such as racism and drug abuse in a number of contexts, such as in the types of rural communities represented in *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002). These concepts were represented in the students' articles that were written as responses to the characters represented in the film. In all these texts, students spent considerable time describing the central characters and emphasising the nature of racism and drug and alcohol abuse in these communities. From Erin's perspective, examination of these important issues in multiple forums, such as the fictional film and novel, the community and as problem in the workplace, strengthened "social understandings". To an extent, successful writing was framed in terms of the capacity to link issues across contexts, and to reconstruct (Beaufort, 1999b) and recontextualize discursive features from one environment to another (Kell, 2003).

The concept of substance abuse was considered in terms of its impact on family relationships, social participation and achievement, safety in the workplace and opportunities, such as the difficulties for education. Indeed, Erin's classroom practice demonstrated how a concept can be moved from one context and text to another

(Iedema, 2003b; Kress, Jewitt et al., 2005; Meurer, 2004) as outlined in Table 7.4 and Figure 7.4. Initially the concept of substance abuse entered the discursive landscape of the class through student research into the topic. After some classroom discussion, the concept was examined in the feature film and novel. Additionally, it was a central part of a police presentation on violence in general and domestic violence more specifically.

Table 7.4 Movement of discourse associated with substance abuse

<p>Level One – General research and discussion on the meaning of substance abuse Examination of substance abuse in feature film <i>Australian Rules</i> and novel <i>Deadly Unna?</i> Listening to police presentation on violence where reference is made to role of domestic violence</p> <p>Level Two – Active meaning making and synthesis of information; classroom discussions; mind maps and concepts maps</p> <p>Level Three – Applied in Feature Article about <i>Australian Rules</i>; for some students applied in report on workplace safety and the dangers of substance abuse.</p>

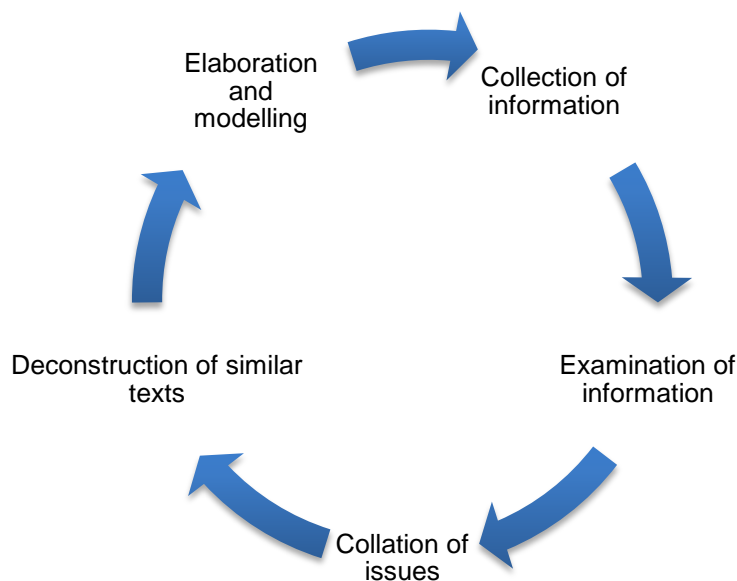


Figure 7.4 Incorporating discourses into texts

It was at this stage of presentation of information and discursive positioning towards the topic, and through classroom discussion, that students became actively involved in

meaning making processes. Ideas, concepts and impressions were organised into categories through scaffolding techniques including mind maps and concept maps based on computer games. These concepts were recontextualised from largely verbal discussion and the mind map, and reconfigured in the feature article constructed as a response to the film.

In turn, the concept of substance abuse was reconfigured in the investigative report to reinforce the notion of rights and responsibilities. Successful writing in this instance resulted from the writer's capacity to reconstruct discourses as they moved from one environment to another (Kell, 2003). It also demonstrated the highly influential nature of discursive framing of substance abuse in terms of rights and responsibilities, as it moved across contexts and texts (Iedema, 2003b). Furthermore, it illustrated the links between Erin's social intentions and concern with issues of empowerment and rights and responsibilities, and how these impacted upon the information and knowledge students were exposed to and the writing practices in which they engaged.

7.3.3 *Multifunctional resources realised through vocabulary, formality and coherence*

At Alexander Heights, extended vocabulary and spelling quizzes reflected the language found in a number of workplaces, and particularly those associated with the trades. In classroom discussions, language learning was orientated to technical language. Erin explained this as:

That it's words about plastering and brick laying that are relevant and the bottom line is they're still looking at word groups or word parts and getting engaged in the vocabulary and how good spelling occurs and we go through rules and this sort of thing as well.

In her class, the acquisition of vocabulary and accurate spelling was embedded in the remedial literacy program. A selection of technical terms students used included words associated with a number of industries and generic workplace environments, such as *abrasive*, *carpenter* and *decorator*.

For example, whilst Mark was preparing a report on employment practices and more specifically award conditions and the legal obligation of employers, Frances reminded him of the importance of using the correct technical language associated with industrial relations. In his report, he included the abstract and technical terms outlined in Table 7.5 and revealed in Text 7.2. He was encouraged to use technical language associated with employment conditions and contractual arrangements such as *award rate* and *job description*. Whilst the report indicated some of the language difficulties Mark had experienced throughout the course, it nevertheless signified his integration of technical

language. This was indicated in phrases such as *potential underpaid allowance* that suggested understanding of the content of the award system by using language associated with it.

Text 7.2 Mark's report on workplace issues (Segment only)

This report will investigate Chicken treat at Joondalup and employee. Mr Pizarna an employee of this branch did 2 hours overtime and did not get paid. To discuss how to avoid this issue from rising again.

Mr Matthew Locke, head Manager of human Resources interviewed Christopher Pizarna of kitchen hand at Joondalup Chicken Treat, on the 21st of March, regarding potential underpaid allowance.....

Mr Pizarna went to the Manager of Chicken Treat and told the Manager that: "I did not get paid for the 2 hours over time I did during this week". He asked me to I write it down on my time card and I replied that I did write it.

The brochure supplied about Unpaid Work: Work Experience and Trial Work by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations states: (copy of paragraph)

I recommend that every person who works gets a meal break every 5 hours and if they do not get it they can sue the company.

Table 7.5 Use of technical and abstract terms in Mark's report

Text	Abstractions and technical terms
Report on employment conditions	<p>ABSTRACTIONS – issue, sue, experience, morale</p> <p>TECHNICAL TERMS – employee, overtime, manager, human resources, underpaid, allowance, brochure, award, rate, sick leave, job description, training, research, condition of law</p>

The value of language, and to an extent technical language, was explained in terms of its use in the workplace. In this recorded classroom interaction, Mark was encouraged to apply technical language and abstractions more explicitly in his report.

Erin: Let's type in states

(Student types in states - assistance throughout this section whilst student types)

Erin (typing): s.t.a... (speaking) And... look up, yes (encourages student to continue typing) It's using the word condition so you could say something like Another condition,

Mark: Yes

Erin: Because it's a legal thing, isn't it, or statute

Mark: Like that?

Erin: Condition of law maybe, because it's law isn't it, it's of the award rate

Mark: Condition (as typing)

Erin: Shall we say award rate because it's actually part of the award rate isn't it so that might be even more powerful to say that.

Mark: So conditions according to the award rate or something?

Erin: Mmm, good

Whilst Mark constructed his investigative report on workplace conditions Erin provided him with advice on selection of appropriate technical vocabulary. She explicitly modelled the use of abstract language through a process of replacing concrete words with more complex and abstract words and phrases without making changes to the structure of the sentences in which they were embedded. Erin modelled her own language choices when she demonstrated the use of *states* in place of *says* and use of *conditions* to explain circumstances of working in a legal context.

Students identified formality as amongst the most important features of successful writing. Data collected from interviews, classroom observations, interviews and analysis of student writing showed that the concept of formality was framed discursively as:

- writing free from abbreviations
- infrequent use of the first person
- maintaining social distance
- professional and business- like presentation of text.

Students consistently relied upon editing support from Erin and computer programs such as the spelling and grammar check as they wrote. For example, whilst assisting Mark to write his report Erin encouraged him to:

Erin: Leave the 'I' messages out, just instead of whenever you want to say 'I will' change it to 'This report is written so changing it from I. If you find that difficult, we've got ways around that like find and replace, so if you feel more comfortable with just writing as is, and then we just go through and work on that together, okay?

However, students had difficulty maintaining consistent and appropriate levels of formality and modality in their writing. On a number of occasions, students used colloquial terms such as *ripped off* when describing the fact that an employer may have underpaid them.

For students in Erin's class, the ability to construct a variety of sentences was particularly difficult. Get, a student whose first language was not English, identified sentence construction as one of his key weaknesses. Text 7.3 is a segment of Get's report written about the possible consequences of extending working hours in a simulated small business. Predominantly simple sentences are used. This resulted in a

series of brief comments that served to reinforce the key idea of the report. Most significantly, Get's inability to construct a variety of sentence types, or indeed, to draw upon a number of cohesive strategies, highlights how the dominance of simple sentences can restrict the development of key ideas, the presentation of information and formation of an argument.

Text 7.3 Get's report on business trading hours (Sample only)

The issue that we are discussing is about hours or the working week for our employees. This issue has been raised by one of our employees who have been working in Car 2 Car for the last couple of years. This issue will have an effect on our company and employees. It will have a positive and negative effect towards the company and specially towards the employees. Our company has never done anything like this before, it will change the whole company system, and this is going to be our first meeting based on this company.

7.4 Strategies for constructing genre

7.4.1 *An eclectic approach to pedagogy at Alexander Heights*

An emphasis on engaging and supporting students framed learning about writing and genre. Erin spoke of the need to support students whilst providing solid boundaries as:

They constantly need to be drawn back to the task in class and what's the expression for it, soft approach, hard approach, so saying every now and then, right that's it, 'you need to get back to work', but generally cajoling them, a friendly relationship, a friendly working atmosphere.

Learning took place despite a persistent level of chatter, with Erin constantly monitoring student activities and moving between students. Writing in this classroom was very much a social activity, facilitated by groups of tables, polite calling out to Erin and tolerance of a level of chatter as students went about their work. During interview, Erin described her approach to writing pedagogy as one determined by the needs of the learner, "... a rather general one ...I tend to be responsive to what the student needs to know". As Erin explained in interview, her teaching strategies included brainstorming, group work, mind maps and concept maps with the intention of developing higher levels of knowledge and the potential for abstract thought. Erin identified intertextuality, a process of linking concepts such as racism and writing practices across contexts, as a vehicle towards deeper thinking.

An eclectic array of teaching strategies, as outlined in Table 7.6, underpinned Erin's pedagogy. Visible teaching strategies directed her approach to language learning which she euphemistically referred to as *remedial writing*. Spelling instruction, for example, combined an explanation of the rules of spelling, application in a variety of words, and examination of techniques for improving spelling including the use of computer and practice spelling quizzes. However, this approach also coalesced with Erin's overall philosophy of being responsive to student need. This was apparent in the structuring of the weekly program to include one weekly session where students worked independently as Erin was available to support students on an individual basis.

Point of need strategies, that is, responding to students as they constructed texts, reflected Erin's orientation to building effective relationships with students and managing the class through persuasion, support and engagement. Erin intended that this would compensate for the erratic attendance patterns that typified some of her students' school life. She described point of need strategies as motivated largely by her desire to address and accommodate the "neediness" of these particular students where "you deliver more help to these boys because it's virtually one to one teaching and whoever asks for help gets some help".

Table 7.6 Dominant teaching and learning strategies associated with writing

Strategy	Desired outcome of strategy	Specific details of pedagogic strategy
DECONSTRUCTION	Film content Social issues Generic structures of film reviews	Examination of a range of texts Intertextual links based on content Mapping of broader issues through brain storming and mind maps
SCAFFOLDING	Writing production process Analysis of content particularly presentation of social issues and point of view Critical analysis of workplace practices Spelling and remedial features such as apostrophe	Visible instruction of language features such as spelling and vocabulary Classroom discussions and group work following writing production model Managed group work and discussion building levels of knowledge through mind maps based on computer game structure
MODELLING	Writing production processes and schematic structure Stages of text construction such as introduction Accessing content and information from sources such as Internet Linking content and issues and point of across texts and contexts	Demonstration of writing production process 'cheat's way of writing' (technology support) Drafting and editing processes, accessing and evaluating content and information from a range of sources Some specifics of language use such as spelling modelled in sentences
JOINT CONSTRUCTION	Elements of language Structure and planning Text construction of reports and film reviews Access of information and language use on computer Formality through vocabulary and correct spelling	One on one discussion with students Extensive use of computers modelling Construction of text with student
FACILITATION	Critical analysis Construction of content	Computer lessons constructed around students' needs Brainstorming Group work and role play
POINT OF NEED	All levels of text construction, particularly final stages	Use of all strategies particularly modelling and joint construction

One lesson, held towards the end of term, gave students the opportunity to finish writing investigative reports and feature articles. Figure 7.5 provides an outline of the fundamental structure of the lesson. Initiation to this lesson was highly regulative in nature. It began in the classroom with a reminder that the lesson was one of the last remaining opportunities for completing outstanding work as Erin examined and referred to the contents of their portfolios. Erin discussed possible consequences of not completing the set tasks, and possible strategies, such as support from family

members, as a way of ensuring completion of these tasks and the course in general. Students were also given advice on the use of computers in this session, in particular the use of appropriate software, by which to design and construct the feature article. After a very brief review with each student on their progress to date, students moved into the hub.

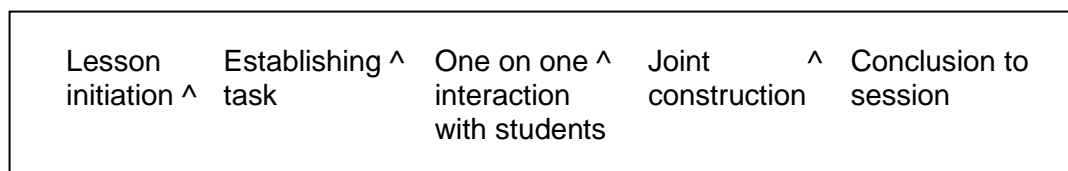


Figure 7.5 Structure of writing lesson

In the tradition of this class, a period of settling into the hub took place through a series of negotiations over seating arrangements and use of computers, frustrations over the slowness of computers and furtive glances at students in an adjacent room. Eventually, the hub was quietly productive with periods of independent work interspersed with social chatter. A series of individual interactions with students characterised the lesson, which was devoted to construction of a feature article and for some students to work on their investigative reports. Erin moved quietly about the room, but, spent considerable time with Mark and Get as they worked. In this lesson, Mark had completed researching the topic, prepared a plan for the report and was in the process of writing the recommendation section. He received support from Erin in terms of spelling, vocabulary and presentation of content. The following interaction reflects Erin's support of Mark terms of spelling and vocabulary:

- Mark: (typing aloud) 'I recommend that every person who works gets a meal break every 5 hours and if they do not get it they can sew the company'.
(He chatters quietly to himself) 'How do you spell sue?'
- Mark: Is that enough?
- Erin: Oh yes, S U E Sue. And get rid of that W.
- Mark: (Using spell check to make corrections) It's easy as that?
- Erin: It is actually, isn't it? Okay, right, if they sue the company what will that mean for the company, what will that cost them in time?
- Mark: Money

Erin also advised Mark on formatting and in the process incorporated suggestions on how to apply features of punctuation such as the colon. As Erin explained to Mark:

- Erin: I think we should do a bullet form, a list of all the things we could lose money from, from losing employees, so we could do **that colon thing**, we could lose money through maybe, and just do a list of what we could lose money from losing an employee. We could lose money through (directing Mark) lost, and then colon that, (waiting for Mark to catch up) lost then

colon. There we go, enter a couple of times, and we can do some dot points now, (pointing to the keyboard) so dot points are here (waiting for Mark to complete). You're a perfectionist. So, what's the first thing, money through lost training (student typing)? Maybe we could say lost money through training and experience (typing) because the person might leave. We could probably think that might happen.

This segment highlights the level of teacher and student collaboration that typically surrounded the construction of text. It is also indicative of a high level of support for Mark in the process of writing. In this exchange, and particularly through reference to Mark as a perfectionist, a compliment Mark readily accepted, Erin validated Mark's experience as the student writer. This was also achieved by the use of declarative statements when addressing Mark, such as *We could probably think that might happen* that were non-confrontational and collaborative. The use of colloquial language when referring to punctuation, where as writers we 'colon that' was reminiscent of the *Cheat's Guide to Writing* and *Confessions of a Lazy Writer*. Such practices validated the student writer and shaped the uncertainty and hesitancy of the reluctant writer into the typical writing experience. In this respect, Erin modelled herself as the uncertain writer, toying with words and ideas in search of meaning and appropriate expression.

Considerations that learning, whether orientated to written or spoken language, be embedded in 'real life' contexts framed much learning that took place in the class. The workplace constituted the dominant 'real life' context. Erin incorporated role-playing scenarios such as the business meeting and the exchange between manager and employee over safety.

Additionally, an investigation into learning activities in the class revealed a dominance of invisible pedagogic strategies. This orientation reflected Erin's rejection of what she described as authoritarian pedagogies. Rather, Erin preferred to adopt the persona of a facilitator, "facilitating rather than teaching from afar", who aimed to foster independence and confidence amongst her students. Students did, however, challenge this approach and for one student in particular, this point of need and supportive approach led him to challenge Erin with "You're supposed to know – you're the teacher". In this particular instance Erin responded by explaining to the student that "I'm teaching you how to go about things – I'm a facilitator – this isn't about stock taking".

Quite explicitly, Erin adapted the curriculum to make the content accessible, or in her own words *sexy* and *fun*. As Erin explained:

I was determined that they would see that this is more fun to know. It was that "so what? factor, Write this report, why? Why should we do this?" that sort of

sense. You've got to give them a reason for writing; it's got to be valuable in some way.

