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Stuart M. Bender
Edith Cowan University

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Learning the Documentary Lesson: Theory and Practice in English

Master of Education (Research)

Stuart Bender (BA, Dip. Ed)
14 September 2007

Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences

USE OF THESIS

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Abstract

This research investigates the problem of teaching documentary texts in the secondary English classroom in Western Australia. Historical studies of the subject indicate that it serves three functions; *ethical training*, *aesthetic cultivation* and *rhetorical training*. Previous research from the governmental perspective has investigated the problems associated with Literary texts, popular television drama and personal-response essay writing; it emerges that these familiar pedagogical activities are deployed in classrooms to function as opportunities to engage students in ethical training, often at the expense of the latter two functions. This research project is a post-positivist theoretical discussion supplemented by qualitative data in the form of interviews.

The documentary text type has not been the subject of theoretical discussion, however it represents a specific problem in the history of subject English — popular accounts of the discipline suggest that its pedagogical terrain, and therefore its pedagogical functions, have progressed over time to become more “humanised.” This critical discussion, however, suggests that documentary texts stand as evidence that the introduction of a new text type does not necessarily modify the overall pedagogical structure of English. Instead, the thesis argues that current teachers’ practices are merely iterations (replications) of an educational technology set down at the inception of popular schooling in 1870.

By comparing the views of four English teachers with historical documentation about the subject, this research illustrates the overlaps of popular theoretical positions on the teaching of documentary texts. Although alternative textual practices have been suggested along historical-philological lines, current teaching practice remains committed to the popular notions of English as an emancipatory space. The

implication of this thesis is that it furthers the discussion of alternative conceptions of visual text pedagogy, refocusing it onto documentary texts in the secondary English classroom. In the final stage of this thesis, an alternative pedagogy is offered which allows the documentary lesson to adequately address the three objectives of the discipline.

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

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1. Introduction

How young these people are, and at the same time how different from one another! They have all been allowed to develop freely, and their distinct and uncompromised natures may be seen even in their early years

(Kafka, 1920/2007: 204).

Contemporary English teaching presents itself as waging the “good fight” in an ongoing social mission. Answering the call of this duty involves the daily challenge of taking unique young humans and ensuring that they continue to develop as decent, cultured citizens and/or as critical, independent thinkers. In a classroom that is distinctly different to a Physics lab, for instance, the English teacher facilitates this development by encouraging experience with texts: the novel, the short story, the feature film, the documentary, and so on. Through finely choreographed learning experiences, students follow the teacher’s lead in appraising the ideas and issues presented by these texts and drawing comparisons to the world as they know it. After five years in the secondary school English classroom, the students are freed upon society, primed to make intelligent choices in their lives.

We, however, will take a different angle. It is my intention to reframe a discrete element of contemporary English — the documentary lesson — from a different perspective; one which is based on a competing historical perspective to that of the social mission. I will examine two aspects of the documentary lesson’s form: firstly, that it represents a clearly discernable unfaithfulness to the curriculum and secondly, that this is predictable and historically explainable. For this reason I wish to magnify the initial clause in Kafka’s second sentence: “[t]hey have all been allowed to develop freely,” as a slogan for the popular view of subject English. By zooming-in on this view, we shall gain access to why the documentary lesson is characterised by certain, persistent features. In the analysis that follows, I shall interrogate the way in which English teachers use the documentary text, and a special teacher/student relationship, to conduct a very particular training regime in which young people are allowed to develop “freely” in a minimal direction, at the expense of acquiring other important capacities.

Overview

This chapter is designed to introduce and establish the theoretical terrain upon which the study is based. I firstly provide a brief account of the history of subject English in Western Australia with references to the curriculum from 1914 and the latest English *Course of Study*. This historical summary functions to unravel the various influences of literary theory on the subject's construction. Following this historical overview, I outline the general problem in contemporary English from the point of view of governmentality in which the subject can be seen as *failing* to adequately address all of its objectives. This problem is portrayed in general terms (ie: it encompasses the majority of text types deployed in English classrooms) in order to provide a context for the specific subject of this thesis: the documentary lesson. After explaining how the problem can be described as a “persistent practice” that has occurred as a result of contingent events in the subject's history, I clarify the significance of this research in terms of its capability to clarify and reconcile ongoing debate of the purpose of the subject, as well as its relevance for curriculum reform in order to address the problem of the persistent practice. Finally, the chapter identifies a limitation of the research and provides a rationale for the structural organisation of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the study

Historical studies of the formation of subject English suggest that it is an educational technology that serves three discrete purposes: *rhetorical skills development*, *aesthetic cultivation* and *moral-ethical training*. Previous research has focused on how reading instruction — significantly, “the literature lesson” (Hunter, 1991) and personal response pedagogy (Patterson, 1993) — has worked to perform governmental training of students' ethical selves regardless of the seemingly liberating pedagogical aims underpinning these approaches. This current research extends these understandings by examining how a particular visual text type (the documentary) is handled by English teachers. Although previous authors operating from the governmental model of English have given little attention to the teaching of visual texts, their work on reading instruction is relevant here because often visual text curriculum documents assert “the belief that the principles involved in teaching

reading and viewing have much in common” (Quin, McMahon & Quin, 1995: vii). As such, visual text pedagogy (of which the documentary is merely one exemplar) can be critiqued along the same lines as previous research into reading pedagogy to show that these text types are deployed in classrooms to serve similar governmental purposes.

Subject English, the only subject that is also compulsory in Western Australian secondary schools, occupies a significant space in students’ school experiences. Central to the subject is the study of texts, comprised of the language modes of speaking, reading, writing and viewing (Curriculum Council, 1998: 82). It is a subject in which teachers are expected to value students’ experiences with texts other than those introduced in the classroom, and it is also a subject in which the skills developed are expected to apply directly to students’ lives outside the classroom. The popular view of subject English, promoted by practitioners, is that it encourages students to discover the self-evident values of language as a means of personal expression and growth as well as to learn valuable literacy skills required by society. This humanist vision of the subject can be clearly identified in two Western Australian education documents; i) the *Curriculum Framework Learning Area Statement* (1998), and ii) the *Post-Compulsory English Course of Study* (2005).

The *Learning Area Statement* outlines the environment in which subject English serves the Outcomes of the *Curriculum Framework*. The document foregrounds the following assumptions/demands of the subject: *the importance of language, modern literacy requirements, future literacy demands, functional literacy and critical literacy* (Curriculum Council, 1998: 82 – 83). These aspects are all firmly grounded in *language*. The *English Course of Study*, designed to merge Post-Compulsory schooling with the K-10 curriculum, is also built from the *Curriculum Framework* and foregrounds the same linguistic assumptions and demands, however in this document the organising device is the concept of “learning contexts” (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 12). Both curriculum documents are driven by the uncontested objective that students “learn to speak, listen, view, read and write effectively” (Curriculum Council, 1998: 81; 2005a: 1).

In order to most clearly expose the uncontested ground on which this view of English stands it is worth considering two typical statements from current documents:

Changes in the nature of work and social life and the development of new technologies have produced a proliferation of new and different forms of communication” (Curriculum Council, 1998: 82).

Through language humans shape understandings of themselves and their world (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 1).

Both statements imply that the discipline is in a constant state of progression towards being more authentic and relevant to the needs of children’s “real lives.” In the first statement, found under the section headed “Future literacy demands,” the subject is charged with overseeing development of students’ capabilities to master a range of communicative text types. The second statement, of course, charges the subject with overseeing the development of students’ personal growth in the fields of personal and ethical responsibilities. Perhaps the clearest exemplar of this is five pages further on in the previous document, suggesting that [English] students might be able to “identify the negative effect of name-calling on someone’s self-esteem” (Curriculum Council, 1998: 87). Presumably, correctly coordinated learning experiences with texts provide the opportunity for students to develop their capacities in these areas.

These assumptions about language and education are presented as natural in the curriculum documents; however this naturalisation obscures the debates and theoretical arguments that have led to this point. If the objectives, goals and focuses of subject English were as indisputable as these documents suggest then it is easy to assume that there would be no room for the academic debates that have flourished throughout the history of the subject.

Compare, for example, the following two statements which are both typical representations of the official documents from which they have been extracted. The first is from the Leaving Certificate Exam 1914, which is the first of the formal examination syllabuses and as such we can consider it a kind of zero-point in the

Western Australian context, and the second is from the *Curriculum Framework Statement for the English Learning Area* (1998):

Mention the name of one work by each of the following writers, with (approximate) date of publication: - Ben Jonson, Edward Gibbon, Thomas de Quincey, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, Jeremy Taylor (University of Western Australia, 1915).

The texts studied reflect the diversity of Australia's population and include texts which reflect the experiences, achievements and contributions of Aboriginal people and people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Curriculum Council, 1998: 93).

In order to explain how Western Australian subject English has refocused from the (apparently) strict values of British Literature to the (apparently) diversified, multi-cultural values embracing texts from a range of heritages, two major theoretical accounts of the subject's history are generally invoked. In the following Literature Review (Chapter Two) I will outline the key arguments proposed by these two opposing versions of the development of modern English to show how the essential content of the subject has often been a highly contested matter of debate.

1.2 Persistent practice and the governmental deployment of “issues and context”

Prior to moving into the exposition of the specific topic of this research I will sketch, in very broad strokes, a general analysis of the current state of English to establish the context of the study. This section highlights a problem which I will call the “persistent practice” of English teachers and identifies historical contingencies that have lead to the inevitable destabilisation of the subject. At this point I discuss the approach of English teachers to texts *in general*, rather than documentaries specifically. For the most part, I discuss the way in which print texts have been deployed by teachers because previous theorists from the governmental perspective have directed their attention to this topic. In section 1.3 (Significance of the research)

and 1.4 (Research questions) I will make a transition from this text type to the documentary text type specifically. By clarifying the problem in general terms at this stage, my later Discussion of the way that documentary texts are handled by English teachers will act as a prime example of exactly how this persistent practice has emerged and how it can be addressed. This will be possible because, essentially, the Discussion argues that the introduction of a new text type will be implemented through the problematic persistent practice I am outlining in this section.

To begin with, it is worth reviewing the way this content has been (and is) assessed in Western Australia. Assessment often bears on the organisation of teaching programs, having a particular impact where high-stakes testing is involved (Guthrie, 2002: 385; Smith, 1991; Yen & Ferrara, 1997). In 1914, the examination questions for the Leaving Certificate, developed by Professor W. Murdoch, had very clear implications for the kind of content to be taught in English classrooms. Two examples will serve to illustrate the point:

1. Show how English has added to its resources of expression during the last thousand years by the extended use of auxiliaries in the conjugation of the verb.
7. Whence did Shakespeare derive the story of the rings in the *Merchant of Venice*?

(University of Western Australia, 1915).

The first question requires students to demonstrate understanding of not only the historical emergence of part of the English *language* but also an understanding of how this is somehow fundamental to the language's expressive and rhetorical capabilities. The latter question reveals a kind of philological attention to the source material of a particular text. These were only two of a possible 16 questions, with students choosing to answer up to seven. By 2006 the focus seems to have changed. In the sample Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Examination paper released by the Curriculum Council in 2006, things look very different. There is only one question for reading, with two parts:

- (i) What arguments are presented in this essay [comprehension text]? What evidence is presented to support these arguments? How might readers be positioned to respond to the arguments and evidence presented in the text?
- (ii) Explain how your context and your knowledge of other texts and/or wider social issues shape your interpretation of this text.

(Curriculum Council, 2006b: 8).

Students will now be expected to identify the arguments presented in a text they have not read before, in addition to relating this text to context (either intertextual and/or wider social issues but also, and necessarily, their own context).

An essentialist response to this change of direction would suggest that it reveals the humanising progress that has been made over the last 90 years. The WACE Examination does not require students, an essentialist position would argue, to memorise facts in a rote fashion nor to identify aspects of language irrelevant to everyday communicative functioning. Instead it would seem students are tested on how well they have learned to *engage* with a text and comprehend its ideas.

Attention must be drawn to the syllabus documentation from which students' study programs would be devised in preparation for these exams. In 1914 the syllabus sets out four discrete areas of study — English composition; the history of the English language; the history of English Literature; and “a general acquaintance” with a group of four books, including Shakespearian drama, Byron and Arnold (UWA, 1915). By contrast the Post Compulsory *Course of Study* (COS) sets out three integrated areas — conventions; contextual understanding; processes and strategies — which are intended to “enhance students' language development and enable them to be more effective and empowered users of language” (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 13). The exam questions quoted above, then, are exemplars of each pedagogical “position” on the teaching of English. Although seemingly “modern,” the pedagogy emphasised by the COS examination questions is in fact drawn from a number of contingent historical sources — Dixon's *Growth Through English* (1967) and other Post-Dartmouth publications; the recent influx of child-centred theory on which the COS is heavily based; and the taking up of Reader Response theory as developed by the school of reception aesthetics, best exemplified in the work of Iser (1978). This

conception of modern English education, in which the subject has apparently been formed out of 1960s progressive influences, sees students' personal engagement with material as a key element to structuring teaching programs.

A materialist¹ approach to the question of how teachers interpret syllabus documentation in the process of pedagogical implementation reveals a very different understanding of what has taken place over 90 years. From this perspective it emerges that the COS does not in fact *promote* a humanist response-based pedagogy; surprisingly, there is no reason to believe that Murdoch's 1914 questions could not be asked of current students based on the "Essential Content" of the COS document. What is interesting, however is that a sampling of current teacher programs suggests that teachers have in fact embraced the COS from essentially a personalist perspective in which students' ethical development is regarded as central. Hunter (1997) has argued that because English encompasses three very distinct areas (personal development, rhetorical training and aesthetic understanding) *and* the social mission has come to take on more significance in popular accounts of the subject's history, it has become destabilised in recent years. Supplementary to this genealogy; Patterson (1993) has outlined the way "personal response" to literature has come to promulgate itself throughout English classrooms as the dominant reading practice, Moon has argued that English can be conceived as a subject that "transmits certain localized, purpose-specific skills" (Moon, 1994: 54) and Hunter has also thrown into question whether or not teachers actually teach the reading practices that produce meaning (Hunter, 1982: 80). It is with these historical investigations into the subject that I intend to explain that although the COS could support a wide range of English practices, teachers interpret the document through a personalist aesthetico-ethical framework which has become conventionalised as a persistent practice.

This personalist aesthetico-ethical framework, although having its pre-English classroom history in the Church (Hunter, 1983: 233), has become standardised in

¹ This materialist analysis, in the tradition of Foucault's rejection of social practices as totalised "with reference to some fundamental principle," (Moon, 1994: 52 – 53) differs from a classical Marxist materialist analysis in that it interrogates the historical conditions that surround the emergence of subject English without "constructing those conditions as the expression or general effect of a more fundamental cause" (Moon, 1993 cited in Bennett, 1998: 29).

modern English classrooms through a number of contingent developments since the Education Act of 1870. As a recent exemplar of these contingencies, personalist pedagogy was seen as an effective way of training students to achieve specific outcomes that were rational in the late 1960s (Patterson, 1993: 66 – 67). As a result of this Dixonist movement, current teaching programs have become littered with references to values, attitudes and issues in the ongoing project to become more efficient at producing self-problematising individuals. The concrete evidence of this in Western Australia is that students are encouraged to engage with texts (Curriculum Council, 2002b; 2003; 2005c) and reflect on how their personal context influences this engagement (Curriculum Council, 2006b). If this is how students are expected to perform in high stakes assessment then this will determine very specifically how students will be taught, both of which are related contingently with the legacy left behind by progressive educational trends extending from the 1800s through to the 1960s growth pedagogy.

In the rest of this section I have three specific aims. Firstly, to identify the ways that current English pedagogy organises itself around students' engagement with "issues and context" as a means of ethical problematisation; secondly, to draw upon professional documentation to illustrate how the English curriculum has been destabilised in classrooms and thirdly, as a result of this historical study, to again signal the need to construe the content of English as a discrete set of skills which can be explicitly instructed as teachers undertake the new Courses of Study. By developing this brief argument, I shall bring into sharp relief the theoretical terrain upon which the study proper will take place.

THE (RELATIVELY RECENT) HISTORY OF THE TEACHING OF ISSUES AND CONTEXT

Before considering how issues and context are handled in modern English classrooms it is beneficial to consider how we have actually shifted from the factual kinds of questions of the 1914 examination to the questions requiring "personal engagement" of 2006. The 1914 examination questions operated within the liberal-humanist model of English education. This model, characterised by the views of

Leavis, concerned itself with preserving the culture of perfection (Arnold, 1869: 44-45) that had previously been available only to minority interest groups (Leavis, 1930: 20). Although the “social mission” of this model has been reviewed elsewhere (Baldick, 1983) it needs to be noted in this instance that the culture of perfection described by Leavis is not an awareness of social issues such as “racism” or “child poverty,” but the ability to “fend” for one’s cultured self when encountering the range of new books of questionable quality (Leavis, 1930: 20). From this perspective then, it would be appropriate for students to be capable of describing developments in the English language that have led to its “perfect” nature — “Show how English has *added* to its *resources* of expression...” (University of Western Australia, 1915) — as well as to have a “general acquaintance with” Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.

Describing itself as an improvement over the elitist liberal-humanist model, personal growth pedagogy emerged following the 1966 Dartmouth seminar with a “stress on literature as a mode of self-discovery and personal development, open even to the ‘inarticulate and illiterate’ because of its closeness to experience” (Hunter, 1988a: 34). The popular myth of English education describes this, and the later incorporation of Althusserian Marxism (Eagleton, 1976; Williams, 1977) and deconstructionist (Derrida, 1978) approaches, as evidence of the civilising progress apparently made in our society. In this conception of the subject’s history English appears to pass from an elitist view of “Culture” (Arnold, 1869; Leavis, 1930) into a child-centred, experiential view that literature should be available to all (Dixon, 1967) and more recently to a view that questions the ideological foundation upon which these prior views of Literature and Culture stand (Althusser, 1969; Eagleton, 1983; Williams, 1973/1980). A Foucauldian analysis suggests that this popular view conceals the ways in which English, and schooling generally, functions like other apparatuses such as the prison to perform moral correction on the souls of subjects (Foucault, 1975). Working from a Foucauldian perspective of power and governmentality (Foucault, 1982: 221; 1991) Hunter has reminded us that these changes in the subject of English are in fact variations of a particular moral technology operating in the pastoral relationship between the teacher and the student (Hunter, 1988a; 1988b). This technology “found in literature a device which focused and supported the functions of moral supervision” (Hunter, 1988a: 36). It is from this governmental position that we can describe the response pedagogy of Dixon as

merely an exemplar of a recurring model, rather than a unique pedagogical instance (Patterson, 1997: 344).

This short account covers the governmental role of English, in which the modern version of the subject is seen to have emerged from a series of contingent developments from about 1830. The governmental model reminds us that leading up to Forster's 1870 Education Act, bureaucrats such as James Kay-Shuttleworth and David Stow were concurrently identifying ways to reform the monitorial school systems in England and Scotland (Hunter, 1987: 577 – 579). They believed this system was not performing the right kind of training necessary for the industrialising society of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Stow believed the rigid structure of the monitorial schools was problematic because it prevented the schools from *efficiently* implanting moral training that would “engage the child’s emotions and ‘true disposition’” (Hunter, 1991: 14). Popular schooling developed from the recommendations of Kay-Shuttleworth and was also informed by other contingent developments in the late 1800s that will be addressed in more detail later. (See section 2.2 of the Literature Review.) From this short profile of the governmental perspective, subject English appears to deploy texts using specific classroom practices that train students in the processes of self-inspection and self-governance (Hunter, 1988a: 42).

What is most relevant to the current study is that while this procedure of ethical self-problematisation became more efficient, the moral technology also came to rely more upon the explicit “personal engagement” with social issues that were seen to be relevant to the students’ lives. In 1914 the technology was quite explicit, as can be determined from Kay-Shuttleworth’s directives for teacher training (Hunter, 1988: 61-64), but the liberal-humanist model did not require students to direct their attention towards social issues. However, it did situate an appropriate framework into which personalist pedagogy could manoeuvre following the Dartmouth seminar in 1966. Here is Matthew Arnold describing the specific relevance of Literature to day-to-day life:

More and more he who examines himself will find the difference it makes to him ... whether or not he has pursued his avocations throughout it [the day] without reading at all (Arnold, 1869: 6).

It is because of historical statements such as this that Hunter is able to argue that the pedagogy of growth model English was not a product of supposed libertarianism or progressive values of the 1960s (Hunter, 1997: 318). In describing English as “based on *experience* and language *in operation*” (Dixon, 1967: 80), the growth model English subsumed a Culturalist position with the emerging field of communicative linguistics. However, communicative linguistics was primarily concerned with learners of English as a second language and emphasised the operative/functional aspects of the English language in daily usage (Littlewood, 1981: 1). For this reason it is easy to see how experiential learning quickly took over as the major focus of mainstream English. The displacement of “the linguistic” was in fact already anticipated in Dixon’s view of communicative linguistics — he saw weaknesses in its emphasis on preformulated messages (linguistic functions) and its ignorance of “the discoveries we make in the process of talking and writing from experience” (Dixon, 1967: 6). Recently what has become important is the effect of language/text “on the reader” rather than the scientific study of language as *linguistics*. This approach is shown clearly in Dixon’s account of how his reading *experience* of a poem by Robert Frost has been negatively coloured by the events of the Gulf War (Dixon, 1991: 197). Hunter critiques this interpretation as typical of an approach by the English profession which sees itself capable of discussing world issues despite having no qualifications in, say Middle Eastern history or international relations (Hunter, 1997: 332 – 333).

The emphasis on experience required the fashioning of specific purposes for students to use language “in operation” that related to their everyday lives. This purpose became manifest in a series of textbooks organised according to the “thematic approach” – for example *Actions and Reactions* (Stewart & Doyle, 1972) or *Facets* (Harris & Mousley, 1972). These books were recommended through curriculum documents apparently because the “themes and central issues may be related directly to students’ own experiences” (EDWA, 1974: 13). For example, one of the earlier thematic textbooks, *Open the Door*, announces its purpose in a note to the student:

This book will help you to open the door and take a closer look at a number of things – at animals, houses, different kinds of people, the sea, your country, speed, hobbies and yourself (Thanos, 1972: ix).

Thus seemingly progressive pedagogical approaches such as “thematic programming” crept into English as a way to organise the aesthetico-ethical demands of the subject. A brief sampling of the kinds of issues that have become popular with English teachers since the 1970s — racism, child poverty, body image, teenage drinking etc — reveals that these have evolved into more than just a way to organise content. As structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to English found their way into the curriculum, these “issues” have come to represent Althusserian issues in which what is at stake is the concept of what counts as “normal” in the social community.

One modern textbook, *English in Context*, begins with the assertion to student readers: “Don’t believe everything you read” (Elith & Hardage, 1996: vi). This book is typical of textbooks influenced by the emphasis on issues — it contains extracts of literary and “cultural” texts, however there is very little attention to linguistic forms. Where these books do place attention to linguistics, it is following a set of comprehension questions on the ideas of the extract and usually appears in the form of implicit language learning activities with no linguistic instruction, such as writing about “an imaginary loss” two times; firstly to make it sound sad, secondly to make it sound amusing (Glasson, 1996: 33).

In the more recent context of critical literacy, the *First Steps* materials in Western Australia have been rewritten to include questioning activities such as: “Is it fair to portray ... in this way?” and “What other response could there have been [for the character]?” (Annandale *et al*, 2005: 228). Placed into this more recent context the kinds of “issues” prevalent in English teaching programs are organised — intentionally or not — around the emancipatory purpose of critical literacy (Patterson, 1997: 336) that students will be “saved” through recognition of difference “glimpsed in alternative texts, and through oppositional practices” (Moon, 1994: 50 – 51). It is the fact that such diverse pedagogies have organised themselves along similar lines that I am drawing upon to suggest that the “social mission” of English reproduces itself through the persistent practice of identifying and exploring students’ personal (moral) engagement with the ideas and issues supposedly found

within texts. Furthermore, in the discourse of literary pedagogy teachers cannot conceive educational programs any other way.

AN INVESTIGATION OF ISSUES OR LANGUAGE?

At this point it is worth considering the sample scheme of assessment presented as a kind of template in the English *Course of Study* document. Teachers are expected to produce their classroom programs according to the set structure of four tasks; *investigation, response, oral production* and *written production*. In this case I am interested primarily in the *investigation* task although any of the tasks could have been chosen to illustrate the relationship between how teachers are encouraged to interpret the document and what they have actually been doing. The brief explanation of the task is given in two stages: firstly a generalisation and then an unpacking of this statement:

Assessment type: Investigation into or for the use of language in particular contexts or texts, involving research, evaluation/analysis and presentation (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 37).

Immediately apparent from the brief outline of the “assessment type” is that students in 1914 could easily have undertaken this task in preparation for the following question:

Show how English has added to its resources of expression during the last thousand years by the extended use of auxiliaries in the conjugation of the verb (University of Western Australia, 1915).

It seems that the COS investigation task (as described in the “assessment type” statement) is encouraging an investigation into *language* which is, after all, the repeated word in Australian policy documents for the subject of English (Curriculum Council, 1998; Curriculum Corporation, 2005). The *Course of Study* even duplicates the words of the *Curriculum Framework* on its cover: “students learn about the English language: how it works and how to use it effectively” (Curriculum Council,

2005a: 1). In a supplementary publication the Curriculum Council presents an example investigation task to help teachers devise their own:

Find and read some sets of rules. You might visit your local swimming pool (there's always a list of rules at a pool) or look near the door next time you catch a train. Notice how some rules are expressed through pictures and symbols (Curriculum Council, 2005b: 7).

This is of course different from the kind of text Murdoch expected students to study; in fact its focus on the everyday language of rules is informed by structuralist and sociolinguistic theories, while the overall purpose is informed by post-structuralist theories of the ways in which language constrains/enables people's actions and their subjectivity (Althusser, 1969; Derrida, 1967/1978). However it is worth pointing out that this is a separate publication and one which was not provided to schools during the initial distribution phase of the COS, so the guiding principles for task design come from the COS document itself. Here is the unpacking of the investigation task in the "supporting information" located in a table immediately next to the "assessment type" description:

Supporting information: Investigation of experiences, issues, texts, audiences, representations, situational contexts, cultural contexts, language practitioners (e.g. writers, producers) (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 37).

This is quite different from what has been looked at so far. Rather, students are expected to investigate concepts such as "experiences, issues, texts, audiences" which is a concept markedly amplified in the Sample Scheme of Assessment provided on the following page:

Investigate and present a report on a topic of concern or controversy in the school, community or workplace, which comes to a conclusion on the topic (38).

Although presented as an example teachers have actually taken up the idea of organising their students' investigation task, and in some cases all four tasks, around

a particular “topic of concern or controversy.” Teachers’ justification for this is generally that it provides a “relevant learning context” for students to examine language. The theoretical background to the pedagogy involved in this kind of task is clearly founded in personal growth English, with the Dixonist belief that “English is so rooted in experience outside school” (Dixon, 1967: 31). What generally takes place in the classroom, however, is an investigation *into* the topic itself. For example, a teaching colleague has set a reading comprehension exercise on the Aboriginal Act (1939) that required students to answer a series of questions such as: “What were the views towards Aboriginals during the 1930s?” There are two theoretical concerns here: firstly, the particular understanding of textual construction implied by the task and secondly, the grounding of such a task in the process of ethical training outlined by Hunter (1988a; 1997). To address the first concern, asking the question “What were the views towards Aboriginals during the 1930s?” immediately after students read the Aboriginal Act of 1939 is to take a misleading approach to a non-fiction text by assuming that it is a “container of fact” (O’Neill, Mellor & Patterson, 1992: 1) that can “mirror the ‘spirit of an age’ in its form or content” (Moon, 2001: 11) while also ignoring the “specific actions of various discursive apparatuses in *producing* textual meaning” (Hunter, 1982: 80). The second concern is that the task is designed (intentionally or not) as a pedagogical event in which students are coerced into an introspective relationship concerning the ethical judgement of their own conduct (Hunter, 1997: 325).

There seems to be two alternatives to this task; firstly, perhaps students could be directed to other historical documents that provide factual information about the attitudes towards Aboriginals, but even that would not count as subject “English.” Students could then examine the linguistic components in each document that allow and enable this kind of reading, which should not be confused with the often-enacted classroom procedure for analysing language that involves a retrieval chart with the headings: *values, techniques used, your response*. That procedure would still be grounded in the kind of limiting personalist pedagogy of the original task. Ultimately, however it is more interesting to question why the Aboriginal Act would be used as a study text *at all* – the answer to which has been the focus of this section.

DESTABILISED ENGLISH

In the previous section I suggested that one of the common ways teachers have been structuring the investigation task in the English *Course of Study* is to focus on a particular “topic of concern or controversy.” Having also outlined the governmental function embodied in this structure I will now indicate how what has become a persistent practice of focusing on ethical engagement with issues and context (instead of *language* itself) represents a destabilising of the English curriculum.

A contemporary definition of subject English comprises three discrete pedagogical areas — ethical training/development, rhetoric and aesthetic use of literature (Hunter, 1997: 315; Patterson, 1997: 349 – 350). The subject’s focus tends to stabilise its weight on one particular region due to contingent shifts of pedagogy, theory (Hunter, 1997: 315) or curriculum design and it has been the purpose of this section to identify the unvarying emphasis on personal/ethical development through which teachers implement syllabus content. Hunter’s thorough genealogical work (1988a; 1988b; 1991) suggests that “content” of English is constituted by a particular form that has “resulted in secondary English teachers taking on the role of pastoral guide or aesthetic guru” (Moon, 1994: 65) at the expense of rhetorical training. The effects of this destabilisation can be identified in statements from TEE markers between 2001 and 2005 which are remarkably repetitive:

There is a tendency for the rehearsed list [of techniques] to be used rather than responding to the questions and the texts themselves and discussing the things that are there (Curriculum Council, 2002: 3).

Students would benefit from some scaffolding to prepare them for answers which require comparison by being shown how to use key transitional phrases such as “in contrast”, “on the other hand”, “similarly”, “unlike passage one, passage two” (Curriculum Council, 2002: 4).

In these statements the markers are clearly lamenting the students’ lack of rhetorical capacity. The markers also commend the work of teachers who had chosen texts with

which students could engage deeply. What is ironic about the markers' comments is that they in fact identify (knowingly or not) the reason students cannot write effectively:

Students seemed much more willing to take up the offer of the questions to produce personal responses to issues. [...] There were some students who seemed to become so engaged with ideas that they sadly overlooked the essence of the question they were meant to be addressing (Curriculum Council, 2003: 2).

Teachers may need to consider the relevance and engagement by students with chosen texts; this may encourage students to use less description and more engaged analysis (Curriculum Council, 2005c: 2).

What we find is that as the moral technology for problematising values has become more efficient, students' ethical selves are no longer drawn out *only* through literature, as in the more explicit pedagogical processes envisaged by Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth, but are in fact drawn out through a personal engagement with social issues from the "real world." In some ways, this is similar to the approach recommended by Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth — using the playground as the "principle scene of the real life of children" (Stow, 1850 cited in Hunter, 1987: 575) — however what seems to be the modern development is the cooption of issues into the kinds of "research project study" regularly undertaken in the English classroom. It could be argued that this change reflects the pedagogical shift from "a study of Culture" (Arnold, 1869; Leavis, 1930) to "cultural studies" (Althusser, 1968; Eagleton, 1983; Williams, 1973/1980) however as Hunter (1988a) has argued these models both function in the same way to produce the same aesthetico-ethical individuals.

Ultimately, Western Australian teaching practice shows a clear emphasis on ethical development at the expense of rhetorical training and aesthetic appreciation. Teachers, it seems, have become so focused on dealing with students' personal engagement with issues/ideas that they are literally left with too little time to teach rhetoric capacities such as "structuring an argument," or aesthetic understandings

such as “the language of film analysis.” The implication for understanding the teaching practice of the COS is that although the content and syllabus documentation has changed, the emphasis on ethical interaction with issues remains the key organiser instead of restabilising the subject to address rhetorical or aesthetic competencies.

A STABLE FORM OF ENGLISH?

Following Dartmouth, it became popular to conceive of English as not concerned with a specific “content” that is “explicit knowledge in systematic order, pre-planned by the teacher” (Dixon, 1967: 73). Hunter (1983) argued that the dominant reading practice taught in English was producing self-problematizing individuals, and we can still see this reflected in the markers’ comments for the TEE, teachers’ comments on the COS content and professional documentation from the Curriculum Council. Recent neo-Foucauldian work into the subject suggests that not only is it possible to conceive of English content as a discrete set of skills, but that it may indeed be desirable to do so. This model would situate English as a precise educational discipline in which very specific skills are taught and learned (Moon, 1994: 54). A realignment of English objectives might view feminist or antiracist readings as “reading practices” that can be taught and assessed (Patterson, 1997: 346) rather than as liberating methodologies. This model would allow for ethical development of students, but only when that is the pedagogical *goal* at a particular moment, rather than as the dominant procedure of English.

To see how this model might be applied to the English COS it is worth considering the following examples of investigation tasks that stand in sharp relief to those seen in schools during actual implementation of the English COS in 2006 – 2007:

- Investigate the history of the anti-hero in literature and/or feature film;
- Investigate the language used in, and popularity of, “self-help” books;
- Investigate the emergence of the *auteur* theory of film directors during the 1960s;

- Investigate the historical development of *cinema vérité* style in documentaries.

Each of these sample tasks requires students to engage in empirical research to develop an understanding of an aesthetic or rhetorical concept, while keeping the context of study firmly grounded in *language* rather than an ethical or political issue. In this way we can see that the COS offers opportunity to move towards a more balanced English curriculum, however the ways assessment designs (eg., the investigation task) are being deployed focus too much on students' ethical experience with issues.

The rest of this thesis is in fact concerned with the kind of topic in the fourth suggestion above — Investigate the historical development of *cinema vérité* style in documentaries — for two reasons. The first reason is simply that the documentary text type has not been the subject of analysis from the governmental perspective of English and, for the most part, has received relatively little attention from mainstream English theorists and curriculum writers. Secondly, as a relative newcomer to the English curriculum, the documentary text type provides an excellent example of how the persistent practice of English teachers accommodates changes to the curriculum. In short: the introduction of a new text type will more than likely be appropriated by the persistent practice of English teachers and deployed for purposes that are unfaithful to the curriculum statements of the subject.

1.3 Significance of the Research

This research is intended to advance theoretical discussion of English pedagogy by grounding contemporary problems in a historical understanding of the subject. Specifically, the research promises to:

- a) clarify understandings of some theoretical aspects of English pedagogy, and
- b) provide a rationale for improved/more effective teaching of documentary texts.

The popular account of the theory of English pedagogy, described in section 2.1 of the Literature Review, offers an emancipatory view of the subject that (in practice) seems to encourage personal engagement with texts, often at the expense of other important aspects of English. Through historical consideration, this research will propose an alternative to these conflicting views and at the same time refocus theoretical discussion onto the documentary text type. The pedagogy associated with this text type is being examined as a mere exemplar of the persistent practice of English, given the ways in which the subject has developed by means of various historical contingencies. As a result of these developments, I believe current English teaching practices provide limited opportunity for aesthetic and rhetorical instruction with respect to the documentary form. It is intended that this research will offer an alternate pedagogy that will allow the teaching of this text type to more fully address the objectives of the English curriculum.

1.4 Research questions

Against the views of English as a progressive subject in which its pedagogy is continually seeking to become more relevant to students' authentic lives, this study examines one example of how the practices of modern English teachers, despite changes in curriculum and pedagogical theory, are consistent, unvarying iterations (replications) of a pedagogical training with its historical origin in the emergence of popular schooling. For this study the problem of teaching documentary film can be reduced to quite a simple statement: the curriculum suggests that a certain kind of teaching should be taking place, but teachers' practice suggests that something else is taking place instead. It is my intention to identify and outline not only what this "different kind of teaching practice" might be, but to trace its genealogy through the history of subject English and also to make some recommendations for ways to resolve the problem.

In order to develop my theoretical discussion I propose the following three research questions. The questions are grounded in the governmental model of English which will be explained in detail in the literature review.

1. Does current English pedagogy reflect curriculum statements for the subject, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?
2. Does Hunter's description of English pedagogy (1988a; 1991) hold true for current English teaching in Western Australia, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?
3. Is the current documentary pedagogical practice of English teachers an iteration of a long-standing training?

1.5 Limitation of the research

There is a significant limitation of this particular research due to the deliberately sharp plane of focus in the critical discussion itself. By focusing on documentary text pedagogy, I am of necessity bracketing off the teaching of feature films, for example, as well as TV drama, advertising and the entire category of print texts that form the bulk of contemporary English teaching. In other words, although the thesis describes the ways in which documentary pedagogy reflects an unbalanced implementation of the curriculum, it is of course possible that the balance is restored in the teaching of feature films, short stories and novels. In Chapter 3 (Methodology), I will comment on specific limitations of the methodology itself, however for the moment I will indicate that the study is designed to contribute to what could be described as “piecemeal” research in that it should be taken into account with the work of Hunter (1988a; 1988b; 1991; 1995; 1997), Patterson (1993) and Moon (1994; 2001) in order to develop something of a wide-angle view of subject English. The Literature Review provides a description of the work of these theorists as background to the current study. By situating my research in this way, I aim for the twin objectives of: i) confirming that the governmental view accurately describes subject English in the 21st century, and ii) expanding and redirecting the discussion toward text-types that have so far received little critical attention.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised in order to progress from a theoretical problem developed in the first four chapters to the solution offered in Chapter Five. This first chapter has framed the thesis around a general problem of contemporary English, according to the governmental theoretical framework. Chapter Two further focuses the theoretical framework by carefully reviewing the literature and establishing the categories of analysis that inform the research questions. Chapter Three details the methodological approach taken for the original qualitative research component (interviews with four teachers) in order to obtain crucial information for investigating the three research questions listed in section 1.4. In Chapter Four I advance my critical discussion of the way in which the practice of English teachers constitutes a predictably unvarying emphasis on personal/ethical development with respect to the teaching of documentary texts. Chapter Five will offer conclusions that redefine the documentary lesson as a particular technology of government within the apparatus of education, and consequently dissect the ways in which teachers' persistent practice is unfaithful to the curriculum. Finally, Chapter Five will also present a practical overview of how the documentary lesson may be recast in order to satisfy the curriculum's three objectives of rhetorical training, aesthetic cultivation and ethical development.

Chapter summary

The function of this chapter has been to make clear the theoretical background and assumptions of the study. I began by recounting the history of subject English in Western Australia from 1914 to 2007 and indicating how the governmental perspective construes this particular history as one in which the subject gradually destabilises to favour only one of its three objectives. By identifying the persistent practice of English teachers in which classroom texts (of whatever kind) are used to promote ethical/personal development at the expense of rhetorical training and aesthetic cultivation, this chapter has secured a firm empirical and theoretical justification for the study's very specific focus on the teaching of documentary texts. I then identified the limitation of the study's singular focus on documentary texts, and provided a rationale for the structure in which I present my critical discussion throughout the thesis.

2. Literature Review

Overview

This chapter reviews the theoretical background for the current research study. I begin by conducting an historical account of the development of subject English according to the two popularly held notions of its purpose. Following this background, I problematise both prevailing theories by drawing upon the Foucauldian conception of *governmentality* and Ian Hunter's investigations in subject English, in order to offer an alternative historical account in which the emancipatory nature of English is derailed in favour of one in which the subject transmits three discrete capacities: rhetorical training, aesthetic cultivation and ethical development. This alternative account exposes the way in which the two established (and competing) theories are in fact identical in form and constitute a significant destabilising of the subject with an inclination toward ethical development at the expense of rhetoric and the aesthetic. In order to demonstrate this alternative account, I draw upon the work of Hunter, Patterson and Moon in the areas of literature, personal response and popular TV drama respectively. This theoretical background, in English text types other than documentary, functions to secure a space in which my own research into the governmental deployment of documentaries can take shape. Finally, I offer alternative pedagogical resources that have been developed in academic fields outside of English that address the aesthetic and rhetorical aspects of documentary texts.

This literature review will provide theoretical background to the research study by evaluating relevant literature under the following headings:

- 2.1 Prevailing theories of English: culture or ideology?
- 2.2 After Foucault: English as government
- 2.3 The reading/viewing lesson
- 2.4 Alternative documentary pedagogy: Aesthetic cultivation and rhetorical training

2.1 Prevailing theories of English: culture or ideology?

Current English educators often align themselves with one of two dominant versions of the subject's history in order to defend or advance a position regarding pedagogical debates. These two competing models can be described as the "Cultural heritage" and "Cultural Studies" views which, according to the exponents of each, are assumed to be in direct opposition to each other. The Cultural heritage, or liberal humanist, model finds its lineage in the works of Arnold and Leavis, in which the study of English is understood in terms of a project of "cultural completion," where Culture is conceived as the "study of perfection" (Arnold, 1869: 45). In this view, the goal of English is to help students achieve completeness as civilised human beings through the domain of literature. The Cultural Studies model, in contrast, draws on Marxist theory and conceives of English as the development of students' critical awareness of the ideological practices shaping their subjectivity. Cultural Studies thus aims to achieve political awareness of the dominant social order (Daly, *et al*, 1989: 16). Because the two models consider themselves mutually exclusive, academic debate about the subject has been mapped stringently according to these theoretical positions.

This debate is evident in the often told myth of the history of English, which is that the subject has developed since the emergence of popular schooling in 1870 with a "social mission" (Baldick, 1983) to emancipate individuals – the students – from one or other of social evils. Depending on the theoretical perspective of the particular narrative, Culturalist or Cultural Studies, the subject either matches or fails to match the needs of the students at any one point in time. Historically, of course, we can see that popular schooling did emerge out of reports into the effects of environment on the working classes in England by Kay-Shuttleworth in 1832 and English was devised as a key subject relevant to the needs of students in the new schools following Forster's 1870 Education Act. Leavis attributed to English no less a task than to preserve the culture of perfection that had previously been available only to the minority interest groups (Leavis, 1930: 20). This view, according to the currently popular history of English, was overturned by the (primarily French intellectual)

revisiting of Marxist theory in the late 1960s. Althusserian views of English, working explicitly from Marxist concept of ideology, saw the “Culture” of Leavis as one way the capitalist means of reproduction are reproduced in society. By positing education as one of many Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1969: 155 – 157) this view of English sought to educate students to become politically aware of the methods of control present in their society. The Structuralism of this view was in turn questioned by Post-Structuralists who, based on the philosophy of Derrida (1967/1978), sought to make students aware not only of the ideological work of culture but also to find ways of recognising difference and resistance in the subject positions available to them in society.

We have, then, two diametrically opposed histories of the subject that can easily be correlated to the two curriculum statements in the previous chapter. The Culturalist position values the kind of curriculum in which students should be able to cite “the greats” of English Literature (Ben Jonson, Geoffrey Chaucer etc); the cultural studies position of course emphasises that students should study the diversity of Australian multicultural society. In this opposition, however, both positions assert that English *should* improve students’ lives through exposure to “good” texts and inoculation against “bad” texts; in effect, the formal difference between the two positions is that the good/bad text distinction is interchangeable depending on the theoretical orientation. In the following section I will outline a third model that side-steps these differences through historical grounding, and describes a non-totalised view of English as a discipline that functions as an improvised technology of education.

2.2 After Foucault: English as government

Distinct from the two theoretical positions outlined in the previous section, research into governmentality that has been developed from the work of Foucault (1982; 1991), draws attention to the overlaps in the views of language and subjectivity presented by these competing models and subjects them to a materialist analysis. In Chapter One, I used the governmental model as a means to examine a discrete problem in contemporary English: the practice of teaching issues and context. This section will revisit this theoretical framework to establish how it provides a

genealogy of contemporary English according to its historical context. The governmental model of English, meticulously advanced in Hunter (1988a; 1991), essentially offers three alternative manoeuvres to theorising the subject. Firstly, through substantial historical analysis, the model situates English as just one of the historical contingencies through which popular schooling has developed. Secondly, the model uses this framework to describe subject English as a moral technology which emerged in the early stages of popular schooling in order to produce certain kinds of aesthetico-ethical individuals capable of self-governance. Finally, the model identifies significant overlaps in the Culturalist and Cultural Studies approaches in order to show that while the content and aims may *seem* to change over time, the structure and practice of the subject do not vary.

The governmental model of English is concerned with the appearance of the subject within the emergence of popular schooling as part of the myth of “progressive civilisation.” The model seeks its roots here in Foucault’s work detailing the historical shift from “punishing the body” to “governing the soul” in order to match the values and desires of human subjects to governmental objectives through a complex network of power relationships in society (Foucault, 1975). Foucault’s definition of “government” encompasses more than just the state political system and focuses on the “way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed” by structuring “the possible field of action” of human subjects (Foucault, 1982: 221).

The governmental account of the development of subject English suggests that the discipline is in fact the result of a history of a diverse set of contingencies that saw the Lancastrian monitorial schools of England transformed into a kind of moral technology (popular schooling) for the training of individuals in the industrialising society of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Education Act of 1870 was in fact directly informed by two contingent events: i) the emergence of statistical measures for counting populations (births, deaths, sickness rates etc), and ii) the work of James Kay-Shuttleworth in England and David Stow in Scotland.

During the late 1800s, it became possible to count, and describe with numbers, various aspects of the population. Additionally, the kinds of questions increased in

population censuses from 156 questions to over 13,000; these contingencies contributed to the form of biopower that began to be exerted in the industrialising state (Hacking, 1991: 183). Biopower (Foucault, 1976; Donald, 1992) was also exercised through the conception of the cellular classroom that permitted the supervising (correctional) gaze of the teacher who would “incite, observe and guide” students in learning situations (Hunter, 1991: 56). Peim (2001) describes the end point of bio-power as “the production of self-disciplining, self-regulating citizenry” (181). From this governmental perspective the subject of English emerges as one in which literary texts are deployed in order to train students to self-govern in the decisions they make in their personal lives (Hunter, 1988a: 42). According to Peim, popular schooling adopted “ready-to-hand techniques of training” from Christian pastoral care in designing the school as an apparatus of governmentality (Peim, 2001: 185). This self-governing individual is produced, in schools, through the pastoral relationship between teacher and student, as well as through the architectural arrangement of classrooms; the latter can be described metaphorically according to Bentham’s panopticon, which translates surveillance into self-surveillance (Donald, 1992: 32; Peim, 2001: 185).

Kay-Shuttleworth’s investigations into the living conditions of the working classes of England took place at the same time as the innovations of Scottish education reformer David Stow who had identified, for instance in 1850, the potential for moral training in the school playground. Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth both believed that monitorial schooling failed because its norms, rules and rigid hierarchical structure (Hunter, 1991) did not allow for students to show their “true” nature; this was deemed to be a problem because it prevented the schools from efficiently implanting moral training where it was “most needed.” In detailed historical studies of power, Foucault has suggested that power can only be exercised over an individual who is free to act in a range of possible ways (Foucault, 1982: 221).

In order to exercise moral power over the students, Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth sought to exercise biopower through conceiving the cellular classroom with a specific kind of relationship between the students and a teacher who would “incite, observe and guide” the students in learning situations that would open them up to moral correction from the supervising gaze of the teacher (Hunter, 1991: 56). This

method of moral guidance was directly borrowed from the Protestant pastoral tradition in which the pastor possesses a kind of individualising, moral power over the members of the church (Foucault, 1982: 214). In the early years of popular schooling this power was bestowed upon the ordinary classroom teacher however with the development of English as a core subject the English teacher became the direct inheritor of this role (Hunter, 1988a: 125; Hunter, 1988b: 11). Hunter never describes this moral supervision as bad in itself; it is an essential task of government, however English also has other educational tasks.

Theorists working from this post-Foucauldian perspective have suggested a re-thinking of the content of the subject, essentially calling for a less enthusiastic emphasis on critical literacy (Cultural Studies) in English. Debate between Culturalist and Cultural Studies accounts of the subject is still fierce, and often takes place across clearly staked-out battle lines. For example, traditional approaches to English education are defined as narrow minded or “one-eyed” in Jetnikoff’s (2006) article entitled “Combating Cyclops.”

It is this tenacious insistence on the social mission of “progressive” English pedagogy that is problematised in Moon’s “Rethinking resistance: English and critical consciousness” (1994) and Hunter’s “After English” (1997). Moon argues that English can be conceived as being a subject that “transmits certain localized, purpose-specific skills” (Moon, 1994: 54). Supplementary to this distinction, Hunter traces the genealogy of modern English to argue that even though the subject has historically encompassed three very distinct areas (*moral-ethical development*, *rhetorical training* and *aesthetic cultivation*) it has become destabilised in recent years to emphasise the moral-ethical dimension.

The social mission of English is brought under sharp criticism by Moon’s article, in which he first argues that “resistance is a feature of all the major models of English” (Moon, 1994: 48) and then outlines how various schools of literary criticism “from Leavisite humanism to post-structural Marxism” (51) have been mapped onto an unchanging pedagogical aim of the subject. This aim, Moon argues, has been to emancipate individuals (the students) from variously defined restraints placed upon them by society. In order to fulfil this social mission subject English has relied upon

assumptions about “language, society and subjectivity” (52) that Moon criticises from the point of view of contemporary materialism. Moon first critiques both models’ assumption that subjectivity is produced primarily through language; rather it can be argued that subjectivity is produced in a range of ways, including “bodily capacities, behavioural routines and generic protocols” (54). The significance of this alternate conception of subjectivity is that subject English cannot claim that raising consciousness or managing subject formation are its key functions (53 – 54). The second part of Moon’s article focuses on a critique of the conventional “reading” lesson conducted in English classrooms. Regardless of the pedagogical model employed, traditional or critical, students are guided (not explicitly directed) towards producing a specific reading that supposedly liberates them “from the grip of ignorance, prejudice, dominant ideology, or some equivalent” (58). From the earlier materialist critique of language and subjectivity, Moon then argues that this kind of lesson *produces* (in the Foucauldian sense) students who can use “text[s] as a device for moral inspection” (59) rather than being technically competent in the discipline of literary criticism. Moon’s solution to all of this is for English teachers to accept that the subject consists of discrete, normative skills that can be explicitly taught.

Hunter’s paper (1997) further develops this idea by systematically tracing the historical developments through which the English curriculum became destabilised to rest its weight on the task of ethical development. Hunter identifies that although English seems to be focused on literary texts, current pedagogy is distinguished most clearly by “a particular way of deploying texts (of whatever kind) in the classroom” (318). These texts can be literary, dramatic or even children’s own writing but the most common pedagogical purpose to which they are put is to provide a stimulus to elicit ethical self-problematisation. Despite moves towards the “genre-based” mode of written instruction, Hunter notes that the “inertia” of personal growth pedagogy results in the possible rhetorical opportunities of genre writing being absorbed by kinds of classroom writing that are simply methods of “heightening, elaborating, and recording the introspective relation to ethical conduct” (326). Importantly, Hunter explains that this destabilisation is inevitably part of the development of English, reminding us that the subject was initially set up to perform the governmental task of creating self-problematising individuals. However by contrast to the classical rhetorical schools that continued to be separate from popular schooling until the early

20th century, the genre-writing theorists ignore the kinds of rhetorical training that provide real mastery of written language (328). Specifically relevant to the current study is that Hunter describes one example of a change in the curriculum (the uptake of genre-based writing) that is almost automatically filtered through the persistent practice of personalist pedagogy. The paper concludes with a warning that the rhetorical genre-based curriculum must be “disentangled” (332) from the ethical formation of students, in a process which Hunter earlier (1995) described as “renovating the curriculum” to reclaim the three fundamental dimensions of English.

2.3 The reading/viewing lesson.

Visual texts became part of the English curriculum in the 1970s and in modern English classrooms the standard visual text types studied are popular/mass-media genres such as television dramas, television news and current affairs, feature films and print/non-print advertising. Regardless of the text type studied, teachers generally apply critical literacy approaches, aiming “to make students critical and selective viewers, able to reflect critically on media messages” (Luke, 1994: 1). There has been little academic attention to documentary texts, however the papers reviewed here provide significant relevant context for the current study. English teachers generally approach visual texts from the same pedagogical perspective, and we will see that this is in fact part of the problem. The purpose of this section is to outline the dominant views of visual text pedagogy and then open them up to scrutiny by using previous neo-Foucauldian research as a starting point. I will first review the dominant views of teaching visual texts in the English classroom and follow this with an account of neo-Foucauldian research into both literary and visual texts.

The objectives of the critical literacy approach to media texts are laid out clearly in a paper delivered at an English Teachers Association Conference in 1990. Entitled “English, Media and Ideology” (Quin & McMahon, 1990), the paper defines the role of classroom English as allowing students to see how television, as something considered to be “light entertainment,” is able to shape public opinions, attitudes, values and beliefs (20). The paper takes an explicitly Althusserian/Marxist approach

to the visual codes use in television programs such as *The Cosby Show* and *The Wonder Years*, arguing that they are constructed in order to encourage viewers to identify with a particular set of values (22 – 24). At the conclusion of the paper, the authors suggest that making students aware of the ideological work of these texts is an important part of education “even if it is not possible to distance themselves from them” (25). Here we see the “social mission” of English taken as granted; the authors admit an Althusserian caveat that students cannot stand outside ideology, however despite this it is “worth” pursuing (paradoxically) in the ongoing emancipatory project of the subject.

In an attempt to survey the practices of English teachers in 1996, Robyn Quin interviewed five metropolitan secondary teachers about their experiences teaching media texts in the English classroom. Although the author announces that the unsystematic research cannot be read as representative or typical of English teachers, the views expressed by the teachers can be read (retrospectively) as typical of the critical literacy approach to teaching media texts. Quin begins by summarising the child-centred reasons for including media texts in the English curriculum:

As in other parts of the world teachers began to search for ways to make the curriculum and learning methods more relevant not only to the ‘new type’ of secondary student but to all students who would live their lives in the second part of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty first (Quin, 1996: 66).

In this conception of subject English history, pre-1970s curricula are described as “rigidly controlled, unabashedly traditional, externally examined and marked by a strict hierarchy of disciplines” (66). From this grounding, the author reviews five teachers’ attitudes towards media texts in the English classroom. What is relevant for the current study is that although the author concludes that some teachers treated visual texts as a stimulus for personal reflection and others studied the content of the texts (79), the persistent practice of using texts as the surface upon which students are guided towards ways of thinking about themselves and their world can be traced through each of the five case studies.

Rod Quin's *Readings & Responses* (2003) is a student textbook that contains a section on documentary texts that represents an interesting (im)balance of the English concerns of rhetoric, aesthetics and ethics. Quin opens with the assertion that documentaries are "constructions that offer particular versions of reality," (Quin, 2003: 69) and this definition dominates the remainder of the chapter. While repeating that the concept of "version of reality" is not a criticism of the documentary form, the text identifies a range of technical aspects of documentaries that contribute to the construction of its version of reality (70 – 73). The rhetorical/organisational elements of documentaries are then discussed as components of narrative structure (74 – 75) and then the chapter progresses through a detailed "History of the documentary" (77 – 82) that identifies major stylistic and technical trends from the 1920s – 1990s. The chapter closes with two very detailed case studies of Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 film *Triumph of the Will* (83 – 94) and Nick Broomfield's 1998 documentary *Kurt and Courtney* (95 – 110). Both of these case studies feature contextual-historical information of the films, analyses of the film technique and criticism of the selection of detail, for example: "There are almost no shots of old people in this film [*Triumph of the Will*]" (92). In each case study there are a number of student-activities, such as the following three questions:

Discuss how the opening titles position the audience (89).

In what ways did your context and your familiarity with certain film conventions influence your response to *Triumph of the Will*? (94)

Discuss whether the desire of some people to find fault with celebrities is just nasty jealousy or a healthy scepticism (101).

The first example question represents a clearly rhetorical interest, while the second and third represent ethical interests. It can be argued that the second example of Quin's questions encourage an aesthetic and/or rhetorical response in its inclusion of the topic of "film conventions," however given that the topic of most of the 11 questions in the chapter resemble that of questions two and three, it is more likely that a personal-ethical response is being encouraged here. Of the 11 questions that span the twin case studies, eight of them are distinctly ethical in direction.

Interestingly, in the book's preface, Quin declares "the belief that you will learn best if you are presented with challenging, worthwhile knowledge and activities" (v). In terms of a balance between ethics, rhetoric and aesthetics, then, the chapter on documentary challenges students to construct "worthwhile knowledge" through activities inclined towards the ethical.

Although Hunter (1991) writes about the teaching of literary texts he finds a similar pedagogical routine in operation, and declares that in the literature lesson "much is learned but nothing is taught" (Hunter, 1991: 52). In Hunter's view this is the essential "type" of English lesson. The format of the literature lesson can be described as one in which students' values are incited through reading and discussion of a text in order to expose them for inspection by the teacher. The teacher (acting in the pastoral role) is then in a position to correct and guide students' responses to form them into self-problematising individuals (73). Hunter's remark that the literature lesson is not about "our humanity or its repression" (66) requires some explanation; the fundamental literature lesson is designed with a very specific form (the pastoral relationship between students and teacher) that engages students in moral training with the objective of producing aesthetico-ethical individuals.

A related analysis of a conventionalised English lesson is found in Patterson (1993) in which the concept of a "personal response" (to literature) is critiqued from the same Hunterian perspective. Patterson explains that personal response pedagogy requires students to use their "response" to literature to "perform a certain representation of the 'self'" (62) which is then scrutinised (informally and formally through assessment procedures) in an aesthetico-ethical transaction. Significantly, the "personal response" is shown not to have originated, as popularly thought, during the 1960s progressive educational changes but through techniques available "since the inception of popular education" (62). Two examples of classroom practice are offered to clarify the position: firstly, an analysis of a US paper presented by Joel Wingard outlining the use of response pedagogy in his literature classes and secondly, a poetry lesson observed by the author in a Western Australian secondary English class. Patterson critiques these examples on the basis that, without explicitly admitting as much, they both rely on students' implicitly knowing that their responses require them to perform the act of "looking within" (64 – 65) and the

successful (ie., highly rewarded) students are those who produce the following kind of response:

Even if I am faced with an unconventional text that I do not understand I can react with frustration and allow myself to try to think of the things about myself that are holding me back from comprehending (Wingard, 1990 cited in Patterson, 1993: 64).

Relevant to the current study is Patterson's tracking down of the historical contingencies that make it possible for English teachers' "preoccupation" (65) with this kind of response. The author identifies the rediscovery in 1968, and subsequent inclusion on the reading lists of teacher education courses, of Rosenblatt's 1938 text *Literature as Exploration*. Rosenblatt's work emphasised that the process of "making a text the reader's own" is the primary objective of literary study. Rather than forging "the necessary links between a progressive pedagogy and literary criticism" (66), Patterson suggests that the interest in Rosenblatt's text can be explained as part of the subject's long-standing function "as a non-coercive means for bringing the 'real life of the child' into the corrective space of the school" (Hunter, 1988a: 115).

In order to use these post-Foucauldian accounts of English as a starting point for reclaiming the aesthetic from the ethical, "'The text is out there': History, research and *The X Files*," offers an alternative to the critical literacy movement's domination of visual text pedagogy. Moon's (2001) paper presents a post-Foucauldian historical/intertextual mode of visual text analysis. The author begins by outlining ways that the English curriculum has *widened* but "the range of methodologies used in textual study seems to have contracted" (5) so that the "mark of good teaching" (6) is often the production of critical and self-reflective readings by students. By contrasting the kinds of interpretive/critical questions typically asked of visual texts with an alternative set, grounded in a historical-descriptive practice, the paper proposes a widening of textual pedagogy that is less-critical and can "equip students with a more diverse repertoire of knowledges and skills, to match the diverse kinds of text they are studying" (15). Moon does not present this approach as the only way to study texts, but rather as an additional practice which aims to identify concrete historical connections about the emergence of a particular text (11). Taking into

account the social mission of emancipatory English, the author is careful to guard this approach against recuperation by ideological modes of English by describing English as a discipline in which there are specific occasions in which teachers should encourage ethical self-reflection, and other occasions where it is worth approaching texts from alternative, aesthetic practices (14 – 15).

Moon's paper approaches classroom study of *The X Files* that traces its historical/intertextual origins from prior TV shows, 1970s conspiracy films and historical events such as HUAC (the House 'Un-American Activity' Committee). Students, in this mode of analysis, would not be trying to interpret or criticise the text – instead the aim is to describe the text in as full detail as possible (9). Additionally, this kind of analysis makes available to students research techniques in the form of surveying (12 – 14) which reveal information about audiences' engagement with the text that is much closer to empirical research than the kind of guesswork and prediction normally expected of English students. Ultimately, the aim of this kind of study is about developing student confidence about "knowing" a text in detail (its history, cultural connections and audience), so that students can develop a greater appreciation of its aesthetic properties.

2.4 Alternative documentary pedagogy: Aesthetic cultivation and rhetorical training

Alternative approaches to the study of documentary film texts are well established outside of English. Detailed examples of historical-aesthetic study, for example, are found in Thompson and Bordwell's *Film history: An introduction* (2003). In this account of film history, which includes documentary, the authors do not consider interpretations of films. Instead, films are located within historical film movements, or technological trends. These historical links are as diverse as the way documentary became "identified with artistic cinema" in the 1920s (184) and the influence of television on documentary subject matter (587 – 588). In discussing the first point, the authors use examples to illustrate three primary types of documentary during the 1920s. In each case the film style is given primary attention, for example: "*Chang* reflected a move toward fiction-based filmmaking" (185). Similarly, the authors

point out that since the 1980s, “documentary practice was changing from pure Direct Cinema to a more synthetic form ... film academics turned their attention to matters of style and structure” (603). It is this attention to empirical study of aesthetic practice that represents a move away from the ethical mode in academic studies of film.

This historical-aesthetic mode also appears in Renov’s essay “Toward a Poetics of Documentary” (1993). Renov attempts to identify a more expansive notion of documentary theory that includes attention to the aesthetic. The author identifies four possible rhetorical/aesthetic modes of documentary and then addresses each one historically: *to record, reveal, or preserve; to persuade or promote; to analyse or interrogate; to express* (21). What emerges from this work is that in order to understand each of these modes of documentary it is necessary to draw upon a body of historical-aesthetic knowledge of documentary text types. For example, Renov’s discussion of his second category of documentary texts — “To persuade or promote” (28) — relies upon understanding the “tradition of John Grierson” (29) of documentary films that are designed to express social messages. The author clearly argues that the documentary film is “the least discussed and explored of cinematic realms” (20) and opens up possibilities for further study.

Although these examples draw from academic enquiry outside subject English there has also been movement within English textbook writing to extend the study of documentaries. Moon’s *Viewing Terms: A practical glossary for film and TV study* (2004) contains a section dedicated to documentary which can be described as representing a balance of the aesthetic, rhetorical and ethical interests of English. The definition of documentary is presented as simply “a term used to describe films that deal with factual topics” (Moon, 2004: 42). The section identifies the historical emergence of the “truthful” film with reference to the Lumière brothers, then suggests a range of categories of the major documentary types, and provides description of stylistic trends such as cinema vérité, direct address and docudrama. Moon identifies the codes and conventions often employed by documentaries, and articulates their rhetorical functions before discussing the concept of versions of reality. The section closes with an activity in which readers (students) firstly, practice the rhetorical skill of selection of detail, as used by documentaries, and then

secondly, subject this to a values-based analysis of the ethical choices involved in constructing a documentary film.

These publications clearly suggest that an alternative tradition of study is available, in contrast to the primary ethical deployment of texts found in mainstream English studies.

Chapter summary

This chapter has functioned to review the relevant literature that forms the theoretical background to my current study. Significantly, I challenged the two popularly held accounts of the history of subject English by drawing on the work of Foucault, Hunter, Patterson and Moon. The alternative account of the subject proposed by this theoretical background is one in which the subject serves three discrete pedagogical aims: *rhetorical training*, *aesthetic cultivation* and *ethical development*, however because of contingent developments in the subject's history there has been a destabilisation so that the ethical aspect is emphasised disproportionately. This Literature Review makes use of previous investigations that have focused on areas of English other than documentary teaching in order to form a foundation for the current study, which aims to refocus discussion on a hitherto unexplored area of the subject. In closing, the Review identified the existence of alternative pedagogy for the documentary text type that addresses both the aesthetic and rhetorical aspects.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

Overview

This chapter outlines the sources of data for the project's critical discussion of the problem of teaching documentary film in the Western Australian secondary English classroom. I begin with a revision of the assumptions for this discussion that have been drawn from the governmental account of the subject's history. Following this, I describe the purpose of analysing a range of documents designed for English teachers (sample teaching programs, textbooks, Curriculum Statements and TEE *Examiner Reports*). The major sections of this chapter deal with the qualitative research methodology employed to obtain my original evidence from practising English teachers. Before reporting on the interviews themselves, I explain the reasoning behind this original research, the methodology employed, ethical considerations and the kind of content analysis performed on the data. I present two basic research questions underpinning the interviews, and based on the data analysis pose a further research question that will inform the Discussion. Because the historical documentation is subjected to the same kind of analysis it is not illustrated here. In further chapters, the data is used to inform my theoretical discussion of the teaching of documentary films in secondary English classrooms.

Introduction

In this chapter I outline how my theoretical discussion draws upon historical documentation and is supplemented by interviews with English teachers. The theoretical assumption, from the work of Hunter *et al*, is that English has historically served three functions, namely aesthetic cultivation, rhetorical training and ethical development, and these are in fact reflected in the current *Curriculum Framework* statement of the subject. It should be pointed out that the *Curriculum Framework* does not represent a change in English, rather it clearly illustrates that these long-standing functions of English are still in evidence. Given this curriculum document, these three functions are expected to be represented in Western Australian schools. My critical discussion will explore the extent to which this expectation is true with respect to the teaching of documentary films in the secondary English context. From

the outset of this research, I believe I have a persuasive argument that the curriculum statement is not adequately represented in many English classrooms in Western Australia. Additionally, this argument can be focused on the teaching of documentary texts to show that the introduction of a “new” text type into the curriculum will not necessarily transform its basic practices because the historical functions are too deeply entrenched. The interviews are intended to “test” these propositions with respect to the attitudes of four teachers from two public school English departments. All four informants are experienced English teachers in the context of Year 12 TEE English. This argument has particular relevance to on-going pedagogical concerns about the content of English, for example to include or exclude popular texts.

The relationship between the documentation and the interviews is represented below:

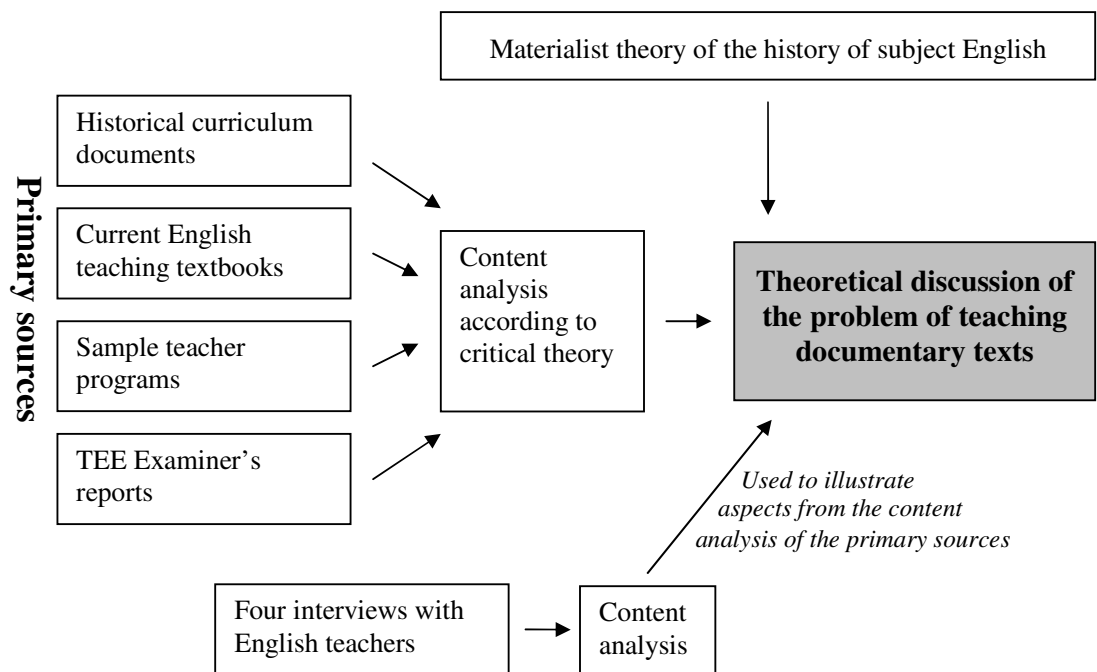


Fig. 3.1

3.1 Historical documentation

Because this critical discussion relies heavily upon the theoretical background of Foucault (1991), Hunter (1988b; 1991; 1997), Moon (1994; 2001) and Patterson (1993), I interpret the historical data through the lens of the governmental view of English. This allows me to devise three categories of analysis: *rhetorical training*, *aesthetic cultivation* and *ethical problematisation*. Essentially, I will argue that the deployment of documentary texts in the contemporary English classroom is in fact highly predictable based upon the historical account of the subject from the point of view of governmentality. I draw upon historical documents that track the inclusion of the text-type in the curriculum, as well as documents that provide evidence of how the ethical deployment of this text-type is merely an iteration of a long standing problem in the subject's development. This evidence is drawn from a range of documents:

- Curriculum Statements of the subject
- Sample teacher programs developed for the English *Course of Study* and Year 12 TEE courses
- English textbooks
- TEE *Examiner's Reports* from the Curriculum Council

Appendix IV provides the actual documentation that has been used for this purpose: I have attached URLs and a description of each document or, in the case of uneasily obtainable documents, I have attached the document itself.