During interview, Erin described a major success of the year as being Mark's transformation from a student who had initially truanted from school, primarily to avoid English, to a student increasingly engaged in writing. Mark's growing confidence as a writer and his preparedness to concentrate on completing tasks led Erin to describe him as "being launched". This constituted for Erin, one of the "wins" of Year Twelve English:

My win this year is Mark and I saw his face and the pride in his face, and the fact that he couldn't wait to switch the computer on by about the third session to see what he'd written. And he'd got up to about two or three pages and it made sense to him as well.... But overall, he actually has found that he does enjoy writing and that he actually can write.

From Erin's perspective, this shift in attitude resulted from Mark's increasing opportunities for success and his shifting attitude from an alienated student to one who had evidence of his capacity to construct text. One of the strategies employed by Erin was to clearly itemise and identify stages of text construction so that Mark could also recognise these as separate activities. As Mark completed a series of stages towards construction of text, and under Erin's guidance, he resolved a number of difficulties he had regularly experienced, such as the inability to locate appropriate information and resources or adequately structure that material.

Additionally the *Cheat's Guide to Writing* (outlined in Figure 7.6) included a number of practices associated with writing. Presented to students as a series of stages of text production as outlined in Figure 7.7, it incorporated features of design, planning and editing. This production process was explained through comparison with computer games and association with various technical aids on the computer.

A cheat's guide to writing

TIP 1: Choose a note-making format that closely follows the final piece of writing

TIP 2: Reflect on assignment, what to keep and what to leave out of your writing. Categorise!

TIP 3: Brainstorm

Figure 7.6 A cheat's guide to writing

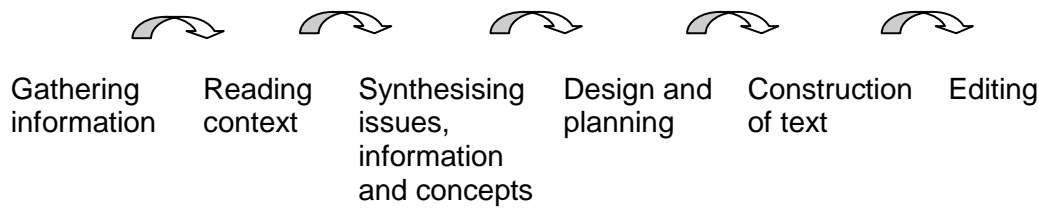


Figure 7.7 Stages of the cheat's guide to writing

7.4.2 *Editing with computers and support from Erin*

Students received support from Erin and used computers in all writing activities. As they constructed texts, students were encouraged to use computer templates to design and structure texts. There was an expectation that texts would conform to conventions of business writing and the application of contemporary business practice such as the formatted full block (Dwyer, 1999). For example, before constructing his report (a segment is reproduced in Text 7.2), Mark prepared a plan of his report on the computer to manage the large volume of material collected from research. He used a software thesaurus program to support his word choice.

Students learned strategies such as searching through keywords and phrases, collection of information and the navigation of official documents, such as legislation. Whilst using the computer, students had access to the tools of spell check and thesaurus, a practice strongly encouraged in the class. Additionally, the computer provided students with a level of independence. This practice provided the opportunity for students to engage in a number of tasks independently and to move between tasks, such as research, constructing written text and text design. As such, it facilitated the opportunity for movement between various modes such as the written and the visual (Vincent, 2007).

An examination of student texts and instructional practices at Alexander Heights also revealed modelling of editing and proofreading. The most commonly edited features identified on samples of students' texts were:

- choice and use of vocabulary
- application of abstract and technical terms
- formatting of text
- formal expression

Computers supported students to check vocabulary and experiment with new words and appropriate uses of capital letters. In the following example, Erin helped Mark to

use the Find and Replace component of his computer to use capital letters appropriately.

Erin: Make sure for every name you've got a capital letter as I think that's what that's trying to say as well (pointing to spell check highlighting). And do you know a quick way of doing that would be Find and Replace so go to edit, find and replace option, there it is. So you could go Blackie, we know that Blackie has got to be in capital letters so you could go replace

Student: How do you do that then?

Erin: This is particularly useful if you've got about 20 different things all the way through. And you can be confident that it's the right stuff. And it says do you want to search and yes?

In particular, student texts were edited to ensure appropriate levels of formality and social distance between writer and reader. At times, Erin replaced colloquial and simplistic terms used by students, and provided considerable support in formatting of texts, appropriate order of text, and applying the appropriate schematic structure. Erin's high levels of editing support reinforced her view that her students were unable to write and that was a matter of "can't do rather than won't do". They were also consistent with her view that students in this class needed to have "wins" and when given appropriate levels of support, would be "launched" into a willingness to write.

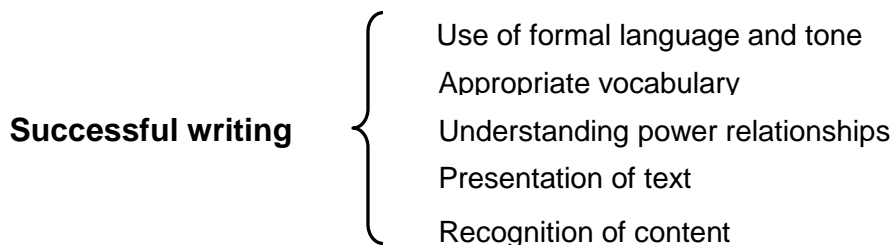
7.4.3 *The regulative environment – English and writing as 'values issues'*

The social environment in which students constructed text was in many respects highly moral, in that it provided guidance couched in terms of "values issues". This was reinforced in a number of ways. There was evidence of an overall concern with the social world in which the students participated, reflected through an orientation to the challenges facing students as active and productive participants in that world.

Additionally, students explored a number of issues, such as domestic violence, in terms of social justice and the values underpinning social attitudes. The capacity to actively support and protect oneself, for example through access to information on employment conditions, was a critical feature of classroom discourse and the selection of tasks. In terms of their personal lives, students explored available information about violence and the risks young men face. This was strongly associated with considerations of empowerment, examination of representations and understanding of social responsibility. The notion of empowerment was framed largely in terms access to information and knowledge, which in turn was dependent on literacy and language use. The capacity to engage in the world of work and to experience a socially just world was presented to students as ultimately empowering for young people. For this reason, students were encouraged to examine many aspects of the workplace, including

contractual arrangements, legislative obligations and workplace rights. Erin sought to engage student writers critically in the texts they encountered, the texts they constructed and discursive construction of social and workplace contexts. Students were encouraged to understand how they were positioned, particularly in an unequal world, and to demonstrate this understanding in their writing (Kamler, 1997).

An emphasis on social issues and values also influenced Erin's perception of successful writing. Successful writers were presented as aware that writing offered empowerment as they negotiated areas of their lives such as employment. In doing this, the successful writer was aware of the importance of understanding the context of writing. Additionally, successful writers used and expanded their vocabulary and recognised the importance of formal uses of language as contexts and situations demanded. Editing and proofreading constituted key aspects of successful writing as writers engaged in the ongoing processes of refining their work.



All students identified themselves as having weaknesses as writers. All summed up their difficulties as “writing in general” however, most articulated the areas that challenged them, such as the ability to produce appropriate lengths of text, or planning what to write. For students such as Chris, difficulties in spelling epitomised their weaknesses. Many however, were able to articulate their weaknesses more explicitly and described unique combinations of writing practices. With the exception of text structure, there was little consistency in students’ descriptions of the difficult aspects of writing. All students were challenged by the amount of writing that was required and with the exception of Get, did not associate difficulties with the types of texts they were required to write, or the linguistic demands of those texts.

During interview, Get described the challenges he experienced writing a number of texts, in particular the more complex texts such as the investigative report. He occupied a unique place in this class. Using the English language presented one of the challenges of his secondary schooling and as a result, Get studied two English subjects as a way of developing his proficiency. He viewed English as critical to his future success, where he aspired to teach primary students from non-English speaking backgrounds. In interview, Get described his frustration resulting from his weakness in

using grammar and sentences and his disappointment that he was not able to study academic texts such as the essay.

Mark appreciated the skills he learned in English. He described the value of learning to write formally and using a broad vocabulary. Mark expressed particular interest in the course and the text types and skills learned. Both he and Chris believed that enough was learned about the mechanics of writing and neither believed that writing additional texts would be useful. Chris had mixed responses to the value of learning to write workplace texts and described the value of such texts primarily in terms of gaining entry into employment. Students generally perceived the subject as challenging and associated success in the subject with the amount of effort students were prepared to make. As Mark explained, “You’ve just got to do your work in class and listen. If you don’t want to do it what’s the point of being there”.

7.5 Positioning students as advocates for social and workplace justice

7.5.1 *Writing at cross purposes - Mark’s feature article and investigative report*

An analysis of Mark’s feature article revealed how, at times, students write in circumstances where multiple social purposes are embedded in a particular genre and text. In Erin’s class, students wrote feature articles as responses to media texts. Mark’s feature article was a personal response to the issues explored in the unit and a sympathetic description of the central characters in the film *Australian Rules* (Goldman, 2002), one a young victim of domestic violence and isolation in a rural community, and Pickles who used drugs as a way of escaping personal problems. Mark’s feature article accounted for events in the film and the behaviours of the characters in terms of these central social issues. Throughout the article (Text 7.4), Mark positioned himself as a writer responding emotionally and sympathetically to the characters of the film, explaining the central character’s behaviour, particularly his substance abuse, in terms of his vulnerability and the challenges of his social and family environment. This is communicated in terms that are colloquial, and outwardly emotive, such as his description of the sources of Pickle’s substance abuse as *he was using weed to try and forget his dad, because his dad left him when he was a little baby so he doesn’t even know what his dad looks like*. This is also exemplified in Mark’s sympathetic description of the troubled Pickles as racist *Pickles is racist, but that’s only because he isn’t his own person he just does what everyone else does*. Mark explained this in terms of the

character's vulnerability to peer pressure, isolation and family dysfunction. This also positioned the reader to engage in considerations of the moral dimensions of the social issue.



Re do

Australian Rules

Rites Of Passage

Blackie is a very strong person he has very good moral judgment, Blackie's dad is a very violent man he wasn't a very good role model for his children especially not when he raped his wife, which shows he doesn't have much respect for anyone but himself, Blackie's dad is an alcoholic, Blackie protected his family from his dad, for example, when Blackie's dad was raping their mum Blackie took all the kids out side and slept with the chickens so the kids didn't have to hear their mum crying, Blackie moved on and didn't let his dad get to him like Pickles did you have to be a very strong person to move on from something like this, Blackie is a very calm person and never said

anything to hurt anyone he was very caring to his family, Blackie was a very good friend to Dumby he never put him down only encouraged him to keep playing football they were best mates even though the hole town was racist, Blackie was his own person he didn't care that everyone else was racist, he did what made him happy, he treated everyone equal and the same. Blackie went to Dumby's funeral even though his father told him not to go but he had no rite to say that Dumby was his best mate and he had to say bye to him.

Volume 1, Issue 1

Blackie, Pickles, Blackies Dad

Special points of interest:

- Blackie defeated his dad
- Blackie moved on
- Blackie has Good moral judgment
- Protect his family what his dad couldn't do
- Blackie isn't racist
- Good friend to Dumby

PICKLES HAS PICKED THE WRONG PATHWAY.

Pickles was always stoned, he was using weed to try and forget his dad, because His dad left him when he was a little baby so he doesn't even know what his dad looks like. He isn't growing emotionally because he's

smoking weed and drinking alcohol to try hid the pain for his dad but it is actually tearing him apart inside. He really needs to talk to someone about it. He's depressed all the time, but he has a good sense of humor but

that's just his way of coping with it. Pickles is racist, but that's only because he isn't his own person he just does what everyone else does.

his problems

Rites Of Passage	
Blackies life	2
Pickles life	2
Dumby	2

E1 ✓
E2 ✓
E3 H
E4 S
E5 S ↓ paragraph organization
E7 ✓

Text 7.4 Mark's feature article

Mark's report did not conform to the recognised and culturally framed generic conventions of the personal response or expository genre which is outlined in Figure 7.8 (Christe & Derewianka, 2008; New South Wales Department of Education, 1994). The article incorporated features of text description and comment; however, the generic conventions and discursive practices of commentary and judgement were restricted to discussion of the dominant characters and social issues. This took place largely at the expense of overall commentary on the quality of the film such as its appeal to audiences and technical conventions.

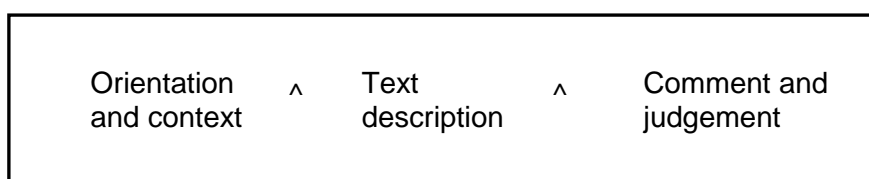


Figure 7.8 Schematic structure of the personal response

This was indicative of an attempt on the part of the writer to position himself as having a close social relationship with the reader (Burgess, 2004; Ivanic, 1998; Knain, 2005). This was achieved through repeated use of the third person pronoun *he*. Potential motivations of the central characters were expressed in personalised and almost colloquial terms, such as *actually tearing him apart inside*. This was highlighted in the depiction of Pickles as unable to develop maturely and to progress through socially sanctioned rites of passage, as reflected in terms of his *growing emotionally because he's smoking weed and drinking alcohol and to try and hide his pain for his dad, but it is actually tearing him apart inside*. It was also reflective of a narrative descriptive style that provided an insight into, and author's interpretation of, the vulnerabilities of the central character. Whilst students were exposed to stylistic aspects of the feature article, such as the short paragraph style, Mark struggled to maintain this and often transgressed into a narrative structure. This is indicated by the retelling of the central character's life through a largely descriptive outline of a series of events interspersed with explanations of the sources of Pickle's behaviour. In this respect, the article combined elements of informative and factual exploration of the world and expression of the imaginative world typical of narrative genres (Martin, 1985).

Embedding elements of the personal response in the feature article had strong ideological implications. The construction of a personal response, situated in a feature article, gave students an avenue for expressing personal interpretations and critical perspectives on social issues perceived as immediately, or potentially, relevant in their lives. This task also served to privilege meanings, in particular personal responsibility

and rights, and to accentuate the damaging consequences of certain social behaviours. Through the genre of the personal response, and impetus to construct opinions on issues such as substance abuse, students were encouraged to commit themselves to a moral perspective on the damaging effects of these behaviours and in this regard, their responses resembled the regulative discourses dominating the unit.

For a period of six weeks, Mark constructed an investigative report about a disagreement over the underpayment of a staff member in a large fast food outlet. Based on a simulated workplace situation, the report detailed the complaint against the company by a junior staff member, the legal obligations to members of staff and recommendations of action to resolve the conflict. Mark's report conformed to standard generic features and schematic structures of the investigative report as outlined in Table 7.7. Outwardly, the report reflected the dominant schematic structure where specific characteristics are described and classified (Macken-Horarik 2002).

Table 7.7 An outline of Mark's report

Schematic structure	Sample in text
GENERAL STATEMENT AND ORIENTATION	This report will investigate Chicken treat at Joondalup and employee. Mr Pizarna an employee of this branch did 2 hours overtime and did not get paid. To discuss how to avoid this issue from rising again.
DESCRIPTION OF ASPECTS = elements of recount	Mr Matthew Locke, head Manager of human Resources interviewed Christopher Pizarna of kitchen hand at Joondalup Chicken Treat, on the 21 st of March, regarding potential underpaid allowance...
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES Elements of recount	Mr Pizarna went to the Manager of Chicken Treat and told the Manager that: "I did not get paid for the 2 hours over time I did during this week. He asked me if I write it down on my time card and I replied that I did write it.
DESCRIPTION OF ASPECTS Incorporation of text from government brochure	The brochure supplied about <i>Unpaid Work: Work Experience and Trial Work</i> by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations states: (copy of paragraph)
RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	I recommend that every person how works gets a meal break every 5 hours and if they do not get it they can sue the company.
REITERATION	I feel that every person, especially young people going out into the workplace for the first time should do some research into under payment and there rights they have regarding meal breaks ect (sic). This is because I believe that a lot of young people are being used and are getting ripped off and they do deserve to be treated like anyone else would.

Although Mark's report was embedded with elements of the recount genre, they were subordinated to the dominant social purpose of the report. It recounted a series of events associated with a disagreement over payment for overtime, such as handling of the original complaint, which had contributed to the conflict situation. The report incorporated extracts of other texts, such as a letter, which recorded the original complaint to the manager regarding employment conditions. It also included text on legislative obligations regarding employment conditions, copied directly from a government website.

Such extensive embedding of text and generic features was indicative of the multiple purposes the text served (Devitt, 2004; Martin, 2002) which made it difficult for Mark to structure the text (Couture, 1986). Indeed, this lack of consistency was evident in fluctuations between business discourses represented in the text, such as references to employment practices and discourses associated with social justice. This inconsistency was particularly evident in the conclusion to the report, which appealed

to the reader's sense of 'rights' and 'fair play' regarding working conditions and contrasted significantly with other areas of the report.

I feel that every person, especially young people going out into the workplace for the first time should do some research into under payment and there rights they have regarding meal breaks ect. This is because I believe that a lot of young people are being used and are getting ripped off and they do deserve to be treated like anyone else would.

Mark's report concluded with a strongly moral claim for the rights of young people, and an expression of frustration regarding 'rights'. It was embodied as a concern for the welfare of young people in particular, who *in the workplace for the first time*, are entitled to be *treated like anyone else* and protected from *being used*. It was also a perspective that recommended empowering of students, and strategies such as research, as a way of informing young people of their rights. The use of highly emotive terms such as *ripped off* and *being used*, was intended to engage the emotive responses of the reader. They were, however, inconsistent with the linguistic features of the investigative report and orientations to technical vocabulary, social distance and formality in terms of third person reporting that typify the genre (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Smith, 1986; Schleppegrell, 2004).