When examining these documents and producing the analysis in the Discussion (see Chapter 4), I use the three previously mentioned categories as an organisational framework. From this analysis it is possible to describe how “the relationships among issues that have influenced the past, continue to influence the present” (Berg, 2004: 234). The issues of the past involve the opposing accounts of the subject's history, as outlined in the literature review, and the subject of my theoretical discussion is how these issues are reflected in current teaching practice.

3.2 Multiple interviews

In order to triangulate the findings from my historical review I propose two simple research questions that can be addressed through interviews with teachers:

1. To what extent can traces of the Culturalist, Cultural Studies and/or historical-philological views of English be identified in four English teachers' attitudes toward teaching documentary texts?
2. To what extent can traces of the curriculum statement be identified in these teachers' attitudes toward teaching documentary texts?

These questions are designed as a simple qualitative component that could be reported on its own as a description of four non-randomly selected teachers' views on the teaching of documentary texts. It is not my intention to make judgements on the teachers' views in this phase of the research; the emphasis is on description that can be drawn upon later in order to illustrate my overall critical argument. This part of the research utilises coding methodology from the fields of grounded theory and interpretive case study design. I use the coding process of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to classify the material into relevant themes and topics (Burns, 2000: 432) before subjecting the material to content analysis (432) to develop concepts that answer my research questions above. There has not been adequate research to establish teachers' attitudes toward teaching documentary texts, so the interviews provide relevant data in this regard. It is important to point out that the concepts from the content analysis are not meant to be representative of all teachers in all English classrooms in the state. The results are not presented as case-studies or grounded theory because they are intended to serve as an additional data source in the general theoretical discussion, and because the existing theory of governmentality *does*, in fact, adequately explain the phenomena.

3.3 Interview design

In order to obtain the kind of data required to advance my theoretical discussion I conducted interviews with four non-randomly selected teachers. The informants were

selected from teaching colleagues who teach Year 12 TEE English because this is the particular course in which the documentary text undergoes the most rigorous analysis. These interviews were organised in two parts that were designed to take place in one interview session. The first part was semi-structured (Merriam, 1998: 74 – 75) and consisted of fifteen questions to elicit a general overview of each teacher's attitudes towards teaching the documentary text. The second part of the interview involved unstructured questions (75) which were asked as the teacher “talked through” examples of their teaching resources used during documentary study. These interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed with anonymous names for coding and interpretation.

The questions for use in the semi-structured section are included in Appendix II. These fifteen questions were developed according to categories outlined by Merriam (76 – 79): *hypothetical* and *devil's advocate* questions, as well as Berg's (2004: 85 – 93) review of effective questions. I attempted to generate a mixture of questions, as well as reducing the number of affective words (89) in order to elicit more accurate information about the topic under study. Additionally, I included extra questions to improve reliability of informant responses. Number eight is an example of this: it is “roughly equivalent” (86) to number five and allows comparison of informant responses to the topic of what they consider when approaching curriculum planning. Supplementary to these questions, of course, I used probing questions (86 - 87) in order to follow up some of the informants' responses to ensure I had detailed information. Appendix II provides detailed clarification of the purpose of each question.

3.4 Data analysis

The analysis of the data was conducted in two stages: coding, which is deductive and inductive (Berg, 2004: 272 – 273), and then content analysis in the form of an interpretive approach (266). Since the interview data will be used to illustrate the greater theoretical points I am making in the Discussion, the aim of my content analysis was to construct categories “that capture some recurring pattern” (Merriam, 1998: 179) across the four informants in terms of how their attitudes reflect one or

other theoretical approaches to English teaching.¹ I identified coding categories by a “deductive approach” (272) in which the categories were informed by the governmental perspective of subject English. At the same time, however, I performed inductive analysis on the descriptions of pedagogical practice. Finally, I attempted to classify each informant according to how much “balance” their attitudes showed across the curriculum objectives of English, as well as to what extent their attitudes reflect a Culturalist or Cultural Studies view of the subject.

In Section 3.71 (Semi-quantitative description of the coding categories) I provide a sketch of the exact coding categories used to analyse the interview data. The full analysis of the transcripts, including Level II codes, can be found in Appendix V.

3.5 Reliability and validity

Being post-positivist and qualitative by design, my overall research does not seek to identify or explain a singular objective reality about English teachers’ practice. According to Schutt:

Post-positivism accepts the basic premise that there is an external, objective reality, but recognizes that its complexity, and the limitations of human observers, preclude us from developing anything more than a partial understanding (Schutt, 1999: 392).

From this assumption, my research relies upon established critical theory and the validity of my results should be judged according to how well they represent this theoretical framework. The interviews, of course, are acts of qualitative research and as such are geared towards making observations about “people’s constructions of reality – how they understand the world” (Merriam, 1998: 203). It is necessary to consider that the interpretations made of the “latest meaning” (Berg, 2004: 269 - 270) of informant’s responses are susceptible to debate (Burns, 2000: 433). In order to improve the reliability of my interpretations of the latent meaning of the

¹ According to Berg, this kind of analysis is effective at providing “a means for identifying, organizing, indexing, and retrieving data” in order to offer an opportunity to “better understand the perspective(s) of the producer of these words [the data]” (2004: 269).

interviews, I use a form of audit trail in which my coding and content analysis are included as appendices in the final study.

3.6 Ethics

The qualitative research component of my study is of course subject to issues of research ethics. The issues that need to be considered are deception, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and the publication of my findings (Burns, 2000: 18 – 21). This research involved asking a series of questions about documentary teaching practice to four voluntary informants. Because I was attempting to find evidence of how the attitudes of the informants reflected particular theoretical approaches to documentary pedagogy, my research required no form of deception (19 – 20) to ensure accurate research data was collected.

The interviews relied upon colleagues volunteering their time. I provided participants with an “informed consent form which describes the purpose of the research, its procedures, risks and discomforts, its benefits and the right to withdraw” (18). These consent forms are included in Appendix III. Along with the consent forms, participants were provided with the question schedule in advance of the interview so they could prepare, as well as choose to accept or decline to participate. In order to provide privacy and confidentiality to participants, I used anonymous names for the informants during transcription as well as in the reporting of the data in the final study. Additionally, I do not use the informants’ teaching resources – the focus is on their verbal comments and attitudes about the use(s) of these resources.

3.7 Four interviews

All four interviews were conducted with the same two stages. The first stage was the set of structured questions (see Appendix II) and the second stage was semi-structured according to the particular “teaching resource” nominated by the interviewee. The interviewees will be referred to as Teacher One (T1), Teacher Two (T2), Teacher Three (T3) and Teacher Four (T4). I begin with a simple quantitative counting of the participants’ references to the three aspects of English this study is

concerned with (Aesthetics, Rhetoric and Ethic). Following this I outline the key themes from each interview and then conduct content analysis on the common themes identified between the four participants. Finally, I posit an additional research question informed by the interview data itself. At this stage, I am not aiming to judge or analyse the information. The objective is to describe four teacher's attitudes towards the teaching of documentary texts.

3.71 Semi-quantitative description of the coding categories

It was my intention to use the interviews to elicit a general overview of each teacher's attitudes towards teaching the documentary text type. The initial stage of coding involved a deductive analysis of each interview. In accordance with the governmental perspective of English this study is dealing with, the kinds of interview data that counts as an "instance" of each concern are:

Aesthetic emphasis: a focus on judging *the artistry of the text*, and on discerning the protocols for artistic judgement. The text is studied in order to appreciate its beauty, elegance, etc — that is, as an essentially artistic object. For example: "They [the students] respond to the fast-moving "American" style but they need to know about different styles" (T1).

Rhetorical emphasis: a focus on techniques of *effective communication or persuasion*. The text is studied in order to discern the rules or techniques for effectively conveying a message. For example: "Students have difficult identifying the underlying argument and the subtle rhetorical techniques such as 'irony' and satire that present these arguments" (T4).

Ethical emphasis: a focus on *values, morals and political positions*, and on the text's role in producing, reproducing or challenging value systems. The text is studied in order to achieve a clarification of values in relation to issues of social concern. For example: "'Mohammed and Juliet' deals with good issues like justice, truth, race, power of government" (T3).

An “instance” in this case is either a sentence or a short passage concerned with one particular idea that pertains to the aesthetic, rhetorical or ethical aspect of the documentary. Summarised in the table below is the quantitative count of each “instance” of one of the concerns by each teacher.

	<i>Instances of Aesthetic Concerns</i>	<i>Instances of Rhetorical Concerns</i>	<i>Instances of Ethical Concerns</i>
<i>Teacher One</i>	11 (23%)	8 (17%)	28 (60%)
<i>Teacher Two</i>	5 (20%)	8 (32%)	12 (48%)
<i>Teacher Three</i>	6 (11%)	19 (33%)	32 (56%)
<i>Teacher Four</i>	15 (36%)	10 (24%)	17 (40%)

Table 3.1: Deductive coding categories informed by the governmental perspective of English

These results are semi-quantitative in that they offer an overview of the general balance (or otherwise) of each teacher’s discussion. As an example of the way this content analysis was conducted, I offer an extract from T1’s answer to Question 10 which asks how often the participant considers the techniques used by a documentary when choosing it for study. This extract contains examples of all three “instances,” which I have highlighted and labelled in the margins.

	<i>All the time. All the time. It’s very important, because when you look at</i>
Aesthetic	<div> <div>... what we try to do is to say to the kids, <i>these are devices that are available to documentary makers. These are the range of devices, okay.</i></div> <div><i>Let’s just see what devices this person has used</i> and also <i>why have they chosen to use those devices? What’s the reason? So I suppose what I’m trying to do is to get them to be a little bit more aware of how they are being influence? And also aware of how a particular version is being presented.</i> And I think that’s very important because I’m just trying to get them aware of the fact that when they are watching documentaries on TV, or they go to the cinemas and they watch documentaries, that they need to know what is the version they’re being presented with, who’s version is it, and also how ... ‘cause I remember saying</div> </div>
Rhetoric	

Rhetoric	<p>previously here, how is this version being presented? Because I think that's very important. So you're talking about the type of shots being uses, the use of music, the use of the juxtaposition of particular shots, the selection of information, the selection of detail. Yeah, because the way in which something is done is ... if they can understand that, they</p>
Ethical	<p>can understand to some extent the way in which ... I'm trying not to use the word "manipulated", but they can understand how they are being influenced. So it's not just what is the person saying, it is also how are</p>
Rhetoric	<p>they going about doing this? So if they can be aware of how they're going, how documentary makers go about trying to influence you in some way, they can become more aware and more critical viewers. And that's what we're trying to do. So, see quite often, you'll get kids who are 16, or 15, 16, and they watch documentaries and they immediately assume that's the way it is. But that's not always the way it is, and that's the point we're trying to make. And we're not saying that they're being lied to. What we're saying is that's just someone's version of this event. And so how are they presenting you with this version is also important. How are they trying to influence you. So if they know how</p>
Ethical	<p>they're being influence, then they can become more crucial and more aware viewers of documentary which is what I think is one of the things we're trying to do.</p>

3.72 Deductive summary of the participants' interviews

According to the three deductive categories identified above, I will now summarise the interview transcript of each teacher. The complete summary of the deductive codes can be found in Appendix V.

TEACHER ONE (T1)

The interview with T1 was conducted in the participant's home in January 2007. The interview took place over one hour. During the course of the interview, the participant referred to the following documentary texts:

- *Bowling For Columbine* (Moore, 2002)
- *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Moore, 2004)
- *McLibel* (Armstrong & Loach, 2005)
- *Super Size Me* (Spurlock, 2004)
- *Nicaragua: no Pasaran* (Bradbury, 1984)
- TV Documentaries from the “Cutting Edge” series (ABC)

Aesthetic instances: 11

Rhetorical instances: 8

Ethical instances: 28

This participant’s 11 instances of **Aesthetic considerations** emphasised the need for students to become aware of the “different ways documentaries can be constructed” stylistically. Students were expected to be familiar with “film language” from their Year 11 TEE English studies, however in Year 12 they would need to learn some new aspects of film language specific to documentaries, as well as that documentaries can be entertaining rather than just informative. Significantly, this teacher also mentioned that students often eagerly anticipate the study of documentaries. An example of the kind of aesthetic interests discussed by this participant is:

I’ve tried to have a look at, say, some English and some American documentaries and some Australian documentaries because I find them quite different in style. Like you know, Columbine is very different to say MacLibel. So I’ll do both and I’ll point out the differences in style to the kids because Columbine’s such a fast moving, so is 9/11, so fast moving (T1).

The eight instances of **Rhetorical concerns** focused on how the documentary director is using techniques to create effects and meaning. Specifically, “meaning” was linked to the concept of “version of reality” as outlined in the TEE English Syllabus. An example of the rhetorical concerns mentioned by this teacher is:

[W]e look at the structure of the documentary itself, how is it constructed and how does it contribute to the way in which the person who's making the documentary is trying to make meaning in some way (T1).

The 28 instances of **Ethical concerns** developed three broad areas of interest — i) the connection between the students' personal contexts and the documentaries; ii) the linking of documentaries with “issues” relevant to other texts studied during the year; and iii) teaching students that documentaries are not about “the truth.” In the first area, this teacher explained that there is an attempt to choose documentaries that deal with issues the students are “in tune” with because they might be facing those same issues in their own lives, and they [therefore] respond well to these documentaries. “Men’s issues” was suggested as an example. Additionally, students were expected to engage with the concept of how their personal context affects their interpretation of the documentary text. The second concern was simply that this teacher makes an attempt to choose documentaries that will “support” or “fit in” with the issues covered in other texts in the Year 12 course. The third concern was that students have difficulty understanding that the documentaries are not “the truth” but are “versions of reality” that have been constructed. For example:

What's your context and how does that influence your interpretation of the actual story itself? (T1)

TEACHER TWO (T2)

The interview with T2 was conducted at the participant's workplace immediately after school in April 2007. The interview took place over 21 minutes. The participant referred primarily to the documentary *Bowling For Columbine* (Moore, 2002).

Aesthetic instances: 5

Rhetorical instances: 8

Ethical instances: 12

This participant's five instances of **Aesthetic concerns** centred on the link between the two ideas that students are unfamiliar with the documentary text type's

conventions, and do not enjoy documentaries unless they are “entertaining.” For example:

They [the students] often think they’re [documentaries] boring with the ... like the narrative voiceover is boring. So you’re fighting against that for a start and they [...] they expect humour in things like it’s got to be blood or humour (T2).

The eight instances of **Rhetorical concerns** emphasised the construction of documentaries. Students were seen as not often understanding that documentaries *were* constructed, and that they felt “like experts” when given the skills to examine the construction of the text. In addition, the documentary genre was identified as a helpful genre for teaching students about the concept of “construction” so that they could transfer this knowledge to other text types.

They [the students] think of documentaries as real life, they think of them as factual and so that was an easy one [Bowling for Columbine] to show them how they were being constructed as [an] audience to view the ideas in a certain way (T2).

The 12 instances of **Ethical concerns** stressed the need to think about the issues in the documentary text chosen for study; a link to the students’ context was necessary for students to view it “critically,” however *Bowling For Columbine* was a useful text because it was *slightly* out of the students’ context. This teacher commented that they did not want a text that required too much teacher explanation because that may influence the responses of the students. Students were expected to “glaze over” texts rather than view them critically, and the purpose of teaching was to “get” them to think and critique the documentaries under study.

I think it’s really easy to impose your own values on kids and I think you’ve got to be really careful about the things that you choose to not be imposing your personal values on kids (T2).

TEACHER THREE (T3)

The interview with T3 was conducted in the participant's home in January 2007. The interview took place over one hour. The participant referred to the following documentary texts:

- *Mohammed and Juliet* (McNeill, 2003)
- *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988)
- *Kurt and Courtney* (Broomfield, 1998)

Aesthetic instances: 6

Rhetorical instances: 19

Ethical instances: 32

The six instances of this teacher's **Aesthetic concerns** centred on students' unfamiliarity with the documentary genre "because they wouldn't watch them normally." For example, students were not expected to notice important elements of shot construction, because they become preoccupied with the people talking. The teacher was very clear about what they saw as a need to begin studying a documentary that used "simple" conventions before moving on to a more complex documentary text. For example, in talking about text choice, this participant explained that

depending on the [skill level of the] class again, I might then look at something like The Thin Blue Line where the structure is very absurd I guess and chaotic and a bit more difficult and challenging for them to discuss (T3).

The 19 instances of **Rhetorical concerns** constantly stressed the importance of techniques as constructing a viewpoint on a particular issue. The teacher found that students often don't write about techniques in their essays. It is important to note that this teacher identified very specific examples from texts whenever making a point. Often, these examples were phrased in terms of a question that the teacher would ask the students during viewing, for example in talking about the documentary "Mohammed and Juliet" the participant gave the following example questions: "Why

have they got the bird? Why have they got the bars? Why is it in a detention centre?” This teacher expected students to write detailed notes on techniques and their effects while viewing the text.

[L]et's look at how the choice of interview is being used and what are the implications of those particular types of people being interviewed in relation to the issues and that sort of thing (T3).

The 32 instances of **Ethical concerns** covered five topics that linked the twin concepts of “issues” and “values.” These topics can be summarised as: i) important issues; ii) the teacher’s passion about the issues; iii) students’ engagement with the text is dependent on the issues; iv) the TEE course is focused on values/ideology; and v) the English TEE course teaches students to question everything about texts. The “important issues” identified by this teacher included justice, government corruption, truth and the power of corporations. The teacher’s passion was seen as an important way of enabling students to engage with the text because the teacher would do additional research into the issue presented by the documentary and use this information in class to question the students. Students’ responses to the documentaries were described as “anger or concern” about something presented in the text. It was mentioned that students often struggle to identify specific values/attitudes/ideologies, and that it was important for students to consider how their own beliefs (and the beliefs of other cultural groups) influence their responses to the particular text. Documentaries were seen as significant texts in the English curriculum because they often expose “gaps in the way truth is represented in the mass media,” and the English course is about teaching students to question things (eg: media representations) that they would not normally question. However, the teacher also noted that students need to be aware of how documentaries themselves manipulate the presentation of information.

It [Mohammed and Juliet] deals with some pretty good issues like justice in justice truth, things like that and also race and the power of the government (T3).

TEACHER FOUR (T4)

The interview with T4 was conducted in the participant's home in January 2007. The interview took place over 49 minutes. The participant referred to the following documentary texts:

- *Mohammed and Juliet* (McNeill, 2003)
- *Kurt and Courtney* (Broomfield, 1998)
- *The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1988)
- *Super Size Me* (Spurlock, 2004)

Aesthetic instances: 15

Rhetorical instances: 10

Ethical instances: 17

The 15 instances of **Aesthetic concerns** by this teacher were mostly concerned with the *style* of the documentaries, explaining that their teaching has become more textually focused since beginning to teach this genre. Style was a significant factor in terms of the choice of documentaries for study – the teacher often chooses documentaries by filmmakers that have a clearly discernable style that can be identified in a range of other documentaries if the students want to independently locate them. The teacher expressed an interest in choosing “intelligent” documentaries that would allow the more intelligent students to engage in more depth with the text.

So I changed [in recent years] and found that I chose good film makers, people who had specific style, there was a specific filmic language that we could identify (T4).

The 10 instances of **Rhetorical concerns** for this teacher addressed the difficulties of students identifying the argument presented in documentaries as well as how the argument is being constructed. Specifically, students were seen as having difficulty identifying “subtle” rhetorical techniques such as irony and satire, or that the

techniques were being used indirectly instead of explicitly guiding the viewer through the argument.

I'll take a particular scene and I'll go through an analysis of it with them, a detailed analysis in terms of symbolic written audio technical as a model to show them what they need to do, and then get them to choose another scene and then they'll take the notes and work through it and talk about it in a group (T4).

The 17 instances of **Ethical concerns** of this teacher covered four main topics: i) values; ii) issues; iii) filmmakers as passionate about a topic; and iv) the purpose of English as exposing truths about society. The first topic addressed the need to examine the value systems/ideologies operating within the documentary. This teacher's comments about issues focused on how their earlier days of teaching documentaries they would often choose documentaries based on the issues but they found this approach distracted from the study of the film's style. The participant emphasised the idea that documentaries are often about topics the filmmaker feels passionate about and it is important to study these texts because the filmmakers are expressing their viewpoint on these topics. In talking about the purpose of English, this teacher commented that "many students" lack knowledge about society and the world, and lack the ability to debate and consider alternative viewpoints. It was seen as important that English expose truths about society, however students are also too young for some of the political/theoretical ideas students are expected to grasp in the course.

And I think documentary is very much about [...] individuals wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards (T4).

3.73 Inductive categories (common themes)

I have identified ten distinct inductive themes that are common between the four teachers, and these can be classified into three general categories: i) teacher considerations for the teaching of documentary texts, ii) teacher beliefs about students and documentaries, and iii) teachers' theoretical beliefs about subject English.

TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS

The first theme in the first category is that the first three teachers highlighted the importance of choosing documentaries that dealt with issues to which the students could personally respond. These issues were seen as an important factor in determining whether or not students would engage with the text itself, and this engagement was also seen as an important goal in the teaching process. On this point we can also chart the text choices of each teacher, according to the texts mentioned in the interviews:

	<i>Bowling For Columbine</i>	<i>Super Size Me</i>	<i>Mohammed and Juliet</i>	<i>The Thin Blue Line</i>	<i>Kurt and Courtney</i>
<i>Teacher One</i>	✓	✓			
<i>Teacher Two</i>	✓				
<i>Teacher Three</i>			✓	✓	✓
<i>Teacher Four</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3.2: Text choices as mentioned by each interview participant

Each of these five texts were identified (in one way or another) as being useful for teaching because the issues were either relevant or “interesting” to students. Only T4 did not nominate “issues” as having influence on their text choice, although they did explain that when they first began teaching documentaries they focused on the issues.

The second theme in this category was the emphasis on analysing the rhetorical techniques of documentaries to reveal how the particular version of reality was constructed. For example, teachers cited the use of voice-over narration, juxtaposition and *mis en scène* (although this term was not used) as constructing a

particular version of reality in the documentary. The study of rhetorical elements was seen as important by the participants because it allowed students to understand how they were being “positioned” to respond to the documentary.

The third theme relates to the attitudes of teachers towards the “aesthetic” aspects of teaching documentary texts. Although participants did not use the word “aesthetics” (often mentioning the “style” of documentaries) it was common for teachers to comment that students needed to be familiar with the basic style of documentaries in order to comprehend the text.

The fourth theme in this category is that subject English was seen as being able to teach students to be more informed about society, and to question aspects of texts and the world. T1, T3 and T4 identified the documentary text type as being specifically useful in this regard because of the issues/topics generally addressed by documentary filmmakers. T2 emphasised the need for students to view texts critically. T3 and T4 explicitly described English as being “about” encouraging students to question the world around them.

TEACHER BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS AND DOCUMENTARIES

The first theme in this category is that all four participants explained that students were expected to use their own context (values, knowledge of issues or experiences) to assist their interpretation of the documentary texts and to make meaning from them. Often this was articulated in terms of questions that would be directed at students. These questions were mostly explicit: “How has your context influenced your interpretation?”; “How has it challenged your beliefs?”

The second theme was that participants expected students to transfer knowledge of film language from their study of feature films. Students were expected to be unfamiliar with the conventions of documentaries, either finding them to be boring or often having simplistic understandings such as “black and white footage means newsreel, and therefore reality.” Teachers described activities in which students

would compare the genres (feature films and documentaries) in terms of the conventions/techniques.

The third theme in this category was that teachers expressed concern with students finding the concept of “versions of reality” difficult to understand. As noted in the first category (Teacher Considerations) this was identified as a highly important notion, along with the idea of construction. T2 described the documentary text type as particularly useful in helping students to understand this concept.

The fourth theme in this category relates to the teachers’ views on students’ subjectivity — T2 and T4 expressed the concern that students should not be “passive viewers” but should be thinking and critiquing what they are presented with in documentary texts.

TEACHERS’ THEORETICAL BELIEFS ABOUT SUBJECT ENGLISH

Surprisingly, although Question 15 was designed specifically to elicit information about the participants’ theoretical background in the subject, the responses indicate that none of the interview subjects were able to articulate a coherent, unified or clearly discernable theoretical framework that guides their pedagogy. One teacher (T4) was confident in attempting to articulate their theoretical approach to subject English, and T1 was entirely candid about not being able to do so: “I’m not exactly sure of it” (T1).

The first theme that emerged, however, was an interest in the subject as being able to encourage students’ thinking about themselves, the world, and questions of “truth.” A second clear theme was the importance of the final exam (the TEE). T1 suggested that although they were personally interested in these kinds of debates they would be very careful of what they say to students because “the kids have got to sit an exam” (T1). This kind of restriction imposed by the final exam was also described by T4 in discussing that some of the concepts of the course were so difficult for students to understand that “if you’re not careful ... you end up thinking ... I’ve got to get these

kids through an exam at the end of the year, so I'm just going to give it to them" (T4). T3 also commented twice that the exam was not the only important thing; Year 12 was seen as an opportunity to expose students to texts and ideas with which they would otherwise not be presented.

3.74 Question posed by the interview data

The purpose of the four interviews was to identify information that could be used to develop descriptions of the attitudes of some teachers at the "chalkface" in terms of teaching documentary texts to Secondary English students. Guiding the interview design and analysis were the following two questions:

1. To what extent can traces of the Culturalist, Cultural Studies and/or historical-philological views of English be identified in four English teachers' attitudes toward teaching documentary texts?
2. To what extent can traces of the curriculum statement be identified in these teachers' attitudes toward teaching documentary texts?

These questions will be answered in the Discussion (see Chapter Five), however at this point it is worth noting that the coding and content analysis has posited an additional question that will also be addressed in the Discussion. I will briefly review the reasoning behind my choice of deductive categories before moving on to an explanation of the additional question posed by this content analysis.

When deciding upon the three deductive coding categories of Aesthetic, Rhetorical and Ethical concerns I had general definitions in mind for what each category would mean. Specifically, a Rhetorical approach would involve students learning the persuasive techniques of documentaries in order to become proficient in using these skills themselves. This might mean *producing* a documentary, editing a short documentary-style piece from stock footage to create an argument or using some of the oral skills of persuasion employed by voice-over narrators in an oral presentation. In the interviews there is no evidence of this kind of detached or dispassionate Rhetorical approach. Rather, the participants described students analysing the

“techniques” of documentaries in order to understand how the documentary has positioned viewers for ideological effect.

The further question then, centres on what these teachers see as the fundamental purpose of studying documentary texts in subject English:

3. According to these teachers, what is the purpose of studying the concept of “versions of reality” with respect to documentary texts?

The concept of “version of reality” was addressed by all four teachers either explicitly or implicitly. This question is concerned with two major ideas. Firstly, it considers whether or not teachers are interested in using documentaries to teach students how to use rhetorical techniques themselves. Secondly, it considers that teachers may be interested in analysing the documentary’s elements of construction in order to evaluate the text for ethical purposes (ie: to consider the political/ideological implications of the text).

3.75 Limitations of the interview research component

Having identified and described relevant information from the interviews that I will employ in the critical discussion that follows in the remainder of this thesis, I will briefly comment on the limitations of the interview component of my overall research. Although these limitations indicate a series of assumptions upon which my critical discussion depends, it will become apparent that through triangulation with the historical data the limitations are reduced in significance.

The first limitation is that my interview participants may not have been answering the questions in ways that reflect their actual teaching *practice*. An example of this is T4’s statement that “later on, I would say, that I probably wasn’t looking so much at the issues.” Although the interviewee was able to clearly articulate what they saw as a change in their teaching practice over the course of a number of years, the statement does not match up to my personal interaction with this teacher in the daily discussions that take place in the English office. I can recall asking the same person,

in my first year at the school, how they might begin their first lessons with a group of students, to which they responded directly: “I will probably begin by seeing if they can identify an issue in society.” This may be an example of what Becker & Geer (1973) refer to as a “distorting lens,” in which people “report as facts things which have not occurred, but which seem to them to have occurred” (171), or a situation in which the participant simply does not give “full attention” to their behaviour (Fiske & Taylor, 1991: 228).² Additionally, during the interview, I observed a defensive tone in this participant’s verbal and nonverbal language. Following the interview, in casual discussion, the participant admitted that they were unsure of what my agenda may have been in asking the questions themselves. It may be possible to argue that the interview participant could detect a subjective/biased theme in the questions themselves, and/or distrusted “the stated purpose of the research” (Charmaz, 2006: 27), however I believe the questions were designed with such a degree of objective fairness that their validity cannot be challenged on these grounds.

This limitation, of course, does not impinge upon the way I intend to use the data in my critical discussion. This first limitation suggests, if anything, that the imbalance may be even *more* significant than suggested in the interviews. The interviews are primarily being used for illustrative purposes to provide evidence of actual teachers making the kinds of statements that support Culturalist, Cultural Studies and/or historical-philological views of English. The content analysis has revealed almost no trace of the historical-philological approach in any of the four teachers’ interviews, however there are clear loyalties to the Cultural Studies model. As the literature review has demonstrated, Culturalist and Cultural Studies approaches to English are in fact identical in terms of their form; the pastoral relationship between teacher and student, and the deployment of texts. For this reason, the imbalance represented across the four interviews makes these useful sources in my ongoing discussion.

The second limitation is that although my analysis has identified a clear imbalance in the participants’ interests of rhetoric, aesthetics and ethics in their practice of

² Needless to say, I do not wish to suggest that T4’s interview was the product of some kind of self-delusion; the disparity between my observations and the interview data could also be explained in light of the participant’s recent activities as a TEE marker. I will make comments in the Discussion about the possibility of different subjectivities within the discursive constructions of “being” a teacher versus “being” a marker.

teaching *documentary texts*, we cannot assume that this destabilisation is taking place in their teaching of other texts. It is absolutely possible that the teachers in this study, if interviewed with similar questions on the topic of poetry or feature film, for instance, may have responded in ways that show a preference for the aesthetic or rhetorical. On one hand this is irrelevant to the current study — I am not examining the use of these other text types, and in any case the participants are not being held up as representative of *all* English teachers — but of course there are wider implications for the current discussion. Subject English, according to curriculum demands, must balance these three areas but it is not true that there must be a balance across *all* text types. It is merely required that over the course of a year the students are taught in such a way as to cover the three aspects equally. Therefore, although the imbalance is apparent in these teachers' treatment of documentaries, if their approach(es) to other texts balanced out then we would have grounds to suggest the persistent practice was not taking place *in their classrooms*.

My solution to this limitation is twofold. Firstly, I present this thesis as a kind of piecemeal research in that it extends and contributes to the ongoing project of other researchers operating within the governmental perspective. The project should be taken into account with Hunter's work on literature, Patterson's work on personal response pedagogy and Moon's discussion of TV drama. Secondly, I turn to the analytic process of triangulation in order to substantiate my argument that this persistent practice (in the teaching of documentary films) is in fact not limited to these four teachers. As described in the introduction of this chapter, the interviews form a network of data sources that I will draw upon:

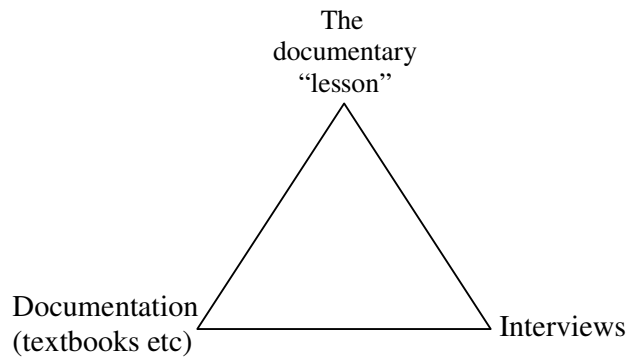


Figure 3.2: Triangulation of the data

Although I will not venture to suggest that this practice is taking place in every single classroom in which a documentary is being studied, my critical discussion will indicate that this is in fact the trend, and that it is merely an iteration of a long-standing imbalance in the history of English teaching.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have outlined the data sources that will be used to advance the critical discussion in the following chapters of the thesis. I began by revisiting the theoretical background to the project in order to justify the use of historical documentation (sample teaching programs, textbooks, Curriculum Statements and TEE examiner reports) as well as the reasoning behind my original qualitative research in the form of four interviews with English teachers. The chapter then detailed how the four interviews were devised, conducted and subjected to content analysis according to the theoretical framework of governmentality. Based upon the content analysis, in which I was able to identify the balance (imbalance) of Rhetoric, Ethics and Aesthetics in the participants' responses to my questions, I posed a further research question to inform critical interrogation of the problem of teaching documentary texts in the secondary English context in Western Australia.

4. Discussion

Overview

In order to formulate the theoretical argument that has been the focus of this project, the Discussion develops to its climax in two broad manoeuvres. Firstly, I inspect the Year 12 TEE English syllabus to establish exactly what would count as a “balanced” lesson on documentary film. The second move comprises a discussion of the three research questions that have guided the design of the study, in which I explore the ways the particular persistent practice (introduced in general terms in Section 1.2) applies to the deployment of the documentary text in subject English.