7.5.2 *Putting the case for workplace safety through writing*

In interview, Chris chose to discuss his investigative report, a sample of which is presented in Text 7.5. Chris was the only one of the three students interviewed who was comfortable writing in the role of manager. On this occasion, he reported on a health and safety incident in a landscaping business, playing the role of company manager. The report recounted details of the behaviour of an employee who had worked under the influence of drugs and alcohol and suggested actions surrounding occupational health and safety. The text conformed to the schematic structure of the investigative report and was embedded with recounts of the behaviour of the young employee and incidents in the workplace. At the level of schematic structure, Christopher's report conformed to accepted conventions of the investigative report. His introduction, for example, included subheadings of issue, purpose of the report and outline as displayed in the following text.

Text 7.5 Chris' report on a workplace safety issue (Sample only)

INTRODUCTION:

ISSUE: The issue is that Brett Bradshaw is coming to work stoned all the time and sometimes even drunk.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: The purpose of this report is so that Brett is aware that he is in danger of losing his job if he does not see the issue at hand and do something about it and changes his arrangements during working hours.

OUTLINE OF THE ISSUE: The issue is that a few weeks after taking on Brett Bradshaw as a full-time landscaper he begun to turn up to work heavily stoned from marijuana and on the odd occasion come to work under the influence of alcohol.

In this report, Chris sought to position himself as authoritative by using abstract and technical terms that described activities in the workplace. At times, he adopted a strongly authoritative tone and high levels of modality, which positioned the employee at the centre of the complaint as deficit, reinforcing the tone and confidence of authority. The report established that the employee was in a vulnerable position as Chris outlined in the introduction that one purpose of the report was to reinforce that the employee *is in danger of losing his job* and was required *to do something about it*.

The use of exophoric references was a way for students to position themselves as confident and competent writers negotiating complex social situations. This was particularly evident in students' negotiation of workplace practices through written text, such as application letters and requests for pay rises, drawing on references to legislation to position themselves as confident and knowledgeable writers. It also assisted students to position themselves as authoritative in terms of the content of the text, such as in Chris' report on drug use at work, where references to broader social consequences of drug taking helped to position him in that role. Chris' report on drug use in the workplace incorporated text from a government agency website and integration of broader social issues in discussion of drug taking in a specific location. In order to address adequately the impact of drug use in a simulated local workplace, Chris drew upon necessary levels of context knowledge, which he transferred into the report.

This served a number of purposes: it provided a source of knowledge that positioned Chris as (a) competent in understanding the topic, (b) capable of constructing text that included business discourse, and (c) having demonstrated an understanding of business and workplace culture. To an extent, incorporating information gathered from other sources lent authority to Chris' writing. In interview, Chris described the process

of constructing this report as involving a significant amount of research into legal issues associated with drugs, alcohol and safety in the workplace. He relied on advice from Erin as to the locations of possibly information. He also relied on examples of reports and text segments accessed through Erin's website. He did not plan the report in any way and in his words "typed it straight onto the computer". He relied on advice about structuring and formatting the text, however felt quite confident in language use including vocabulary, sentences and spelling without relying on advice from Erin.

7.5.3 *A sense of disempowerment – the struggling writer*

In interview, Get described his experience of being in the class as largely an uncomfortable one. He described feelings of frustration as he struggled with the language of the class and dislike of the texts he was required to construct. With the exception of the summaries and note taking tasks, texts he associated with formal and academic writing, he described the experience of writing workplace texts as both tiresome and challenging.

Get chose to discuss a report investigating trading hours for which he constructed a scenario and company where, in the role of manager, he examined the possibility of extending business hours and the impact this might have upon staff. Get's report indicated that he struggled with a number of the conventions and linguistic features of the report genre. Most significantly, his report moved among description of aspects of extended trading hours, the potential impact on the company of extending trading hours, a description of potential conflict and the importance of avoiding conflict in the workplace. The report demonstrated difficulties in differentiating between conflict that resulted from behaviours in the workplace scenario and broader understandings of conflict.

Table 7.8 Schematic structure of Get's report

Schematic structure	Elements in text
ORIENTATION Introduction	Introduction to the company Issue of increased business hours Purpose of report
ASPECT Legal requirements	Legal requirements
RECOMMENDATIONS	Extend work hours Offer benefits for staff
REITERATION Conclusion	Team work as a solution to potential conflict
ASPECT The issue	The need to extend work hours A source of potential conflict Resolving the conflict
ASPECT Effect on employees	Positive effects of longer hours, increase remuneration and benefits Negative effects of less family time and more administration

Get understood the importance of using abstract and technical vocabulary in the world of business. He positioned himself as knowledgeable about the world of work through terms such as society and positioning of the issue of extended hours as having implications for the workplace, for society and customers. Throughout the report, Get applied phrases associated with the business world and business report such as *course of action* and *plan of action*.

Nevertheless, Get relied upon particular words and phrases heavily and in this respect, his report revealed a restricted vocabulary. As the opening paragraph highlights, Get used the word *issue* a number of times. Only gradually, after referring to the issue on more than one occasion, did Get describe it in any depth. Similar patterns were evident in the report, where for example, having introduced the concept of a *course of action*, it is repeated twice in the same section.

Text 7.6 Get's report on business trading hours (Sample only)

Introduction

Our Car 2 Car company and employees have a problem involving everyone in the company. The issue is one of the most common issues occurring around the workplace, society and customers. This is an issue about hours and about extending trading hours for our company. This may affect everyone in different ways, depending on their preferred working hours.

This issue has been raised by one of our employee who would prefer to work an extra hour. We could extend the company time to suit the customer hour. Some customers may prefer to shop in the afternoon or the evening. The purpose of this report is to investigate whether some new customers want to shop around evening and benefit our employees, with more future employments. This report will research and discuss the extended hours issues and our employees.

The issues that decide to discuss may bring a lot of problems to our employees. Some employees would prefer and some would not, this may make a negative problem to the company, but also it may be a positive issue.

From an interpersonal perspective, he did not maintain an authority associated with the position of manager and positioned himself in an equal and friendly relationship with the reader. This low level of modality resulted from the use of a plural first person pronoun used to describe *our employees*. In interview, Get described difficulties he faced using the conventions of formal written text. He also described general difficulties he faced applying the conventions of writing as opposed to the conventions of spoken text and when selecting appropriate words and phrases, particularly technical terms. Additionally, he described the value of Erin's support in writing the report in terms of "what language to put in the report" and:

The first thing is how to write a report and after that the grammar and the writing form, how to write the report, how to use the language in the report because talking and writing are different so to know that.

Get's challenges in accommodating the role of manager were representative of the dilemma facing students as they were encouraged to position themselves in positions of power without the requisite generic and linguistic skills to fulfil the task. These difficulties were compounded further as students, particularly Get and Mark, endeavoured to understand the nature of the social role itself and to negotiate the multiple social purposes of the texts they constructed.

Erin edited Get's report in detail, indicating that Get needed support with a number of language functions such as capitalisation for appropriate technical terms and use of nominalisations. His report indicated a high level of difficulty with verb usage, in particular application of simple and complex verbs and past and present applications of verbs. Get struggled to construct sentences beyond the simple sentence level, which compounded his struggles with using verbs at the clause level; where additive conjunctives were primarily used as connectives. In this sense, Get was dependent upon Erin to produce text at a level that would ensure successful completion of work.

In interview, Get described his discomfort about the process of writing reports and disappointment about the quality of the final product. He explained that he had not known what to write and that he had been confused during various stages of the process. He did, however, appreciate the support provided by Erin, particularly her reviewing of various drafts, and felt encouraged to continue working on the report. He explained: "My English is not that perfect and that's why it took me a bit to learn". However, Get appreciated the opportunity for joint editing support, where Erin and Get worked collaboratively to identify errors in the work and to discuss and receive advice on how he might improve.

7.6 Preliminary discussion and conclusions

The social environment in which writing took place exerted considerable influence on what students constructed and the resources they employed in doing so. Two distinct discourse roles dominated the construction of writing identities: the writer as worker; and the writer as a socially empowered individual. At one level, the worker was a discursively constructed notion which accentuated responsibilities; that is, a worker with the independence, knowledge and literacy capabilities necessary for economic participation in the contemporary world (Gee, 1999). In this environment, students learned to construct texts, such as the application letter, that encouraged them to take responsibility for securing and managing their own successes in the world of employment. However, as the worker in this class was capable of examining conditions of employment, and through access to information able to understand and negotiate rights and responsibilities, the workplace became a site of critical understanding, examination of rights and responsibilities and struggle over power (Gee, 1999; Rehm, 1994).

In this case, writing practices were shaped by three discourse orientations: the English discipline area, a vocational emphasis on communication skills and the workplace and contemporary conceptualisations of literacy. Features of content were reflective of the

English discipline area, in particular elements of media and literature through study of the novel (Sumara, 2004). Literacy was designed to support students deemed not to have met the requirements of the school systems in previous years or achieved acceptable levels of performance in subject English (Bernstein, 1990). In this respect, literacy was positioned as a critical instrument for overcoming the impact of inequality and issues of social justice these students were likely to face in the world as adults.

Instructional practices within the class were also informed by discourses of relevance and authenticity. The emphasis on “meaningful scenarios” involving conflict situations was associated with real learning, or as described by Erin, “deep learning”. To an extent teaching strategies reflected official pedagogic discourses of relevance, practical learning, and authenticity valued in the vocational sector and reinforced in the policy documents such as *Our Youth, Our Future* (CCWA, 2002) and curriculum documentation (CCWA).

Evident in the class, particularly in the remedial sessions, were elements of a skills based pedagogy concerned with the development of mechanical skills of writing and text construction (Christie, 1991; Locke, 2005). There were clearly features of process pedagogies that emphasised the processes of planning, construction and revision. This was particularly evident in the *Cheat’s Guide to Writing*, which reinforced a methodological approach to writing (Christie, 1999; Ivanic, 2004). Additionally, there was an emphasis on the social purposes and contexts of writing, and on conformity to broader schematic structures. However, as outlined earlier in the chapter, instruction in writing and construction of text was often less rigorous at paragraph and linguistic levels. Evident in the class was an orientation to writing practices and strategies associated with a critical literacy approach to writing (Kamler, 1997). This was indicated by a strong emphasis on the transformational power of writing (Locke, 2005) through writing about social justice and rights and responsibilities.

This case study afforded a unique opportunity to analyse the teaching of a vocationally oriented subject embedded in the English subject area. In this sense, the subject represented an integration or convergence of discourses from differing fields, each with distinct approaches to language, writing and pedagogy (Farrell, 1997; Lewis, 2005). Writing instruction in this class also contained elements of an emerging social practice paradigm (Ivanic, 2004). Clearly evident in this class, and reflective of the model, was an emphasis on writing embedded in various social actions that were enacted in the class. This was also evident in an emphasis on ‘real-life’ or simulated contexts and the practices and activities typical of those contexts. One of the overriding concerns of the class, that writing serves communicative purposes (Ivanic, 2004; Paltridge, 2002), was representative of this emerging model. Additionally, there were elements of an

ethnographic approach to writing where students examined the literacy practices of the contexts in which they were likely to participate and which emphasised places, events, practices and material resources of writing. As described by Ivanic, it was characterised by tension between pedagogic practices, which were orientated to the development of resources at the level of linguistics and genre, and practices that accentuate understanding of real life contexts.

The central focus of this chapter has been to explore the learning environment in Erin's class and interpret its discursive construction of writing identities. Whilst a number of students struggled with the demands of writing complex texts such as the report, and 'socially complex' texts, such as the request for a pay rise, they were nonetheless concerned to position themselves as capable writers. For some students, this was emphasised in a capacity to position themselves as competent in text construction, conformity to genre or through the capacity to format and present text. In this regard, all students were concerned to construct authentic texts. Combinations of texts and presentations of texts, such as the range of genre types, and in particular the large number of transactional types of texts, were critical in shaping the learning environment.

CHAPTER EIGHT: A Comparative Analysis of Discursive Positioning of Student Writing Identities at Woodlands, Altona and Alexander Heights

8.1 Introduction

This chapter, outlined in Figure 8.1, utilises the results of a cross case analysis to identify similarities and salient differences across the three cases. It provides an overview of the ways writing identities were constructed through the genre and linguistic resources made available by them and presents one of the central findings of the thesis, namely, that all three environments were highly social environments and discursively framed distinct notions of the student writer.

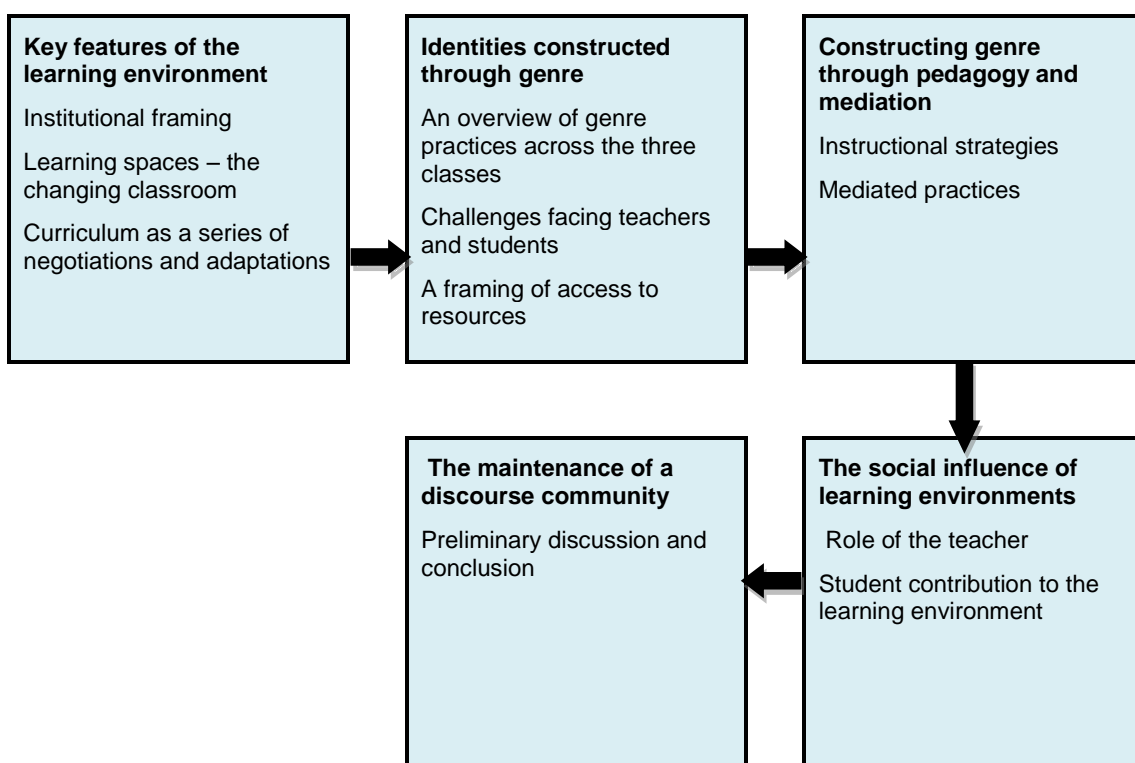


Figure 8.1 An outline of Chapter Eight

8.2 Key features of the learning environment

8.2.1 *Institutional framing*

The learning that took place in all classes was influenced by the institutional contexts that framed them. Curricula, schools and English departments exerted influences over the choices made by teachers. In all three cases, the demands of vocational education programs and workplace learning outside the school were inconsistent with the timetabling structure of the traditional secondary school environment. Disparities between programming of VET subjects, attendance at courses outside the school and workplace experience limited student participation. In all schools, there were students who had enrolled in the subject as part of a vocational program; however, some students had undertaken the subject after struggling with the more academic subjects and did not always participate in vocational programs.

This project took place at a time when increasing the school leaving age and encouraging completion of twelve years of schooling were key political agendas in Western Australia and were in the process of being formalised in policy. This changing policy and legislative landscape was apparent at the school level. In Erin's class all students, and, in Barry's class, at least fifty percent of students, had returned to school because they were unable to find employment. In these instances, students attended school largely to meet family expectations and as a substitute for either employment or a full time position in a vocational program outside school. In this respect, the school was a point of mediation between policy agendas concerned with expanding school participation and the reality of the classroom where teachers adapted to poor patterns of attendance and limited student engagement. This impetus for increased school retention clashed with the reality of student absences, and, at times, exerted a considerable influence over choices teachers made.

Alternatively, students not actively engaged in the world of work, had limited experience of the dominant context framing the subject. Students, who did not attend workplace experience or vocational programs, had limited exposure to contemporary workplaces. For some students this resulted in restricted access to knowledge about behaviours and the place of writing and text in any workplaces.

In some instances, teachers found themselves responding to conflicting agendas. For Barry, this represented a dilemma between conforming to the school's intention to retain students in school and enable pathways for students into vocational courses and the English Department guidelines on assessment submission dates. Barry and Frances also described the marginalised position of this subject within their own departments, which resulted in a level of defensiveness about the status of a vocational

subject within English departments. Francis expressed concerns that assumptions were made about the degree of difficulty of tasks associated with the workplace. She felt that a lack of information about the subject, particularly at the departmental level, undermined teachers and students in an environment where teacher capacity and status were associated with subjects taught. Such attitudes were indicative of a hierarchical environment where certain subjects within the discipline of English represented valued traditions of culture, forms of text construction and language use, and others clearly lay outside this tradition (Caughlin & Kelly, 2004).