4.1 The curriculum revisited

For the moment, I intend to briefly pinpoint the key features of what can be labelled a “balanced English classroom” by examining the Year 12 TEE English *Syllabus* and the English *Course of Study* documents. Although I will refer to “subject English” as a whole, including reference to general curriculum support materials, it is useful to ground the Discussion in the Year 12 TEE context for two reasons. Firstly, the four interviews conducted for this study involved experienced TEE English teachers, and secondly, the TEE syllabus contains the clearest formulation of curriculum requirements for the teaching of documentary texts currently available. The remainder of this chapter discusses how the “documentary lesson” in fact represents a destabilised implementation of the curriculum and, for this reason, it is helpful to understand precisely what is expected if a teacher is to address (equally) the rhetorical, aesthetic and ethical domains of subject English in this context.

The Syllabus contains a very brief description of the approach to be taken with documentary texts, which is intended to be informed by the principles outlined earlier in the document. Even in this 90 word depiction we can see roughly even attention to the rhetorical, aesthetic and ethical:

In their study of each documentary text, students will focus on understanding the ideas, propositions and arguments being presented, as well as the attitudes and values underlying them. Students will examine the role of verbal language (the words of presenters, narrators, characters, interviewees, voice-overs etc.), film language (lighting, use of camera angles, selection of shots, music, montage etc.), structure and selection of detail in the presentation of ideas, propositions and arguments. In their discussion of such features, they will be taught to use appropriate technical terminology to express their understandings (Curriculum Council, 2005d: 19).

Earlier in the document, the “Process Objectives,” which “refer to students’ general language development” (15), list eight Objectives that are intended to inform teachers’ coverage of text content, including documentaries. These Objectives emphasise students’ written/oral expression skills (rhetoric), and critical reading/viewing capacities (ethics). The section titled “Teaching-Learning Program” (16 – 20) further develops the pedagogical experiences expected of students, including for example, aesthetic cultivation: “Students will consider how their *appreciation of a text* can be strengthened when they make connections with other texts” (16, emphasis mine). Additionally, the document stipulates: “The texts studied will also provide examples of appropriate structural and stylistic models for their own [the students’] written and oral compositions” (19). This will become very significant later in the Discussion.

Although the TEE *Syllabus* document itself has been phased out during the implementation of the *Course of Study*, a close inspection of the COS Indicators of Level of Achievement for the Viewing Outcome (Curriculum Council, 2005a: 40) shows a similar balance of the rhetorical, aesthetic and ethical, although the phrasing is somewhat vague. Organised into three categories, or aspects — conventions, contextual understanding and processes & strategies — the Levels allow for a range of learning experiences that should cover the selection of just about any text. For example, in studying a documentary, Level 7 students may be expected to give attention to the aesthetic/rhetorical use of *cinema vérité* techniques: “comprehend and interpret specialised conventions comprehend and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres” (40). Or, a Level 6 student might undertake ethical

analysis of Al Gore's ideas presented in the 2006 documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* "discuss relationships among representations, socio-cultural context and attitudes, values and beliefs in texts" (40). A Level 8 student might practise the rhetorical techniques of Michael Moore's sweeping amalgamation of different text sources from *Bowling For Columbine* in order to "synthesise ideas and information from a number of texts, identifying and taking account of differences in purpose, audience and context" (40). It should also be noted that generally, assessment tasks for the *Course of Study* combine two (or more) Outcomes for assessment purposes. Often, this means combining Viewing with either Writing or Speaking & Listening. In this way, although students' rhetorical skills are not represented to a huge extent in the Viewing Outcome itself it is expected to be addressed with each assessment.

4.2 Discussion of research questions

Guiding this research project were three specific questions intended to identify the defining characteristics of the contemporary English "documentary lesson." I will begin by simply recounting the questions, and the remainder of the chapter will address each question in turn.

1. Does current English pedagogy reflect curriculum statements for the subject, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?
2. Does Hunter's description of English pedagogy (1988a; 1991) hold true for current English teaching in Western Australia, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?
3. Is the current documentary pedagogical practice of English teachers an iteration of a long-standing training?

Additionally, the micro-level questions guiding the interview component of the research will be addressed in the discussion as necessary.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

1. Does current English pedagogy reflect curriculum statements for the subject, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?

In very recent years, teaching English in Western Australian secondary schools has undergone some significant adjustments from the point of view of administration and curriculum. One of the recent administrative changes in the education system is the 2004 introduction of The Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT), designed to “enhance the status of the teaching profession by facilitating the professional growth and development of teachers throughout their careers and operating a regulatory system” (WACOT, 2004). Additionally, throughout the fraught implementation of the *Course of Study* during 2006 – 2007, public criticisms of the state of English expressed frustration at the lack of texts such as Shakespeare, a sense of “rigour” and basic skills in the curriculum. These “problems” have been branded as illustrations of moral decline in the popular citizenry, as indicated in various posts on the discussion forum at the website of the People Lobbying Against Teaching Outcomes. For example:

I have never found a single student yet (I have been teaching on and off for almost a decade) that ever heard of the Nuremberg Trials, let alone what they were about. Little wonder then that aggressive war has become so popular of late (Schofield, August 28, 2005: ¶18).

At the same time, English teachers have maintained that they have been, and continue to be, highly professional in their delivery of the course (Cody, 2006). During professional development for the COS itself, a Curriculum Council representative proposed that one of the aims of the COS reform was to raise the public opinion of teacher judgement and professionalism by reducing the relative importance of “the Exam” itself, shifting more emphasis onto the course-work *conducted by teachers during the year* (C. Kowald, personal communication, April, 2006).

It is unsurprising then, that in this context I am prepared to ask whether current pedagogy reflects the curriculum. From the outset, since I intend to answer the question negatively, it appears that an instantaneous counterargument is that there has been such radical reform of the curriculum that of course we can expect the subject to take some time to (re)stabilise. However, I reject this point of view. My

critical analysis views the subject from a much wider angle in which we see an interesting series of developments of the modern educational apparatus. After all, it makes sense for WACOT to reframe the teacher with more authority: this increases the impact of the pastoral relationship. It also makes sense for English teachers to maintain the idea of their own professionalism: they, in fact, embody the technology of the pastoral relationship. The public debate and criticisms are merely examples of the kind of argument between the values of the Culturalist and Cultural Studies views which I have already shown are mere iterations of the same subjectifying practice. Playing down the importance of “the exam” allows the educational apparatus to seemingly become more civilised and humanising while simultaneously directing more power to the pastoral relationship of the teacher/student coupling in the classroom.

The significance of the pastoral teacher/student relationship will resurface in my discussion of Research Question Two, however since the success of those later comments relies upon identification of current pedagogy’s emphasis of the ethical we must first examine the (in)fidelity of the documentary lesson to the curriculum requirements. In my analysis of the research material, it appears that in the documentary lesson the curriculum balance is inclined significantly to the ethical, at the expense of aesthetics and rhetoric. This analysis will weave its way through some of the interview participants’ comments, as well as through a sampling of actual teaching programs that involve study of documentary film.

To begin our understanding of the documentary lesson, let us first consider two curriculum statements that tackle the way that the documentary text type fits into subject English. The TEE *Syllabus* expects students to comprehend the documentary, as well as submit the text to ethical analysis.

In their study of each documentary text, students will focus on understanding the ideas, propositions and arguments being presented, as well as the attitudes and values underlying them (Curriculum Council, 2005d: 19).

But this should be taken into account with the General Principle that:

Students' abilities to use language in their written and oral compositions will be developed through both the breadth and the focus of their reading [and viewing]: the breadth of their reading will widen their language experience; and the detailed focus on particular texts will increase their awareness of specific ways in which language can be used (19).

In other words, the curriculum expects that the study of a documentary text will see students undertaking ethical analysis, while at the same time using the text as an example of the aesthetic and rhetorical capabilities of *film* language. It is important to note that there is not a kind of developmental routine in the way these three capacities are covered. Aesthetic cultivation, for instance, is not designed to be the end-point of a rhetorical and ethical analysis. The three capacities are treated as discrete elements that can be achieved simultaneously.

And now, three interview participants' statements on the way documentary fits into their view of subject English:

What we're looking at is things like ... and I think history [teachers] actually use this approach as well, to some extent, but what we do is we look at the version of the story and the context and we look at the structure of the documentary itself, how is it constructed and how does it contribute to the way in which the person who's making the documentary is trying to make meaning in some way (T1).

And I think documentary is very much about [...] individuals wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards (T4).

I think that documentaries like those documentaries can expose kids to make them question ... the world basically, everything around them (T3).

The documentary lesson, here, is presented as one in which students can be engaged in the process of questioning texts (the documentary), viewpoints (the documentary

maker) and the world (the subjects/events of the documentary). This is, in a very definitive sense, the achievement of the critical literacy movement, which “aims to give students a powerful understanding of the culturally constructed nature of texts and their entanglement in larger social and political forces” (Misson & Morgan, 2005: 18). At this point, I also wish to bring into play an extract from one of the sample teaching programs that have been developed for the English COS. After viewing a documentary in class, the task sheet instructs students as follows:

Analysis should focus on:

- Ideology
- Identification of visual language codes and conventions (SWAT)
- Discussion of the effect of the use of the above. Consider:
 - nuances of meaning
 - use of connotation and/or symbolism
 - positioning of audience
 - representation of social groups
 - values and beliefs
- The importance of this scene to the development of the documentary’s thesis. (NSHS, 2007: 4)

Aside from the limited attention to aesthetics (“identification of visual language”) and the restrictive approach to simply following/comprehending the rhetorical structure of the documentary, it is clear that the focus is on the accoutrements of critical literacy’s brand of ethics: ideology, positioning of audience, representation of social groups, values and beliefs. It should not be surprising that this is in fact Part B of a two part task, in which students initially participate in a panel discussion of the “representation of identity in the short stories studied in class” (1).

So far we have considered three teachers’ statements of the importance of documentary texts, and an assessment task sheet. What is immediately striking is the way in which the aesthetic and rhetorical elements of the texts are utilised by teachers. Rather than being treated as discrete aspects of study, these seem to serve the function of engaging students in an ethical analysis.

In the interviews, the aesthetic element of documentary texts is variably described as something that prevents students engaging with the text, or — through judicious text selection — as something that can be used to initiate this engagement. For example, if students are unfamiliar with the conventions of the genre:

They often think they're boring with the ... like the narrative voiceover is boring. So you're fighting against that for a start (T2).

One solution may be to consider a text with an aesthetic style that might appeal to “teenagers.” When viewing *Kurt and Courtney*,

they [the students] just love the music, the fast pace, the kind of hand held jerk of the camera, the sense of going on a journey, all of that, those sorts of techniques I think (T4).

Or, more generally,

they respond to documentaries that are fast moving and American style, if you want to put it that way (T1).

In other words, students’ understanding of the aesthetics of documentaries is linked to their subjectivity as certain kinds of viewers. That is, they are often seen as passive viewers who require attention-grabbing aesthetic devices in order to pay attention. These expectations of students’ responses to the texts are borne out in the choice of documentaries mentioned during the interviews, most of which were released between 2001 and 2005. The only texts not from this recent period were *Nicaragua: no Pasaran* (1984) and *The Thin Blue Line* (1988). None of the participants’ mentioned showing even extracts of earlier documentaries, such as Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922), as a way of illustrating documentary aesthetics. T1 asked students to read Quin’s (2003) chapter, which contains a detailed analysis of the 1935 documentary *Triumph of the Will*, however the teacher did not indicate that this film was shown or discussed in class.

In short, aesthetic cultivation is sacrificed for two reasons. The first (and which most teachers would suggest is pragmatic) is that student motivation is increased by watching more recent texts. The corollary reason is that student motivation is increased by viewing texts about issues they are “in tune with” (T1). The latter reason will be examined in greater detail in my discussion of Research Question Three. For the moment, suffice to say we have evidence of the aesthetic domain receiving little attention in the documentary lesson. We can identify this even in teaching programs that include documentary study as part of a “reading/viewing journal.” One program for the COS unit 3B (PSHS, 2007) is organised around the focus topics of “the environmental, conservation, misuse of technology, genetic engineering” (1) and contains the Response task in which students are required to submit fortnightly written pieces demonstrating their comprehension and interpretation of texts, including the recent documentary “about” global warming: *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim, 2006). Although students would (presumably) discuss other visual texts, their piece on *An Inconvenient Truth* functions as part of a formal viewing task in which they should be able to demonstrate up to Level 8 on the viewing Scale of Achievement. As indicated in section 4.1, this would indeed involve attention to the text’s artistic form, however the ethical interest of “issues” has clearly managed to muscle out the aesthetic and take precedence.

The general impression emerging so far is that teachers view students’ *engagement* with the text as being affected initially by its aesthetic style. Three of the participants (T2, T3 and T4) spoke specifically about introducing documentary study by providing information about the genre, including its aesthetic devices, before showing the actual text that would be studied. Even though the exact approach varies, it seems that the aim is to alert students to the techniques on which they would need to take notes that would help them examine the presentation of values and attitudes. T3’s interview involved a discussion of what counted as engagement with the text, in which they described “taking it a little bit further” than just identifying the techniques. This teacher used a specific example of class analysis of the short documentary “Mohammed and Juliet” (2003) in which the students were asked to “respond” to a government official being interviewed in front of an Australian flag. Students were expected to come to conclusions such as:

His values and attitudes oppose mine. He's challenging my own values and attitudes as an Australian (T3).

Before moving into a discussion of the teaching of rhetoric and documentary, I will make a final comment about aesthetics. The closest pedagogical practice to what we might call “aesthetic cultivation” appeared in the text choices offered by T4. This was the only teacher who suggested that issues were not an *important* factor in choosing documentary texts for study. Rather, documentaries were often chosen because they were stylistically “interesting,” and the filmmaker had a clearly discernable style that could be observed in a range of texts. This allowed students to track down additional documentaries if they were interested in doing so. Aside from this, the interviews and a sampling of teacher programs suggest that documentary aesthetics is concerned with two areas: a) drawing students in so they will literally pay attention during the screening, and b) allowing students to see that the documentary genre can be entertaining as well as informational.

While aesthetic study is relegated to such a small range of pedagogical concerns, we can see that the rhetorical mode suffers under a similarly limiting approach. The attention to rhetoric appears to be a matter of teaching students to “see through” the manipulative positioning devices of the text, in order to access the values, attitudes and beliefs of the documentary. We can detect this in a number of places in the interviews:

getting them to look at it in terms of their construction and their narrative really so that they ... they stop thinking [...] that they're looking at the real facts but they're looking at constructed facts (T2).

At the same time, however, this becomes confusing when the documentary appears to be supporting values that the teacher wants to encourage. In one interview, the teacher oscillated from expecting students to “see through” the devices to simply treating them as virtuous means of questioning the dominant ideology:

They [the students] need to have I think the capability, the understanding, the literacy to question everything. To question things like representations,

representations of power, ideologies that are underpinning or underlying in particular texts (T3).

They [the filmmakers] had this repetition of these scenes where there's ... it's a shot of the detention centre and you've got the bars and the barbed wire fence, and then you've got ... within that shot, you've got the bird and the bird on the barbed wire fence and quite often the birds go flying off and you've got the clouds in the sky in the background. So there's that whole idea of those ideologies behind there in relation to should this person who hasn't done anything wrong be detained? This person should be free like the bird (T3).

Of course, in both cases the teacher is actually talking about questioning/challenging the dominant viewpoints, and this notion of “resistance” as a common feature of both Culturalist and Cultural Studies models of English has already been critiqued in Chapter Two. For the moment, the important point is that the rhetorical aspects of the documentary are being used to incite the process of ethical problematisation, rather than as a means of *teaching* rhetorical techniques. We can identify the same practice in another sample program for the Year 11 COS, unit 2B, in which a Viewing assessment task reads as follows:

Study the ways in which filmic codes work to encourage acceptance or rejection of

- Social values of the film/documentary compared to those of the viewer
- Preferred and dominant readings

In addition to which closely examine

- Genre, film language including technical codes (CSHS, 2006: 1).

Significantly, the final task is an essay in which students discuss the “key strategies effective in positioning you to respond to one or more issues in at least one text” (1). What we see here are the rhetorical elements demoted to the rank of “technical codes,” and then subjected to a semiotic analysis. From the stand-point of ethics, this looks like a suitable task. However, once again we find that there is no attention to

developing student skills in the rhetorical techniques being studied. It is for this reason that I propose the notion that, with respect to documentary film teaching, the rhetorical aspects of the curriculum are essentially stripped from classroom instruction.

One final point remains to be discussed with respect to the study of other visual text types. Anecdotal observation suggests that some common English tasks involve “studying” the techniques of a feature film, for instance, or “designing” a print advertisement or planning a storyboard for a film scene. There is certainly room to argue that rhetoric *may* be adequately addressed in these tasks, however I believe that this is unlikely. To begin with, let us consider a resource package intended to act as a sample for teachers to plan a unit for Year 12 COS 3A. One task involves the study of a feature film *or* a documentary, and the use of a set of generic viewing questions, regardless of the genre. For example:

2. Examine the values and attitudes represented as those of each of the different groups in the movie. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes?
4. Keeping in mind what you have just learned about film technique, describe how one film represents subjective viewpoints. What do you see? What don't you see? Why?
5. How are identities expressed, constructed, represented and critiqued through film language? (NB This is an in-depth question)

(De Grauw, 2006: 38 – 39).

This is just a sampling of the questions: the focus is exclusively on the values/attitudes encoded in the rhetorical techniques used by the films. No specific questions are provided for documentaries, however there are specific sample questions for six feature films. Each set of questions focuses on an ethical analysis of the text.

The second reason to believe rhetoric is not taught adequately in other visual text areas is because the kinds of creative tasks in which students “plan a storyboard,” for example, represent the ideology of a child-centred approach to learning, which

privileges the value of “learning through experience.” If we dissect the “how” of the teaching practice from the “why,” what we find is that the designing/planning involved in these items provides a creative way for students to understand how the techniques work in *other texts*, which they will then subject to the same kind of ethical analysis we have discussed so far.

To close the discussion of this first research question, I will briefly recall the simple statistical count from Chapter Three. This data should be interpreted by keeping in mind the summary of the curriculum extracts at the beginning of this chapter (section 4.1). Although I am not offering these four teachers as necessarily representative of all (or even most) English teachers in the state, I believe that, in concert with the discussion so far, the figures account for highly persuasive evidence of the destabilised nature of the documentary lesson.

	<i>Instances of Aesthetic Concerns</i>	<i>Instances of Rhetorical Concerns</i>	<i>Instances of Ethical Concerns</i>
<i>Teacher One</i>	11 (23%)	8 (17%)	28 (60%)
<i>Teacher Two</i>	5 (20%)	8 (32%)	12 (48%)
<i>Teacher Three</i>	6 (11%)	19 (33%)	32 (56%)
<i>Teacher Four</i>	15 (36%)	10 (24%)	17 (40%)

Table 3.1: Deductive coding categories informed by the governmental perspective of English

It should also be recalled that curriculum documents for the subject (ie: the TEE *Syllabus*, the *Curriculum Framework* and the *English Course of Study*) clearly foreground *language* as the object of study in English. On the face of it, the analysis so far clearly shows that ethics outweighs the other two areas significantly, however the results become particularly interesting if we remember that aesthetics and rhetoric were, in practice, much more limited than we would expect in a “pure” study of either aspect. In a very real sense, then, although the participants expressed *some* aesthetic and rhetorical attention, in most cases these were simply a means of gaining information that would allow the students’ ethical analysis.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

2. Does Hunter's description of English pedagogy (1988a; 1991) hold true for current English teaching in Western Australia, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts?

The purpose behind this question was to apply critique to the (fundamentally) descriptive account of the documentary lesson developed through my answer to the first research question. In the Literature Review (see Chapter Two), I provided a sketch of Hunter's genealogy of English pedagogy which, although his work applies specifically to the literature lesson, provides a useful lens through which to view subject English more generally. In his description of the teaching of literature, Hunter (1988a; 1991) views the subject as a technology comprising three specific components:

- The pastoral relationship (of the teacher/student couple);
- A text (as the surface upon which students' ethical selves can be displayed);
- Pedagogical manoeuvres which enable learning (of a particular moral reading practice) without teaching.

Importantly, Hunter explains that these aspects of contemporary English have historical roots in the establishment of modern schooling in 1870, which adapted (and improvised upon) the pastoral tradition from the Church. The contingent events which lead up to this — including Kay-Shuttleworth's visits to the working-class districts of Manchester; Stow's modifications to the playground; and statistical investigations of poverty and health — have been discussed at length in the earlier chapters of this thesis. In order to advance the current discussion, we must presently recall Foucault on the notion of "pastoral power," which is linked with "a production of truth — the truth of the individual himself" (Foucault, 1982: 214).

Foucault's portrayal of traditional Christian pastoral power characterises its form in four specific ways: it ensures salvation, it sacrifices as well as commands, is attendant to the individual and develops knowledge of its subject's souls/minds

(214). The key function of this power is to operate directly on the interior of the individual, in order to correct moral aberrations and, significantly, to

result in a developed form of conscience in its subjects, in the gradual use and understanding of a series of techniques of self-examination, by which they come to know themselves better and implement upon themselves the lessons of the pastor (Hook, 2004: 254 – 255).

Through a redistribution of this power in (approximately) the 1700s, the concentration of pastoral power began to spread into other aspects of the social apparatus and shifted to promise salvation in *this* world (Foucault, 1982: 214 – 215). In the educational apparatus, functioning as part of the “network of practices of government” (Hook, 2004: 243), pastoral power became practiced through “the teacher or tutor in relation to the child or the pupil” (Foucault, 1991: 91). Hunter’s work examines the swelling of this power into the development of English education, which is “the name of an instituted means of forming a particular type of person” (Hunter, 1991: 73). This aesthetico-ethical type of person is produced through very specific pedagogical routines constructed around the teacher/student coupling.

[A]n instituted relation between two differentially specified ethical and social statuses: that of the student, characterised initially by moral and psychological immaturity, and later by a dissociated aesthetic sensibility, manifested in the endlessly significant responses called forth in the domain of supervised spontaneity; and that of teacher whose “many sided” persona is joined to the student through relations of emulation and supervision, love and surveillance, and provides the surface of diagnosis and correction on which the student’s responses are registered (72 – 73).

In Hunter’s description of English, individual students are expected to initially misread the text because of their “moral and psychological immaturity.” Following this, students offer “endlessly significant responses” (ie: they are offered the freedom to respond in any way that seems personally relevant) to the text without *judgment* by the teacher, in order to reveal their interiority which is then problematised through systematic questioning by the pastoral figure (the teacher). This routine is

echoed/iterated in both Culturalist and Cultural Studies models of English, because each student's response

is seen as having to be *realised* in each individual or subject, rather than imposed. This is because the full response is viewed as an expression of the inner self by earlier models of English, while the critically conscious reading is seen as both expressive of and constructive of subjectivity by Cultural Studies and Critical Literacy paradigms (Mellor & Patterson, 1994: 21).

I now wish to shift the plane of focus of this governmental inquiry to include the teaching of documentary texts. What has begun to emerge so far is in fact an explanation of why my first research question identified a skew towards the ethical in the teaching of documentary films. In the remainder of the discussion of the second research question I shall firstly explain how this distortion is reflected in the interviews, and then offer a critique of English teachers' (mis)use of textbooks with respect to documentary film study. Since I have now re-established the Hunterian work surface upon which we can examine and inspect the contemporary documentary lesson, let us consider the following comments from the interview participants on their choices of documentary texts for study:

I want it [the documentary] to be relatively accessible and obvious. I don't want to be overly explaining in order to totally influence [the students] (T2).

And the kids, because I was reacting to it [the documentary], they were reacting to it and discussing it and that sort of thing. So I think that if the teacher reacts well to it and is passionate about the text and the issues within it, then that can overlay onto the kids (T3).

In both cases, the position of the teacher is predictable. In the first instance, the teacher wants to "teach and yet *not* teach" (Mellor & Patterson, 1994: 25) by allowing the students to produce what seem to be their "own" meanings. This procedure is also evident in T3's comment, in which the teacher is acting as a guide who does not explicitly tell the students how to react, while simultaneously drawing attention to certain features of the text that will be suitable "inciting surfaces" for the

students' ethical beings. The particular pedagogical instance discussed by T3 involved guiding the students in the following way:

Let's look at the symbolic codes and you know, you've got his body language which is a symbolic code. Look at what he's wearing. Let's look at what's in the background. Okay, so there's an Australian flag in the background. Oh my God, that government is supposed to be representing Australia (T3).

This process of guiding is what Hunter calls "supervised spontaneity" (Hunter, 1991: 72) in which the students' ethical selves are incited through the teacher's judgement-free questioning. The teacher is not *instructing* the students in the (aesthetic or rhetorical) significance of the Australian flag; the objective is merely to direct students' attention to this aspect of the text and indicate that it is something that should be questioned.

I said what's going on here? Can you believe this is happening? Why is this so bizarre? And the kids, because I was reacting to it, they were reacting to it and discussing it and that sort of thing (T3).

In light of Hunter, it is unsurprising that student *discussion* is held up as a goal of the English lesson. When asked about a specific experience of successful teaching of a documentary film, one interview participant contrasted their most recent Year 12 class with an earlier class in the following way:

they [the recent class] wanted me to spoon feed them all the time and "okay, just give us the stuff so we can learn it so we can do the exam." Whereas I found that this other class I considered to be very successful, weren't doing the same kind of learning... (T4).

The "kind of learning" in the previous, successful, class involved "more discussion, a lot of debate" which enabled them to "be able to investigate the underlying value systems and ideologies that operate within documentaries" (T4). We must remember, however, that the discussion method is not peculiar to subject English. Cooper & Simonds (1999), writing about general classroom teaching methods, link the

discussion method with experiential learning. They locate the assumption of experiential learning as being “that we learn best when we are actively involved in the learning process — when we ‘discover’ knowledge through active participation” (149). I am not, of course, questioning the value of the discussion method. Rather, I am interested in detailing the humanist tendency of the method as it is deployed in the English documentary lesson as a means of not only provoking student’s ethical introspection, but of privileging this as a natural reading practice. Driving the emphasis on the ethical reading practice seems to be a belief about students’ subjectivities as viewers who need to be freed:

I think they’ve just got to look at why they’re watching it, who they’re intended for, who they exclude, who’s marginalised, those sort of things because I think kids tend to view them as fact and the reality rather than a version of events or a single perspective reality (T2).

This attitude precisely reflects a Cultural Studies approach to English, in which “a theoretical breakthrough is promised which allows the reader [viewer] to see through the ideological assumptions of the text and its readings” (Mellor & Patterson, 1994: 29). Interestingly, there is a kind of oscillation that takes place in the way the relevance of documentary is covered by the teachers in this study. In the discussion of Research Question One we considered the following statement:

And I think documentary is very much about [...] individuals wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards (T4).

From this angle, which can be read as a kind of Culturalist view of texts, the documentary is presented as capable of expressing an important, unique belief. Although a strictly Culturalist view would be wary of documentary texts as a “mass media” object, what we can see reflected in some of the participants’ interviews is a belief that the task of the English student is to become sensitive enough — to use Growth Model terminology — that they can connect with what is being expressed by the filmmaker and appreciate the way this argument has been constructed. The

appropriately sensitive student, then, will presumably develop an awareness of the ability of the genre to express human-interest stories. As one participant put it:

if you can expose them to some good documentaries and say you know, they're just as entertaining and enlightening as feature film, then they may consider watching a documentary later on (T3).

English pedagogy is portrayed as empowering students in developing their understanding of important issues of which they might otherwise have remained ignorant (in a world, presumably, devoid of subject English). However, the same teacher also offers a strictly Cultural Studies view of documentary texts as worthy of a different kind of critical inquiry:

Also I think that just the way that the documentaries are constructed themselves enables us to sort of question things like the power, like the power of the documentary maker because of course, documentaries are really a text themselves. So okay, yes this documentary is exposing certain truths or ideas to us but shouldn't we be questioning the way that's presented to us as well, because obviously that film maker has their own political agendas (T3).

What we have is a clear example of the oscillation between Culturalist appreciation of the humanist message of documentaries, on the one hand, and a Cultural Studies wariness of the text-as-manipulation on the other. Regardless of the approach taken, the objective of the documentary lesson is to achieve ethical inquiry. Hunter's criticisms of the literature lesson (1988a; 1991) hold up as explanatory of the teaching of documentary texts. With these remarks in mind, I will briefly summarise what appears to be taking place in the documentary lesson:

- The teacher selects a documentary that will, through its aesthetics and content matter, engage the students' attention;
- Via the pastoral relationship of teacher and students, the teacher directs the students attention to specific aspects of the text that allow the activation of an ethical viewing practice;

- Finally, one of two kinds of ethical analysis takes place. Either; a) the underlying thesis/message of the documentary is praised for the way it exposes ideology, or b) the rhetorical features of the text are then mined for their ideological impact (positioning) on the audience.

Based upon the material available for the present study, Hunter's criticisms can be extended to explain another peculiar aspect of the documentary lesson. An important feature of the pastoral relationship that emerges is the absence of textbooks from the teacher/student coupling. In the case of the documentary lesson there are two points to consider here: a) English teachers rely on textbooks in very different ways to teachers of subjects such as Science or Mathematics, and b) available English textbooks rarely *mention* documentaries. Firstly, consider that the only interview participant who described a textbook in their teaching of documentary spoke about it in this way:

I don't give the kids notes, copious notes like I used to simply because I find the chapter in that text, and it's the Quin text, as good as I can provide them, and since we make the kids buy it, really there's no point in my copying it for them. So all the information they really need as far as documentary and the syllabus is concerned is in that chapter and they need to read it beforehand, and I tell them beforehand to read it (T1).

The textbook being discussed here is Quin's *Readings & Responses* (2003) which, from a strictly informational standpoint, probably does contain much of what students need to know, however we should ask why it is used simply as background reading. Presumably, the "real" work is performed in class, and this is also where the teacher will be called upon to assist the students' learning. The information in the textbook, apparently, requires no elucidation on the behalf of the teacher. Interestingly, the discussion questions of the chapter promote a largely ethical analysis. There are 11 questions on the two case studies (*Triumph of the Will* and *Kurt and Courtney*), eight of which are along the lines of:

1. Discuss to what extent you agree that the film presents a sanctified image of Cobain.

2. How convincing do you find the film's portrayal of Cobain? In answering this, discuss the factors affecting your response, such as pre-existing knowledge and values, as well as the material in the film itself (Quin, 2003: 97).

Again, students are expected to “discuss” their personal reactions to the text. Indeed, the second question stipulates that they interrogate their own subjectivity (“knowledge and values”). The current study can make speculations about what is taking place here. In order to do so, I shall pose a series of questions about the relationship between texts, textbooks and student discussion.

- a) What is the purpose of *viewing* a documentary text in the English classroom?
- b) What is the purpose of the teacher-guided discussion of the text?
- c) What is the ordinary purpose of content area textbooks?

Perhaps, posed in a different way, these questions could be subsumed under the general question: “What reading and viewing practices are typically encouraged in the English classroom, and how is this opposed to the standard reading practice appropriate to content area textbooks?” The likely answers to these questions have in fact been hinted at in the Discussion so far. We have seen that the purpose of viewing documentary texts is ultimately to initiate a scenario in which the teacher can guide students in a pedagogical routine that promotes an ethical reading practice. A key stage in this routine is the class discussion — allowing the students to engage in experiential learning of the method of self-questioning necessary to produce the appropriate ethical response. Textbooks, on the other hand, are not designed to be deployed this way. They function to provide specific theoretical or conceptual information in a manner that is presented as fact. This is a problem for English, and I suggest, then, that the absence of textbooks from the documentary lesson is the result of two contingencies. Firstly, the textbook itself would stand as an obstacle between student and teacher in their mutual questioning of the documentary text. Secondly, English teachers are in fact wary of textbooks simply because the theoretical paradigm of the subject itself *resists* fixed meanings under the banner of “versions of reality.” As a result of these contingencies, the English textbooks that are available

for use with students contain “discussion questions” of the same type as those offered by teachers in class. Additionally, a quick sampling of popular English textbooks suggests that they rarely contain sections on documentaries. It seems likely that they do not even need to cover this text type because teachers will inevitably carry out the persistent practice of subjecting the text (and students) to the ethical interrogation.

To test this speculation, let us take a question from Quin’s (2003) textbook about Leni Riefenstahl’s 1935 documentary, *Triumph of the Will*. It is a question that could possibly be answered from an aesthetic *or* ethical position, however it will prove interesting to consider which kind of answer would be rewarded most.

2. How might the narrative construction of *Triumph of the Will* have been different if it had been made in 2002? (94)

Looking at the question from the aesthetic position, a student could plausibly answer the question in terms of the differences in the artistic trends of documentaries of 1934 and 2002. This might mean suggesting that the 2002 documentary could have been assembled from archival footage, however modern documentaries often have a participatory style (Nichols, 2001: 115 – 123) in which the film director appears as a subject making a journey of some kind. From this perspective, the 2002 version would probably have a character/director journeying to Nuremberg and, through the use of associational editing, the film might contrast the contemporary city with the footage from 1934. Through these contrasts, the film may use a similar kind of editing as Resnais’ *Night and Fog* (1960) which cuts from black and white archival footage of Auschwitz, under Nazi rule, to colour footage of the abandoned and decaying camp in 1955.

Ethically, however, the student would perhaps consider that in the 2002 context Adolf Hitler (and the Nazis) do not occupy the same position of power as they were beginning to in 1930s Germany. The 2002 film would not be commissioned by Goebbels as a piece of propaganda and, as such, would most likely portray the subject in a negative light. Perhaps the student would refer to a rhetorical feature such as voiceover narration as a means of presenting ironic counterpoint to the footage *carefully selected* from the available archival footage. The student would

possibly emphasise that the Nazis went on to commit atrocities in the years leading up to, and including, the Second World War. Finally, there may be some indication of the predicted emotional response(s) of the viewer to the images of Adolf Hitler saluting the ranks of *Sturmabteilung* members marching past with shovels slung over their shoulders.

I have very briefly sketched firstly, a kind of historical-philological explanation of how the text may “look” different if made during 2002; and secondly, a Cultural Studies explanation of how cultural context affects the construction of the text’s version of reality. In order to determine which answer is likely to be rewarded the most, let us turn to the interview responses to a question in which participants were asked to describe what they thought essay questions (about documentaries) should focus on.