8.2.2 *Learning spaces – the changing classroom*

The investigation incorporated an exploration of how features of the physical environment, such as the availability of learning spaces and access to technology shaped writing practices (Kress et al, 2005). It identified that in all classes writing took place in multiple spaces consisting of a teacher's 'homeroom', and rooms dominated by the computer, such as computer laboratories and, at Alexander Heights, the 'hub'. Teachers described the opportunity computers provided to help students construct finely edited and well-presented texts. All teachers were encouraged by students' positive responses to the potential for them to write over extended periods, and for integrating text design and research with writing. Teachers' experiences of the computer as a source of student confidence and positive attitudes towards writing motivated this selection.

Typically, students worked on a variety of tasks, such as researching or drafting whilst in the laboratories. On most occasions, there was minimal contact between teacher and the class as a whole. One-on-one communication, often initiated by the student, was the most common form of instruction, learning and support. In the computer laboratories, students had substantial levels of control over the progress of their work because these environments offered independent learning that, outwardly, positioned teachers in largely support roles.

Access to multiple learning spaces, such as the classroom and computer laboratories, allowed teachers to draw upon differing pedagogical strategies. In Frances' case, for example, the visible and authority-based pedagogies she applied in the classroom contrasted with the student centred practices taking place in the computer laboratory. For Erin, weekly classes dedicated to 'remedial writing' used similarly visible pedagogies in which time was tightly monitored, content was knowledge based and student activities clearly framed. Classes conducted in the 'hub' and computer labs reflected more invisible pedagogies where students largely determined the tasks they worked on, the level of support and direction required, and at times their own levels of

engagement. Such actions indicated varying levels of teacher agency and confidence in terms of negotiating the curriculum on behalf of their students. In all three classes, extensive use of the computer contributed to a level of ambiguity surrounding notions of the classroom and spaces for learning. For example, students had ready access to information, texts and images as a result of access to the Internet. Additionally, students brought resources such as examples of reports, excerpts from legislation, photographic images and symbols into the classroom. As such, the outside world was regularly brought into the experience of the classroom. In many respects, this activity challenged the discursive construct of the 'class' and space of the 'classroom' where student experiences outside the class and resources collected outside the school, were brought directly into the classroom and into text.

Teachers' use of such technologies located writing within the contemporary policy landscape and wider field of social and educational discourse. Discourses of learner autonomy, informality of learning and both practical and tacit learning largely motivated by need echoed discourses associated with lifelong learning, as expressed in the state policy of *Our Youth, Our Future: Post-Compulsory Education Review* (CCWA, 2002). Practices in the labs were consistent with the policy's emphasis on information and communication technologies and reverberated with notions of the adaptable and flexible worker. They conformed with principles of lifelong learning, the knowledge economy and the new work order, all of which advocated autonomy, tacit application of knowledge and responsiveness to change through their engagement with information technology.

The physical environments were also reflective of other influences at work in these classes. For example, Barry's computer lab was full of symbols of production such as sets of computers, printers and large working tables. Equally, the podium and student desks arranged in rows, were indicative of the visible pedagogies governing much of Frances' interaction with her students. Writing in Erin's class at Alexander Heights took place in three distinct locations, two of which favoured social interaction between students: the homeroom arranged in small groups of tables, and the hub, where students worked at computers either independently or in small groups.

8.2.3 *Adaptation, negotiation and resistance to curriculum*

As was described in Chapter Four, the curriculum document framed writing in terms of outcomes, tasks and texts and encouraged integration with other subject areas. This allowed for distinct versions of English which were reflected in the diversity of structures across the three classes. An examination of the course outline distributed in

Barry's class, and confirmed by classroom observations, showed the course structured around the construction of a series of tasks and text types. This task-based structure afforded students a level of autonomy in choosing text types, features of text at the ideational level and in the pacing of the program. Students were encouraged to write in "each and every lesson, if possible". However, in both Frances' and Erin's classes, structured learning programs imposed some stability on a loosely framed curriculum, whereby the curriculum unit was imposed upon a largely outcomes and task based curriculum. In both classes, units of study composed of a dominant concept, provided the unifying framework for much of the writing taking place and applied to content associated with both traditions of English and vocational education.

The unit structure brought some stability and cohesion to a subject framed loosely in terms of abstract notions of English and writing. It provided both a way of consolidating the construction of text in terms of social purpose and specialised forms of knowledge (Kress, 2002; Yates, & Collins, 2010). It consolidated larger actions, such as customer service and understanding of social issues. It provided an avenue for greater teacher authority (Kress et al., 2005), as opposed to authority residing in the curriculum document. This structure compensated for a lack of content in delivery of the outcomes based structure for writing tasks.

Teachers' strategies for adapting the curriculum reflected their priorities in terms of what should be learned and how this should take place. Generally, Woodlands adhered to the dominant regulative impetus of the vocational orientation of the curriculum, whilst reducing the demands of the curriculum in terms of analysis. Altona's response to the curriculum was characterised by enhancement of the curriculum, particularly inclusion of academic literacies. Emphasis on social, communication and empowerment elements dominated Erin's adaptation of the curriculum which represented a compromise between what she considered to be the 'needs' of the students and the demands of the curriculum.

Additionally, teachers employed a range of strategies to meet the demands of the curriculum. Incorporation of student experience in both the work and social worlds made the processes of text construction more accessible. Individual teachers foregrounded different elements of the curriculum, for example, an orientation to one page transactional texts, or an emphasis on functional forms of writing.

Teacher perceptions of student ability and needs provided much of the impetus for adaptations of the curriculum, such as Barry's view that students were unable to engage in analysis and their capacity to work but not to think (Barcan, 2004). Frances adapted the curriculum to reinforce her perception that whilst most students in the class struggled with English and language, they were capable of achieving reasonable

writing standards if given the right environment and adequate support. Erin was influenced by her view that her students were amongst the most vulnerable and needy members of society.

Such adaptations need to be considered in the light of the institutional environments in which the classes were placed and the teachers' own strategies for negotiating official discourse. Teachers chose differing paths by which to adapt the official curriculum: for Barry, this meant accentuating and minimising certain features; for Frances, it was adhering to the curriculum and extending certain features; and for Erin, it was following an official pathway, and reconfiguring of the curriculum. Such actions revealed varying levels of teacher autonomy and confidence in negotiating adaptations and resisting official frameworks.

However, in the daily operation of the classroom, the curriculum played a minimal role as a source of authority. Rather, authority resided with the teachers who provided access to forms of participation and resources necessary for writing. Teachers, through their interpretations and transformations of the curriculum, played a significant role in adapting learning and writing to notions of participation. Adaptations also reflected teachers' perceptions of successful textual, writing and language practices. All teachers extended student writing beyond the curriculum's emphasis on operational short texts. Teachers did this differently: Erin reinforced elements of design in the construction of text, while both Frances and Erin positioned the writer as having critical capability. Teachers also achieved this by constructing social roles beyond the operational, such as the role of director and manager at Alexander Heights. Frances' construction of the academic essay challenged expectations of participation in text and the cultural positioning of text. This was a form of resistance to the subjectivities, and forms of initiation (Christie, 1997) into the world of work, and into subjective and hierarchical forms of economic participation.

Additionally, teachers' attitudes to learning and knowledge influenced their pedagogic choices. Curriculum documentation advocated that a "range of different learning contexts will provide students with the opportunity to grasp theoretical concepts". Erin and Barry favoured learning through practical application, and development of tacit knowledge as a way of accessing knowledge. Such sentiments were expressed in Barry's concern that students learn "real life type writing rather than academic writing". Orientations to practical learning for these particular students also encouraged Erin to incorporate role-plays, as a way of learning through doing, and embedding the construction of text in broader social actions. However, teachers' recontextualization of the curriculum also reinforced pedagogic discourses, particularly those embedded in policy statements such as *Literacy for All* (1998) and *Our Youth, Our Future* (2002)

which prioritised literacy as a critical feature of economic participation. To an extent, both Barry and Erin enacted a literacy version of English. At Woodlands, a perspective of literacy that accentuated citizenship and social and personal development was largely excluded in favour of a view that favoured capability and knowledge for the workplace. At Alexander Heights, orientation to social participation and empowerment reflected an emancipatory view of literacy. To an extent teaching strategies reflected official pedagogic discourses of relevance, practical learning, and authenticity valued in the vocational sector and reinforced in the policy documents such as *Our Youth, Our Future* (2002) and curriculum documentation.

8.3 Identities constructed through selection of genre

8.3 1 An overview of genre practices across the three classes

In all classes, a multiplicity of factors, as outlined in Figure 8.2, shaped the selection of genres. Selection of texts largely conformed to the guidelines of the curriculum. In many respects, text selection was determined by the needs of students, in particular their need to secure employment, participate actively in their social environment and, in Erin's class, meet the demands of their own personal lives. Whilst in each class there was an orientation to social participation not articulated in the curriculum, the discursive and social construction of the workplace dominated the enacted curriculum.

Texts were brought into the learning environment in a number of ways and from different sources. Teachers brought texts, often sourced from textbooks and other support materials as examples. In Altona, samples of texts, such as the order form, were actual documents used by the school. In all classes, students analysed texts available through individual research of business and government agency websites. Students at both Altona and Alexander Heights conducted website searches, and having identified texts such as employment application forms, analysed these texts for their own production. Additionally, students at Altona and Woodlands were encouraged to source texts from their own workplaces. These texts provided some currency in terms of the textual and writing practices in actual workplaces, and the opportunity to observe the effectiveness of those texts in contemporary workplaces. Both practices gave students some influence over the types of texts entering the classroom.

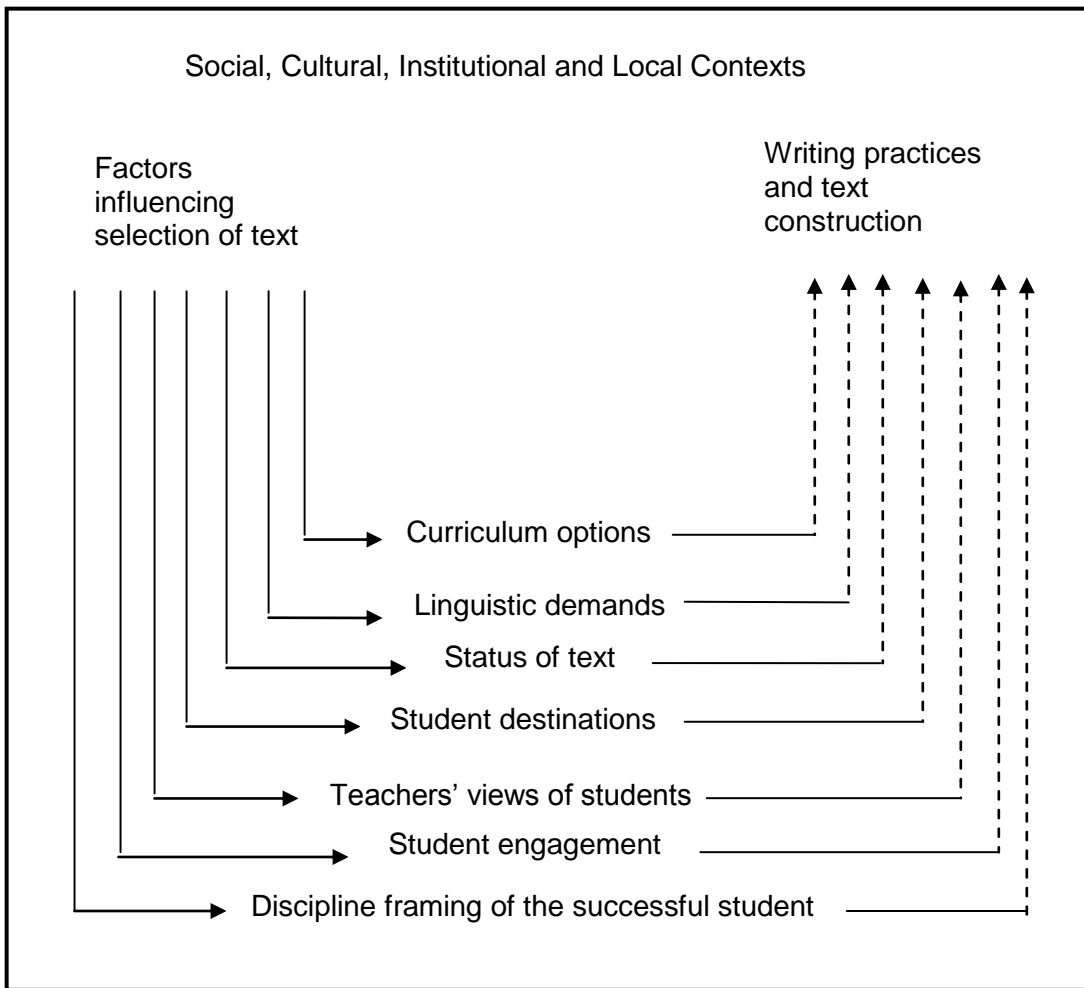


Figure 8.2 Reasons for selection of genre

In each class, students produced at least two letters, which were drawn from a number of registers. These ranged from letters requesting information about employment opportunities or a job interview, to letters of complaint. Whilst these texts appear as one page transactional texts, there was recognition in all classes of the potential complexity of writing these apparently simple texts. Francis described the challenges that these “socially demanding texts”, posed for students. However, she also argued that these texts were challenging for all writers and believed that students could successfully construct them with scaffolding the appropriate support and modelling of the generic features. Along with Barry, she identified the fact that learning how to construct texts that served specific social purposes, and often quite delicate purposes, was beneficial for students.

Selecting texts provided a powerful way of bringing discourse into the classroom. The large number of workplace texts was a pivotal mechanism for prioritising discourses associated with economic participation and relationships located in work contexts. In this sense, selection and presentation of text was complicit in reinforcing the

hierarchical nature of many contemporary workplaces and divisions within society and as such mediated pathways into the future.

8.3.2 *Challenges facing teachers and students*

In some instances, discourses from business, subject English and social justice were represented in the same text. Such multiple purposes resulted from the social and pastoral functions that some texts served. This was particularly apparent in the reports written in Erin's class where business discourses were interspersed with more socially critical discourses, often associated with social justice. Such multiple purposes placed contradictory demands upon students. In some instances, this resulted in incompatible language use, such as that used in Daniel's report, which oscillated between abstract language appropriate to analysis of the feature film and personal opinion on the events at the time.

Such practices led at times to a weakening of understanding of genre and resulted in the presentation of genres as containers for a variety of ideas and linguistic resources. This placed the young writer in a contradictory position, where he or she was required to meet complex demands of language, and text construction, with fewer resources than might be the case for other English students. Such an approach amplified the potential for superficial levels of understanding and restricted the potential for transference of knowledge and capacity to apply skills in multiple contexts. This was clearly the case on those occasions when students were presented with confusing models of genres and texts.

8.3.3 *A framing of access to resources*

8.3.3.1 *Meaning making through ideational resources*

Writing in these three classrooms was characterised by exposure to an eclectic array of information sources. Students accessed information, knowledge and discourse through research conducted over the Internet, acquired in their studies in other subjects, in their workplace experiences, as a result of their own investigations and through teachers' presentation of information and knowledge. This investigation of content highlighted varying levels of control over collection of information. In all three classes, teachers maintained control over knowledge associated with film and documentary studies and therefore were largely responsible for transferring and framing cultural studies discourses. However, teachers exhibited far less control over content associated with the workplace component of the course and relied upon students to access relevant material through research and the knowledge acquired in their own workplaces.

This study also highlighted the value of personal experience and private knowledge in these classes. On some occasions, students' experiences formed much of the content of a written text, and demonstrated how schools, subjects and individual classrooms can be locations where school knowledge and other knowledge valued in the lives of students converged. This resulted in significant crossing of boundaries between institutional and everyday knowledge, and between business and personal knowledge (Kress 2000) which in turn, contributed to shifting notions of schooled knowledge. It validated students' experiences by bringing them into the sphere of schooled and institutional meaning and thus into the public domain. This was a way of recontextualizing students' personal knowledge and experience into the realm of valued school knowledge (Bernstein, 1999b; Kell, 2003; Moss, 2001). They repositioned the student experience into the world of work, blurring the world of work and the institutional, and also blurring the boundaries between the public and the private.

As Kress (1994), Iedema (2003) and Meurer (2004) highlight, these movements may have significant ideological consequences as, for example, the personal experience of sport became aligned with economic activity and participation. Equally, such movement can be associated with the regulative interests of particular teachers, exemplified by broad considerations of rights and responsibilities being moved from the area of social issues to behaviours in the workplace at Alexander Heights. Additionally, at Woodlands, the knowledge and skills acquired as part of sports and personal hobbies were translated into marketable workplace skills.

As Halliday (1985), Brandt (1983, 1986) and Knain (2005) have highlighted, successful writing demands the ability to interpret and reproduce elements of context. In all classes, context represented a resource necessary for effective writing, and critical if texts were to achieve their purpose. Such knowledge was an important part of the interplay between the immediate, often simulated, situation and the broader cultural context. An understanding of context, and features of content, as opposed to background, complemented writing practices. Such approaches were clearly indicative of a shifting emphasis from context as background to the capacity to interpret context, and transform features of context, as a central resource of writing and textual practice.

High levels of external references reflected this consideration of context. Much text construction relied on references to the external world of the text, which resulted from use of students' personal experiences and significant levels of research through the Internet. At times, students prioritised representation of context over text construction. In a number of instances, such as report writing in Erin and Barry's classes, students drew heavily on external referents, such the war in Iraq and information about worker's

legislative rights to the exclusion of considerations of text construction. However, this use of exophoric references was also a way for students to position themselves as confident and competent writers negotiating complex social situations. This was particularly evident in the students' application letters and requests for pay rises. It also assisted students to position themselves as authoritative in terms of text content, such as in Chris' report on drug use at work, where references to broader social consequences of drug taking helped position him in that role. In all classes, the capacity to construct simulated local contexts required the ability to interpret, and to an extent represent, broader social contexts.

8.3.3.2 Framing access to interpersonal resources

In all classes, students were presented with apparently simple texts which often captured the nuances and subtleties of communication in contemporary Western cultures and workplaces. Texts, such as the written job application or request for a payrise required knowledge of context and communication in terms of how workplaces operate. These texts demanded an understanding of shifting notions of formality and informality that included, for example, the use of first person voice whilst maintaining appropriate social distance. It reflected the importance of positioning by balancing social distance and first person voice in job applications. It demonstrated the capacity to negotiate interpersonal relationships through text and to draw on a range of linguistic resources to build relationships. More importantly, engagement with the interpersonal aspects of writing such as modality and social distance encouraged students to consider how they represented the "self" in writing and what sort of writer and worker, citizen and individual they were able to present through text.

For teachers and students, strategic concepts such as formality framed successful writing. The concept of formality distinguished everyday uses of language from business and academic writing and was recognised by students as "a new way of doing things". It was one of the most challenging practices for young writers and one of the most valued, regularly reinforced through classroom interaction and editing. It both explained and reinforced discourses associated with business and academia by providing a lens through which students could differentiate between language uses. It did, therefore, encapsulate a number of language and presentation practices, such as use of objective voice, appropriate use of personal voice and relevant technical and abstract vocabulary.

Despite the high levels of computer usage, particularly at Woodlands and Alexander Heights, written language and print dominated text construction. Texts were routinely constructed using computers and technology, which provided the opportunity to incorporate various modal forms. Use of multiple modes was, however, limited to print

text, as students did not construct text for technological communication such as email or the Internet.

8.4 Constructing genre through pedagogy and mediation

8.4.1 *Instructional strategies*

In all classes, learning about writing was a largely social endeavour that was embedded in a range of communication practices. In Barry and Erin's classes one on one communication reinforced the importance of relationships and rapport between teachers and students. In both classes, reviewing student work took place through talk and interaction. In Barry's class, students appreciated the opportunity to initiate support and to obtain support at point of need. In Altona, students valued scrutinising and observing language use and paragraph construction through classroom modelling. At Alexander Heights, democratic and collaborative approaches to learning found expression in teamwork and team activities such as brainstorming.

Similarly, these were environments where students and teachers valued the demonstrating and modelling of the writing process. Across all classes modelling supported writing development through strategies embedded in the writing production process, strategic practices and concepts such as formality. Additionally, students were actively supported as teachers demonstrated their own ways of structuring texts, applying the conventions of stages of text and using vocabulary and discourse.

To varying extents, all teachers accommodated the reluctant writer. Concerns about the relevance of writing, student engagement and motivation intertwined with considerations of pedagogy and instruction. Teachers were concerned to give students a reason for writing beyond the evaluative demands of the subject. They applied a range of strategies. For both Erin and Frances this resulted in adapting the curriculum to expand the media study task to include the essay and the feature article, and in doing so, incorporate features of film analysis and social issues.

In all classes, and particularly at Woodlands and Alexander Heights, allowing students to select topics and text gave them some agency over writing. For some students, this level of control over selection of text, content of text, and certainly the opportunity to bring personal forms of knowledge and experience into the classroom, fostered responsibility in the production of text. Incorporating student text in modelling of writing, and presenting examples of students' work positively, provided the opportunity for input into writing.

Additionally, choices about instruction and pedagogy were influenced by teachers' attitudes to learning and knowledge. Curriculum documentation advocated that a "range of different learning contexts will provide students with the opportunity to grasp theoretical concepts". For these particular classes, both Erin and Barry favoured learning through practical application, and development of tacit knowledge as a way of accessing knowledge and building skills. Such sentiments were expressed in Barry's concern that students learn "real life type writing rather than academic writing". Orientations to practical learning also encouraged Erin to incorporate role-plays as a way of learning through doing, and embedding the construction of text in broader social actions. Such views of learning proliferated in all classes, particularly Barry and Erin's classes. It was reinforced in Barry's class by an emphasis on the number of texts constructed. Such practices reinforced the practical learner and the practical student in "a practical world".

8.4.2 Mediated practices

A myriad of strategies mediated writing; however, the most notable were forms of social mediation, technological mediation and collaborative writing. Most writing of simple texts was embedded in broader social activities such as maintenance of customer relations, conducting a meeting or applying for employment. Writing also took place within the context of simulated social roles, and successful writing measured in terms of the capacity to act the part of the company director, or OH&S Committee member.

Computers provided scaffolding support in text construction and particular features of language use. They supported editing of basic vocabulary, grammar and spelling and support in text construction through programs such as Publisher. Access to field knowledge and information was facilitated through use of the Internet and mediated, in some instances, by information provided from government and other agency websites. The computer and Internet offered students access to a myriad of visual symbols that were incorporated into production of texts ranging from those in corporate packages, feature articles and flyers advertising events. In this sense, technology facilitated the integration of writing with other semiotic modes and systems.

Much of the writing that took place in these classes was a collaborative endeavour where students and teachers constructed text through various forms of joint construction and reviewing. Across the cases, the two most competent writers, Daniel and James, consistently reviewed and edited their texts. They were both confident in their writing, comfortable in seeking help when needed and in providing examples of their work to their teachers. Daniel in particular had internalised editing practices,

eliciting support when needed and on other occasions, reviewing independently.

Across all the classes, the most commonly edited features were sentence construction, formal language and schematic structure.

Different pathways to independence were apparent. At Woodlands, the emphasis was upon editing, conferencing and technology. At Altona, it was based upon modelling of choices and editing. At Alexander Heights, editing and technology were the major sources of support. In all classes, the review of student texts was a central strategy for improving student writing. Whilst this practice improved the quality of a number of texts, it blurred the distinction between the work of teacher and student. Most certainly, the degree to which teachers edited texts, sometimes up to six times, brings into doubt the extent to which texts were clearly the work of students. Whilst scaffolding support was strong in a number of areas, text construction generally was heavily mediated, raising questions about how easily the students would make the transition from dependent writers to students who could easily reproduce texts. In these classrooms, students generally developed understanding of, but not always control over, processes and strategies of writing and in this sense, were limited to passive realisations or understandings of the conventions of particular texts.

8.5 The influence of regulative environments

Learning about writing took place in dynamic social environments where the teacher moulded the student writer. In every class, motifs of participation framed the student writer as an aspirational learner. In Barry's class, motifs of employability and performance in the workplace dominated much classroom discussion around writing; for Frances, however, the aspirational learner was associated with maturity, the potential for achievement and the value of student experience. Discourses of remediation, empowerment and social justice constructed the aspirational learner in Erin's class. Such powerful discourse patterns (Christie, 2001) shaped the possibilities of the writing roles available in each class, and privileged particular concepts of the writer. No class, in this respect, allowed students to choose writer's roles and offered very particular discourse roles (Smidt, 2002, 2009). Overall, these were not environments where alternative positions were offered to students (Bourne, 2002).

From two teachers' perspectives, positive interpersonal relationships between students and teachers were crucial for success. Both Barry and Erin described relationships with students through concepts such as "rapport, getting on a personal level" and "a friendly working atmosphere". Barry identified himself as a teacher able to build supportive and guiding relationships with students which he viewed as necessary given their

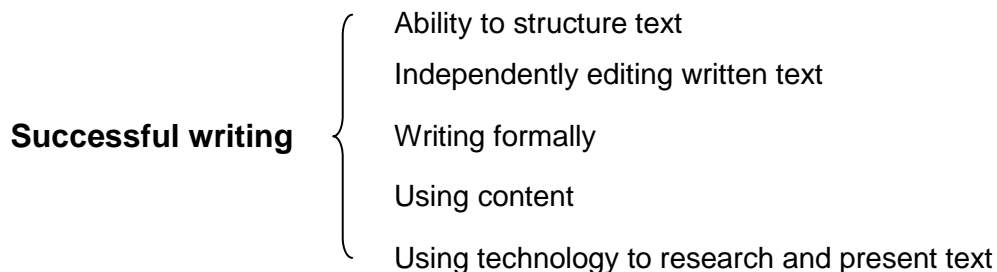
resistance to school in general, and for some, English in particular. Barry believed that in this class, authoritative methods were ineffectual. For Erin, perceptions of students as socially disadvantaged, needy, and receiving few wins, framed her communicative style and pedagogical strategies. Concerned not to alienate students already disengaged from school, both teachers accommodated some degrees of disruptive behaviour and social talk. In contrast, Frances emphasised social order and control within the classroom, framing maturity as a feature of writing and allowing only expressions of maturity. The monitoring of discussions reinforced Francis' authority and facilitated orderly interactions between teacher and student.

Teachers brought into these classrooms professional identities, unique experiences of the subject area and perceptions of particular groups of students. In all classes, successful writing was presented as a largely language and print based textual practice. Successful writing meant command of content, such as workplace practices associated with Occupational Health and Safety, social issues of racism and conventions of film. Successful writing also consisted of specific linguistic practices, such as appropriate uses of technical and abstract language, which represented this knowledge, and strategic practices such as formality. Students were consistently encouraged to see successful writing as the capacity to make judgements about language and content knowledge as the classroom practices, such as discussion and editing of work, modelled and reinforced these processes.

Teachers brought their own expectations of the successful student writer to these classes. Teachers' conceptualisations of successful writing did not represent significant points of difference. Rather, points of departure lay in the way the principles of successful writing were taught, and the expectations of students' capacity to control them.

Each day, students brought a myriad of experiences into the daily life of the class. With them came twelve years experience of school, of English and of writing in the classroom. Their identities as writers, as students, and as learners accompanied them, influencing their attitudes to writing tasks and learning about writing. Unlike Daniel (Woodlands) and James (Altona), who saw themselves as successful writers, most considered their writing as a weakness. For these students, research and the organisation of information, practices associated with writing, were strengths. A few summed up their difficulties as "writing in general", however, most articulated the areas that challenged them, such as the ability to produce appropriate lengths of text and to plan what to write. For some, constructing paragraphs, spelling, punctuating and structuring of texts were particularly difficult. For Kristina, the most challenging aspect of writing was translating material from the Internet into her own words.

Students had their own informing concepts of successful writing, and their own views of what it meant to be a writer that they brought to the classroom and to individual acts of writing (Hyland, 2010; Ivanic, 1988, 2006). In a number of instances, these were consistent with those of their teachers. Students generally described successful writing as the capacity to construct and refine texts through reviewing processes. Additionally, they viewed successful writing as that which achieved a level of formality, and which presented the self as a particular type of writer. They also believed that successful writers were able to use information, knowledge and texts from a number of sources; and had the ability to use technology to convey meaning, to select appropriate vocabulary and to format and present text. For a number of students, therefore, successful writing was linked to the use of technology. In summary, students' perceptions of successful writing may be represented thus:



A myriad of factors converged to construct the student writer. In each class the students was writer as worker, and to an extent, the independent worker. To varying degrees, and more particularly at Alexander Heights, the student was writer in society, voicing concerns about social justice and representing the empowered writer. Similarly, the academic writer, the investigator of culture, echoed throughout students' texts. Students largely conformed to the writing identities presented to them. Confident students, such as Daniel resisted the preferred workplace identity through his insistence on critically analysing *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

Students' perceptions of themselves as writers were shaped by the texts they wrote and the ways they positioned themselves in that process. As discussed previously, Daniel positioned himself as a critical thinker, and writer capable of representing the conventions of the report genre, which separated him from the rest of class. All students, to varying extents, positioned themselves as knowledgeable about the world of work, reflected in discourses and vocabulary associated with work and business.

8.6 The maintenance of a discourse community

A complex educational setting comprised of discourses from the subject English area, the Vocational Education and Training sector and contemporary dialogues on literacy framed writing in these classes. In all three, teachers' opinions and structuring of the writing experience, demonstrated some affiliations with discourses in the subject area. Teachers also responded to against emerging discourses emanating from the vocational sector and literacy. In each class, the incorporation of multiple influences and perceptions about textual practice, subject content and learning, resulted in distinctively local versions of subject English.

Such diversity highlights the predisposition of the subject area to incorporate multiple discipline areas (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Kress, Howie & Sawyer, 2006, Macken-Horarik, 2009) and a number of discourses on textual practice and pedagogy. Teachers' approaches to the subject area were located in differing traditions and orientations to those traditions. All classes were characterised by limited representation of personal growth and cultural heritage traditions of the subject. This resulted in marginalisation of some valued traditions of the subject area, such as study of the culturally valued text, and in two classes, academic forms of writing.

Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (1990, 1996) helps to explain how English classes are shaped in part by the significant discourses and practices informing their discipline and teachers' adaptation of those discourses in the classroom. Each teacher reinforced discourses of writing instruction and perceptions of particular types of writers. English faculties not only represented discourse communities with established social practices and conventions, teachers and students of the subject also occupied a particular position within the school. Each of the classes reflected a positioning of English in the context of broader school communities where teachers adhered to, and to varying degrees implemented, school priorities, and negotiated the delivery of English in the context of these environments. In this respect, this study highlighted how pedagogic discourses that are adapted by schools may find their way into particular classes and in the process be recontextualized into particular forms that reflect teachers' attitudes. To an extent, teachers' implementation of the curriculum reflected their own responses to demarcations and issues of status within the subject (Caughlan & Kelly, 2004; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995).

Teacher attitudes largely prioritised writing as a set of skills or competencies, an orientation reflected in the skills based models of subject English (Locke, 2005). In all classes, vocabulary, particularly the uses of technical language, punctuation and sentence construction were influential in framing successful writing. This was described by Barry as *very much your basics of grammar and punctuation, sentence structure*

and paragraphing... more to the point, very much functional writing. Erin framed successful writing in terms of remedial writing that emphasized vocabulary, punctuation and sentence construction. Equally, for Frances, syntax was prioritised, emphasising good writing in terms of purpose, *writing.... where they achieve their purpose.... their syntax must be basically spot on to be ... to be able to write to understand.*

Additionally, all drew upon, to varying extents, an emerging emphasis on cultural studies in the subject (Sumara, 2004; Turner, 2007), reflected in interpretation of the feature film and the political documentary, and construction of the feature article. English, in these classes also represented a point of departure from the prominence of critical literacy in contemporary discourses. It was actively rejected in Woodlands as beyond the capabilities of the students, and unnecessary in terms of student destinations. At Altona, aspects of critical literacy featured in analysis of the media text, although limited to an understanding of the role of filmic conventions in positioning viewers. In all classes, students examined text construction, particularly features in samples of workplace texts, and the devices used to position readers. However, it was concerned primarily with replicating strategies in their own text construction, such as the persuasiveness of the feature article, the tenor of the resignation letter and presentation of corporation.

Framing of the written response to a media text was indicative of how tensions between the discourses associated with writing in English, VET and literacy were resolved. One of the largest writing tasks in the course, the *Written Analysis of a Media Text*, highlighted some of the difficulties that emerged from an environment composed of multiple discourses. The indefinite nature of this task allowed negotiation between various discourses. For example, production of an investigative report as response to the contemporary documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* drew upon discourses of cultural studies, particularly in examination of the representation of the events in the popular media, and incorporated, not always with approval, personal responses to the text and events at the time. In this way, Barry drew upon discourses of both the film analysis and organizing features of the investigative report. The film analysis and essay in Frances' class drew exclusively upon discourses of cultural studies and academic writing dominant in the English area. For students in Erin's class, cultural studies, an emphasis on social issues and an ethical perspective framed construction of the feature article.

Such adaptations also reflected teachers' perceptions of successful textual, writing and language practices. Frances' construction of the academic essay challenged expectations of participation in text and the cultural and social positioning of text and writers of those texts. This constituted a resistance to the identities and forms of

initiation (Christie, 1997) into the world of work and into subjective and hierarchical forms of economic participation inherent in the curriculum. There was resistance to discursive orientations to economic participation inherent in the curriculum. In each class, teachers acted as gatekeepers of pedagogic discourse by supporting, resisting and adapting features of the curriculum and other forms of official discourse. All teachers supported the largely vocational and workplace orientation of the curriculum, although Frances challenged the divide between the vocational and the academic by making the academic essay one of the centre pieces of the course. Reflecting the priorities of the discipline, teachers responded largely by incorporating, albeit to varying degrees, discursive, textual and linguistic orientations of the English subject area.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the salient similarities and differences in the construction of writing identities in these classes. It highlighted how each class represented distinctive responses to curricula and incorporated discourses about successful writing in unique ways. Each combination of discourses had a unique impact on the construction of student writing identity. This resulted partly from teachers' filtering (Gee, 2002, 2004) of discourses of subject English as they adapted to the needs of their environments, and their own perceptions of what their students could achieve. It also stemmed from teachers' perceptions of successful writing and the ways writing should serve student needs and the needs of the community. Additionally, a comparison of student attitudes and construction of text revealed that students positioned themselves as writers in various ways: through the use of technology, through adoption of concepts and practices such as 'formal writing', and by adopting and at times resisting the identities offered to them.

Chapter Nine, the final chapter of the thesis, provides some concluding comments about the relevance of this study. It highlights the complexity of the English subject area and the array of discourses that increasingly constitute its core business. Additionally, the chapter explores how the context, which shaped the writing undertaken by students in these classes, was influenced by both local acts of writing and by broader social and cultural forces from beyond the classroom.

CHAPTER NINE: Conclusions and Recommendations regarding Writing Genre and the Discursive Positioning of Identity

Writing identities are relational entities (Ivanic, 1988, 2006), in that they do not exist in isolation, but in social activities and relationships, ways of learning, forms of text construction and within physical environments.

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has sought to identify and elucidate the ways student writing identities are discursively positioned in contemporary English classrooms. It sought to do this initially by examining the types of texts students constructed and some of the genre and linguistic resources they employed in this process. Additionally, the thesis sought to delineate how particular learning environments and specific writing practices shape writing identities. More specifically, it focused on the ways learning environments construct particular identities and roles for writers through the semiotic resources made available in those environments, and the ways students were positioned to appropriate and use those resources. It sought to do this by asking the overriding question:

What environmental and discursive features shape the writing identities of senior secondary English students?