[W]hat is the version of reality that you’re getting here, whose version is this, and how does he or she go about doing this? (T1).

Construction of reality, versions of reality, who’s privileged by them. I think they’ve just got to look at why they’re watching it, who they’re intended for, who they exclude, who’s marginalised (T2).

[D]iscuss how a text has been constructed to filter a particular viewpoint or display ... or how a text has challenged your beliefs or something along those lines (T3)

I think they should link techniques with a persuasive element of film, the impact that it has on the audience, the emotive effect, the persuasive effect, the way that it’s trying to establish its viewpoint or its argument and I think the questions need very much to encourage the students to say how was I persuaded? (T4)

It should be immediately apparent that the second kind of student response would be rewarded most highly, based on its emphasis on the construction of a version of reality. The attention to techniques (voice-over narration) would be read as evidence

that the student is “aware” of how the text may persuade the viewer to accept its version of reality. I also feel confident speculating that a student who tackles T3’s suggestion of “how a text has challenged your beliefs” would receive a high result if they suggested that the documentary would include information that some members of the audience would not be aware of, and that this information would shock them into a new understanding of the terror inflicted by the Nazi regime.

Through analysis of the teacher interviews and some textbook material, I have performed a kind of reconstruction of the documentary lesson in subject English. What we find is that Hunter’s critique of the literature lesson is in fact able to explain most of what has been expressed by the interview participants. The documentary lesson appears to rely on the familiar pastoral relationship as a means of generating students’ ethical introspection in response to the text. Although the teachers maintain an interest in the rhetorical aspects of documentaries, this is generally used in order to access the construction of the particular “version of reality” offered by the text in order to open it up to ideological critique. There is significant, persuasive evidence to believe that the attitudes of teachers to documentary texts sway between a kind of Culturalist respect for the text as exponent of “truth,” and a Cultural Studies resistance to the viewer positioning of the text’s rhetorical devices. In the discussion of Research Question Three, I will in fact examine why English teachers value the teaching of “versions of reality” when it comes to documentary texts, and locate this in the tradition of the persistent practice of deploying “issues” in the classroom.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

3. Is the current documentary pedagogical practice of English teachers an iteration of a long-standing training?

Since the dominant teaching practice in the documentary lesson is informed by a Cultural Studies model of English, humanist commentators may argue that visual text pedagogy represents educational, humanising progress. Manzi & Rowe claim that media teaching, from which English visual text pedagogy is often drawn, has moved from a view of “the transparency of texts [...] to analytical, structured and

self-questioning approach” (1991: 40). It will prove valuable to carefully consider this humanist viewpoint; that English pedagogy, and visual text pedagogy specifically, has changed its focus. What transpires is a repeated insistence of student subjectivity constructed around the notion that they must be “saved.” In reflecting on their attempt at teaching about ideology and the media (in general), one author concludes:

I would say that students learn best to “see” the “invisible,” ideology, when it becomes in their own interest to — when they are actually caught in a contradiction, believing things which are directly hindering their own well-being or wishes, or which conflict with a change in experience (Williamson, 1981 – 82: 83).

However, this does not in fact represent a significantly different view to that of the (Culturalist-influenced) Newsom Report in Great Britain in the early 1960s:

We need to train children to look critically and discriminate between what is good and bad in what they see. They must learn to realise that many makers of films and of television programmes present false or distorted views of people, relationships, and experiences in general, besides producing much trivial and worthless stuff made according to stock patterns (Newsom Report, 1963 cited in Halloran & Jones, 1992: 12).

In both cases, students are expected to initially be unaware of what is “wrong” with the media representations they ordinarily watch (presumably uncritically). The purpose of English education then, is to raise students’ awareness of the specifically ideological impact of texts (in Williamson) or the implicitly ideological — “false or distorted” — representations (Newsom). In stressing the “trivial and worthless” nature of many visual texts, the Newsom Report appears to confirm Patterson’s (1993) comments that “response,” as the term is used by English teachers, pertains specifically to literature. Patterson finds that students are not required to “connect” with texts that are not “literary” because *only* “literary texts are assumed to be about the ‘inner world’” (61). However, I believe this assumption is *no longer* held by English teachers or curriculum writers. It is possible to track this significant change

in just the 10 year period from 1995 to 2005 by comparing two extracts of student essays about documentaries, from the series of TEE *Good Answers: English* books. In the first extract, the student discusses how a documentary called *Rebels of a Forgotten World* tells “us” stories about the world we live in, as well as presenting facts.

He [the Governor] is always sitting behind a desk in his fancy office surrounded by symbols of power and authority. This is then juxtaposed to an interview with a rebel member who is out in his natural environment. This contrast emphasises the innocence of the rebels and justifies their cause and it also highlights the fact that this is an imperialistic war (ETAWA, 1996: 98).

10 years later, a student writes about how the documentary *Behind the Veil* uses the location of a secret girls’ school in Afghanistan to emphasise ideas about the subjects presented.

By using this location the documentary draws sympathy from the viewer toward these girls and emphasises the issue of inequality and also that of the importance of education (ETAWA, 2006: 97).

The essay questions themselves are comparable, and drawn from the same syllabus documentation, however there certainly *appears* to be a change in the teaching that has led to the production of these two responses. The second student is perhaps paying more attention to the viewer’s response to the text (“draws sympathy from the viewer”) whereas the first student seems to make the assumption that the viewer will “get” the meaning from the text. By stressing the “issue of inequality and also that of the importance of education,” the second student seems to be including their own values in the analysis. In contrast to Patterson’s investigation of 1990s pedagogy, in which students are not expected to connect with non-literary texts, the second student is quite explicitly connecting their interiority with the documentary content.

Can we conclude then, that documentary texts have *gradually* become an intensified site of governmental deployment in the English classroom? Superficially, this may seem to be the case, but operating behind both student texts is a much more

important aspect of ethical problematisation: the documentaries being discussed are “about” international issues. Unsurprisingly, another example student essay included for the same question discusses the values and attitudes presented in a documentary titled *9/11* (Hanlon, Klug, Naudet & Naudet, 2002). These texts allow students to consider their personal responses to major issues, and as such we see that the persistent practice has influenced the teaching of documentary texts from their very first inclusion into the curriculum.

In this section I am primarily concerned with the ways in which the documentary lesson functions within the educational apparatus to serve specific governmental objectives. This discussion extends the notion that English uses literature as a device to implement (in a concentrated form) the governmental objective of moral supervision (Hunter, 1988a: 36). By comparison, what appears to be happening in the documentary lesson is that teachers seem to believe that the teaching of documentary texts allows students to develop critical thinking skills with which to question the dominant (controlling) forces in society, while at the same time the structure of the lesson inevitably serves very specific governmental aims. As Hunter indicates, there is nothing “pedagogically or politically inappropriate” with the teaching of ethics (Hunter, 1997: 319), it is merely that the emphasis on recruiting the documentary lesson into the “social mission” of English neglects other important aspects of the curriculum. To illustrate this, we can turn to some teachers’ opinions on the importance of the teaching of documentary texts in the English discipline:

English teachers are probably best equipped to do this, to teach documentary because I don’t think that others ... other subjects like say history, they might show documentaries, but they don’t do them in the same way we do them (T1).

[U]nless we understand how we’re constructed as an audience, we can never view anything critically (T2).

[Q]uite often, documentaries expose those gaps and expose us to the idea that there can be those gaps in the media and what we see in the information we’re given and provided with [in the media] (T3).

I think it's [the teaching of documentary film] essential. [...] I suppose that comes back to that sort of old argument of is English about exposing truths in society? And I think documentary is very much about that (T4).

We can identify the recurring themes of Cultural Studies English here: either the documentary lesson teaches students to question the representations offered by the text itself, or it exposes students to texts which do the questioning for them. A quick sampling of the texts discussed in the interviews indicates that these views are borne out in the choices of documentaries for analysis:

	<i>Bowling For Columbine</i>	<i>Super Size Me</i>	<i>Mohammed and Juliet</i>	<i>The Thin Blue Line</i>	<i>Kurt and Courtney</i>
<i>Teacher One</i>	✓	✓			
<i>Teacher Two</i>	✓				
<i>Teacher Three</i>			✓	✓	✓
<i>Teacher Four</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3.2: Text choices as mentioned by each interview participant

The centrality of the student: issues, choices and theoretical mutation

An essentialist response might suggest that the choice of documentaries reflects an interest in “starting where the students are at” and this is reproduced in the teachers’ own justifications for these texts on the grounds that “it’s got to interest them and it’s got to have some sort of link to them so that they can understand it from their context” (T2) or that “the kids are more familiar with [these texts] and perhaps more in tune with [them]” (T1). Unsurprisingly, the humanist interpretation of “where the students are at” is limited to the students’ personal *interests*, rather than necessarily their academic ability; significantly, it also assumes that these interests are not determined by contingencies external to the student. Hunter reminds us of two other historical flaws with the humanist belief; firstly, this kind of “child-centred” approach in fact has its roots in Stow’s use of the playground in the 1830s, and in a second, related contingency, that “popular culture” was also injected into the English classroom in about 1913 with a series of recommendations by J. A. Green to include

aspects of the students' lives from outside the classroom, such as comic books and other forms of "everyday language" (Hunter, 1996: 8 – 9). Patterson (1993) has also outlined contingent reasons for the emergence of this practice, which of course has an influence on documentary pedagogy. In the documentary lesson, this resurfaces in the attention teachers give to the issues presented by the text — only one interview participant (T4) did not suggest issues as a key factor in text selection, however they did acknowledge that early in their teaching career issues *was* a focus. Importantly, this is not limited to the interviews conducted as part of this study. We can identify, for instance, this same focus as an organising principle in some sample teaching programs:

Students are to negotiate and select a major international issue and how it affects people. The unit will address how people have brought change in the past, or could now bring change in the present, together with the impact of that change on all parties involved (De Grauw, 2006b: 2).

The persistent practice is evident in both the child-centred approach implicit in the stipulation that students "negotiate" the topic, and in the range of topics that is *limited* to major international issue as a linking theme between their texts. In a very definite way, each student is positioned as an "actor and therefore a locus of freedom" (Dean, 1999: 13) who is required to perform specific introspective actions. The documentaries *McLibel* and *Super Size Me* are recommended as texts which offer "solutions" to the issues, into which the students presumably have some personal investment. In the investigation task, the task sheet specifies the following step:

Viewing of relevant feature films, documentaries, media items, search the net.
Make detailed notes relevant to your issue (6, emphasis mine).

From our historical-philological standpoint, we must question why "aesthetic text boundaries," for example, is *one* issue discursively excluded from the list of candidates for study. This kind of topic, grounded very firmly in the subject's terrain: language, would cater for an investigation of Errol Morris' documentary editing or, from another text category, a response to L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry. Rather than

representing gaps in teachers' knowledge, these kinds of (absent) aesthetic tasks are simply *not* attached to the dominant practice of ethical analysis.

Commonly, the Critical Literacy movement stresses that media texts should be studied in order to teach students to "critique their own culture" (Jetnikoff, 2006: 38). This is a position that mirrors the views of the teachers indicated just a moment ago in which documentaries either exposed students to critiques of the culture *or* provided a means of learning to critique representations and constructions in texts generally. Moreover, we notice that these kinds of arguments inevitably become tied up with ethics, as Jetnikoff goes on to make the speculation that

if we encourage classroom thinking about issues of ethnicity, identity and the discourse of multiculturalism we might activate debates about discourses of belonging and citizenship in English (39).

In the name of the social mission of the subject, it is the persistent practice of emphasising issues that enables/constrains English teachers in the governmental pursuit of ethical problematisation. Embedded in Jetnikoff's hope that "we might activate debates" is the privileging of that very specific set of values about education and English as emancipatory opportunities. In fact, it is precisely these kinds of argument that illustrate clearly the way that the long-standing training of English teachers (the persistent practice) influences the take up of seemingly substantial modifications to the subject. Classroom debate over issues of "ethnicity, identity and the discourse of multiculturalism" is a by-product of post-structuralist philosophical thought in the Humanities in the 1980s. Rather than Deconstruction being incorporated into the English curriculum as a reading practice that can be systematically taught, practised and measured, the technology of English appropriates certain aspects of Deconstruction as ready-to-hand means of eliciting the values of students. In holding up "debates about discourses of belonging and citizenship" as an objective of English, Jetnikoff is (unconsciously or not) presuming "some conception of an autonomous person capable of monitoring and regulating various aspects of their own conduct" (Dean, 1999: 12). We see this in the issues-based teaching of documentaries, in which a text like *The Thin Blue Line* is chosen because

it deals with things like government corruption or police corruption, I should say, truth, justice in the American system especially and that does work well because we quite often do that text after we've done Dead Man Walking. So the students are quite familiar with those issues within America already (T3).

We also see it in the justification of teaching a documentary about (male) football hooligans' behaviour in a Chelsea supporters' club:

[G]ender I think is a good one to do because the kids at the age of 16, 17 years old are also dealing with issues of masculinity and femininity and their own gender issues and so they can tap into that and their relationships with their parents, their brothers and their sisters and so on and all the stereotypes of the things that are expected of them in terms of their behaviour. So it's a good thing to tap into because it's part of their experience (T1).

Interestingly, while appearing to signal theoretical progress for the subject — for example, the inclusion of post-structuralism or another textual theory — the method of appropriation merely iterates the governmental purposes of English; or in Hunterian terms the “pastoral bureaucracy” in which the state cares “for its citizens as a means of looking after itself” (Hunter, 1994: 62). The result is an interesting mutation of pedagogical activities which are “not-quite” Cultural Studies (in the academic sense), because although they might look like an examination of “the ideological determinants of the very sign systems and institutional means whereby a culture is mediated” (Daly, *et al*, 1989: 16), the analytic manoeuvres simply use ideology as a site for the eliciting of students' ethical selves. This seems to occur no matter how strictly the analysis of rhetorical elements used by documentary films follows semiotic methodology. The following is a useful description of five semiotic analytic groupings:

[G]enre-specific codes and conventions (laugh-tracks in sitcoms, “formal” dress for newsreaders, opening credits); metaphor and metonymy (meanings by association or substitution, such as a red rose or heart means romance); iconic (Sydney Opera House means Australia) and symbolic (black means evil, white

means purity) representations; paradigmatic (historical and linear “across time” analysis such as character or plot development) and syntagmatic features (“slice of time” analysis such as in freeze frame) (Luke, 1996: 180).

Although T3 does not invoke the same descriptive categories of analysis, they can be interpolated from the following meta-cognitive “talk-through” of a retrieval chart used during viewing of the documentary:

So I'll discuss specific examples in the documentary that we were watching and saying these are the things that you need to be looking for. What was the interviewer wearing? What was the interviewee wearing? What was in the background? What sort of setting were they in? Why did they have that setting? How were those objects around them associated with that person? What did they say during that interview? What were their facial expressions and body language and tone of voice like and what does that indicate to us? (T3)

Having identified these elements, the students then transfer the information to another chart in which the codes are linked to the construction of “an argument, issue, idea or a question that’s actually raised in the documentary” (T3). The purpose of this kind of teaching is undoubtedly to “interrupt students’ unreflective acceptance of media’s ‘public pedagogies’, and to develop new strategies for thinking about the meanings that media transmit, and the meanings viewers construct for themselves” (Luke, 1996: 178), however the discussion of Research Question Two has very clearly illuminated the limitations of this kind of teaching practice. As Hunter has indicated about English pedagogy in general, and we are seeing in the documentary lesson in particular, while the subject simply adapts existing devices and routines (such as those of semiotic analysis) for the objectives of government it simultaneously destabilises its attention to the three curriculum objectives.

We can, in fact, see this destabilisation illustrated perfectly in a short chapter on documentary film study in *Reading Television (Book 1): Critical viewing and creative response* (Arnold, 1997). Although the use of textbooks by English teachers has been critiqued already (see the discussion of Research Question Two), the structure of this book’s chapter on documentary film bears out the unstable

pedagogical ground of the documentary lesson. The book itself opens with a statement about student subjectivity that has become a commonplace in media analysis:

Australian children watch more television than they do anything else but sleep. It's incumbent on us as educators and devisors of curriculum in the English classroom to try to draw this text into our teaching and learning (vii).

The chapter offers a more or less Cultural Studies approach in the information presented under the headings “Real stories?”, “Code of ethics” and “Political documentaries” (90 – 91). These sections outline versions of reality, as “certain angles or perspectives” (90), the influence of advertisers and shareholders on the kinds of documentaries shown on commercial TV (90) and the ability of documentaries to “get behind the [political] fronts that act as cover-ups” (91). It is interesting to see how the genre is presented variously (and unproblematically) as something to be “aware” of *and* as something that offers the last hope for a responsible democracy. The sections headed “Nature documentaries,” “Historical documentaries” and “Docudramas” (91 – 92) take almost an aesthetic view of the genre; discussing both the “state of the art camerawork” (91) of David Attenborough’s recent documentaries and the availability of archival footage for use in historical documentaries (91). Regardless of its lack of attention to rhetorical devices, we still cannot interpret this as a “well-balanced” textbook because its selective critical focus reveals the persistent practice at work in two ways. Firstly, aesthetics is ignored, in favour of ethics, when a “social issues” documentary is being discussed and vice-versa. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we have seen that the types of documentaries chosen by English teachers fall into the category of “social issues.” Irrespective of whether or not this book is used popularly by English teachers, it is an ideal indication of the persistent practice at work in the discursive formation of the subject.

Performing ethical introspection under exam conditions

I will now broaden the discussion from the attitudes of the profession (in regard to documentary texts) to include an analysis of the effects of this persistent practice on the education of students. We will see in the participant interviews, *TEE Good Answers* guides and the TEE Examiners' Reports, that the repeated emphasis of ethical problematisation has an identifiable impact on viewing practices learned by English students. Firstly, it is worth considering how the Discussion so far bears on what may emerge in considering these documents. In *Creelman's TEE Questions: English*, the (professional) author presents an example of an introduction to the second Non-Print question from the 2000 English paper, which in fact qualifies as the kind of ethical response we can expect to be highly rewarded by the markers:

Michael Moore's documentary *Bowling for Columbine* constructs a particular version of reality by using a highly selective set of facts and realities and shaping them to convey a powerful message about the effects of the gun culture and the acceptance of violence in America which he controversially links with America's aggressive foreign policy. Rather than altering my views, Moore has reinforced my opinions about the harmful effect of the right to own guns and the pervasive and dangerous acceptance of violence in American culture (Bagworth, 2005: 129).

While this may be more fluent than the student answers expected in the exam, it provides an indication of the kind of "personal response" that appears to be undertaking a critical analysis of the text. In fact, we do not need to look far to find a student answer that corresponds to this ideal:

The idea of Adolf Hitler being a deity or "God like" figure sickens me in scenes of *Triumph of the Will* such as its very opening. Reifentahl [sic] has included a shot of clouds and a Nazi plane emerging and "Hitler descending from the heavens" so to speak (ETAWA, 2005: 96).

Aside from the emotional connection apparently obtained from the text (“sickens”), this student answer interestingly goes on to conclude with a statement that reveals the idea of “Cultural completion” of the “true self” that informs traditional views of subject English’s history which is of course, as Foucault suggests, a “construction of post-enlightenment and humanist thought” (Marshall, 1990: 16). At the same time, the answer exposes (unwittingly) the limitation of strictly teaching documentaries according to the notion of “versions of reality.”

The documentary film *Triumph of the Will* was created at a time where governments knew that presenting ideology in a ~~way~~ [sic] form which is eye-catching and entertaining makes it easily acceptable, although my personal contexts have influenced the resistance reading of this text (ETAWA, 2005: 97).

This student appears to have “seen through” Riefenstahl’s version of reality, which apparently the 1930s German audience could not. Little wonder this answer is a “good” answer; it concludes with a statement opposing the twin targets of Cultural Studies: the government *and* ideology, which are seen as something that can be — must be — resisted. However, more than Cultural Studies is invoked here. Taken together, the student’s answer and Bagworth’s exemplar demonstrate modern iterations of English as “an *essentially* oppositional and liberatory field of practice” (Moon, 1994: 59). The resistant reading of *Triumph of the Will*, for example, presents itself as liberated from the manacles of ideology in its “individual expression and self-realisation” (59), while Bagworth’s shows how a liberated viewer is able to think for themselves even if there is a simplified versions of reality on offer. Although the interview participants broadly expressed the view that “version of reality” should be taught because it is an essential part of understanding the documentary genre, it seems that the concept is, in fact, an ideal tool for cultivating an essential part of the English ethical project.

The 2005 *Good Answers* also shows an interesting disparity of rhetoric, aesthetics and ethics in the student essays selected for inclusion in the Non-Print section. Feature films and documentaries are discussed, but rather than offering a balance of the three English objectives, *all* of the student essays in this section address the

ethical. This is significant because the Non-Print section of the 2004 exam offered a set of questions that had been designed so that each of them could be answered from an aesthetic, rhetorical or ethical point of view. Where a student does attempt to engage in an aesthetic discussion, the persistent practice quickly emerges, as in the following extract of an essay asserting the strength of feature films being located in the stories they tell:

Also, the issues, ~~prese were in va~~ [sic] such as McMurphy's desire to "beat the system", something I as a school leaver can certainly relate to, or Book's "desire to seek justice", much like myself this morning, seeking justice after my brother drank the last of the orange juice, are important issues. This differs from *The Matrix* ~~where the issue of~~ [sic] "saving the world" from ~~this obviously fake world~~ [sic] *The Matrix* was one of the key issues portrayed, not an issue I can easily relate to, and which resulted in my lack of interest in the movie (2005: 104).

The question asked candidates whether the stories of feature films were more important than the "astounding special effects and extravagant settings" (102), which could clearly be tackled from an aesthetic perspective. Alongside the answer, the *Good Answers* authors comment that "The personal examples are highly relevant and add weight to the view presented" (104). In this case, it seems that as long as the student is thinking *about* themselves then they appear to be thinking *for* themselves.

This notion is also taken up in the 2004 *Good Answers*, in which one student's response to a documentary about prison life, called *The Farm: Angola, USA* (Rideau, 1998) is praised by the authors for dealing

effectively with the notion of power, by arguing that the power of documentary film is its ability to make us confront what we do not know and *question our humanity* (ETAWA, 2004: 74, emphasis mine).

The student notes that the documentary "makes the audience think and feel on so many levels" (75). Considering the kinds of statements made about documentary films in the interviews conducted for this study, it is unsurprising that the editors of

the *Good Answers* guide appear to reward student answers that operate from this ethical point of view. If we remember that a repeated theme in the interviews was the connection between documentaries and “truth,” then two further student essays in the 2005 *Good Answers* take on interesting significance. One student, discussing *Cunnamulla* (O’Rourke, 2000) with respect to “What kinds of questions do documentaries ask?” concludes that the question “What is truth” is

a question that is brought about many times by documentaries and one that will probably never be answered, but stating that there are many truths seems to be the truth (ETAWA, 2005: 125).

This student appears to be articulating what Moon describes as the post-structuralist “methodological emphasis on the recovery of truth (theorised as ‘difference’)” (Moon, 1994: 59). English seems to hope that by investigating issues of “the truth,” students may develop certain moral capacities that we can see reflected in another student essay about three documentary texts, which begins with:

A shameful aspect of the history of the white man is the lack of respect for or understanding of difference. Whether a ~~cult~~ [sic] minority, a culture or the rules and practices of society, history has been replete with instances of attempted assimilation, deceit and violence (ETAWA, 2005: 126).

We have then, a range of ways in which students may demonstrate (under exam conditions) that they are capable of self-problematisation. Students may show that they can “see through” the version of reality offered, bring in personal stories from their lives that are loosely connected to the content of the text, or simply suggest that the documentary is able to position viewers to question themselves (and society). These kinds of answers show how governmental objectives (such as multiculturalism) are superimposed onto the teaching of specific texts and, in each case, appear to be the kinds of essay that are rewarded in the *Good Answers* guides. However, are these values mirrored in the *Examiner’s Reports* themselves?

Each year, following the TEE, the Curriculum Council releases the *Examiner’s Report* for each subject. These reports are designed “to comment on matters relating

to the Tertiary Entrance Examination” (Curriculum Council, 2002b: 1) and summarise the opinions of the Examining panel in relation to specific questions and the overall approach taken to the exam by student candidates. The *Report* also makes suggestions and advice for teachers to consider in teaching the following year’s cohort. To discuss the effects of the persistent practice on students’ examination responses, I will inspect the 2001 – 2006 *Reports* in which the examiners comment on exam questions that require (or encourage) students to discuss documentary texts. The examiners’ comments are presented firstly as “advice for teachers” and then as “advice for students” before providing question-specific commentary. For the purpose of the current study, it is possible to consider these TEE results a kind of “survey” of 49,476 of students although, of course, not every student wrote about documentaries. The six exam papers contain between one and three questions in the Non-Print section that explicitly require students to discuss documentary texts, and each *Report* summarises the rough percentage of the cohort who answered particular questions. The table below identifies the sample of students who tackled the documentary questions commented upon in the *Report*.

<i>Exam year</i>	<i>Candidates who sat the exam</i>	<i>Rough percentage of candidates who answered questions <u>requiring</u> reference to documentary films</i>	<i>Number of candidates who answered questions about documentary films (whole numbers only)</i>
2001	7965	61%	4,858
2002	8468	59%	4,996
2003	8509	43%	3,658
2004	8318	32%	2,661
2005	8342	29%	2,419
2006	7874	14%	1,102

Table 4.1: Rough percentages and whole numbers of candidates who answered TEE questions requiring reference to documentary texts

The percentage of candidates has only been taken where the question specifically *required* students to discuss a documentary text. For example, the 2004 exam has questions two and five that ask specifically about documentary texts, but question three gives students the choice to write about documentary or feature film. I have not included the percentage of students who tackled question three.

It seems that these *Reports* portray the most balanced attitudes of the English documents we have examined so far (excluding, of course, the *Curriculum*

Framework and the *TEE Syllabus*). Throughout the 2001 – 2006 Exam Reports, there are at least four clear themes that emerge which have relevance to the current study:

- Students discuss their personal context in detail;
- Students are developing personal voice;
- Students tend to list techniques, struggling to clearly *explain* how the texts use techniques;
- Teachers need to emphasise how to construct an argument.

These themes show that the examiners — while looking for a balance of aesthetics, rhetoric and ethics in the answers — find that students give very brief attention to the aesthetic construction of texts, suffer from a lack of rhetorical skill themselves and very often provide in depth “personal” responses to the questions and texts. This (im)balance is not surprising, however what is interesting is that the examining panel (comprising some members who are practising English teachers) manages to avoid the persistent practice. In the General Comments from the 2006 Exam *Report* we find markers commenting that:

There was a sense that “the exam seemed to elicit responses that were all about issues, rather than the nature of text.” This may be something teachers want to consider as well as examiners (Curriculum Council, 2007: 2).

Although one of the intentions of this comment is to point to the construction of the exam questions, it also seems to indicate that there is a different *modus* for markers and teachers, respectively. The practice of marking “the TEE” seems to foreground the normative nature of the subject, while daily classroom practice “forgets” this. Moon reminds us that “By narrativising its practices in terms of the restoration or recovery of truth [...] English side-steps the question of its normativity” (1994: 58). I would go further to argue that the overall institutive weight of “the TEE” regime, including the constant discursive reminders that the paper is intended to examine “the breadth of the syllabus” (Curriculum Council, 2005c: 1), is enough to dislodge the persistent practice at least temporarily. We can see this oscillation played out in the 2002 paper, if we consider Question 5 from the Non-Print section.

Although documentaries use verbal language, they also tell their stories and create meanings visually.

Discuss the significance of visual images in telling a story and creating meanings in at least **one documentary film** you have seen (Curriculum Council, 2002a: 11).

In the corresponding *Report*, there is a clear difference between what examiners were *asking* for (in regards to both normativity, and a balance of aesthetics etc) and what students actually produced. For example, the markers discriminate in their expectations of “poorer answers” and “better answers” in terms of how much attention is given to *how* the visual images create meaning (25). Additionally, the markers indicate that the question phrase

“Visual images” might be taken to refer to selectivity of shots, montage, sequence/editing, style, film techniques (such as camera angles, lighting, film choice), symbolic codes, special effects (such as computer graphics), historical footage, dramatic reconstruction (Curriculum Council, 2003: 25).

This is a relatively detailed list of aesthetic features, and the markers go on to stress that:

Students should also show an understanding of how visual images are used for effect in the chosen text(s): i.e. they should have a *thorough appreciation of the film text* (25, emphasis mine).

Unlike Questions one and four, which offered clear(er) opportunity for ethical commentary, we are dealing here with a question that is designed for aesthetics. 40% of candidates approached this question (compared with 19% and 11% for Questions one and four, respectively) and apparently many answers “regurgitate[d] prepared essays and/or list[ed] visual elements” (10). This is unsurprising, considering what we have uncovered so far about the way “film techniques” are dealt with in the English classroom: as merely vehicles for arriving at the ethical analysis of the text. Essentially, although this question may have appeared simple to students, who

presumably had produced pages of notes and SWAT charts on the techniques of their documentaries, they were evidently inadequately prepared to tackle its aesthetic requirements.

We can turn to the 2003 Exam *Report* to gain an understanding of what students *are* prepared to deal with. A few extracts of the *Report* will suffice to reveal the effects of teachers' persistent practice on the students' abilities to perform under exam conditions:

Students seemed much more willing to take up the offer of the questions to produce personal responses to issues (Curriculum Council, 2004: 2).

I think what struck me most of all was that the students were engaged by what they were writing about (2).

It was very pleasing to see students engaging with contemporary and “up-to-date” cultural productions such as *Bowling for Columbine* (2).

These kinds of responses correlate perfectly with the descriptions of documentary lesson pedagogy that emerge in the participant interviews conducted for this study. We see the repeated themes of “personal response,” “engagement” and texts that are “current.” Aside from these ethical concerns, my earlier comment that rhetoric suffers most of all is also reflected in the same *Report*:

The notion of argument needs to be the next big thing in teaching. Too many candidates seem to think an argument is a series of assertions (2).

Teachers need to revisit their focus on writing techniques [...] Students have become so enmeshed in values, attitudes, themes, issues and reader/viewer position, that they are overlooking the “nuts and bolts” of text (3).

There are two interesting points to make about these marker comments. Firstly, rhetoric — one of the key objectives of any English curriculum document — is ironically presented as “the next big thing in teaching,” as if it is something that

needs to be *introduced* to the curriculum. Secondly, I believe the marker has summed up the situation precisely in describing students as being “enmeshed in” what are essentially the key components of Critical Literacy. We see similar complaints about students’ understandings of the “nuts and bolts” of documentary texts in the 2002 and 2005 Exam *Reports*:

Perhaps it is time to back off from camera angles — they are not all that important in the scheme of things but seem to be seen by students as the only component of cinematography and visual construction (Curriculum Council, 2003: 5).

There is an over-emphasis on camera angles as an aspect of filmic construction. [...] More attention needs to be given to such things as composition, framing and camera distance, and the interrelationship between these and other aspects of film language (6).

There was a noticeable and confusing use of archival footage as setting (Curriculum Council, 2006a: 4)

Each of these reflects the problem of a teaching practice that emphasises the ethical; for example, the confusion of archival footage with setting may result from students struggling to understand the construction of the text they have been presented with while being asked to focus on their “responses” to the viewpoints of the filmmaker. Additionally, camera angles are often presented by teachers in such a way that “a High Camera Angle makes the person look innocent” and “a Low Camera Angle makes them look dominant/oppressive.” There are many exceptions to this rule, for example a meaning such as “power” (in *Triumph of the Will*, at least) is just as much an effect of Hitler’s eye-line/gaze, his body language and the triumphant music underscoring the footage of him surveying the ranks of troops. Additionally, while this kind of simplified decoding makes absolute sense in light of English teachers’ emphasis on ethical analysis, it also relies upon the outdated notion that the “set-up of the camera betrays the inner attitude of the man behind the camera” (Belazs, 1970 cited in Carroll, 1996: 227). Carroll’s essay devastates these sorts of Althusserian critiques of “objectivity” and documentary to the extent that the significance of

discrete analysis of aspects of visual construction (such as camera angles) must be reappraised by English teachers.

The contemporary documentary lesson

We have traced then, the way in which contemporary documentary pedagogy is merely an iteration of the persistent practice “in which formal instruction concerning the text as a cultural artifact is relegated in favo[u]r of its use as a means of eliciting personal responses” (Hunter, 1997: 318). The characteristics of the documentary lesson have emerged through a series of contingent developments in the curriculum since the introduction of media text types, which we can summarise as follows:

- The Newsom Report shows that media texts were introduced under the pretext of their saturation of the “real world” of students, and that *therefore* students must be inoculated against the “false and distorted” representations offered;
- Teachers’ choices of documentary text types appear to reflect an insistence on examining “important issues,” often centred on topics such as ethnicity, identity and/or difference. These may also be linked with “free choice” of the students to undertake “personal study” of the issue itself;
- Interview participants emphasise the use of documentaries in developing students’ critical thinking skills to question and challenge the dominant ideology of society;
- Theoretical changes in Literary/Cultural Theory have been adopted by English as ready-to-hand means of transporting students to an ethical engagement with the text;
- Rhetorical and aesthetic aspects of documentaries are given brief attention in a simplified semiotic methodology that also transports students to an ethical engagement with the text’s version of reality;
- Finally, “the TEE” (which is of course *not* a “real language situation”) is the only place in which the persistent practice is not explicitly conducted; yet its effects are still apparent in the complaints of the markers.

One last point to make in closing this discussion, is that the documentary lesson, like other governmental technologies, “should not be understood as planned or predetermined” (Hook, 2004: 242) and the above sketch simply illustrates the inevitable deployment of this “new text type” in the curriculum as a result of contingent developments in the subject’s history long before media texts were introduced. Although the documentary lesson is clearly being used in limited ways, Chapter Five will demonstrate that there are alternatives that can encompass the ethical formation of students as well as their rhetorical and aesthetic capacities.