The thesis concludes with an overview of the key findings emerging from the research. Initially, this chapter reviews the key features of the environments in which students wrote and were positioned as writers. Second, it delineates the dominant writing and genre practices identified in these classes. Third, it examines the implications of the different types of identities constructed for student writers. This section of the thesis also reiterates, briefly, some of the key observations of Chapter Eight. It concludes with an overview of the methodological implications and a series of recommendations.

9.2 Key findings of the study

9.2.1 *The impact of the learning environment*

This section presents the findings in response to the key question: How did policy, curriculum and classrooms discursively shape writing and genre practices? This research has drawn attention to the ways in which learning environments determine semiotic practices such as writing, and the availability of the semiotic resources that enable these. The research findings support the view of Brand and Clinton (2002) and

Kostouli (2005a), that the framing of learning environments as contexts begins in locations far removed from the classroom and for that reason, a contextual or social semiotic study of learning environments demands a broad interpretation of social and cultural context.

The influence of state policy

In each of the case studies presented, policies such as *Creating the Future* (Carpenter, 2004) brought social and cultural values into the classroom through school priorities such as literacy, academic achievement, pastoral care and vocational education. At Altona, literacy discourses pervaded the school through established literacy programs. At Alexander Heights, a pastoral care program supported students remaining at school through Years Eleven and Twelve, many of whom had patterns of truanting and poor behaviour. At Woodlands, an extensive vocational education program was designed to support students into further education or vocational courses.

Infiltration of national policy

All three English teachers in this study were influenced by literacy discourses, reflected during this time in the *Literacy for All Policy* (DETYA, 1998), which framed literacy as a requisite for social and economic participation. There were parallels between the dominant national and state policies and teachers' opinions, which revealed a culture of school and teacher responsibility and incorporation of the notion of literacy. , Discourses surrounding literacy, and public concerns about literacy, infiltrated the English subject area and teachers' classroom practices (Bernstein, 2000). In this respect, education policy had positioned students to be particular types of writers before they entered the classroom. Additionally, the study revealed the overlaying of discourses within the English discipline that added to the complexity of the subject area, an observation also made by Beavis (2006), Kress, Howie and Sawyer (2006), and Green (2004, 2006).

The ideological consequences of curriculum

This thesis highlighted Kress' (2006) view that the English curriculum formalises more than knowledge, information about texts and forms of communication. It also relocates, consolidates and legitimises ideologies and discourses; frames access to particular genres; and importantly, serves to ideologically position both teachers and students. *The Vocational English* (CCWA) curriculum was an ideologically imbued document. It framed the dominant form of writing as the construction of workplace documents, which positioned the student writer as a worker capable of basic, rather than more complex

communicative skills (Gilbert, 2001). Students were not necessarily given access to valued genres of the subject area (Coe, 2002; Johns, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2004). Moreover, only general terms framed lengthy texts; for example, descriptions of the *Written Presentation* provided very few guidelines about the genre and semiotic resources needed for the successful production of these texts. The lack of guidelines afforded teachers the freedom to select from a broad array of texts that students might construct. This had significant consequences for these students, as curriculum that is lacking in specificity about the text types to be constructed has the potential to trivialise writing practices, a point argued by Christie and Humphries (2008) and Christie and Derewianka (2008). Broad parameters, as found in this curriculum, are open to a myriad of interpretations, resulting in texts that may not reflect the standard conventions of particular genres, or that simply serve as 'containers' of content.

Shaping students through physical spaces

The educational spaces in which the teachers and students operated were not neutral. They presented possibilities for meaning making that reflected institutional values of the contemporary school and reflected teachers' predilections towards the needs of particular students, and what and how students should learn. Teachers' pedagogic practice was enacted through the layout and adornment of their classrooms. Social and interpersonal relationships were fostered through symbolic markers (Iedema, 1996; Iverson & Duveen, 2005; McHoul, 1990) of teacher authority and student acquiescence. For example at Altona, students worked in an ordered environment with very little spontaneous interaction, a high level of teacher monitoring and an emphasis on listening as Frances spoke in forms of learning best described as the informal lecture. The physical aspects of these learning environments thus contributed to the semiotic resources made available to students (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2005a; Kress, Jewitt et al., 2005).

Expanding the notion of classroom

This research has also brought into question traditional understandings of the classroom given the somewhat fluid nature of the environments in which the students wrote, constructed genre and learned about both. The learning environments extended beyond the classroom walls. Government sites located on the Internet and student workplaces, for example, provided content and examples of texts that students utilised as they constructed various texts. In a number of instances, students' interests were also drawn upon and reshaped into text construction, and vocational content. Additionally, some students wrote in multiple locations. For example, the students at Alexander Heights worked in the traditional classroom, the hub where they had access

to computers, and the computer laboratory where they access to more sophisticated software programs.

9.2.2 *Contradictions associated with the presentation and construction of genre*

This section of the chapter presents key findings in response to the question: What writing practices were evident in the focus classes?

The complexity of simple texts

This thesis has revealed that apparently simple genres identified with operational levels of workplace participation, often demanded the use of complex linguistic resources to identify contextual demands of writing. Whilst texts such as the application letter and request for a raise may not be lexically dense, or even demand extensive use of abstractions or technical language, they demand sophisticated uses of interpersonal resources associated with both formal and informal writing. Such texts present an anomaly in the English area, and indeed in the area of genre and text interpretation, where the complexity and demands of text have been viewed largely in terms of the use of abstract language resources. Successful construction of these texts, however, demands the construction of an authorial voice, presence and social distance with the capacity to negotiate delicate, and at times hierarchical social relationships.

Hybridity and a lack of textual authenticity

Hyland (2002, 2010) and Beaufort (1999b) have alerted researchers to the potential for genres to not only aim to achieve more than one purpose simultaneously, but also to have conflicting rhetorical aims. Difficulties emerged for many of these students as they were presented with complex texts serving multiple and often incompatible purposes. At times, these multiple purposes resulted from teachers' regulative concerns, such as considerations of social justice incorporated into the director's report on workplace safety. It also reflected some of the challenges of writing outside areas of social experience such as imitating or enacting the company director.

A number of texts were presented and constructed with very loose interpretations of generic structure and extrapolations of stages of genre (Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2009). Genres, particularly in the longer texts, were not clearly defined. All teachers emphasised understanding of the generic conventions of the shorter texts such as the letter by presenting texts at the levels of purpose, schematic structure, and stages of text, but the longer texts were not approached with the same degree of rigour.

Accessing but not embracing technology

One of the challenges of embedding business writing in the school curriculum is the complexity of presenting students with contemporary and emerging textual practices. While the use of the modern business letter has declined and been replaced with more instant forms of communication such as email, website interaction and even text message, these shifts in communicative practices were seldom presented to students. Although they were exposed to a variety of business letters representing a range of purposes, and types of audiences, there was little recognition of technological communication practices used to achieve similar outcomes. At times, this placed school practices at odds with practices in contemporary workplaces. Whilst all students constructed job application letters, and in Erin's class had completed employment application forms, they did not examine or use electronic job applications that were becoming standard practice in a number of industries, and formed the basis of one student's current job application.

Despite the availability of computers in all classes, there was minimal uptake of electronic communication for the purpose of workplace communication. When provided with the opportunity to select email to communicate with customers or staff, students were reluctant to use it. Whilst students consistently examined texts on websites, none used emails to conduct business transactions. There was, however, significant emphasis in classes on presentation and recognition of the importance of design, and the communicative potential of these. The findings of this study, that technology supported presentation and formatting of text, and the inclusion of visual images and scaffolding support, highlighted the lack of attention to technology as a communication tool. This clearly orientated business writing in these classes to the construction of print based texts.

Genres reflected teachers' social agendas

The combination of selections of genre at the level of curriculum and in classroom practices reflected both Schleppegrell (2004) and Christie's (2004a) contention that genres act as gatekeepers, framing access to a range of discursive and linguistic resources. In each class, a unique set of resources was presented to students, which they appropriated and transformed with differing levels of expertise. With the exception of Frances' teaching of the essay, students in these classes were effectively excluded from academic discourses associated with senior English and thus locked into particular pathways, and into access to particular cultural meanings (Martin & Rose, 2008).

Genre – an emphasis on content

Some practices within these classes did not encourage an understanding of conventions of genres at all levels, particularly at the linguistic level (Christie, 2004a; Christie & Derewianka, 2008) and at the level of stages of text, nor did they facilitate the transference of knowledge and skills from one situation to another (Beaufort 1999a; Beaufort 1999b). Much of the learning about writing did not extend beyond largely ideological meanings, interpersonal meanings and ideational meanings dominated by concerns over content and correct uses of vocabulary.

Construction of genre as a strongly mediated practice

Throughout the classes, writing was a mediated practice. Overall, writing and text construction were presented to students as collaborative and iterative practices. Extensive editing of student texts, with up to six reviews done by the teacher independently or in collaboration with the student, reflected this orientation. Various forms of collaboration and mediation supported aspects of text construction, including mapping the demands of task, planning and conducting research, text design, construction, and editing. It is then unsurprising that a number of students described teaching strategies and support from their teachers in personalised terms, such as 'helping'. For most students, collaborative writing in the form of joint construction of text, teacher modelling of particular aspects of text construction and editing of text, provided a certain level of security. Collaborative writing also reinforced teachers' priorities, such as use of appropriate vocabulary or an emphasis on sentence structure. In this respect, a transition to independent learning was not always achieved, and whilst students recognised the demands of particular registers and genres through terms such as 'formality', they were not always able to independently realise these in their own writing.

9.2.3 *Complex student writing identities shaped by a myriad of factors*

This section provides an outline of key findings in response to the question: What writing identities were students positioned to affiliate with in these contexts?

This thesis recognised that a myriad of factors consolidated existing identities and introduced new ideas of what it means to be a writer. In the three classes, students wrote in environments that were locations of complex human interactions, attitudes and values (Bourne, 2002), where they were positioned to be particular types of writers through an array of social practices and forms of text construction (Davies & Harre, 1990; Hyland, 2010; Smidt, 2005, 2009).

The impact of broader social and political influences on construction of student writing identities

The study showed that institutions, teachers and students construct writing identities in response to social, political and technological circumstances. At the time of research, students wrote in an environment where government agencies and schools strove to accommodate a growing cohort of students completing twelve years of school. One key strategy was to offer largely vocational courses to students not planning to attend university. This work-based curriculum provided an array of text types and genres designed to reflect those found in contemporary workplaces. The curriculum document, in emphasising the importance of context, and allowing teachers to incorporate students' workplace experiences and knowledge, enabled the workplace to enter the classroom. It offered a point of interaction between the school environment, vocational courses and the workplace, and in doing so, located students' writing in broader social and cultural processes (Jones, 2008, 2007; Gilbert, 2001).

Identities shaped and reinforced through affiliation with teacher-imposed discourses

In all three cases, students largely affiliated with the writing identities offered to them. Students acknowledged the importance of writing and text construction as workplace skills. In this respect, students associated the notion of writer with the worker. Whilst students recognised the value of writing in their future occupations and in future studies, they essentially adopted the subtle discourse patterns (Christie, 2001) of their classes. For example, two of the three students in Barry's class accepted his emphasis on writing for the workplace. In Frances' class, students generally accepted academic forms of writing, such as the essay. In Erin's class, students wrote in an environment, which privileged the notions of social justice and personal and institutional responsibility, notions which her students accepted without challenge. With only a couple of exceptions, students adopted the writing identity their teachers had chosen for them.

Varying levels of resistance

Beyond this outward appearance, however, some students demonstrated various forms of resistant, negotiated and discordant writing identities. Daniel, at Woodlands, resisted the motif of the writer as worker, preferring instead to draw upon notions of the writer as critical thinker. Some students also negotiated writing identities by accepting elements of the writing resources offered to them. Kristen, for example, accepted the need to write to secure employment, but did not value the texts presented to her. Additionally, at Alexander Heights, Get largely rejected the workplace orientation of the course and its associated texts, preferring a greater focus on language, grammar and

writing such as the construction of summaries. Three students in the study rejected the discourse roles offered to them and maintained their established or 'patterned' ways of seeing themselves (Smidt, 2002, 2009) as ambivalent writers (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010). These students were largely disengaged from the activity of writing and whilst they acknowledged its value as a workplace skill, they did not perceive themselves as writers with particular levels of ability or interest.

The potential for change

While some students were able to resist the identities chosen for them, others were able to change their perspective of themselves as writers, by embracing the opportunities presented to them. Thus, this study revealed the potential for changing identities as students aligned themselves with particular discourses and attitudes (Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007). Two significant examples emerged. At Altona High School, Bryony embraced essay writing with trepidation and finished the unit with confidence, expressed as 'this has been easy...'. Through a combination of highly scaffolded lessons and support from her teacher, Bryony constructed an essay that incorporated content associated with the narrative literary tradition and film studies, and knowledge of the academic register. At Alexander Heights, Erin identified Mark as one of her successes, describing his increasing engagement in writing as one of him being 'launched'. Throughout the year, Mark had transformed from a student who had truanted to avoid subjects such as English, to a student who had constructed complex texts such as the feature article and report, and actively sought the support of his teacher as he constructed these texts.

Writing identities influenced by the construction of genre

Student writing identities were influenced by the genres constructed, the social actions surrounding them and the discourse roles they were offered (Smidt, 2009). Discourse roles offered to students reflected the very general role of the writer as worker. More specifically, these incorporated the role of job seeker, manager and employee. Additionally, students were offered the opportunity to engage in and explore these roles in a number of industries that might represent their future pathways, such as sports coaching, plumbing and jewellery making. At Altona, students were offered the discourse role of the academic writer through the academic register. Students at Alexander Heights explored the role of manager and social commentator with a particular focus on social rights and responsibilities. In all classes, teachers incorporated discourse roles in ways that modified the curriculum, whether to restrict aspects of critical literacy, to incorporate academic literacies or to emphasize social

rights and responsibilities. Within each class, however, students were offered prescriptive discourse roles that were clearly framed in terms of behaviours and construction of associated texts. It was only through forms of resistance and negotiation that students diverged from these.

Students construct identities through language patterns

On one level, the use of repetitive and distinctive language patterns (Hyland, 2010), helped construct and reinforce student writing identities. Various forms of content were reinforced through abstract and technical language (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin, 2007). This was particularly apparent in vocabulary and nominalisations associated with employment, workplace conditions, narrative and filmic conventions, customer service and social justice issue.

It was in the area of interpersonal positioning, however, that the most profound transformations of students' writing were observed. For many students, understanding of formal writing represented both an increased understanding of writing, and an increased level of knowledge. It also represented a shift in what it meant to be a writer, which Mark described as "it's a different way of looking at it I guess; I would never have thought to write it like that before". It represented not only learning of language techniques, such as interplay of first and third person voices, it also represented strategic uses of language. For many students this represented a significant shift in application of language use as they became increasingly aware of the demands of audience, and of representing the self in texts such as the job application. In this sense, there were transformations as students positioned themselves as assured writers.

Whilst a number of students struggled with the demands of writing complex texts such as the report, and "socially complex" texts, such as the request for a pay rise, they were nonetheless concerned to position themselves as capable writers. For some students this was emphasised by positioning themselves as competent in text construction and particularly through formatting and presentation skills. In this regard, all students were concerned that texts "looked right". For students, most of whom also studied computer subjects, this provided an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in this area. In this sense, students such as Daniel, and Bryony, sought to represent their knowledge in the area of media and prowess in specialist language associated with it.

Student identities shaped by teachers' affiliations

Student writing identities were shaped by their teachers' own affiliations with the discourses of the English subject area and selection of particular discourses for their

students. Each class was characterised by a distinct configuration of discourses surrounding writing and strategies for teaching writing. In Barry's class, writing was located against a predominantly skills based interpretation of subject English which incorporated features of an emerging social practice model emphasising context and communication. It supported the framing of writing as a workplace competency. Orientations to skills based, genre and critical and cultural discursive approaches typified English in Frances' class, which reflected rigour in text production and some emphasis on linguistic features. At Alexander Heights, an orientation to literacy, and discourses of social participation and individual empowerment justified the inclusion of remedial support and writing of texts that challenged social values and attitudes. It supported writing as a way of empowering vulnerable students. As such, students wrote in environments where teachers filtered (Gee, 2002, 2004) subject discourses, and in doing so, semiotically marked particular texts as significant (Iverson & Duveen, 2005).

Ethical considerations also influenced teachers' decisions about what discourse roles and genres should be made available to students. All teachers were concerned about public perceptions of the role of schools and of English teachers in ensuring that students had a fundamental level of literacy as they left school. In this respect, teachers saw their role as one of repairing the failings of the school system and addressing the impact of these failings on individual students (Bernstein, 1996; Bernstein, 2000; Bernstein & Solomon, 1999). Additionally, teachers used motifs that were imbued with ethical and moral expectations to frame the successful student. All teachers constructed students as aspirational learners, that is, as individuals with goals and plans for the future. In Barry's class, this was framed in terms of employability and performance in the workplace; in Frances' class in terms of the writer as achiever and designer; and in Erin's class as an empowered individual able to negotiate the challenges of their working and personal lives.

9.3 Methodological implications and issues

The study's findings have accentuated the need to engage in rigorous analysis of the learning environment that moves beyond the descriptive to identify how it discursively shapes writing identities. In doing so, the study incorporated a broad interpretation of the notion of context that took into account Brandt and Clinton's (2002) view that it be viewed as a network of Adriane threads connecting the broader social and cultural influence imbibed in policy, curriculum and genre with local environments. To do this,

the study incorporated a detailed examination of the institutional framing of writing in curriculum, school priorities and structures, and the English department. The research also revealed the changing nature of the learning environment and the methodological challenges this poses.

The study sought to identify the interplay between broad cultural concepts of context and the immediate local contexts. To achieve this, an ethnographic engagement with the classroom, teachers and students delineated key environmental features. In order to classify dominant writing and genre practices in the classes, the study identified practices and the ways they provided access to resources. Integrating this complex network of factors demanded a unifying framework. This was achieved through the notions of the discourse community (Beaufort, 1999a; Hyland, 2010; Swales, 1990) and genre (Christie, 2002a, 2004b, 2005a; Macken-Horarik, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Martin, 2001, 2002, 2009). The concept of the discourse community, however, is vulnerable to loose definition and lack of clarity as what constitutes a community cannot always be easily delineated. To avoid this, an understanding of discourse as a multilayered phenomenon was used.

Bernstein's (1990, 1996) concept of pedagogic discourse also helped focus the research on the functioning of discourse in education systems and within particular classrooms. Studies of discourse communities lend themselves to the 'rich' descriptions of the ethnography (Geertz, 1973; Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005). However, this approach can lead to analysis that constitutes nothing more than a series of descriptive scenarios and cameos which represent the lives of teachers and students.

To avoid this, concrete analytical devices that could capture the details of writing and genre construction were used. The Sydney Schools' clearly defined notions of genre based on the framing of purpose, structure and staging of text, and which included examination of a sample of linguistic resources were employed. Additionally, to identify commonalities in the ways writing and genre were represented and enacted at various levels, this study specifically focussed on the selection, presentation and construction of genre.

The purpose of this was to direct attention quite specifically to the ways identities were positioned in both the classroom and in the broader social environment. The concept of discursive positioning (Smidt, 2009) provided a framework by which to explore the ways students were conditioned to behave in particular ways. Ivanić's (1998) model of writing identity as constructed through forms of ideational, interpersonal and textual positioning also supported the analysis. This facilitated the integration of 1) the notions of resources in Halliday's semiotic framework of text construction, 2) the operations of

discourse, 3) the identities imposed upon students and 4) their own agency in either accepting, negotiating or resisting the identities presented to them.

One of the key challenges of this research was gaining access to classrooms for a sustained period of time and thus utilising aspects of ethnographic research. Despite a rigorous attempt to randomly select schools, the reluctance of most contacted schools to participate meant that availability framed the selection of classes and schools. In addition, Year Twelve is a busy time for teachers and schools and there was little opportunity for a prolonged period of research. The period of access to classes was far shorter than was intended. Additionally, the role of the researcher as observer proved problematic at times. On one hand the researcher was not a participant in the classroom as a way of capturing the writing experience as 'authentically' as possible. On the other, of course, the distant or 'invisible' observer did not contribute to the 'core business' of the English classroom and their presence in the school itself was of uncertain value.

On a more positive note, the researcher was able to access data from a range of sources and to make connections with aspects of that world, particularly through the views of teachers and students and their interactions in the classroom. One of the great challenges and rewards of case study and ethnographic research is writing 'rich descriptions' and taking the representative event and turning it into a story or narrative that reveals greater and more significant truths. It is therefore important to reconcile the demands of the observer or researcher striving for objectivity and distance with those of the storyteller giving significance to events, attitudes and moments of interaction (Geertz, 1992; Stoller, 1989).

This has ramifications when conducting research in schools and into the behaviours and attitudes and values of young people. This researcher was ever aware of the potential for subjective interpretations of student behaviours and attitudes given her background in teaching and concern for the welfare of students who struggle within the English subject area. Additionally, representing the world of education and communication through the eyes of a younger generation is always going to be a challenge and one demanding thoughtfulness and sensitivity. It is also pertinent to consider that all interactions with students, including classroom observations and to an extent student interviews, are conducted under the gaze of the classroom teacher or another significant adult. Observing students at any time of their school life brings with it responsibilities, and this is no more the case than during the final year of school when students are facing decisions about the future and concerns about their capacity to create opportunities and face the challenges presented by these. Finally, it is important to remember that despite the best intentions of any researcher to 'blend' into a school

and classroom environment, they are 'That person writing about us....' (Stoller, 1989) and for that reason, the potential impact upon the students needs to be given primary consideration.

9.4 Limitations

The fact that only three classes were studied is a limitation of this thesis. Whilst it was planned that more cases would take part in the study, accessing Year Twelve classes in the final year of school, proved to be difficult. Additionally, classes could not be observed for more than four months because of the demands on both teachers' and students' time.

Using a semiotic approach also presented challenges for the researcher. The premise of this approach is that all aspects of an environment have meaning and contribute to the resources and meaning making capacities of that environment. This poses a dilemma for the researcher as any limits on the research case, which are necessary for effective implementation, restrict examination of semiotic potential. The demands of rigour and reliability in research, and the cataloguing and analysis of resources associated with it may be incompatible. For this reason, the project limited the study of semiotic resources associated with writing and genre, leaving some aspects of the environment largely unexamined. Finally, given the limited access to classroom activities and typical events of the school year, there were some areas of potentially fruitful research that were not included in the study. Whilst the impact of assessment was one key area not included for this reason, its importance in the learning environment and its contribution to the nature of writing practices is recognised.

9.5 Recommendations

There are fourteen key suggestions for policy and practice that have emerged from this study that provide recommendations for 1) improving learning environments, 2) the selection, presentation and construction of genre, and 3) complementing and expanding student writing identities.

Recommendations for improving learning environments

- 1. That educational administrators respond to the importance of physical and social environments in shaping student writers through the provision of resources**

Learning environments are more than physical sites; they are locations that contribute to the shaping of identity through their regulative nature and through access to resources. This study highlighted the integral place of computers in students' writing practices and practices associated with writing such as research. However, access to computers across the three classes was inequitable. It is therefore recommended that education sectors provide access to computers for all English classes. Additionally, classrooms in the study revealed particular characteristics, which largely reflected teachers' orientations and traditional forms of classroom layout. It is suggested that schools take a more considered approach to learning environments and construct environments that reflect the various forms of learning in which students engage. Where possible, they should provide multiple spaces that facilitate a variety of teaching and learning strategies.

2. That increased research is conducted into the impact of classroom and learning environments on student writing

It is suggested that greater research be conducted into the impact of learning environments on students' capacity to engage in writing. In particular, research needs to take into account the changing nature of acquiring information and knowledge, as reflected in this study, and consider the role of learning environments beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom.

3. That universities and educational boards investigate and identify the communicative needs of industries and professions

The English subject area, as with all discipline learning areas, needs to ensure that its approach to particular communicative strategies and texts is authentic. For this reason, it is recommended that teachers have access to workplaces and to authentic workplace texts before undertaking teaching this specialist form of discourse and text construction.

4. That ongoing professional development be made available to English teachers to meet the educational needs of an increasingly diverse cohort of students

One of the key findings of this research was the importance of teachers having access to an eclectic range of pedagogical strategies for an increasingly diverse cohort of students. The study revealed that modelling and scaffolding strategies provided powerful forms of support for students who lacked explicit knowledge about particular forms of texts and the structures and stages of those texts. Additionally, students responded positively to, and imitated, teachers' modelling of writing practices whether in rigorous classroom dialogue or demonstrated in more personalised point of need approaches.

5. That a more rigorous and specialist approach be taken to curriculum by national and state education jurisdictions

One of the key findings of this research was the need for curriculum to a) clearly articulate expectations of what students need to achieve and b) be responsive to the possible variations that may exist at school level. The curriculum that was implemented in these classes provided very little guidance about the requirements of text production and for this reason, it is suggested that a more concentrated process of assessing the efficacy of English curriculum be adopted.

2. Recommendations for improving selection, presentation and construction of genre

6. That curriculum clearly identify expectations of genre and text construction

One of the significant findings of this thesis was that complex texts, such as the report, were described in very general terms in the curriculum documentation. This description provided no information about the purpose of reports, or the generic structure or stages of these particular texts. Such general phrasing allows for very broad interpretations, which may lead to inconsistencies across state based systems. It is recommended that curricula provide rigorous signposts for new and ongoing teachers, including the provision of more descriptive outlines or exemplars.

7. That teachers are provided with support materials that will help teach the linguistic resources of a range of genres and text types

This curriculum document was accompanied with minimal support materials that offered only brief guidelines for teachers. Such guidelines are essential for new teachers. Additionally, the research identified that it was often at the level of language use that students experienced the greatest difficulties. It is suggested that teachers be given supplementary materials to assist with the teaching of necessary language skills.

8. That teachers receive training in the most effective ways of using computer technology to improve student writing

The introduction of computers into the writing classroom offers enormous possibilities. However, it cannot be assumed that teachers are aware of the potential writing tools available on computers. Additionally, it cannot be assumed that teachers can use computers to complement existing pedagogical strategies. For this reason, it is suggested that professional development opportunities be made available for teachers to effectively and creatively incorporate computers into their teaching strategies.

9. That pre-service teacher preparation incorporate study of recent developments in communication practices

Contemporary teacher training needs to take a considered approach to the demands of teaching writing in environments where communication practices are undergoing considerable change. For this reason, it is recommended that through initial teacher training programs, new teachers explore writing practices and examine genres that reflect these changes. This thesis recommends high levels of understanding of the generic and linguistic features of the texts student are likely to encounter in their English studies. New teachers need to be informed about the various generic, ideational, interpersonal and textual resources necessary for high levels of textual production.

10. That education systems provide ongoing professional development in teaching key genres, text types and their linguistic features

It is clear from this research that there were significant variations in teachers' understanding of the purpose, generic structure, stages and linguistic features of some of the complex texts constructed. For this reason, it is recommended that teachers, particularly new teachers, receive professional development on the construction of exemplary texts.

11. That senior school English curricula incorporate a greater focus on language than that identified in this curricula document

Teachers need a framework by which to describe the range of resources used in the construction of text and for that reason, elements of genre theory and functional linguistic theory may form the basis of professional development for English teachers. Such an approach would help achieve a greater consistency not only at a national level, but it would also go some way to ameliorating the variations in approaches to text presentation and construction between state systems, schools and classes.

12. That special attention be given to scaffolding and modelling teaching practices at both preservice and inservice levels

One of the key findings of this research was that scaffolding and modelling teaching practices were successful in supporting the student writer. This thesis recommends that elements of the Australian genre teaching model be incorporated into pre-service teaching programs and that current teachers are given access to ongoing professional development.

3. Recommendations of improving student affiliation with writing

13. That national and state governments support the literacy needs of senior school students

The study revealed that powerful strategies are needed to address the needs of struggling and often weak writers. Of particular note across the three classes was the lack of additional literacy and language support for students who could not satisfactorily meet the demands of the curriculum. For one particular student, Get, for whom English was not a first language, there were no additional language or literacy programs available to support him despite his aspirations to teach young migrant students himself. For this reason, it is recommended that additional language support be provided for students who are unable to meet the demands of curriculum in the senior years.

14. That national and state education boards consider the educational needs of the reluctant writer

Whilst the study identified the need to support struggling writers, it also identified that some of these students were also disengaged from the activity of writing generally and for that reason could be considered a reluctant writer. For this reason, it is recommended that professional development be provided to teachers of disengaged students. Of particular use in such a program, would be the use of mentor teachers who are successful in their own classroom practice.

9.6 Need for further research

This research was conducted during a time of considerable controversy about the place of subject English in preparing young Australians for the communicative demands of the future. It highlighted significant differences in the approaches adopted in three English classes. There is a need for ongoing research into the ways the teaching of writing in secondary schools provides the necessary resources for young people's future aspirations. Equally, there is a need to build upon contemporary mapping of expectations of writing development for particular ages.

Finally, there is a need to maintain momentum into research which investigates the changing nature of writing in the contemporary world and the implications for this in the English classroom. Underpinning this study has been a consideration of writing in English classrooms as indicative of changes in contemporary communicative practices. The capacity for text to be easily moved from one location to another, for research to increasingly accompany the act of writing and for extensive scaffolding support through technology, challenges contemporary views of writing as the act of a single author. Such practices challenge educators and academics' perceptions of schooled writing

and the student writer. In this context, there is a need for ongoing research into concepts such as schooled writing and indeed the viability of the concept of writing in communicating the myriad of practices associated with the production of text.

9.7 Contributions to research and further considerations

Currently English teachers and their students find themselves enmeshed in a complex and at times contradictory set of historical circumstances. Public and political concerns over declining literacy standards, changes in the technological and communicative landscape, and an increasingly diverse senior school cohort have positioned the work of the English teacher as largely the negotiation of multiple and at times incompatible demands. Of central concern therefore are considerations of the work of the contemporary English teacher in a discipline shaped by diverse knowledge bases and discourses.

This thesis aimed to expand conversations about the place of subject English in the contemporary world through an examination of three teachers facing the daily reality of teaching writing in three senior school classes. Additionally, it aimed to contribute to understandings of the ways framing of writing and genre practices have very significant and tangible results for the forms of identity made available to students. Importantly, it aimed to contribute to the nascent research into how the complexities of learning environments shape access to the resources necessary for successful genre construction in the Australian senior school English environment.

This thesis also aimed to contribute to the growing interest in contextually orientated research. It has sought to expand understandings of what frames contexts by exploring both the immediate contexts in which writing takes place, and the influences of the broader cultural, social and political environment. Importantly, the thesis has aimed to contribute to understandings of the ways student writing identities are constructed, and the ways in which students privilege, accommodate and resist the identities offered to them.

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Appendices

Appendix A – First and second order themes

Initial First Order Themes	Refined Second Order Themes
<p>Regulative discourses are based on views of 'ideal' human behaviour and writing</p> <p>Social justice – expresses concern that students experience and equitable opportunities and can recognize the needs for others to be treated fairly</p> <p>Personal empowerment – gains the ability to negotiate the demands of a modern world</p> <p>Remediation – addresses writing and genre weaknesses to ensure social participation</p> <p>Working and employability– secures and maintains employment</p> <p>Achievement – participates to ensure and demonstrate social, educational and discipline success</p> <p>Maturity – actualizes the mature young adult through approved forms of behaviour</p>	<p>Regulative discourses – regulative expectations of student writing embedded in policy, curriculum and teachers' values shape what students write and how they write</p>
<p>The contexts in which writing takes place are multilayered, heterogeneous and intricate</p> <p>Interplays – links levels of context</p> <p>Beyond the classroom – provides experience and information that originate beyond the classroom</p> <p>Interdiscursivity – incorporates discourses from various sources</p> <p>Contradiction – reveals contradictory beliefs, actions and practices</p> <p>Activities – shows activities surrounding writing</p> <p>Physical – demonstrates the material and physical aspects of writing</p> <p>Social – shows social interaction surrounding writing</p>	<p>Context – contexts provide access to resources and the ways in which those resources are appropriated and warranted</p>

<p>Writing is a socially mediated and strategic practice</p> <p>Correction –correcting genre and linguistic features through editing</p> <p>Collaboration – constructing text collaboratively</p> <p>Scaffolding dialogue – understanding and constructing text through teacher and student dialogue</p> <p>Technological mediation – using technological tools in construction of text</p> <p>Strategic practice – a number of strategic practices such as planning are involved in the activity of writing</p>	<p>Mediation – when writing is framed by socially mediated practices</p>
<p>Genre are understood, taught and produced in diverse and sometimes uncertain ways</p> <p>Social purpose –serving purposes to build context and support regulative purposes</p> <p>Uncertainty – lacking realization and certainty in schematic structure and at stages text</p> <p>Distinctiveness – distinctly constructing types of genres</p> <p>Intertextuality – using elements of other genres and resources and meanings</p> <p>Discourse – constructing genre draws upon discourses from within the subject area and beyond</p> <p>Appropriateness – using of appropriate genre, ideational, interpersonal and textual resources</p>	<p>Genres – there is diversity and uncertainty in understanding and construction of genres</p>
<p>Learning about genre and writing results from multifarious interactions and intentions</p> <p>Organization – structuring pace and sequence of what is written</p> <p>Experiential learning - following independent paths to writing through construction of environment</p> <p>Visibility –transmitting knowledge and practice through scaffolding and modelling</p> <p>Point of need – supporting students as writing takes place in response to perceived need</p> <p>Management - controlling context through writing and learning</p>	<p>Learning – learning results from various contextual, instructional and social intentions and behaviours</p>

<p>Diverse student writing identities are discursively and socially constructed and positioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conformity –conforming to the forms of identity made available to them • Resistance –resisting forms of identity made available to them • Motifs – viewing student writing identities through motifs such as the worker or achiever • Autobiographical self –bringing experiences and perceptions to the activity of writing • Enacting – enacting views of the self as writer in activities and appropriation of resources 	<p>Identity – identities are shaped through patterns of affiliation and differentiation</p>
<p>Successful writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social purposes –achieving social purposes through writing • Discourses – representing dominant discourse and ideologies • Strategic practices –employing a range of strategic practices such as formality, planning and editing • Structure –understanding and realizing the schematic structure of particular genres • Cohesion - organizing meaning at text and syntax level • Textual design and presentation – actively designing and presenting text 	<p>Success - expectations of successful writing for particular students in particular contexts influences writing practices</p>
<p>Writers appropriate and transform available resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation - representing facts and forms of knowledge • Recontextualization – moving facts, knowledge and discourses in the activity of writing • Lexis - selecting and using words and phrases • Discourses - representing discourses such as writing for the workplace • Interpersonal resources – appropriating practices such as formality • Textual resources – using cohesive and multimodal resources 	<p>Resources – writers use particular resources made available contexts for particular purposes in distinctive ways</p>

Appendix B - Teacher interview

Teacher Interview Questions

I've got a series of questions, and I've actually got quite a few, and we don't need to stick to it really rigidly but I wanted to start off with questions that are fairly specific and get a picture of the group of students and then some more general questions looking for your opinion.