Chapter summary

This chapter comprised a discussion of the three major research questions guiding the current project. I first discussed the ways in which the research data from interview participants and sample teaching programs suggests that current pedagogy does not reflect curriculum statements for the subject, with respect to the teaching of documentary texts. Significantly, there was little evidence of either aesthetics or rhetoric being taught in a “pure” form; rather, these were often used as vehicles for transporting students to an ethical inquiry of the text and themselves. Aesthetics seems to receive limited attention, in as much as teachers often chose documentaries that would “look engaging,” so that students would uncomplainingly watch them, as well as “learn” that documentaries can be entertaining as well as informational. We saw how the study of rhetoric, with respect to documentary texts, was mainly concerned with “empowering” students to “see through” the manipulative positioning devices used by filmmakers.

Secondly, I recalled the Foucauldian notion of “pastoral power,” as taken up by Hunter (1988a; 1991) to explain the development of English as a discipline which relies upon the teacher/student relationship, and a specialised deployment of texts, to produce students as very specific kinds of aesthetico-ethical subjects. This critique was then extended to the interview participant data from the current study; in which we also saw the pastoral relationship between teacher and student reflected in the kinds of questioning used to lead classroom discussions of responses to the documentaries. The interview data suggested that documentary pedagogy is centred

on an attitude toward student subjectivity as passive viewers who require liberation, however there was significant oscillation between a kind of Culturalist appreciation of the humanist message of documentaries, on the one hand, and a Cultural Studies wariness of the text-as-manipulation on the other. I then examined some popular English textbooks to reveal how the persistent practice is evident in the kinds of questions provided for students to “think through” the material, resulting in further naturalisation of ethical introspection as the dominant viewing practice for documentary texts.

In discussing the final research question, I revisited the origins of the concept of students as unaware and passive viewers who are subject to manipulation by media texts. We saw, through the *TEE Good Answers* guides, that although a humanist conception of the (recent) developments in documentary pedagogy would suggest Cultural Studies shows a greater promise of liberation, the persistent practice of teaching “through” issues has affected the documentary lesson from its very beginning. The documentary lesson — specifically its insistence on choosing documentaries dealing with “international issues” — was then linked to the governmental objectives more broadly taken up by subject English; organised around notions such as ethnicity, identity and difference. It also appears that the persistent practice influences the way theoretical shifts in the adjacent fields of Literary/Cultural Theory have been incorporated into English, in order to more easily serve the subject’s governmental objectives. Finally, I considered the Year 12 English “exam” to see how students are expected to perform the ethical introspection under these conditions, by reviewing the *Good Answers* in more detail, as well as the *TEE Examiner Reports* from 2001 – 2006. In this discussion, it emerged that while the *Reports* signified the most balanced of the documents we have covered, the markers complaints (about student’s lack of rhetorical abilities and their lack of attention to aesthetics) clearly showed the effects of the destabilised nature of the curriculum. I closed the discussion by reconstructing key components in the series of contingent developments in English that have lead to the contemporary documentary lesson.

5. Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

Overview

This chapter functions to clarify the theoretical argument presented in the thesis. I begin by locating my view of English in the historical-philological model which differs significantly to both Culturalist and Cultural Studies English. The ethical practice (privileged by these prevailing models) is then historicised in a review of two adjacent fields: i) changes to the TEE *Syllabus* documents from 1984 to the 2006 *Course of Study*, and ii) the theoretical shifts in media pedagogy since the 1960s. Following this, I indicate three implications of the study for further research and close with a recommendation for an alternative practice that addresses the shortcomings of the documentary lesson as identified by the study.

5.1 The history of persistent practice and media pedagogy

In a 2003 episode of *The Simpsons*, Springfield Elementary School is the subject of a documentary to be directed by the fictional character “Declan Desmond” (an amalgamated send-up of documentary maker Nick Broomfield and, later in the episode, Michael Moore). This character stands in front of the students and declares: “When you think of documentaries, you probably think of the Maysles brothers or Barbara Kopple” (Glazier, Gould, Greaney, Anderson & Moore, 2003). The students, of course, stare blankly back at him. Desmond’s line and the students’ reaction are humorous for reasons that of course shed light on the problem of teaching documentary texts in the English classroom. Despite their significance in the field of documentary production, Kopple and the Maysles would also be unknown to students in the average Year 12 TEE English class in Western Australia because teachers do not give historical-philological attention to the genre. I am of course not about to advocate a return to Culturalist style examination questions: “Mention the name (and approximate date of production) of one work by the following documentary makers:- DA Pennybaker, John Grierson, Fred Wiseman, Errol Morris etc,” although this kind of factual knowledge may in fact be a valid requirement for serious study of documentary texts as cultural artefacts. I have two major concerns

about the approach. Firstly, we have already seen that a Culturalist pedagogy seeks to “save” students from popular texts rather than necessarily studying the historical trends of a genre. Secondly, it seems likely that films such as these would be studied in terms of the directors’ recurring ideas, issues and themes; Wiseman’s “questioning of authority/institutions,” for instance. The current study indicates substantial areas of contemporary English practice that require reconsideration on the grounds of curriculum cohesiveness. At the same time this research should not be (mis)identified with either the backlash against Cultural Studies that accuses the movement of “crimes both political and pedagogical” (Freesmith, 2006: 25), or with defences of English-as-ideological-critique such as Sommer (2005). This study has been an analysis of the phenomenon from a very different perspective.

I should also clarify that the purpose of this study has not been to belittle the popular teaching practice of documentary texts itself; there certainly is important analysis to be done from the perspective of Cultural Studies, however we should remember that Cultural Studies (as a means of ethical problematisation) does not offer the humanist promise of “completion” or of escape from ideology/government oppression. It just happens that Cultural Studies has been taken up as the dominant mode of analysis in the documentary lesson. One of the objectives of this study has been to highlight these contradictions inherent in the influence of Cultural Studies on the documentary lesson, while also indicating that the persistent practice of ethical instruction has emphasised a single English objective at the expense of other fundamental curriculum requirements. Importantly, the introduction of a new text type (for example, documentaries) into the curriculum means that subject English merely reconfigures itself in a new iteration to accommodate the change as a site of ethical problematisation.

I am about to consider the historical curriculum developments that have had a kind of gravitational influence on the modern documentary lesson; however it is worth recalling a number of points before moving further. Firstly, we have seen that the prevailing models of English are similar in form in that they function to implant a moral technology in students that serves the governmental purpose of teaching them to “think for themselves,” and to think “about” themselves as subjects of their own conduct. Secondly, we should remember that the problem in continually supporting

the view of emancipatory education is that this vision ignores an inherent contradiction:

There is [...] a paradox in teaching independence of mind. If I as your teacher tell you to think for yourself, you are caught in an impossible position. Think for yourself, and you are still thinking as I tell you, in my terms. Think not as I tell you, and you must decide *not* to think for yourself (Donald, 1993: 121).

In the English classroom, “teaching independence of mind” is often *the* goal, and whenever a new text-type (or other curriculum innovation) appears, it seems this humanist value is attached to the text-type. For example, when attempting to envelop all domains of experience with literacy, Ray Misson asserts a series of values as “self-evidently true,” beginning with the notion that: “We as *individuals* are created — at least partially — through texts” (Misson, 2005: 40, emphasis mine). By focusing on the ethical, however, English ignores its other two educational objectives. Regardless of which model of English is invoked, we should remember that since many human practices are not based on language or knowledge (Hunter, 1993: 128), then

nothing is gained by attempting to reduce the host of social technologies and special procedures of the apparatus of literature to the single point of consciousness, or to linguistic structure (Hunter, 1984: 425).

The current study has shown that Hunter’s general critique of subject English does in fact apply to the documentary lesson, in which ethical instruction attempts to engage students in a study of documentary texts that will positively affect them as individuals. How then, do these contradictions within subject English so often (and so effectively, in the case of media pedagogy) become invisible and naturalised? To answer this, I wish to briefly review important changes in the Western Australian TEE *Syllabus* from the vague introduction of the documentary text-type in 1984 to its more solid status in 1990. These localised changes will then be supplemented with general developments of media pedagogy in English education in Western society since the 1960s, in order to comprehend the historical context in which this study should be considered.

By tracking the TEE Syllabus from 1984 to 1990, we see that the curriculum moves from adopting a hybrid Culturalist-personalist perspective in the 1980s, to something closer to post-structuralism in the early 1990s; however, throughout this succession there is the constant emphasis of *language* as central, as well as a consistent balance of rhetorical, aesthetic and ethical interests. The significance of the persistent practice, therefore, is that it acts as a filter through which teachers interpret the curriculum, as reflected in the interviews, sample teaching programs and curriculum support materials examined in this study. To begin with, the 1984 *Syllabus* very clearly values the humanist themes of “the individual” as well as the capabilities of language:

In the teaching of English, more depends upon the personal qualities of the individual teacher than in the teaching of most other subjects (SEA, 1984: 106).

The study of resources in this area [non-print media] should aim to develop an awareness of the special qualities of the medium, but since this course concerns itself with language, the concentration should be upon the language used (117).

We see reflected here both Culturalist and personalist ideas of freedom, individuality and the “special qualities” of text, however we should also take note that the final examination did not test students’ understandings of the non-print media studied. Non-print media texts were included in the syllabus because they (including documentaries) offered

frequent opportunities for the study of truth and falsehood in language, and opportunities to learn to follow the line of an argument, to appreciate the different strategies used in interviews, to recognize different ways of avoiding issues, to distinguish between clear and muddled thinking and to be aware of bias and appeals to emotion (114).

In other words, the non-print media offered rhetorical training, thus balancing out the curriculum. The 1986 *Syllabus* introduces more specific objectives for non-print media; covering aesthetic, ethical and rhetorical skills/understandings with such

notions as “understanding[s] of the role of genre conventions,” “how media texts relate to culture and social value system[s]” and “critical vocabulary appropriate to describing media texts” (SEA, 1986: 153 – 154). Language is still central, however it is infused with personalist-ethical characteristics in its definition on the *Syllabus*’ first page as

a means by which human beings communicate with one another, pass on traditional values and generate a sense of self, [and therefore] is an essential component of every culture (151).

As such, we can still identify traces of the ethical practice even though the document, as a whole, maintains a balance across the three objectives of the curriculum. It appears that these areas are expected to be treated discretely; for example, aesthetics: “They [students] should be able to describe the defining characteristics of a genre” (155), and ethics: “locate some of the unstated assumptions that underly both genre and convention” (155). This separation is still evident in the General Aims of the 1987 *Syllabus* (SEA, 1987: 81) even though an explicitly Culturalist attitude dominates the 1986 and 1987 documents in phrases such as: “It is essential for this subject that students develop an awareness that some forms of language are richer and better able to express humane values than others” (SEA, 1986: 151; SEA, 1987: 81). The late 80s’ *Syllabuses* also show how the centrality of the student also impacts on the expectations of teachers and students:

Since this subject aims to help students develop their own powers of discrimination and independence of judgement, teachers should give serious and sympathetic attention to what students enjoy and value, using those interests as the starting point from which to develop their skills and understanding (SEA, 1986: 151; SEA, 1987: 81).

It is here that we see the origins of what becomes (in the interviews and teacher programs) the principal aesthetic-ethical concern that “if we’re teaching them to be critical viewers, it’s got to interest them and it’s got to have some sort of link to them so that they can understand it from their context” (T2). As I have argued earlier, the result of this emphasis on “relevance” is that aesthetics is consigned to the ethical in

two ways: i) aesthetic interests become linked to conceptions of the students' subjectivity as "passive/uncritical viewers", and ii) aesthetics is only considered in order to allow students to engage *personally* with the text so that the inevitable ethical analysis can take place.

The 1990 *Syllabus* shows a number of significant changes to the overall aim(s) of the subject as well as the position of documentaries within it. Language and its relationship to culture and "the self" are still dominant, however there is an interesting disciplinary statement that the course

is designed to meet the needs of students considering applying for tertiary entrance at the end of Year 12. It emphasises the development of critical and analytical thinking, such as is demanded in tertiary study (SEA, 1990: 119).

The significance of this is that the English teacher is no longer privileged in the same way as in the 1984 *Syllabus*; instead, the English course, teacher and students are recast in their institutionalised roles within the educational system. Additionally, 37 documentaries are listed as recommended texts and the documentary text-type itself receives a dedicated section (121) that in fact remains exactly the same in every *Syllabus* until the 2006 *Course of Study*. The implications of these changes for this study are that in 1990 the *Syllabus* takes on a much more specific, rigid form with respect to documentary study. It is no longer something that teachers can use "as necessary" to ensure that students receive a "well-rounded" education. Instead, it becomes an identifiable object of study, with recommended texts covering mostly nature documentaries, historical issues and aspects of Australian culture (124 – 125). Predictably, of course, the text-type is also recuperated as merely another opportunity for ethical inquiry. Recall, for a moment, that in the Discussion of Research Question Three, we saw how seemingly different student examination answers (from the 1995 – 2005 *Good Answers* guides) represented essentially the same ethical practice. It would be short-sighted however, to simply suggest that teachers are interpreting the *Syllabus* incorrectly. Because teachers are often acting in response to the decisions of bureaucratic groups to which they are often minimally represented (Rhatigan, 2001: 40 – 41), I will now locate the historical emergence of this persistent practice

throughout the theoretical positions of media pedagogy before documentaries even entered the Western Australian curriculum.

Interestingly, documentary pedagogy receives barely a mention in an international collection of a “wide and unique range of accounts of education about the media for young people between the ages of 4 and 18” (Alvarado & Boyd-Barrett, 1992: 1). This is perhaps unsurprising, documentary entered the Western Australian *Syllabus* as a required text for study in 1990 and for practical purposes the pedagogy seems to have relied upon materials in the adjacent field of film/TV study in general. It is important to recall only three dedicated chapters on documentary study were found in commonly available (not necessarily “popular”) English textbooks; and only one interview participant mentioned using a textbook; the others described more or less a similar “discussion and notemaking” approach as would be used for the study of a feature film.

Although this is oversimplifying a very broad history, the study of media can be understood as beginning with the recommendations of both the 1959 Crowther Report and the 1963 Newsom Report that the mass media have powerful effects on children, both negative and positive (Halloran & Jones, 1986/1992: 12). This Culturalist position was further taken up by Robin Wood, who debated against the formalist tendencies of Alan Lovell in the 1960s – 70s issues of *Screen* and *Screen Education* (Cook, 1992: 155 – 158). The 1970s and 80s saw Althusserian approaches to ideology employed by Film Studies, particularly in the psychoanalytic/feminist work of Laura Mulvey (1975). Aspects of post-structuralism, reader-response and intertextuality (through the 1980s – 90s) seem to be the most recent inclusions in media study that have had an impact on mainstream English. The typical way these developments have been integrated by English pedagogy can be seen in the following range of comments:

[F]or many young people the mass media may well be the single most influential environmental factor in their lives, barring the home itself [...] [W]e have believed that the teaching of the cinema can be a powerful civilizing force in itself (Kitses & Kaplan, 1974: 5)

Knowledge of the mediated and constructed nature of the television message, and of the ways in which pictures are used selectively, ought to be part of the common stock of every person's knowledge in a world where communication at all levels is both increasingly visual and industrialised (Masterman, 1980/1992: 50).

Documentaries allow you to question things in the world because documentaries do that. They question things but at the same time, I want them [the students] to question the documentary and how it's been constructed and that sort of thing (T3).

Documentary is in a strange position here: a documentary text can be a cinematic feature release (in which case, popular views of English are likely to concede that it *may* be art), or a TV production (of which, Critical Literacy seems to be automatically wary). Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the text type has been so ignored in theoretical debate. These views also echo a key idea identified in the Discussion, that theoretical shifts in Literary/Cultural Theory are incorporated into subject English through a process by which the persistent practice simply draws on them as ready-to-hand means of generating the ethical problematisation. Therefore, each of these changes in media pedagogy has flavoured the contemporary documentary lesson. What I am concerned with at the moment is how the subject conveniently “forgets” the historical construction of its own discourse, with each new theoretical iteration announcing its improved ability to civilise students. For example, the 2006 *Course of Study* was viewed by (some) teachers as heralding a new era of freedom, in which the loosening up of text-choice reflected the curriculum becoming more “in tune” with the students’ interests. Still other teachers criticised the “content-less” syllabus. Even without Hunter’s reminder of Stow’s 1850 invention of the playground as a place where children’s “true character and dispositions are exhibited” (Stow, 1850 cited in Hunter, 1997: 319), or Dixon’s 1960s personalist pedagogy, we have evidence that both of these responsibilities had previously been allocated to the subject. For instance, the 1986 TEE English *Syllabus* encouraged the study of video clips such as Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” (SEA, 1986: 155). Additionally, the 1987 *Syllabus* informs us that English “must be seen as a continuous process of growth from Year 1 to Year 12” (SEA, 1987: 81) which of

course anticipates the Post-Compulsory Review by about a decade. In 1972, Shayer criticised post-Dartmouth pedagogy by referring to “the ‘fallacy’ that English had ‘content’” (Christie, 1993: 98 – 99). Despite this case of “forgetting,” there are some promising instances of theory that push towards a Foucauldian critique of the media and media pedagogy (for example: Buckingham, 1991 and Luke, 1993) however the implications of these theoretical viewpoints inevitably wrap themselves in ethical problematisation:

[T]his implies that as teachers we need to understand more about what our students *already* know before we start trying to teach them what we think they ought to know. Yet it also points to the need for a more open, questioning style of teaching (Buckingham, 1991: 30 – 31).

[A] study of televisual texts and audiences enables a study of how TV structures family social patterns and hierarchies of control, how subjects construct themselves in relation to TV content and schedules, how discourses of the popular become discourses of ourselves (Luke, 1993: 176).

By now, we should of course recognise the familiar themes of “the pastoral relationship” and “the self” in these accounts. Even in 1974, Cary Bazalgette suggested that English teachers tended to ask students for moral-ethical responses to films, rather than teaching *how* these responses have been influenced by the film technique. On the surface, this seems strikingly similar to the neo-Foucauldian call for the explicit instruction of reading/viewing practices, particularly when Bazalgette suggests that

in many classrooms the response that is sought is not necessarily the students’ immediate emotional response, but one that is acceptable to the teacher, and that is based on sets of definitions already offered by the teacher, for example, “What does this film tell us about the war?” (1974/1992: 31)

This critique could certainly apply to much of the documentary pedagogy addressed in the current study, however, Bazalgette closes with the remark that “They [the students] are, in fact, being specifically trained *not* to articulate their own responses”

(31). What we are seeing in the history of media pedagogy is that while clinging to a kind of humanist conception of students as autonomous subjects, the ethical practice is unavoidable.

5.2 Implications for future research

Throughout this analysis of the documentary lesson, it has been necessary to consider a number of concerns in the pedagogy of other visual texts. Therefore, there are implications for future research in these other areas of media text pedagogy (within English); firstly, in order to further substantiate some of my speculations and secondly, to broaden the current debate into these areas. One obvious topic that will benefit from further research is the reluctance of English teachers to use textbooks. In this study, only one participant referred to the use of a textbook when teaching documentaries: it is of scholarly interest to determine if this is a feature of classroom practice in other text areas. My speculations on this as a contingent requirement for the pastoral relationship are necessarily interpretive, however further research may confirm (or negate) this explanation.

The four teacher interviews have not been offered as representative of all English teachers, although the interpretations align closely with my personal observations of teaching practices in three (very) different school contexts, as well as the governmental view of the philosophical tendencies of the popular views of the subject itself. Further interviews may offer supporting evidence, or of course may reveal examples of teachers who do not fit the patterns identified in this study.

The alternative practice that I am about to offer in Section 5.3 is based entirely on the theoretical framework, and research conducted, for this study. It is beyond the scope of the project to investigate how students might react to (and cope with) this alternative practice, however this is an area that deserves to be investigated. From my personal experience teaching a similar program on the topic of feature films (specifically, the historical development of the Hollywood action film), students seem capable of understanding this kind of teaching practice, but their retention of the information suffers. ie: The students performed very well in the analysis of the ideological component of the action film study, however they did not *retain* the

“aesthetic/stylistic” analysis to the same degree. This is unsurprising, given what the current study has revealed about the persistent practice *in general*. Had students been exposed to a more balanced curriculum in the five years of secondary schooling leading up to the action film study, they may have been more experienced in this wider range of viewing practices. Students’ capacity to perform a wider range of practices, of course, is one of the implications of a neo-Foucauldian model of English.

5.3 Recommendation: an alternative documentary pedagogy

This project has examined the ways in which the documentary lesson functions as a particular technology of government within the apparatus of education. By its dependence on an impossible conception of the student as autonomous, self-constructing humanist subject, the persistent practice of English pedagogy attempts to raise itself to a privileged position which it cannot, in fact, occupy. The effect of this practice, in the documentary lesson and elsewhere, is that English cannot serve its three curriculum objectives because it begins to focus exclusively on the ethical. As we have seen, the aesthetic and rhetorical concerns become devices by which students are manoeuvred toward ethical self-problematization. This process results in the ethical practice becoming naturalised for students *and* teachers; severely limiting the study of texts. I now wish to close the study with a brief recommendation for an alternative practice.

I pose this recommendation in a series of three theoretical assertions upon which an alternative practice could be grounded. It is beyond the scope of this project to provide a detailed teaching program (for example: a four week unit on documentary); instead I have included a student task sheet in Appendix I that identifies the key texts and concepts involved in what I am offering as a model, and two further summaries of possible tasks. These are not designed to be delivered “as is” — they should be read as templates or prototypes that can be added to, or modified, in order to become appropriately complex for a particular group of students. For example, it would be

possible to combine parts of the investigation task with a study of feature film in order to develop a kind of intertextual focus between genres. My emphasis here is simply in the *conceptual construction* of the teaching practice, rather than on the specific texts or content to be covered. Doubtlessly, there are substitutes available for almost all of the texts. I aim to highlight what historical-philological practice might look like, in terms of addressing the “balanced curriculum.” This practice would treat ethics, rhetoric and aesthetics as discrete areas in their own right. The key implication of my study is that the pedagogy needs to change, and here I offer a necessarily brief sketch of one way that this might be accomplished. The three principles upon which this practice depends are:

- This practice addresses the *language* of the documentary;
- This practice is not organised around a central theme or issue;
- This practice sees viewing as productive.

In the first principle, I use language to refer primarily to the specific, historically defined attributes of documentary production and reception. This involves factual knowledge of the development of the form, for example an awareness of the Lumières’ *Arrival of a Train* (*Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat, L'*, 1895) and Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922), as well as historical contingencies such as the enabling effect that the miniaturisation of post-World War II location filming equipment had on the emergence of the aesthetic style of *cinéma vérité* genre (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 409; Bruzzi, 2000: 68 – 70; Cunningham, 2005: 211). The point of this is to avoid the ahistorical tendencies of a structuralist (Althusserian) analysis of codes which locates meaning “in” the text itself. Instead of assuming the text has an essential meaning, or “essence” (Bennet, 1983: 7), this alternative practice considers a particular documentary text within a network of other texts and discursive objects. Significantly, this historically-grounded study of documentary aesthetics accomplishes what Hunter terms a “description of texts — of their compositional technologies and historical deployments” (Hunter, 1988a: 289). Such an analysis of *Triumph of the Will*, for example, would look very different to those which rest on the ethical consciousness of the students.

I am conscious that the study of documentaries should not become a kind of “introduction to university film study” or even a miniature version of university film study. At the same time, of course, we should be aware of the decades of research by Noël Carroll and David Bordwell in the academic field of film theory that offer much to our studies in English. For example, Carroll’s criticisms of the limitations of Cultural Studies-influenced Film Studies (Carroll, 1996: 276) add weight to the argument that English ought to consider other options. Perhaps the foremost example of how this first principle might affect the practice is in the way the program begins. Unlike the lessons described by the interview participants, this task does not begin with a comparison of feature films and documentaries. Instead, we begin with a comparison of TV news and feature film documentaries, accepting Rosen’s distinction that TV news is “live,” and therefore somehow closer to reality than a feature documentary which appears to be about the “past” (Rosen, 1993: 59 – 60). Additionally, the semiotic construction of the TV studio versus, for example, Michael Moore’s shabby clothing and hand-held microphone, reveals significant genre distinctions when compared to contemporary network newsrooms,

which are always at some point (usually openings and closings) shown in a long shot that emphasizes the resources the network has committed to the news department — not just in the number of subsidiary personnel supporting the anchor and reporters, but in its technologies of news recording, gathering and transmission (59).

The second principle refuses to organise the study around (or even focus on) a central theme or issue. I recognise that documentary scholar Bill Nichols states that documentaries typically deal with socially debateable issues (Nichols, 2001: 66 – 67), however this does not mean that the only way English should teach these texts is by asking students to engage with the issues or personally reflect upon them. This study has revealed that the dominant practice’s emphasis on issues is one of the characteristic ways in which curriculum delivery is destabilised. The major objective of the alternative pedagogy is to address this; we have also seen that feature film pedagogy stresses the ethical at the expense of aesthetics and rhetoric, so by making changes in the documentary lesson we can begin to influence the pedagogy of other text areas. My choice to assemble the assessment task around the topic of

“documentary and creativity” is deliberate for two reasons: i) it allows the task to encompass some of the documentary texts mentioned during the research for this study, and ii) it culminates in a detailed analysis of one director’s work, allowing for aesthetic interest in the *auteur* theory as it applies to documentary film. Of course, this kind of analysis may be read as privileging “the expression of the individual” and as such this allows the program to investigate the value systems involved in the *auteur* theory itself.

This third principle follows Moon’s (1994) conception of English as transmitting localised skills and understandings, which may call for direct instructional methods. Therefore, this practice teaches students how to produce aesthetic, rhetorical and ethical readings of the documentary texts. The practice is earthed firmly in a productive model of reading which views meaning as something which “is not a *thing* that texts can *have*, but is something that can only be produced” (Bennett, 1983: 8). Reading (or viewing) as a productive practice means that meaning is activated through following certain historically determined rules in which the reader performs a specific meaning-making routine (Bordwell, 1989; Greenfield, 1983: 136 – 140), rather than recovering “origins — of the text, of the author, of an underlying system or of her or his self or consciousness” (Mellor, 1992: 251 – 252). It should be noticed that this means students can be instructed that reading/viewing simply entails that “we have a practical familiarity with some practices of reading [and viewing]” (King, 1984: 126 – 127), and that different interpretations come about because of different historical contexts in which the “content” of the text is activated (Hunter, 1983: 230). This would enable, for instance, the teaching of a resistant reading of Michael Moore — although I have not used his texts for this purpose in this case— provided it is presented as an ethical practice that has certain boundaries and rules of production. At the same time, however, there are options for the production of intertextual readings (aesthetics), and a rhetorical analysis of the artistic/artificial proof offered by a particular documentary (Nichols, 2001: 50 – 56).

I believe that the three sample student tasks in Appendix I follow these three principles and, as such, offer the beginnings of a move towards a more stabilised documentary pedagogy. Taken into account with the overall argument presented in this thesis, the *sample* alternative teaching tasks aim to refocus some of the critical

attention in English theory and practice onto the non-print genre, beginning with documentary text pedagogy.

Chapter summary

This chapter began by clarifying the theoretical position of the project as belonging to neither Culturalist nor Cultural Studies models of English by identifying the inadequacies of these models with respect to the teaching of documentary films. The naturalisation of the ethical practice was then tracked through, firstly, the TEE *Syllabus* documents from 1984 – 1990, and then through developments in media pedagogy theory from the 1960s – 90s. I identified three implications for further research; given the assumptions/interpretations relied upon for this study, as well as the necessarily theoretical proposition for an alternative documentary pedagogy. Finally, the chapter recommended three principles for an alternative practice that focused on the language of documentary texts, distanced itself from “themes and issues” based approaches, and invoked a productive model of reading/viewing practices.

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Appendix I: Sample student tasks for alternative pedagogy


NB These tasks are designed for a Year 12 English 3B *Course of Study* class. The learning context is “language and knowledge,” and students are assumed to be achieving between Levels 5 and 8. Firstly, I provide a sample task sheet for an Investigation, and then a simple list of possible Response tasks; the purpose is to demonstrate how the alternative pedagogy could be applied to the different assessment types. The first task sheet is necessarily more detailed here, for illustrative purposes here, than it would be if actually provided to students.

English 3B Investigation: Documentary & creativity

Student task: Investigate a range of documentary films that exhibit some of the different stylistic choices available to filmmakers. Then write an essay in which you persuasively argue for an historical appreciation of the aesthetic style of one filmmaker.

In this task, we will view a range of documentaries from different historical periods in order to examine some of the stylistic features of the genre. Our focus will be on the way that specific factors can influence the style of particular documentaries, including; artistic intentions, the available technology and the purpose of the text itself. The final assessment will require you to write a persuasive essay in which you argue **for** the appreciation of one director’s style according to historical facts, rather than simply what is known as the *auteur* theory.

Viewing and writing skills will be *learned and assessed* in this task.

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Week 1	<u>Introduction to documentary history:</u> Viewing extracts- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arrival of a Train</i> (Lumière & Lumière, 1895) • <i>Nanook of the North</i> (Flaherty, 1922) • <i>Deep Blue</i> (Attenborough, 2003) <u>Theory</u> – Grierson’s “creative treatment of actuality”	<u>Common documentary styles:</u> Contrast documentary form with TV news/journalism <i>Cinema verite</i> and “documentary truth.” <u>Theory</u> – the influence of location filming equipment on form/style. <u>Compare</u> <i>Gimme Shelter</i> (Maysle & Maysle, 1970) with the films viewed previously.	<u>Common documentary styles continued:</u> Techniques of editing, selection and arrangement: artistic/entertainment choices <i>and</i> persuasive intentions Viewing extract- <i>Pumping Iron</i> (Butler & Fiore, 1977) – entertaining manipulation of editing <i>Roger & Me</i> (Moore, 1989) – persuasive manipulation of editing	 Summarise the rhetorical organisation used by Moore in <i>Roger & Me</i> in order to persuade viewers to produce the meaning that “Roger” is unscrupulous. Add one paragraph to comment on your attitude towards this kind of manipulation, given that the popular view of documentary is that it is objective/true.

<p>Week 2</p>	<p><u>Documentary and society:</u></p> <p>Viewing extracts-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Olympia</i> (Riefenstahl, 1936) • <i>Triumph of the Will</i> (Riefenstahl, 1934). <p><u>Read</u> (and identify the rules used in) sample critiques: ethical¹ and aesthetic²</p>	<p><u>Director study:</u></p> <p>Introduction to Errol Morris</p> <p>Viewing extracts-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fast, Cheap & Out of Control</i> (1997) • <i>Mr Death</i> (1999) • <i>The Thin Blue Line</i> (1988) 	<p><u>Director study continued</u></p> <p>Viewing <i>Mr Death</i>.</p>	<p><u>Weekend homework:</u></p> <p><i>Read</i> an interview with Errol Morris. Summarise his ideas on documentary style, with relevant quotes.</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p><u>Director study continued:</u></p> <p>Closely examine extracts from <i>Fast, Cheap & Out of Control</i>, <i>Mr Death</i> and <i>The Thin Blue Line</i> to determine the specific characteristics of the style. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -editing -set design -cinematography -interview staging 	<p><u>Theory – auteur theory and documentary films</u></p> <p>Read textbook notes on <i>auteur</i> (Moon, 2004: 11 – 14).</p> <p>Using the framework/model provided, write three paragraphs to persuade a reader that <i>Mr Death</i> is the product of a film <i>auteur</i> with a distinctive style.</p>	<p><u>Theory – alternatives to the auteur theory</u></p> <p>Revisit the extracts from the three texts, in light of information about the roles of the production designer, cinematographer and editor.³</p>	<p><u>Essay preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -discussing the question -rhetorical form (selection and arrangement for persuasive effect) -review of relevant terminology <p>Write the essay and hand in by _____ (due date).</p>

The question for the essay comes from the 2003 TEE English exam:

The power of a documentary film lies in its filmic style rather than its content.
Respond to this statement by referring to at least **one documentary film**.

Additional focus questions to assist you in preparing the essay:

- Because of the popular view of documentaries as “objective,” what does this suggest about the likely interpretations by viewers? How would a persuasive style be more (or less) powerful than the documentary’s content?
- Because Errol Morris’ style is so obviously unique, how might this influence the audience’s attention, engagement or response?
- Because the *auteur* theory values the “director as creator,” how might this influence the audience’s response?
- What other factors have influenced the style of *Mr Death*? (Eg: technology, cinematography, viewer expectations of Morris’ film style. Think about how Morris’ trademark of including his interview-voice only once in the film was an *accident* that came about during filming of *The Thin Blue Line* and has since become a stylistic feature.)

¹ **Ethical considerations:** critiques the film based on the twin notions of “versions of reality” and “viewer positioning”; see Quin (2003: 83 – 94).

² **Aesthetic appreciation:** praises Riefenstahl’s artistic use of the documentary form.

³ Students will be taught about the stylistic contributions of Ted Bafaloukos (Production designer), Bob Richardson (Cinematographer) and Karen Schmeer (Editor).

Two further possible tasks

NB These tasks are not intended to be used in conjunction with the previous program. Their purpose is to suggest how the alternative pedagogy might be used for tasks which are *not* dedicated documentary investigations.

Two interpretations of *Triumph of the Will*: aesthetic & resistant.

Students are expected to learn the rules of performing both an aesthetic viewing (ie: appreciating Riefenstahl's use of the documentary form) and resistant viewing (ie: criticising the film as propaganda). It would also be relevant to include attention to the historically-socially constructed aspect of persuasiveness by viewing extracts of Frank Capra's World War II *Why We Fight* propaganda, which "seems remarkably naïve and overblown in its treatment of patriotic virtue and democratic ideals" (Nichols, 2001: 109).

Readings & viewings for the task:

Triumph of the Will (Riefenstahl, 1935).

Why We Fight: The Nazis Strike (Capra, 1943).

"Viewing Practices" (Moon, 2004: 177 – 182).

Fiction film's appropriation of documentary techniques.

Students are expected to learn how the techniques of documentaries can be utilised by fiction films. The focus is on how some techniques can be appropriated as a means of tapping into a code that activates viewers' expectations of "realism." The distinction between "reality" and "realism" is a key component of this task. For example, *The Blair Witch Project* will be examined in terms of its use of handheld shooting techniques, as well as the way its internet marketing promoted it *as* a documentary in order to influence viewer expectations by activating particular genre knowledge.

Viewings for the task:

- *This is Spinal Tap* (Reiner, 1984)
- *JFK* (Stone, 1991)
- *Blair Witch Project* (Myrick & Sánchez, 1999)
- *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993)

Appendix II: Interview questions & clarifications

1. Can you briefly outline which classes you have taught documentary texts to in recent years? (**Probe if necessary:** how recently have you taught documentary texts to Year 12 TEE students?)
2. What are some of your preferred documentaries to teach? Why?
3. Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience in teaching documentary film with secondary students? This might be any year group.
4. Suppose you are about to plan the teaching of a documentary text with Year 12 TEE English students. What would your first steps be?
5. When you are choosing a text for study, how often do you consider the issues presented in the documentary?
6. What do you think are the key aspects that essay questions should ask about documentary texts?
7. Is it possible for teachers to approach documentary texts the same way that they approach a novel? How do you feel about this idea?
8. Do you have any personal criteria of content when choosing documentary texts?
9. What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentary texts? Why do you think these cause problems for students?
10. When you are choosing a text for study, how often do you consider the techniques used by the documentary?
11. In what ways has your teaching of visual texts, including documentary, changed over the years you have taught Year 11 or 12 English?
12. What are some of the aspects of documentary texts that you think students respond to the most?

13. Some teachers like to structure their teaching programs according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how would documentary texts fit into a program like this?
14. How does the documentary text-type fit into your view of English as a discipline?
15. Often, English teachers like to see themselves as being aligned with a particular theoretical approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

Clarification of each interview question

For each question, the purpose is as follows:

1. Can you briefly outline which classes you have taught documentary texts to in recent years? (**Probe if necessary:** how recently have you taught documentary texts to Year 12 TEE students?)

This question is primarily a warm-up to focus the informant on the topic of documentary texts, as well as to emphasise the Year 12 context.

2. What are some of your preferred documentaries to teach? Why?

Although this question further focuses the informant's discussion to particular documentary texts, I am also hoping to gather information that might reveal the informant's theoretical orientation toward texts.

3. Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience in teaching documentary film with secondary students? This might be any year group.

The purpose of this question is to find out what the informant perceives to be a successful teaching experience – their ideas of “success” may (or may not) be similar to the learning outcomes of the *Curriculum Framework*.

4. Suppose you are about to plan the teaching of a documentary text with Year 12 TEE English students. What would your first steps be?

This question aims to reveal the informant's key objectives in teaching the documentary text type. It may provide interesting comparison to questions five and ten.

5. When you are choosing a text for study, how often do you consider the issues presented in the documentary?

In this question I am trying to identify information that may help pinpoint the informant's views towards ethical-problematisation with respect to the kind of issues that the informant considers important (if at all).

6. What do you think are the key aspects that essay questions should ask about documentary texts?

This question serves to draw out the informant's views towards the important aspects of a documentary text, which may or may not reflect the outcomes of the *Curriculum Framework*.

7. Is it possible for teachers to approach documentary texts the same way that they approach a novel? How do you feel about this idea?

Because much visual text pedagogy explicitly argues that these text-types can be taught in similar ways, this question asks informants to state how their position compares to this concept.

8. Do you have any personal criteria of content when choosing documentary texts?

This question is included for internal reliability purposes to compare informants responses to questions two, five and ten.

9. What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentary texts? Why do you think these cause problems for students?

With this question I am trying to get informants to feel comfortable discussing their own beliefs about documentary texts by placing the responsibility on *students*. I am hoping to draw out information about why the teachers believe certain aspects are important and why they think students should understand these.

10. When you are choosing a text for study, how often do you consider the techniques used by the documentary?

This is another “extra question” to compare with questions two and five, however it should also reveal information about the informant’s position on aesthetic cultivation with respect to the documentary text form.

11. In what ways has your teaching of visual texts, including documentary, changed over the years you have taught Year 11 or 12 English?

In this question I am hoping informants will provide concrete examples of teaching practices that they consider successful and unsuccessful, as well as their theoretical positions on the reasons for success/failure. Also, this information will contribute to the internal reliability of interpreting informants’ views on which aspects of documentary texts are important.

12. What are some of the aspects of documentary texts that you think students respond to the most?

This question should allow further comparison of each informant’s beliefs about the relative importance of different aspects of documentary texts, however the question will also allow for informant evaluation of whether or not students are “responding to” the same things that *they* believe are important. For example, an informant may suggest that “unfortunately, students don’t respond to the techniques enough.”

13. Some teachers like to structure their teaching programs according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how would documentary texts fit into a program like this?

This question is seeking two possible kinds of information. The first kind relates to the informant’s views on intertextuality (the ways that individual texts are linked to many other texts). The second kind of information may reveal linking themes that are congruent with ethical training or aesthetic cultivation. For example: a theme such as “racism” may show the informant’s preference for ethical training.

14. How does the documentary text-type fit into your view of English as a discipline?

The primary purpose of this question is to allow informants to describe their view of subject English with a concrete example. This question may also reveal the additional information of whether or not the informant believes the text-type is valid at all, and for what reasons.

15. Often, English teachers like to see themselves as being aligned with a particular theoretical approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

Supplementary to number 14, this question also allows informants to describe their view of subject English, but in more detail. It will also suggest the extent to which the informant identifies themselves with a particular view of English (eg: Culturalist/Cultural Studies). The information from this question will provide interesting comparison to the informant's earlier statements that may (or may not) match up to the theoretical position they believe they occupy.

Appendix III: Information Letter to Participants and Informed Consent Document



(Name of participant)

I am currently studying a Master of Education (Research) degree course at Edith Cowan University. My research involves a historical study of English teaching practices, and some interviews with current, experienced English teachers. This research has the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee. The title of my research project is: *Learning the Documentary Lesson: Theory and Practice in English*.

The interview component of my research aims to describe the attitudes of English teachers towards the teaching of documentary film. Participants have been selected because they are experienced teachers of English and are currently (or have recently been) teaching Year 12 TEE English.

The research project involves a detailed document study and short interviews with four participants. If you decide to be a voluntary participant in this research, you will be asked a series of interview questions (please see attached) about your approach and attitudes towards teaching documentary film in the English classroom. Additionally, I would like you to nominate and share with me a preferred teaching resource for documentary film (for example, a worksheet, set of notes, or other material). I will not collect this resource, but as part of the interview I will ask you to “talk through” the way that you use the resource in the classroom.

The interview will take up to thirty minutes and will be tape recorded and transcribed. Your name will be made anonymous, and you will not be identified in either the interview transcript or the written paper. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time during the research process.

Participants' involvement is only required during the short interview stage and I am the only person who will have access to the confidential material (audio recordings, which will be destroyed following transcription, and the written transcripts themselves). During the research process the data will be locked and stored at the University.

As a participant, this research project offers you the opportunity to professionally reflect on your own teaching practice. I hope you will find it a valuable experience.

Should you have any questions regarding the project feel free to contact myself ([REDACTED]) or the supervisor of the project, Dr Brian Moon (9370 6275). If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Professor Mark W Hackling
Director: Research and Higher Degrees
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
100 Joondalup Drive
Joondalup WA 6027
T +61 8 6304 5170
F +61 8 6304 5850

If you are willing to participate in this project please sign the attached Informed Consent Document and return it to me.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Bender

Student: Master of Education (Research)
Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences
School of Education
Edith Cowan University

41 Bridle Drive
MAIDA VALE 6057
9262 777
0402 880 500



Learning The Documentary Lesson: Theory and practice in English

Student conducting project:

Stuart Bender
[REDACTED]
Faculty of Community Services,
Education and Social Sciences,
School of Education
Edith Cowan University

Tel: [REDACTED]
Or: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

University supervisor:

Dr Brian Moon
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Community Services,
Education and Social Sciences
School of Education
Edith Cowan University
2 Bradford Street
MOUNT LAWLEY 6050

Tel: 9370 6275
Email: B.Moon@ecu.edu.au

By signing this document you are acknowledging that you are willing to become a participant in this research project. This document acknowledges that you have:

- been provided with a copy of the Information Letter, explaining the research study
- read and understood the information provided
- been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- been made aware that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- understood that participation in the research project will involve: an interview of up to 30 minutes that *will be recorded on audio-tape* and transcribed for the purposes of the research study
- understood that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that your identity will not be disclosed
- understood that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project
- understood that you are free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- freely agreed to participate in the project

Signature: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix IV: Interview transcripts and teacher programs

In this section I have included, in the form of an audit trail, particular data sources used for the study that are difficult (or impossible) for a third party to obtain. In the case of the original interviews for the study, I have included the entire transcript, and in the case of the sample teacher programs I have simply included the pages to which I refer. The Curriculum Council *Examiner Reports* are available online at the following URL:

<http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/pages/publication05.htm>

***Interviewee: (T1)**

***Interviewer: Stuart Bender (S)**

S: So firstly, can you briefly outline which classes you've taught documentary text to in recent years?

T1: Well it's part of the Year 12, or it was part of the Year 12 TEE syllabus, because as you know now, we have a new syllabus with the course of study, alright. So really what I'm talking about now is what we did last year and previous to that. So I've taught Year 12s for as long as I can remember. So I've taught documentary text in Year 12 for as long as the syllabus has been ... as long as it's been a public syllabus which has been at least 10 years. And I have occasionally looked at documentary in Year 11 as well as part of the Year 11 ... well it's not actually part of the Year 11 TEE syllabus, but I look at it anyway, you know, when I think it's appropriate to get kids ready for what to expect in Year 12. So I've been teaching it for years, in Year 12.

T1: Okay. Sure. So ...

S: In Year 12 TEE.

T1: So what are some of your preferred documentaries to teach?

S: Alright. It's changed over the years, alright? I did ... I have done, and still do, to some extent, documentaries that are called Nicaragua: No Pasaran, I've done Camira Diary of Strike, okay, they are the two that I used to do early days and I still use them occasionally because they're so good to use. Recently, because you try to do things that are more up to date and that the kids are more familiar with and perhaps more in tune with. I've done things such as Columbine, Fahrenheit 9/11, I've actually done ... okay, I've done one of the Cutting Edge series, it's called Football Hooligans. You know it at all, Stuart, that you remember it at all?

S: I'm not, but I know the series you're talking about.

T1: Okay. So I've done that one as well. And have I mentioned MacLibel? Okay, I've done MacLibel. And so they're about ... they're the common ones that I would normally do. So that's about six or seven for you.

S: Okay, so why would you choose these ones that you've sort of changed more to recently, why would you use those ones?

T1: Simply because the kids are more in tune with them. The kids know them and perhaps they're a bit more motivated to look at them a bit more closely. Also what I try to do is I've tried to have a look at, say, some English and some American documentaries and some Australian documentaries because I find them quite different in style. Like you know, Columbine is very different to say MacLibel. So I'll do both and I'll point out the differences in style to the kids because Columbine's such a fast moving, so it 9/11, so fast moving. What's the other one about the MacDonalds, the guy who does the ...

S: Yeah, Supersize Me.

T1: Supersize Me, I've done Supersize Me as well. So I like to choose documenters from basically different countries because I find their styles are different and expose the kids to different styles. So yeah, I do a lot of range. I tell you what I do now as well. I don't often, I don't always do the whole documentary, I choose bits and pieces. Like with Nicaragua: No Pasaran, I'll do the beginning, the first 10 minutes and the last 10 minutes. And I'll cue it all beforehand so I'm not sitting there for hours in the classroom trying to find it. So I know the exact numbers and I've got them written down. The same goes for Camira Diary of a Strike. I will just show the first 10 or 15 minutes of it to show kids that there are different ways in which documentaries can be constructed and that the styles do vary. So I don't always do the whole thing. Sometimes I do, but not always.

S: Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience in teaching documentary film with secondary students? This can be any Year group, it doesn't have to be Year 12 TEE.

T1: To be honest with you, I find documentary ... I always find documentary ... the kids are in tune with documentaries and they enjoy them, they look forward to it. So usually when I'm teaching documentary in Year 12 TEE, there's never been an occasion I don't think where the kids have complained about it and not been interested. I have found, say with Nicaragua: No Pasaran, there's some music right towards the end. And it's very electronic music and it's a very powerful scene right towards the end. And I have actually, actually last year, I had kids say to me, where can I get hold of that music and I've actually got the music on CD, alright, I've given them the CDs and they've gone and actually made copies of their own. So they've been so taken by it that they actually are looking for extra information off their own backs, usually. So there's not been one occasion where it sort of stood out as being really tremendously successful, but I generally find the kids enjoy it. They enjoy the non-print text really far more than they probably do the print text, I suppose because they're more exposed to non-print than they are to print texts. They're more in tune with it.

S: Sure, okay. Is there perhaps a particular documentary text itself that you use and you can remember it went particularly well or something?

T1: To be honest with you, it depends on the class. They do ... like sometimes I do Nicaragua: No Pasaran, and it wouldn't work with the kids, and they laugh at the music. And other time's they're really taken by it. So really it depends on the class. So in general what I say is that kids enjoy documentary. No text really stands out because the texts that we do are very popular usually. So if we're looking at things like MacLibel, or Columbine or 9/11 and so on, then they're very popular, the kids have often seen them beforehand anyway, which is no problem to me, I think that's an advantage. And so to answer your question I suppose nothing really stands out because the kids are always ... not always, but generally enjoy it and ... but some kids respond ... some classes respond better to some texts than others. And it's hard to predict, which is why sometimes I give the kids a choice. I say to them, look, we can't do them all, which would you prefer to do? And so basically I'll tell them which ones are available and we'll do a show of hands. And so I find that if I give the kids the choice, it gives them a bit more say in what they're doing and acts as a way to motivate the two perhaps just a little more closely. Rather than me telling them constantly what to do, they're being given some choice as to what texts they're doing.

S: Suppose you're about to plan the teaching of a documentary text with a Year 12 TEE English class, what would your first steps be?

T1: Planning to teach it?

S: Yeah.

T1: I'd ask ... well, okay. I'd need to make sure they've got the texts that we discussed previously, the one ... the Quinn text, so they've got that. I will say to them even before we even start, just to make sure that you've read that chapter before we start. I don't give the kids notes, copious notes like I used to simply because I find the chapter in that text, and it's the Quinn text, as good as I can provide them, and since we make the kids buy it, really there's no point in my copying it for them. So all the information they really need as far as documentary and the syllabus is concerned is in that chapter and they need to read it beforehand, and I tell them beforehand to read it. The only other thing I'll do beforehand is I'll say to them, which ones would you like to do. It depends a bit also on what other texts we've done in the course. And there's another question later on that talks about theme, because we often do gender issues and so on. So some of the texts I look at fit in quite well with that sort of theme. So yeah, that's as much as it gets really. The kids also, because we do documentary later in the year, they've already done a feature film where they ... let me just remind you that's what they used to do in the old syllabus because it's changed of course now. But they used to do feature film beforehand anyway, so ... and of course in Year 11 they used to do TV drama. So all that stuff about film language they should all be familiar with, the types of shots, all that stuff on use of the length of the shot, the colour and so on and so forth. They're all familiar with that sort of language which is also relevant for documentary. So they've had a fair bit of preparation before they even get there.

S: When you're choosing a text to study, how often do you consider the issues that are presented in the documentary?

T1: Quite a lot, quite often, because over the last few years we've had a general theme running in our Year 12 TEE and it's a gender theme. It's really to do with men rather than women, alright. The type of text we choose is reasonably important, but it's not the most important thing. But we do try to actually choose texts that will fit in with the other texts that we've been using. For instance, as an exploratory text, we do Biddulph's Manhood. So we look at Manhood and then consequently some of the documentaries we choose down the track hopefully will fit in with some of those gender issues as well. And even Football Hooligans for instance because it's dealing with a very, almost cult like male sect of people who ... of Chelsea supporters, Chelsea Football Club supporters, you can even look at that from a gender perspective and ask the kids why are these guys behaving this way. So yeah, so in looking at a theme, is something which is I think is a good thing to do because it tends to tie the texts in together. And also gender I think is a good one to do because the kids at the age of 16, 17 years old are also dealing with issues of masculinity and femininity and their own gender issues and so they can tap into that and their relationships with their parents, their brothers and their sisters and so on and all the stereotypes of the things that are expected of them in terms of their behaviour. So it's a good thing to tap into because it's part of their experience.

S: So is it something that you consciously think about when you're preparing texts that you're going to choose?

T1: Yeah, yeah it is. But the thing is, we developed this Year 11 and Year 12 course seven years ago, even though it's usually updated each year, and we've got all the texts anyway. So basically we don't think much about it any more now because we've been doing the similar sorts of things really for quite a while. So we have all the sets of books that we require for the kids and give them out. So yeah, so you know, for instance, the short stories, we'll do the Rhinoceros beetle which deals with the gender issues, and As Paused to One to Fly, which deals with the same sort of thing. So we've got all the text and so the texts really present the theme, to some extent.

S: What do you think the key aspects that essay questions should ask about documentary texts?

T1: Okay. The key aspect, when you look at the syllabus, the syllabus looks at documentary in terms of versions of reality. What the kids have got to understand, this is what I explain to them very clearly, right up front, is that documentaries is not fact. It's not fiction either, but it's not the fact, it's not the truth as such. What it is, is a version of the truth, or a version of reality. So that's the key aspect, or that's the philosophical nature of the whole approach that we adopt and I think the syllabus adopts that approach as well. So what we ask them to do is to do ... is to, when they look at the documentary, is to say what is the version of reality that you're getting here, whose version is this, and how does he or she go about doing this. So they're the three things ... that's the focus of the whole, of our whole approach. And so that's the key basically, you know, the kids have got to get out of their mind that just

because it's a documentary, it's somehow the truth. It's not. What it is, it's a version of someone's truth. And that's a very important thing for kids to learn. Actually it's not just documentary of course, it's all texts, almost. And that's the philosophical approach that we adopt. And I think the syllabus approach is that ... it has that approach and I think it's a very good one.

S: Do you think it's possible for teachers to approach documentary text the same way that they approach teaching a novel? How do you feel about that idea?

T1: Well, there are aspects of it that are the same. In a sense that they try to influence you in certain way, texts and they present a particular version of the story, or a particular version of reality. So in that sense you can approach them in the same way. But obviously there are differences. There are generic differences between the ... difference between the texts. So the kids need to also understand what is it that makes a novel a novel, what is it that makes a short story a short story, a feature article, a feature article and so what are the characteristics of those things. And it's something else that we clearly define for the kids as we go along and teach all this stuff. Every time we look at a new text, we discuss what the characteristics of those texts are because yeah, I suppose because the characteristics of the text determine to some extent what you can and can't do. So anyway, so I don't know if that answers your question or not.

S: I'm very interested in also what are the kids doing. So if we're reading a novel, we're doing something while it's in the process of reading it, and if we're watching a documentary while we're watching it, we're doing something. What are you getting the kids to do with the similarity between both of those processes?

T1: Okay, well the similarities would be what are the issues, and what ... and I suppose the similarity would be what's the version here? Who's version is it and who is this person. And I think it gets back to context as well. What is the context of the author, okay, of ... and also perhaps the characters, alright? And what modern context have we got as well? What's your context and how does that influence your interpretation of the actual story itself? So that's the similarities between the approach. So actually, like we ... that's a similarity to it now, but I think no matter what text that you look at, there are always things that you look at in class with kids. So it's context, I suppose, and it's also what's the version you're getting here and whose version is it? So they're the, I suppose, they're the things that we look at which are similar between the different types of texts.

S: Yeah. And at a cognitive level, that's what the kids are thinking about. What about physically? What you're actually doing?

T1: What you're actually doing? Well it depends on the sort of texts you're looking at. If you're looking at documentaries which is what we're talking about right now, what I ... and my approach is ... well the kids often say look, can we see the whole thing first? So some of them I'll say yes, some of them I'll say no because there's no point, 'cause it's too long, it's too time consuming. So with some things like Camira or Nicaragua: No Paseron, I'll just actually show the beginning and the end because I want to make a point. But with others, I'll show the whole thing and then I'll get the kids to make notes, and I'll put this on the board. I'll get the kids to

make notes on basically the fundamentals, the title, the director and things like perhaps who the characters are and also what they think the issues are.

S: This is while it's happening?

T1: While ... yeah, that's what I'm hoping the kids will do. Okay? That's that sort of general note taking, you know. And I'll put that up on the board for them. But then what we'll do is we'll go over a couple of scenes, right, in minute detail. And as we are watching it, we'll decide which scenes to look at, which scenes will be good ones to look at. So often they're obvious. They're pivotal scenes or they're scenes that demonstrate an interesting device or an interesting technique of some sort. And as we're ... as I'm going through it, I'll make sure I've got the numbers so I can cue them very quickly. And then we will spend probably three or four periods doing nothing other than doing a transcript of that exact scene. And a transcript will be information on obviously the dialogue, but also the type of shot that's being used, the length of the shot, the lighting, any juxtaposition of scenes and so on and so forth. So anything that's obvious that we need to point out. And as to how the actual documentary work, or how that scene is actually constructed, how the director is trying to make a particular effect, does that make sense?

S: Ah-hmm.

T1: So that's the approach that I adopt.

S: Sure, okay.

T1: So I give the kids a choice. With the major documentaries, I will choose bits and pieces of them myself to make a point. We'll see the whole thing beforehand usually because the kids get fed up with the thing being interrupted all the time, but then we go back and we look at at least two scenes in detail, and that takes a long time. Because I'm constantly using a pause button and the kids are writing copious notes. Because that also becomes useful I think their exam because I want them to be actually quote, actual dialogue, actual shots as they're trying to make a point.

S: I'm curious, do you have any personal criteria of content when you're choosing documentary texts?

T1: Not really. It's just that I ... this is a personal thing, I like the idea of doing ... looking at men's issues. I think that we've looked at women's issues for a long period of time and maybe it's about time men look at their issues as well. So that's why I have chosen to do Biddulph's *Manhood*, not that I think it's the be all and end all, 'cause I think that the book has problems, but when I look at the short stories and I look at the documentaries, I make a point of looking at the treatment of men. And I think that's a good thing to do because there aren't many male English teachers, I don't think. And maybe it's about time that some of us did that. I'm being careful about what I say here. [laughs]. Yeah, maybe it's about time some of us did that and say look, let's focus on issues that men might face now. And I think the kids respond to it, generally respond to it very well. And sometimes at the end of the year they're fed up and say we're sick of this, but you can't win 'em all. So, you know. So, but I think generally they respond quite well. And it's quite a personal thing. And

sometimes at the end of the year, the boys will open up a bit and they'll talk about the relationships they have with their fathers and with each other and the expectations they have on them. And the girls will comment on it as well. And the girls find it quite interesting also to this ... often they haven't actually looked at the issues that boys or men face, or fathers face. So that's something that I just as a personal thing, I like to do this with my classes. So that's ...

S: Is there a reason why documentary texts, of all, would be relevant for that kind of, I suppose that ... that line of teaching, that line of investigations?

T1: I think sometimes ... not necessarily. I think it's somehow or other it lends itself to it. I mean, depending on the documentary that you choose. I must admit there's another one I use which, I can't quite think of the name of right now, it's ... I think it's another Cutting Edge documentary that I use, and it deals with a men's group in Hobart. And the kids find it quite bizarre, the sorts of things that these blokes get up to. And we talk about it and afterwards they're not quite as alarmed, once we've had a chance to talk about it, they're not quite as alarmed as they first are when they first see it. I wish I could remember the name of it. It's ... I think it's Cutting Edge one again, and it's ... it deals with ... it's a postcode. And each week they used to do a different post code. So this is Hobart whatever the postcode is. And it's just this little group of people living in a fairly isolated community and it's the men who get together in this community and they go through all these sort of rituals and they have meetings and so on, you know. So what was the question again?

S: Just is there, or are there any personal criteria that you use when you're choosing documentary that you're going to go with?

T1: Well, okay. The criteria are that I think it's got to interest me. It's got to interest the kids. It's got to do what the syllabus once is trying to explain. There's probably lots of documentaries that you could choose to use that are okay to use, but they're not as good to use as some others. So I do think the choice is important. The ones, the choice, the actual documentaries you choose to use are important because some demonstrate the things you're trying to teach more clearly than others. And I think you have to tap into the kids' interests. And I think you have to also hopefully do something which you are enthusiastic about as well, because I think that rubs off on the kids too. So they're the criteria.

S: Sure. Okay.

T1: Sorry, one other criteria. It needs to be fairly recent, I think, because ... it used to be, anyway, the old syllabus, because I think the people who mark the TEE get tired of doing the same ones all the time. So I think if you do something that's a little bit new and a little bit different, I think that's also good in terms of the kids answers and the TEE because I think the markers get tired of actually looking at and doing the same texts year in and year out.

S: What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentaries, and why do you think those particular things would cause problems for students?

T1: To be honest with you, I think the kids don't have a lot of trouble with documentary, usually. I think that once you point out what it is you're trying to teach them, they cotton on pretty quickly because they've probably seen a lot of TV that's in a lot of film, they've seen lots of documentaries and they're in tune with it. The find it a lot more trouble in fiction than they do with say with no-print. Suppose the sorts of things that kids might find it difficult with, I mean the only concept would be okay, what is ... what do we mean by a version of reality? Some of the kids who aren't as clever might find that difficult to get their head around, although I don't think it's a particularly concept really. The other thing that we do ask the kids do, also though, is about whether documentaries can be as entertaining as feature film. So there's another aspect that we talk about that's entertainment, and whether something can be both entertaining and informative at the same time. And what's more important. So the kids find it difficult to know what you mean by entertainment, so you have to sort of explain that to them as well. And also the other things that the kids do, I must admit, do find trouble with is the issue of context. Some struggle with it because you can find information on the author, or the directors, sometimes it's hard to find it actually, but if you ... and they can sort of see how that might be important, but they find it difficult to relate their own contexts also, sometimes to the interpretation of a text. I don't know why, but some of them do struggle with it.

S: Okay. Can you tell me a bit more about that? Sort of, what you mean?

T1: Well the problem is that I say to the kids, well, who are you, what are you? Obviously if you're looking at a text and it's to do with gender issues, and you're a 16 year old boy, you're going to look at it differently to what I'm going to look at because I'm over 50 years old. We're going to have a different view of all of this. So what do you think my view might be and how is it different to your view and why are these views different? So that's looking at their personal context. But see the kids don't have a lot of experience. The kids are only 16, so they don't have a lot of experience in ... they often though haven't even questioned who or what am I? So this is forcing them, I suppose, to start looking at questions like that which I suppose is part of the syllabus, is getting them to think about themselves, think about the texts and start asking those sorts of difficult questions. So some of them, I suppose to struggle with that issue of context, and find it difficult to put that in writing in a way that's ... in a mature way. What can they say, I'm 16, I'm a teenager. So they find it difficult to express that aspect of context in a fairly mature way. But they usually get there by the end. If you talk with me, and I start talking about context in Year 11 with the kids, I deliberately talk about context, so I introduce them to at least the term and what the concept is, so that when they get to Year 12, if I teach the same kids again, they've already heard the term and so then they can start thinking immediately about okay, alright, this is a text, how do I see this as differently from, say, somebody else?

S: Can you think of any common things you end up writing as commentary on kids' essays to do with documentaries? Something that stands out at all?

T1: Yes. Apart from all the actual stylistic things and grammatical type, spelling type things, the kids often find it difficult to understand what the difference is between say a version of reality and bias. And they'll often say this particular

documentary is biased. And I tell them they're probably better off not using that term bias at all, not to sue the word, because bias to me implies some sort of deliberate manipulation. And quite often documentaries are not trying to deliberately manipulate you in any way. What they're ... all they're doing is they're trying to show you a particular version of a story. And it doesn't mean they're trying to directly manipulate you, they're just trying ... they're just showing you a version of events. I don't find the word "bias" very helpful when you're talking about documentaries. So I'll often say to the kids, don't use that word. And they often do. And I think it's too easy to simply say something is biased, it's just too easy. What they really need to do is get beyond that and say, well, it might have a bias, what is the bias however, what is the version you're being presented with, whose version is it, that's the context part of it, and then how are you being presented with this version, how are you being presented with that version. So that is something that I have to drum into the kids, you know, that first of all documentaries are not the truth as ... not a definitive truth on something. And secondly, they're not either also deliberately ... they're not all propaganda, they're not all trying to basically manipulate you in some particular subversive manner. So they're the things that I'm trying to get across to the kids. And I often find myself commenting that on kid's work.

S: What about techniques? When you're choosing text for study or when you're choosing a text, how often do you consider the techniques that are actually used by that documentary?

T1: All the time. All the time. It's very important, because when you look at ... what we try to do is to say to the kids, these are devices that are available to documentary makers. These are the range of devices, okay. Let's just see what devices this person has used and also why have they chosen to use those devices? What's the reason? So I suppose what I'm trying to do is to get them to be a little bit more aware of how they are being influence? And also aware of how a particular version is being presented. And I think that's very important because I'm just trying to get them aware of the fact that when they are watching documentaries on TV, or they go to the cinemas and they watch documentaries, that they need to know what is the version they're being presented with, who's version is it, and also how ... 'cause I remember saying previously here, how is this version being presented? Because I think that's very important. So you're talking about the type of shots being uses, the use of music, the use of the juxtaposition of particular shots, the selection of information, the selection of detail. Yeah, because the way in which something is done is ... if they can understand that, they can understand to some extent the way in which ... I'm trying not to use the word "manipulated", but they can understand how they are being influenced. So it's not just what is the person saying, it is also how are they going about doing this? So if they can be aware of how they're going, how documentary makers go about trying to influence you in some way, they can become more aware and more critical viewers. And that's what we're trying to do. So, see quite often, you'll get kids who are 16, or 15, 16, and they watch documentaries and they immediately assume that's the way it is. But that's not always the way it is, and that's the point we're trying to make. And we're not saying that they're being lied to. What we're saying is that's just someone's version of this event. And so how are they presenting you with this version is also important. How are they trying to influence you. So if they know how they're being influence, then they can become

more crucial and more aware viewers of documentary which is what I think is one of the things we're trying to do.

S: In what ways your teaching visual texts, including documentary, might have changed over the years that you've taught Year 11 and 12 English? Did it change a lot?

T1: When I first stated, when it was first introduced in the course, in the syllabus some years ago, probably about ten years ago, maybe longer, actually it's probably longer now, I really didn't know that I was meant to be doing. And so I'd show some documentaries in class and I was simply looking at the issues. It's as simple as that. Because I simply ... it was introduced into the syllabus and we were given practically no guidelines as to what this was all about. And it wasn't until I attended a couple of in-service courses a year or two after the whole thing was introduced, that it started to click with me and I started to understand what it was they were really trying to get at. So it hasn't changed a lot in the last 10 years or so, but it change a lot in the first few years as I got a handle as a teacher on what they were expecting me to do. And actually that's a very interesting point, isn't it, because changes are made to the syllabus on a fairly regular basis and quite often I don't think we're very well prepared for it. And we're not well prepared for what it is they are expecting us to really understand and what it is they're expecting us to teach these kids. So yeah, so it has changed, a lot.

S: So it's changed from just focusing on issues to ...

T1: Well I didn't really even know. I mean, you read the syllabus and ... the syllabus isn't even all that explicit or clear about it. I don't even think it mentions things like versions of reality in the syllabus, I don't think it does. And all that sort of terminology came afterwards. And I remember actually clearly, it was War on Grallier, that we heard of Warren, I attended a sort in-service with Ron Grallier and he started talking about all this stuff and he actually chose Nicaragua: No Pasaron and Camira diaries and he showed us this and he took us through this and then the whole thing started to make sense to me. And then I went away and I think I did a much better job as a teacher after that, in teaching this stuff. Which is interesting, isn't it, because it just goes to show that while the calibre of the kids and their parents and the cohort is important, so is the teacher. We need to know what's going on and keep up to date.

S: What are some of the aspects of documentary text you think students respond to the most?

T1: I think that, you know, obviously the controversial issues, or issues that affect them. So obviously the MacDonald's one and MacLibel and what's the other one that we mentioned?

S: Are you talking about Supersize Me?

T1: Supersize Me, they really respond well to those sorts of documentaries because they're issues that affect them, and we've got a lot of kids working at MacDonald's at [my school]. And they're things that ... they're often ... weren't

even aware of until they've seen these sorts of documentaries. And so they respond to the issues and documentaries that affect them personally, but also they respond to documentaries that are fast moving and American style, if you want to put it that way. And very entertaining. And while I don't mind showing some of that, I also make a point of showing different sorts of documentaries as well. But the kids, they like to be entertained. And they like things that are fast moving because that's what they're used to and they find it sometimes difficult to sit through a different type of documentary like MacLibel, for instance, which is also quite long, which is a quite slow movie. But that's one of the reasons I some ... I hopefully ... at least show parts of MacLibel because I want to show them that there are different sorts of documentaries and that they are still very interesting, but they've got to make perhaps a bit more of an effort.

S: Some teachers like to structure their teaching programmes according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how would a documentary fit in to that kind of programme?

T1: Well as I've said, we've chosen the theme along gender issues and I choose to actually look at male gender issues more than sort of female gender issues. And some of the texts that we've chosen to use, we've bought sets of texts and we choose ... I choose texts anyway, like the short stories and even when I chose other novels, like I've done say, for instance, Cloudstreet, I might look at Cloudstreet from a male gender perspective. At least that's not the whole thing, but at least I'll look at that to some extent. So yeah, I think themes are interesting for the kids to do, try and tie the course together a little bit, and also of course from an intertextual viewpoint, the kids can start making connections later on as well. Mind you, that's not just was intertext idea's about, but at least it's something that they can make links between different texts and the subject matter and the way in which gender issues or issues can be treated differently by different people and in different way. So we do look at a theme, generally. But it's not the be all and end all, but it is something that we do use to tie the course together.

S: And how does documentary fit into that/

T1: Well only in the sense that if you can look at documentaries that have a ... that focus on mends issues for me, right, which I then ... I look at, I choose, then they'll fit in with other texts that we looked at. And it's often very interesting because when you look at, say for instance, some of the things that Biddulph has to say in Manhood, and then you have a look at other documentaries later on, you can well, you might be able to say things like well there you go, I mean, you thought a [unclear] was ridiculous, but nevertheless here are these guys who are acting like this in Football Hooligans, why are they like this? So you can sort of ... you can link documentaries and film to some of the expository texts that the kids have studied earlier in the year, and I think that's quite a valuable thing to do. So yeah, so basically we do use a theme.

S: How does the documentary text type fit into your view of English as a discipline?