1. The first question I want to ask is about the composition of the class – how many students are there?
2. How is the subject managed in your school, is it managed in the English Learning Area?
3. I want to move on to talk about the texts. What are the five or six key texts written by the students in this class?
4. What are typical lengths of these texts?
5. What are the dominant purposes of these texts?
6. How do you feel how complex the texts are that your students produce in terms of comparing them to say other English subjects?
7. Are you satisfied with the range of texts students produce in the subject?

8. How much class time do you devote each week to writing?

9. So where does most of the writing take place during class time, say the classroom, computer lab or even library?

10. Are the students required to do writing for homework?

11. Where do examples of texts come from?

12. How relevant do you think the language skills learned in English are to other subjects that they're doing?

13. What do you consider to be good writing in this English subject?

14. What sort of activities do you think help develop generic language skills, such as sentence structure, paragraph structure and spelling?

15. What are the critical areas of knowledge about writing, such as planning, proofreading and knowledge about audience that the students that the students need to consider?

16. What skills and knowledge about construction of text do you think students doing the subject really need to achieve?

17. Do you think the subject places enough emphasis on writing?

18. Are there students in the class who are capable of working at a higher level?

19. To what extent are there students struggling in this class?

20. This leads on to one of my questions, what sort of personal and social factors might influence students' success or difficulties in the subject?

21. Are there any ways the subject is adapted to meet the needs of the students in this particular class. You've mentioned that some of them are doing work placements so there's a need to adapt the subject to accommodate the fact that they're not bringing work experience of their own into the class. Is there anything else?

22. So in that sense are you able to describe a fairly typical English student?

23. Are there any challenges working with this group of students?

24. Have you observed any consistent areas of strengths or weaknesses in their writing?

25. How do you think the writing done in the subject helps prepare the students for the demands of life after school?

26. How would you sum up your general approach to teaching writing in this particular class?

27. What advice would you give to a teacher who was about to begin teaching Vocational English for the first time?

28. This is the final question so thank you very much for persevering. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Appendix C - Student interview

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

This is a semi-structured interview combining general questions about writing and about the writing of particular texts. The interview will start with specific, matter-of-fact questions and lead into more general questions where your opinion will be sought.

Part One – General Questions

1. What do you think is the main purpose of writing in schools?

- assessment
- preparation for life in general
- preparation for work
- not sure

2. What are the main types of writing you do in school?

- assessment
- activity sheets
- projects

3. How often do you write during an average week in Vocational English?

4. How useful do you think writing vocational or work related types of texts is in helping you develop your writing?

5. What types of texts that you have learnt to write are the most useful or beneficial in helping you develop your writing?

6. Do you feel that you learn enough about writing and language in general, things such as writing paragraphs, sentences and spelling, in Vocational English?

7. Are there other types of writing you would benefit from doing that are not covered in the subject, for example creative writing or essays?

8. Do you feel there is enough writing in the subject?

9. What is the best environment for you to write in?

- classroom
- computer room
- combination of both

10. Do you draw on (integrate) what you've learnt in other subjects into writing you do for this subject?

- computing
- formatting of texts
- graphics
- logos
- business
- VET areas

11. How much do you use examples of writing, for example from workplaces, to help you write a new text?

12. What types of instruction have been most helpful in learning about writing in the Vocational English subject?

- presentation
- discussion
- writing a new text together
- group work
- one to one discussion with the teacher
- teacher assisting in revising or editing your work
- using examples

13. What types of writing activities have helped you the most improve your writing?

- worksheets
- examining examples
- writing a text together

14. What do you consider to be your strengths as a writer?

15. What areas do you think you need to work on?

16. Does the Vocational English subject challenge you in the area of writing?

- work at higher level
- more work
- more variety of texts
- more complex texts
- difficulty in meeting the requirements

17. How relevant or helpful do you think writing is for life after school?

- work
- social
- personal
- further education and learning

18. Do you find the Vocational English class an easy one to work in?

19. What is your overall impression of the Vocational English subject?

Part Two – Questions about Text

This is a general discussion about the construction of one of the student's texts.

1. What information was required before writing this text?

2. To what extent did you plan before writing and if you did what did you consider?

3. What do you know about this particular type of text, such as the job application letter, before beginning to write? How did this help you?

4. Did you plan a structure for the text, and if so, what made you choose this particular structure?

5. What type of audience were you writing for and how did the type of audience influence you use of sentences, paragraphs and words?

6. Did you use an example of this type of writing, such as another letter, to help you?

7. What type of assistance did you get from the teacher, for example editing, in writing the text?

Appendix D - Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Principals and Teachers

A Case Study Investigation into Writing Practices in the Vocational English Subject

I have been provided with a copy of the information letter, explaining the project.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that participation in the research project will involve:

- observation of three Vocational English classes
- participation in four interviews

I understand that classes may be videotaped or audiotaped and interviews will be audiotaped and that recordings of interviews and classes will be destroyed after being transcribed.

I understand that the information will be kept confidential, will only be used for the purposes of this project and I will not be identified in any written assignment or presentation of the results of this project. I understand that I am free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty.

I freely agree to participate in this project.

.....
Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Appendix E - Essay written by Bryony

The Shawshank Redemption

The Feature Film, The Shawshank Redemption, directed by Frank Darabont, relies heavily on the traditional elements of character, setting, conflict and resolution to develop the narrative. Darabont has used both narrative and filming techniques in constructing this film, which has enabled him not only to tell a story, but also to communicate a theme and evoke a response in the viewer. Technical, Symbolic and audio codes have been used in shaping this text and allows us, as viewers to recognise the theme, that there is corruption in the justice system.

^{reveals} The Shawshank Redemption shows the ups and downs of prison life. It shows us that the prisoners have absolutely no power and that the prison guards are both morally corrupt and physically abusive. The film focuses on a man called Andy Dufresne, a small town banker who is convicted for the murders of his wife and her lover. He is sentenced to serve two life sentences in the Shawshank prison. The story of Andy shows the injustices he faces from his first day at Shawshank prison and throughout his twenty-year journey there. Overy

Paragraph
two
missing
↓
brief
account of
the frames
Darabont
is
conveying in
this
film

Another one of the main characters in the film is that of Red. He is a sort of mentor in the prison, but he is very important to the film as he also acts as the 'all seeing' narrator. Red is one of the long serving prisoners at Shawshank, and it is because of this that he has become friends with his fellow prisoners and accustomed to the injustices of the judicial system. Red is first introduced to the audience when he is in front of the parole board. "I am a changed man, there is no danger to society here ^{guys}." We then see his plea for parole rejected, and are persuaded to feel sorry for this man, who throughout the film is only ever presented as quiet, well spoken and anything but 'dangerous.' Ellis Boyd Redding

Darabont's use of camera angles helps us get a better understanding of each character and their place in the prison. The use of low camera shots, show us that the guards are the authority figures and are always in control. The best example of this is when one of the prisoners asks Hadley: "When do we eat?" His reaction to this comment, via the close up on his face, conveys his feelings of aggression and intolerance towards the prisoners. Through the way the guards talk to the prisoners and in the tone they use, we can see that they have absolutely no respect for the prisoners. "You eat when we tell you to eat, you shit when we tell you to shit and you piss when we say you piss". Darabont is trying to show us that the guards not only hold all the power, but they abuse their power too. through low camera angles, close ups, tone etc.

Appendix F - Report written by Kristen

SPEAKING & LISTENING

YR 12 VOC ENGLISH

TASK 6

impromptu

present the information in a clear and concise manner
My report is based on three Speaking and Listening videos, which are called 'The Basics', 'Prepared and Impromptu speeches' and 'Interview Skills'. My report will take you through the basics of writing a prepared and in prompted speech. Also you will learn how to be confident when you are giving a speech to a large crowd of people. All three videos are divided into three topics which are, The Content, Purpose and How You Say It. I hope that this report will cover everything you need to know about public speaking and speeches.

THE BASICS:

1.1 THE CONTENT:

MOO

The general content of a speech is what you want to say, you should make it clear and confident, remembering to plan it carefully. The preparation and presentation of your speech should be clear, simple, straight forward and distinctive, remembering to pause in-between talking. The basic content of writing a speech is the what, who, where/ why and how.

1.2 PURPOSE:

You need to make sure you can identify the purpose of communication, which means to entertain and persuade the audience. When writing your speech the audience may not know anything about the subject you have chosen, so make sure you include some background information, and dress- up the message to keep the audience interested.

1.3 HOW YOU SAY IT:

When speaking in front of large crowds of people it is crucial to use affective body communication especially eye contact, appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures. Listening and speaking skills involve two people interacting and swapping information. Think through your notes and guide the progress of conversation:

- Listen well
- Analyse purpose
- Concentrate style

Control your body language, by not fidgeting and try sitting still. Look the interviewer in the eyes, breathe regularly use hand gestures and try and be as confident and persuasive as possible. Focus on anyone you may know in the audience when giving your speech, which may help you feel more at ease and less nervous.

material
mental

PREPARED AND IMPROMPTED SPEECHES:

2.1 THE CONTENT:

To succeed in public speaking you need good preparation, content and presentation. By being prepared you will think positively and stay comfortable and confident. Never use a predictable opening that the audience will get bored of hearing. To be able to capture the audiences' attention, avoid any quotes and don't restate the subject over. Having palm cards is a great way to cure your nerves as you can just jot down reminder points about what you are going to say, but never read off from them as the audience will become disinterested. ~~~~~~~~~

2.2 PURPOSE:

If you already have special knowledge on the subject you are about to speak on it will keep the audience more interested because they will be able to tell that you actually know something about what you are talking about. To be prepared it is best to have notes on the subject you are talking about it will make the purpose much more clear and it will also help you understand the theme on your subject as it will be much more concise. Brainstorm all your ideas and hopefully this will help you gain greater confidence.

2.3 HOW YOU SAY IT:

Focus on people you know in the audience like friends or family as it will boost your amount of confidence. Control your tone of voice to a happy level rather than a boring one tone sound, making sure that you remember to take short breathers in-between sentences. Speaking slowly is a much better way to address your speech, because you are less likely to twist your words than if you were speaking at a faster pace. When giving your speech it is more appealing to the audience for you to stay stationery in one spot rather than moving around, as it would be impossible for you and the audience to engage any eye contact if you were wondering around the place. It is best to stick to using plan language leaving it clear and simple as it is more distinctive to the audience and everyone can understand what is being said.

INTERVIEW SKILLS

3.1 THE CONTENT:

When it comes to interview skills you have to prepare and communicate the content and purpose of predictable questions. When you are being interviewed you will most likely be asked a question that you are ready to hear especially if you know a bit of background information on the topic. When you are being interviewed make sure you listen well, analyse the purpose of the question and concentrate. Those three tips will help guide the progress of conversation between you and the interviewer.

3.2 PURPOSE:

Listening and speaking skills are ^{involved} when two people interact by swapping their information. When being interviewed it is important that you know the difference between open and ended questions, otherwise you could end up with an interview that progresses no where because all the questions are ended. Try using an active listening approach otherwise without that you may not understand what the interviewer has asked you and therefore the interviewer will have to keep repeating themselves, which might make them and you quite uncomfortable.

3.3 HOW YOU SAY IT

When being interviewed, or interviewing it is important to control your body language, especially the amount of time you spend fidgeting, it is much more comfortable for you and the other person if you just sit still. Look the interviewer in the eyes then they know you are paying close attention and listening. Make sure you breathe regularly and pause in-between sentences. It is ok to use hand gestures, but keep it to a minimum you don't want the other person to be distracted by your hands, while they are suppose to be listening to what you are saying

CONCLUSION:

~~After watching~~ After watching all three Speaking and Listening videos I think the information that ~~we~~ ^{we} have written can be very useful. It gave some great pointers on how to overcome the ~~fr~~ ^{fr}ight of speaking in front of large crowds, and how you can prepare a basic speech. ^{on an} ~~an~~ interview

Appendix G - Report written by Daniel

INTRO

Fahrenheit 9/11 is a documentary made by Michael Moore aimed to expose the high level corruption in the Bush administration of America. This is presented in three parts: the 2000 election, the 9/11 attacks and the war on Iraq. Throughout the movie Moore speaks over the scenes and uses irony to outline the points and contradictions raised in the film. Music is used to portray a certain feeling towards the scenes in the movie.

1.1 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The election by which Bush became president is surrounded by controversy. The television polls constantly showed Al Gore as the more popular of the two candidates by a substantial lead. Suddenly the Fox television network showed George Bush ahead in the polls. After this change the rest of the networks followed suit and presented Bush as the leader. Michael Moore asks the question 'was this because the director of the Fox network was Bush's cousin?' and proceeds to raise the point that most important figures involved in the campaign were close friends with Bush. Bush won the election but his procession to the Whitehouse was pelted with garbage and angry crowds ran riot in the streets protesting Bush's cheating the election.

1.2


After Bush came to office the customary meeting of the senate was held. House Representative from all states attended to speak up for the African Americans. These Representatives each raised the same issue: the thousands of black voters who were disenfranchised from the electoral rolls. These voters were people who would not be likely to vote for Bush as president. The representatives moved to have a re-election and an investigation into how it was that the voters were denied their rights.

1.3

The house representatives needed at least one member of the senate to sign their petition or it could not go ahead. One by one the representatives stood up but no senators could be found to help the African Americans so 'one by one they were told to sit down and shut up'. The corruption in the election is made clear by the way Moore informs the viewers of Bush's cousin directing the Fox network and the person in control of the voting was also a member of his campaign. Bush's brother was the governor of Florida. Florida being a major state needed to win the election and it was polling in Gore's favour until the Fox network announce otherwise. The black voters were never given justice because the whole campaign, senate and government were against them.

1.4

Bush's campaign went awry after he won the presidency. Shortly after the election Bush found he could no longer have his judges appointed and he then lost republican control of the senate. His approval rating dropped dramatically so he left the White house and went on holiday. Michael Moore makes this an extremely harsh point by using withering sarcasm and quoting parts of news reports such as 'bush was on holiday forty percent of the time'



2.1 9/11 ATTACKS

The opening scene to this segment is designed to awe the audience. The vision

4.1 THE WAR ON IRAQ

When Osama Bin Laden became the confirmed culprit of the 9/11 attacks Bush prepared to put troops in Afghanistan. During this time fear was spread throughout the U.S via the media. Reports of terrorists with pen-guns and remote control aeroplanes packed with explosives descending upon the people of America and the apparent need for ten-story building parachutes are some examples of the propaganda spread during that time. When the troops in Afghanistan started hunting for Bin Laden, mixed messages came across the media. Fear is a powerful tool for manipulating the public and it was used to great effect.

4.2

The troops in Afghanistan had very little knowledge of what to do. Footage of bush saying 'we're gunna rush em and smoke em out! We're gunna smoke him out of his cave!' is repeated. A parody of cowboys rushing some bandits is shown with the cowboys saying those exact words. This is used to show bush as being a fool with little thought into the whole matter. The troops stayed in Afghanistan for a whole year and found nothing except booby traps and caves. Bin Laden and the Saudis got away. This is made into a humorous scene with a classic rock song playing in the background to a truck packed full to overflowing with militia, driving down a road. Basically this is to say that Bush did nothing at all by trying to hunt Bin Laden.

4.3

The hunt for Bin Laden was unsuccessful but a few leads were found that said he had gone into Iraq. Bush moved his troops into Iraq under the pretence that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. In truth Iraq never made any aggressive moves towards America. Saddam Hussein hid from Bush in the deserts of Iraq. Scenes of civilians standing outside their ruined home cursing Bush and wishing divine judgement on the American troops, men running back and forth across streets carrying their dead children are used to shock the viewers into the firm belief that this is wrong. The Iraqis will fight back against America from now on because they are a proud people. This is a war that Bush has no hope of winning. Footage of Bush saying 'ah aim a war president, I sit in my office with war on my mind' is shown. Directly after this some more footage of Bush saying 'to be honest I don't really spend too much time on Bin Laden, he doesn't concern me'. This is a contradiction that is designed to make Bush look like a fool. This segment nears its end with a mother's grief at losing her son to a war that shouldn't have happened. The mother reads a letter from her son wondering why he is in Iraq and voicing the opinion of the troops: that Bush is a fool and should never be re-elected. The movie ends with a remark from Michael Moore and the mother crying at the war memorial in front of the White House.

Appendix H - Lesson Protocol

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

(Writing Episode)

Thank you for taking part in this research project your time and ideas are very much appreciated. Please take five minutes to complete this questionnaire on the lesson that has just been observed.

1. What areas of the curriculum were addressed in this lesson?

2. Was the writing being conducted in this lesson part of a unit or specific learning outcome(s)? If so, please give details of what this is.

3. Please indicate the reason(s) students were asked to write in this lesson?

To test content knowledge

To summarise

To practice writing mechanics

To share imaginative experiences

To practice text types

To demonstrate ability with text type(s)

To demonstrate language skills

To analyse texts

- To explore out of class material
- Assessment
- Other

4. What types of writing activities were students engaged in during this lesson?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Writing exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Constructing texts | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Analysis of texts | <input type="checkbox"/> | Proofreading | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

5. What type(s) of texts were students learning about/constructing in this lesson?

6. What directions were students given before undertaking writing activities in the lesson?

7. What type of experience do students have in the type of writing undertaken?

8. Did students have to undertake preparation before commencing the writing activity/ies?

Yes No

9. Where was the content or subject matter of these writing activities derived from?

10. Please indicate what knowledge of text types were students required to demonstrate in the writing activities in this lesson?

Purpose Text Structure

Audience Content Knowledge

Generic Specific Use of

Conventions Language

11. Were there any specific areas of language use planned for study or practice in this lesson?

12. What instructional methods were chosen for the writing activities in this lesson?

Presentation Explanation

Modeling Joint Construction

Teacher led discussion Scaffolding

Group work Individual teacher-
student discussion

Other

13. How has the nature of the student group influenced choices about instruction in this lesson?

14. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?