T1: Well, I mean, when it was first introduced, I couldn't really see it as being part of the English course, but I've changed my mind now. I think it is an interesting thing to do. It is a form of communication. It is something that the kids are exposed to a lot when they watch the TV. And I don't think it's covered in the way we cover it in any other part of the ... in any other quarters at the school, so I think it is a very useful and an important part of the English course. I've got no trouble with teaching it at all. The kids enjoy it and I think it's a valuable thing to do. And someone should do it and I think English teachers are probably best equipped to do this, to teach documentary because I don't think that others ... other subjects like say history, they might show documentaries, but they don't do them in the same way we do them. I don't think anyway. So we look at documentary from a different angle, if you want to put it that way, and I think that it's a very valuable thing to do because the kids watch them a lot.

S: So what angle would that be?

T1: We don't just look at what the documentary has to say. Like for instance I can imagine that in history they show the kids lots of documentaries on history of say the World War I or World War II or whatever. They might look at the information that they're getting, but we don't look at that so much. What we're looking at is things like ... and I think history actually use this approach as well, to some extent, but what we do is we look at the version of the story and the context and we look at the structure of the documentary itself, how is it constructed and how does it contribute to the way in which the person who's making the documentary is trying to make meaning in some way. So that's the approach that we use and I think it's a very useful thing to do.

S: I'm curious about something you said at the beginning of that, was that in the beginning you didn't really see how it fit, but your mind has changed. I'm curious what prompted the change.

T1: Basically what prompted the change was getting a better understanding of what they were trying to get at when they introduced it. I don't think I was very well prepared. I don't think English teachers were very well prepared when the whole thing was introduced right from the beginning and I feel a little about it actually because I can remember those classes that I had and I was at a bit of a loss as to what to do. But now that I've had a chance over the years to look at lots ... a variety of documentaries very carefully, I can see how it fits in much better now, basically because I've got a better idea of what they wanted from us in the first place. And I think what they wanted from us was quite legitimate. I think it was quite a legitimate thing to do, to look at documentary and look at feature film.

S: Sure. Often English teachers like to see themselves as being in line with a particular theory or approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

T1: I'm not exactly sure of it, okay, because I'm not really ... I suppose ... I have ... I was reading a text recently which talked about a post-structuralist approach and it seemed to align with what we do right now. And I think what that means, I think I could be wrong here, I think what it means is that there are versions of reality and

there are versions of truth, but there's not necessarily such a thing as the truth, and I think that most post modernism I think is perhaps not a word that might ... some people ... a label that some people might attach to it. And I find the whole debate fairly interesting because can see where some people might say there is such a thing as truth and you're kidding yourself if there's not. So I can see where they're coming from and I can also see where the other school of thought's coming from in saying there's no such things as truth, there's only versions of the truth. So there's a tension there, I think, between those two philosophies and I suppose, I don't quite know where I sit with those two issues because I think there are such things as truth, but there's also versions of truth at the same time. Maybe they're both correct, but they sit side by side. So I find that sort of philosophical debate fairly interesting, but I don't get into that with the kids. I think that would just confuse them.

S: How does that kind of debate fit in with, I suppose, your view of English as a subject?

T1: English as a subject to me, I would tend to say there are versions of truth, there are versions of reality, it depends upon the context, the context of the person who's actually producing the text and your context. And I mean I agree with all that sort of stuff, you know. But by the same token I don't ... I think it's too easy to simply say that everything you are shown, is it just a version of the truth? There must be some actual truths out there somewhere. For instance, if you want to get ... if you want to discuss it any more depth, I mean, I think that there's such a thing as right and wrong, like I think it's wrong to kill people or murder people. I think ... I mean it's an extreme example, so there is such a thing as right or wrong. I'm not quite sure whether the English people who support the other theory would say sometimes it's okay to kill people, sometimes it's not. See what I mean? So I'm not quite ... I haven't quite worked that out yet.

S: So how does it, I suppose, relate to what you would actually be doing with kids in English?

T1: I'm careful about what I say. I don't want to give the kids the impression that there's always a version of reality. And sometimes if the kids ... if I've got a small class and they're bright, I'll go the next step and I'll say, well you know, is there such a thing as the truth, as a reality, is there such a thing? And I might short of throw the question open to them and I might put it to you in exactly the way I've said to you right now, I mean there is such a thing as right or wrong. We're talking morality here. And I just think with the bright kids, it might just ... I might expose them to another way of thinking and might get them to question. But I'm careful. I don't want to confuse them either. Because at the end of the day, also, the kids have got to sit an exam, I'm very conscious of that. I'm conscious of what I'm meant to teach them and get through all the course and there's a lot to be done in virtually three terms, in 30 weeks. So I won't ... I don't want to confuse them. And I basically also want to teach them the course, look at all the texts very carefully, look at the concepts and get them to pass that TEE exam as well as they can. So I don't want to confuse them too much. But sometimes if you've got some bright kids who I think could handle it, I might just start talking about some of those other issues about what is truth and what is reality and so on. So ... but it depends on the class.

S: Sure.

T1: Well the kids ... well this is the old syllabus, mind you, because the course of study is ... things have changed, okay. So with the old course of study, with the text, yes, the kids would buy that text. I think it's called Text in Context, but you'd have to check on that, it's a Quinn text. I think you know the one. There's two of them, one for Year 11 and for Year 12. There's a whole chapter in there on documentary and quite frankly I can't get at that. And because we get the kids to buy it, I say, read it. What you need to know as far as documentary and as far as the syllabus is concerned is in that chapter. So read that and become familiar with it. As far as the film language and so on is concerned, I usually often just put it up on the board for them. I start talking about such things as type of shots that are being used and the effect of ... you know, we talk about camera distance, camera angle, camera movement and we talk about lighting and music and sound effects and all the ... I will put it up on the board for them. But by the time they've got to year 12, they're pretty familiar with that by now because they've done it in TV drama in Year 11 and they also have been exposed to it in feature film in Year 12 which we did earlier than documentary. So they're pretty used to all that sort of film language. So yeah, let's go back to the question, what was it?

S: Why is the Quinn book particularly useful?

T1: I think that n has been around for a long time. I think he's very familiar ... in Western Australia. I think he's obviously ... I don't ... he may even have written part of the syllabus, you know, and I just think that what he's ... and I think he's been part of the ETA and so on, and so I think that what is written in that chapter really is what the kids need to know as far as documentary is concerned. So there's no point in my running off lots and lots of notes for them which is going to cost us mega bucks in photocopying, so I just simply say right, you've bought the book, read that chapter, it's in there. And I don't go through it with them, I just expect them to actually read it. And so they have an idea about what documentary is and what the issues are before, hopefully, and the good kids will do this, hopefully we even start talking about documentary. And then what I'll do is I'll have a look at the syllabus and I'll say okay, this is what the syllabus expects you to do, and then I will ... and then the other thing is what I do is I look at the questions and the things they have to answer. So I always do this before I start a new section of the syllabus because it gives them some focus and some direction. The questions that they need to answer are things such as documentaries are versions of reality, discuss. That's one. The other question is that documentaries get closer to the truth than any other type of text, discuss that. So that's where that whole issue of what truth is. And thirdly, the other issue is that ... to do with entertainment, that documentaries can be as entertaining as feature films. Discuss that as well. So they're the three things that we get the kids to focus on in terms of their essays and so if they know what they're expected to look at, then it gives them some focus and direction as to when they're looking at the documentaries and reading their notes and things like that, or reading that chapter in their book.

S: Okay, so you start off the study of documentary with say those few questions?

T1: Yes.

S: Do you give them the cues, and then what happens?

T1: I tell them before we start, read this chapter. Then I look at the syllabus and say this is what the syllabus expects you to do, I read it out to them in class and say this is what you are expected to do, although I must admit, in documentary, the syllabus isn't ... I don't think is all that good. But anyway, nevertheless, I do that. Then I will discuss with them ... I'll say listen to me carefully, this is what this is about, it's about versions of reality and versions of truth and I explain that to them in just five or 10 minutes. And I will tell that when we look at these next documentaries, what they need to do is to look at what is the version, whose version is it, how is the version being presented. Those three things. And then what I'll do is I'll look at the ... I think I mentioned we look at the ... okay, we looked at the chapter of the book they should have read, we looked at the syllabus and I'll discuss with them what I expect them to be able to do, introduce them to the sort of terminology. I might go over very quickly all the things to do with film language, camera angles, lighting, music, sound effects, all that sort of stuff. And then I'll look at the questions. And I'll get them to highlight key words and things like that. And having done that, then we start looking at the documentaries.

S: So does anything else happen with the questions? You sort of ...

T1: Basically the questions, I'll simply say, well okay, with the questions, there's three. This is the way we've constructed it. One will be an at home essay, alright, and one will be in class. So we've given the kids to do ... to do a lot of research and work at home and really look into it very carefully, but we also expect the kids to be able to write an essay in class under pressure in 50 minutes. And what I'll do is I'll give them a choice. I'll say which one do you want to do at home, which one do you want to do in class? And so basically we do it by a show of hands, simple as that. So it is three essays. So basically I ask them which one do you want to do at home out of the three? And they'll have a quick look at it and then they tell me, by democratic vote, which one they want to do at home, and so that's the one that they do at home. With the other two, the in-class ones, I expect them to prepare notes for both of them, alright, not just one. Because what I've done is I've tried to actually ... the questions are structured to cover the whole of the syllabus. So I don't tell them which one they'll be doing in class, I'll say prepare them both. And when they have to come to class and write the essay, I literally flick a coin and say right, one, heads, two, tails, or whatever. So I expect them to prepare both. And also with the in-class ones, they can bring in a page of notes. So the really good kids go to a lot of trouble, a lot of trouble and prepare them very carefully. The kids who don't work very hard, don't prepare them very carefully and often their results are reflected at the end of the year. So that's what I do. That's how I approach it. And then what happens is we look at the documentaries in class, as I say we usually look at ... we look at the whole documentary first, I'll ask them ... I'll give them a focus. I'll say look at what the issues are, and basically perhaps someone asks them what version of the story are you getting here? And then we'll go back over a couple of scenes in a lot more detail, shot by shot, or second by second, basically. And that can take at least two or three periods to do that as well, a whole week. And they take lots of notes, and they, in a sense, do a transcript. And yeah, and they use that in their ... hopefully in their exam.

So that's just the approach. And at the end of the year, once we've done the whole course, then we look at the whole intertextual question. I start trying to link the whole thing together, link all the texts together. So yeah, so that's what we do, it's a big thing to do.

S: Okay, great.

T1: That's how it's done, how I do it, anyway.

End of recording

***Interviewee: (T2)**

***Interviewer: Stuart Bender (S)**

S: So firstly, can you briefly outline which classes you've taught documentary text to in recent years?

T2: Okay, so do you want me to start with Year 10 or do you want to know about Year 11 and 12 specifically?

S: We might as well start with Year 10 if that's a ... sort of a recent one as well.

T2: Yeah, I'm just trying to think. Well, I guess it's part of every class that you teach, like there's a component of documentary in every course that you run. So I've done it with ... from vocational English and they're pretty exciting instructional documentaries, to Year 11 and 12 TE English and Year 10 general English as well.

S: What are some of your preferred documentary to teach and why?

T2: Okay, well Bowling for Columbine is an obvious one because I've taught in schools where the kids need obvious and so that ... I mean that one's a fairly good one in terms of the variety in it and the stuff that ... and it's got so much support stuff. So that's one that's really successful that I've taught but ah, I just have to think. Oh, there's the ones Kirk and Courtney and things, which are the prescribed ones, and probably the only ones that I've taught are probably ones that were prescribed to the school rather than going outside of that, so the obvious one's Cane Toads, Kangaroos, Kirk and Courtney, Bowling for Columbine.

S: Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience in teaching documentary film with secondary students? This can be any year group. It doesn't have to be 12 TEE.

T2: Well, Bowling for Columbine obviously and probably the best time that I taught that was when it first came out, and it was pretty amazing when it first came out. So it was a good one that you could go hey, look at this and look at what's happening and stuff. But there's so much support with that, like so many articles and things that it's sensational enough to teach to kids that don't understand the nature of construction well. So I mean because I'm telling you about my experience being with mostly lower end kids, it's like it's successful. So it's successful in terms of the fact that it is totally accessible to them.

S: So is this lower end TEE kids or lower end Year 11, 12?

T2: Lower end TEE but low socioeconomic, low ... just not really great kids with cultural capital. Kids that don't know a lot about anything and the reference is to South Park and whatever else is a big hook-in for them, so yeah.

S: Sure.

T2: Yeah.

S: So what was particularly successful about that ...

T2: Okay.

S: ... class may be?

T2: Well, because you could teach them how they were being totally constructed by the ideas that were presented and the fact that kids don't often understand. They think of documentaries as real life, they think of them as factual and so that was an easy one to show them how they were being constructed as audience to view the ideas in a certain way.

S: Okay, and they basically got it?

T2: Yeah, totally got it, yeah.

S: Great.

T2: Yeah.

S: Suppose you're about to plan teaching a documentary text with your 12 TE English students, what would your first steps be?

T2: Well, definitely just background information about documentaries if they didn't know about that, but talking about documentaries as narratives and talking about the fact that they are constructed to present a certain view, they're always biased, they're always from one particular stand-point and they're not always factual, like it is a version of reality, not the total of reality. So getting across that point and getting them to look at it in terms of their construction and their narrative really so that they ... they stop thinking about the fact that they're looking at the real facts but they're looking at constructed facts.

S: Okay.

T2: Okay.

S: So that first step is to introduce the concept?

T2: Yeah.

S: And then what about more sort of I guess the planning stage? So this is you're getting what worksheets ready, you're getting ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... things ready ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... and then what happens?

T2: Ah, so I'm not sure what you're asking me but I'll have a go.

S: Well, it's ...

T2: So you mean just the routine, the sequence of how to ...

S: Yeah, the routine of planning, okay I'm going to walk in and do ...

T2: Okay.

S: ... whatever this documentary ...

T2: Okay.

S: ... is. You probably ...

T2: Okay, so certainly I would give them the background to documentaries, background notes, teaching notes, whatever to documentaries that get them to look at what they're looking for and what to expect, and mostly I don't assume that they have the knowledge or the skills to do that. So you'd work with something fairly simple as an example to start with. Get them to do retrieval charts to see how they're being positioned, who's been ... what information's been privileged and whose point of view it's from and those sorts of things before you would look at the one that you're critically trying to view.

S: Now when you're choosing a text for studying, how often do you consider the issues that are presented in the documentary?

T2: Always, I think I probably ... it ... I think that that's what I would base it on really and mostly, the ones that will resonate with the kids probably, ones ... because if we're teaching them to be critical viewers, it's got to interest them and it's got to have some sort of link to them so that they can understand it from their context.

S: What do you think of the key aspects that essay questions should ask about a documentary text?

T2: Construction of reality, versions of reality, who's privileged by them. I think they've just got to look at why they're watching it, who they're intended for, who they exclude, who's marginalised, those sort of things because I think kids tend to

view them as fact and the reality rather than a version of events or a single perspective reality.

S: Is it possible for teachers to approach documentary text the same way that they might approach a novel? How do you feel about that idea?

T2: Yeah, I think it is because we talk about the construction of a novel, the components of a novel, it's the same thing. Documentaries are constructed. You go through the construction of them, the target audience, the context, the purpose, the ... yeah, issues, themes. I don't know.

S: So the con ... the overall concept ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... can be ...

T2: Applied to documentaries as they are to novels.

S: Okay.

T2: Yeah.

S: Do you have any personal criteria of content when you're choosing a documentary text?

T2: I think we're restricted by what we can show to kids. I think it's really easy to impose your own values on kids and I think you've got to be really careful about the things that you choose to not be imposing your personal values on kids, and I think it's easy to do if you aren't careful about what you're choosing.

S: Okay. So when you are choosing, do you ... you consider that kind of a thing?

T2: Oh yeah, and I consider the audience I guess. I mean most of them, I want them to get something out of it. I want it to be relatively accessible and obvious. I don't want to be overly explaining in order to totally influence. So it's something that they need to be able to draw information out of fairly readily rather than me imposing knowledge on them.

S: What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentary text and why do you think these might cause problems for students?

T2: Okay, they think that black and white is news reel and history, and they're very swayed by that. So if they ... if there's black and white footage, they see it is absolute version of events and reality. They often think they're boring with the ... like the narrative voiceover is boring. So you're fighting against that for a start and they ... if ... they expect humour in things like it's got to be blood or humour. Like if it's grossly bloody and gory, they'll go yay and they'll watch it or if it's funny but anything in between, they have trouble with.

S: And that's why they would have trouble with it because they're ...

T2: It's ... because each ... probably because they want to be entertained rather than informed. So if they ... the documentaries they prefer are ones that entertain them as well as inform them that are not just information.

S: How often do you consider the techniques that are used by the documentary?

T2: I'm not sure that that's what I would do first of all, go to look at it to look for techniques. I probably would look at it more for content than techniques initially and usually I would use the documentary to support something else that I was doing, or to add to the knowledge but I probably, in the course of watching it, would alert kids to techniques and that's probably more about me than them because I do things in such a hurry that often, I've only seen something quickly myself before I present it to kids. So I'm kind of analysing it and talking it through with them because I would often use it just to support something else.

S: Sure, okay and in what way has your teaching visual text, so including documentaries, changed over the years that you've been teaching?

T2: I think that kids are visually a lot ... they're critically aware visually before they are to read something. So kids have viewed a range of everything and they think they're experts. So I think that more and more we're taking them back to look at why they're looking at something rather than looking at something for information sake or entertainment sake rather. So often, their eyes will glaze over when you say that you're going to show a viewing text because they're I've already seen this or oh, that was boring and so I think more and more we're trying to sell why you look at things and how you look at things rather than just looking at them for entertainment sake.

S: So is that a change that you personally made from say when you began teaching Year 11 and 12?

T2: Yeah probably but also documentaries are readily available. Not documentaries, any film text. They're readily available now. They were expensive and hard to come by before. Now you can have anything from anywhere easily. It's not a big deal and there's so much more availability of videos, DVDs and things in classrooms. It's not ... it's easier to teach viewing texts now and also I mean kids lock into that pretty well, so it's become something you've got to do well in order for them to get something out of it.

S: What are some of the aspects of documentary text that you think students respond to the most?

T2: I think when they feel like they're experts. Like if you can scaffold it enough to get them to look at something critically, I think kids get great satisfaction out of being able to draw extra information out themselves and they feel like experts, and I think that's really satisfying and I think they ... that success leads to other successes.

S: So that's not necessarily specific to documentary? That could be applied to other texts as well?

T2: Oh, it could be but yeah, it could be but I think documentaries are something that you know, it's there to see. They enjoy that and it's something that they all do on mass because they're watching at the same time. It's not like they've gone away and read something and come back, it's something they do on mass, they're there at the same time and they're making the same discoveries at the same time.

S: Now some teachers like to structure their teaching programs according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how would documentary text fit into a program like this?

T2: I love that approach but only if it's working. Like I don't think you can just pull anything in together because it's of the same genre and hope that that will work. It doesn't. It's boring, it's laborious, you just ... you're just dipping into an ocean if you do that but if they specifically relate, like if you do a novel and I've just done Dracula. So doing the novel of Dracula and then looking at different film texts and documentaries and things surrounding that time is really successful in getting them to get a wider picture of what they're reading and then a greater understanding of the issues and things that surround it, but not just for the sake of it. Like you don't go I'm going to do horrors so therefore, we will look at everything horrible, like there's no point to it. As long as it's got a sequence and it's intertextual and you can make references to it, I think it's a good thing.

S: So it ... does that mean you're talking about say studying documentary as a documentary that happens to be related or we're going to look at this documentary because it's supporting what we've already done?

T2: Both.

S: Okay.

T2: Both, because I mean there are some fantastic documentaries that support but there are others that relate to the time that aren't based on fiction. It's supporting the values and things of Victorian times or whatever in that specific example. It gives them an overview of the history of that time and then underpinning to why the gothic genre was explored through those things. So I'm only using that because I've just done it, and that's ... and that's a good example of that but yeah, I think it's great for underpinning information, particularly with kids like this that don't have access to that kind of cultural capital that some other kids do.

S: How does a documentary text type fit into your view of English as a discipline?

T2: Well, I think it's just another ... it's another text. It's a really important ... it's a really important part of English. It's ... you know, it has cross-curricular things too but unless we understand how we're constructed as an audience, we can never view anything critically for anything else. So yeah, I think it's really important.

S: Okay. Often English teachers like to see themselves as being aligned with a particular theoretical approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

T2: Fairly random, I think.

S: Okay.

T2: It just depends, so I don't know. I probably change my views on things all the time. I try not to be stuck in a prescriptive thing where I teach the same thing all the time, try to access new things, new ideas, try to be relevant to what kids are needing to know at that time. So probably in study, I ... there are certain things that I probably prefer but that's not for me to impose, I don't think. You're kind of giving a broader view, so things change and it's not about so much as being right up to the minute. You might discover something that you didn't know about that was made in the '50s or whatever. It's just ... I think you need to be open to new ideas, open to learning and open to exploring what's better teaching practice.

S: Now what I'm interested in is if you can describe a particularly favourite resource you like to use when you're specifically doing documentary study with the kids and I'll probably ask you a few questions about you know, why you like to use that kind of thing, what does it look like in a classroom ...

T2: Yeah.

S: This is really more I guess the practical ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... stage.

T2: Okay, like when I was doing Bowling for Columbine with some fairly difficult kids, there's lots and lots of material to support that. So there's all those gory things that came out in the magazines at the time, the pictures of the horrified kids and then there's people that have written books afterwards. Like there's a couple of really good books that construct people who were accused as heroes and talk about the kids that did it and stuff, and so all of that is really well supported with the Bowling for Columbine and Michael Moore's megalomaniac style that involves everyone and it's also interesting to see how it's dated fairly quickly and how ... it would be interesting to see how he would change it and how our whole industry's been produced around that. So as a social experiment, it's probably fairly good to look at as well.

S: Okay, so you've got the documentary, you've got some newspaper articles, some magazine feature articles and some books that are non-fiction?

T2: Yeah, expository. The ink's written by people who were accused at the time as being accessories and then they're come out to defend themselves publicly through books probably.

S: Okay, and so how do you use these? What do you actually with these in a classroom?

T2: Oh, what do I do with them? Well, we used Bowling for Columbine and the book and I can tell you later what it's called but it's just gone out of my mind what it's called, and it's written by the two boys, one of their friends that they sent away on the morning. He saw them in the car park, he was friends with them and they told him to leave before anything started. So he was implicated as being an accessory and whether he was or wasn't doesn't really matter. It's just interesting to read his text and the way that that's constructed to present himself as a hero and everything else, and make money out of it or whatever. And then to use the actual footage and the ... you know, the ... because by this time, a lot of kids hadn't watched it too. It's a bit out of their range of what they would choose at the video store. So you can view it critically from afar now with younger kids who don't really know a lot about that, and I'm trying to think. I'm not sure what else to tell you about that.

S: So you're ...

T2: What the outcome ...

S: ... reading extracts from the books and they're taking notes or you're ...

T2: Yeah.

S: What kinds of things are the kids doing?

T2: Well, the kids were critically analysing the book and the construction of the character, how he's constructed himself in a re-tell of the events and they're using the movie to support how other people are doing that and how everyone has a different perspective but that this whole industry has basically been constructed. It's become a product that's constructed around the ... that one day, that couple of hours on one day.

S: So this is kind of like a, what a five-week thing? This is a ...

T2: Five to eight weeks because it ... yeah, it's fairly ... yeah, probably eight weeks.

S: And it sounds like you're describing assignments that they're ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... talking about, these essay kind of things ...

T2: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

S: Okay, and in preparation for the essay, what sort of things are you getting the kids to do?

T2: Sorry, I'm not sure what you're asking me here. Probably ... are you talking about just teaching points like the sort of ...

S: More sort of when the kids are working ...

T2: Yeah.

S: ... what are they working on?

T2: Oh, what are they working on? Well, they're looking at the ... initially, like comparing the three sets of different text that surround that, so three different expository things. There's newspaper clippings, there's the novel and then there's the film as well, and how it sets up three very different versions of events and the writing style of each, the presentation of each and how it privileges some and excludes others, and just the whole manipulation by the media to get you to accept a certain view.

S: Okay.

End of recording

***Interviewee: (T3)**

***Interviewer: Stuart Bender (S)**

S: Can you briefly outline which classes you've taught documentary text to in recent years?

T3: Year 12 TE English.

S: So how recently have you actually taught documentary texts?

T3: The last three or four years, that's it.

S: What are some of your preferred documentaries to teach?

T3: I've used a documentary, it's an Australian one called Mohammed and Juliet and I've also used The Thin Blue Line and Kirk and Courtney. And the reason that I like using Mohammed and Juliet is because firstly, it's an Australian text and the curriculum council does require you to use a certain percentage of Australian texts. It deals with some pretty good issues like justice in justice truth, things like that and also race and the power of the government, and it's just a really straight-forward sort of documentary where the techniques are really obvious. So it's a good one to start off with, so I quite often start off with that one, just to teach concepts like symbolism and the use of how visual techniques have been used in the documentary, because a lot of students aren't really that familiar with documentaries so it's a good one to start off with before you go onto the more complex and longer documentaries.

S: So why would you like to teach them about The Thin Blue Line? You know, what ... you would may be move onto that one?

T3: Yeah, The Thin Blue Line is a lot more experimental with techniques I suppose. So that's why I always start off with one that's a lot easier just to get them familiar with documentary texts before we move onto the more complex ones. The Thin Blue Line, I probably choose that not only because of the techniques and the structure of the actual documentary but also because it deals with things like government corruption or police corruption, I should say, truth, justice in the American system especially and that does work well because we quite often do that text after we've done Dead Man Walking. So the students are quite familiar with those issues within America already.

S: This is Dead Man Walking, the non-fiction?

T3: The non-fiction expository text, yeah.

S: Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience in teaching documentary film with secondary students? This could be any year but it doesn't have to be Year 12 TEE.

T3: Okay. I would say that an activity that I did in class that worked quite well, the documentary was just small group work where each group had to focus on a particular part of the documentary, like a particular type of technique and how it was being used in the documentary, and they had to share findings with the rest of the class. I mean it sounds pretty simple but it worked effectively because it enabled them to focus on a particular part, become an expert on a particular part of the documentary and by sharing that, it was a way that students in the whole class were able to create like a retrieval chart and listen to what the findings of the other groups were and the knowledge of the other students and the expertise of the other students, and use that information in their own notes and also for their second viewing of the documentary.

S: Okay. So which year group was this?

T3: Year 12 TEE English.

S: Okay, and what was the documentary?

T3: I think the documentary for that one would've been The Thin Blue Line. I can't remember specifically but I think it was because I felt that they needed to do an activity like that for that particular documentary because it was quite a complex one. There was a lot of techniques being used in the documentary and I felt that the best way for them to be able to take in those techniques was to do the small group activity where they were focusing on one main one each while viewing it and then sharing those findings.

S: So this was particularly successful because you'd done say the same documentary before with a different year group or a different class and you hadn't done that method ...

T3: Absolutely.

S: ... and it hadn't worked as well?

T3: Yeah, it hadn't worked. I realised that the documentary was too difficult for them from the year before, that it was just too complex and I actually thought about not teaching that documentary at all, but I thought no, I'll give it another go because it's such a great documentary and there's a lot that it has to offer in terms of its structure and that sort of thing, and I thought well maybe, it would work if I did the small group activity so that way, they only had to focus on one technique and then use other people in the class to help them to get used to and get them to know about the other techniques.

S: Okay. Why was that successful that way? How did that ... how do you feel like you knew it was more successful?

T3: I suppose it was because through their note making, I was able to see that they had more notes. Especially in the second viewing, they were ... they sort of looked more confident while they were viewing as if they knew what they were now looking for because they had heard it from other students, and also in terms of the actual written essays, the way that they wrote about the documentary was they were a lot more confident than the year group before.

S: So suppose you were about to plan to teach a particular documentary text with Year 12 English students, what would your first steps be?

T3: Okay, I suppose I would firstly select a documentary appropriate for the actual class. If I had a really weak TE class, then I might decide well, I'm just not going to do *The Thin Blue Line*. It's just not going to work even with small group activity. One that relates to the interest perhaps if I know the class quite well, something that I know will engage that particular type of class. So yeah, I'll firstly select the documentary that I think ... and I'll plan it ahead of time as well.

S: Would this be something that's happening early in the year or later on in the year if it was up to you, not a school decision? If it was up to you?

T3: Well, in the programs that I've been using, documentaries have always been in the ... around towards the end of the year and that's fine with me. So I would start thinking about what documentary quite early in the year based on getting to know how they approach the other texts that we've been reading or viewing. And also I would revise techniques, different filming techniques because obviously, we would have already studied feature film earlier in the year and yes, some of the techniques are similar but some of them are different in documentaries. So we would discuss similarities and differences between documentary text and other media texts, just so they get an idea of the genre and they're a little bit more confident with the genre before we actually start viewing that sort of thing. So we might do something like I suppose a then diagram looking at the differences and similarities between documentary and feature film.

S: Now what about issues? When you're choosing a text to study, how often do you consider the issues that are presented in the documentary?

T3: I quite often do. I don't think it's absolutely necessary but I do because I think the issues that a documentary text deals with can make the difference between whether the class engages with the text or not. So I think it's the issues but also not only the issues but the text deals with like how the documentary text deals with those issues and presents those issues. In TE English, it's really, really important, I think it's probably one of the most important things that students engage with the text and they reactions and things like that to the text. They need to be able to have that sort of response so that they can engage with not only the text but then later on, the question in relation to that text. So that's why I probably see issues as being quite important because it's all about how the students will engage with the issues and the actual text itself.

S: What do you actually mean by engage? So you mean ...

T3: I suppose reaction ...

S: ... how they respond to that ...

T3: ... they just have reactions to it so they might be angry about something that's said in the documentary or they might ... you know, and you see it when they're watching documentary, you see the reaction just going ooh, err and they're like they're just really angry or they're concerned about something or they just ... usually because the personalities within the documentary, they're values and attitudes oppose or challenge their own, and that's what TE is all about. It's about them responding to the values and attitudes and the beliefs of other people. So if you can get a good documentary that does that, then they're going to engage with it for those purposes, I think.

S: Do you have particular kinds of issues that you'd like to focus on when you're choosing?

T3: Justice and truth, how the government ... I've looked at things like government power and how the government can conceal the truth, and how a lot of injustice occurs because of that. I find that students react quite well to those sorts of things, so yeah, looking at those sorts of things. Like they all have different beliefs in terms of political issues that are occurring, especially in Australia at the moment. So yeah, I usually use stuff like that.

S: What do you think are the key aspects that essay questions should ask about documentary texts?

T3: I think that it's good to focus on the way techniques are working to establish a particular viewpoint and possibly even how the viewer has responded to that viewpoint. So looking at how ideologies I suppose in documentary are working, the ideologies of different cultures or different groups of people and how the ... how those ideologies challenge or confirm the ideologies or the beliefs or the values and attitudes of the audience members.

S: Okay. Can you may be give me like a specific example of ...

T3: Of an essay question?

S: Not so much an essay question but say the ideologies that you're talking about, just sort of to clarify ...

T3: Okay.

S: ... what you mean by that.

T3: I don't know how well I'm going to explain this but basically in Mohammed and Juliet, it looks a lot at government corruption and how they're hiding the truth and that sort of thing, and then there's ... you've got the small time lawyers, they're not big time lawyers, they're just small time lawyers that have taken on this particular case and they're fighting for truth, they're fighting for the government to reveal information and the government's basically saying we don't have the documents you want. We don't have the information you're looking for. We don't have any proof or evidence that any of this happened. There's a lot of denial. There's a lot of like people in the government who are quite high up in the government saying things like I didn't know that any of this was happening. So they're basically you know, it's quite obvious that they're concealing the truth and lying and that sort of thing. So I'm looking at the ideologies of the lawyer, the group of lawyers and also the documentary maker herself and how she is basically fighting ... they are fighting for the truth, they're fighting for some sense of justice. And it's all in relation to an immigrant who died while in custody in Port Hedland in a detention centre, and the government's basically trying to hide documents and things like that, and ... about violence that was occurring and that sort of thing. So basically, it's looking at the ideologies of the documentary maker and the people that are trying to find some sense of truth in justice, their ideologies as opposed to the government and their focus being trying to protect the integrity of the government and trying to protect themselves and that sort of thing.

S: Okay. So you mentioned there, you mentioned issues, truth, power, corruption which you mentioned before and the ideologies that are sort of competing around those particular issues. So with that mind, kids are armed with that, you would want essay questions to focus on what so that they could talk about those things?

T3: Yeah, yeah.

S: What would you like the essay question to focus on? Not necessarily what they are ...

T3: Okay.

S: ... but what would you like to see?

T3: I suppose the essay questions would be something along the lines of discuss how a text has been constructed to filter a particular viewpoint or display ... or how a text has challenged your beliefs or something along those lines.

S: Okay. So describe how a text has challenged your belief, why would that allow kids to talk about those issues and ideologies you were talking about just a moment ago?

T3: Oh well, because that's something that we would've focused on in class, so they would obviously or hopefully use those focus points that we've done in our note making to then say well okay, I've looked at this in my notes, I've looked at these issues. How can I use these issues in my responses? Choose the issues and my understanding of how these issues were constructed within the text to answer this particular type of question.

S: Is it possible for teachers to approach documentary texts the same way that they approach a novel? How do you feel about this idea?

T3: Okay. I think that you might use similar teaching strategies. So for example, you might use groups, more group work when you're teaching novel and teaching documentary but I think that different text types should be approached independently but at the same time, even though I think that they should be approached independently because all different genres have used different techniques and that sort of thing. So a novel is very different to a documentary because there's different techniques being used obviously. I think that it can be very effective at the same time to compare and contrast different text types, looking at how they're similar or different in terms of how they're constructed, why are they different, what is the impact of them being different, that sort of stuff.

S: Is that sort of based on perhaps similar topics or just it doesn't matter?

T3: No. I would look at it, I wouldn't compare contrasts in relation to issues. I would look at more to do with how those issues are constructed or presented, so what techniques are used. So for example, if you're looking at a novel which is obviously it's a print text as opposed to a non-print, you look at how an argument is constructed in the novel ... or sorry, I should say in the expository text *Dead Man Walking*. So you'll be looking at expository texts, you'd look at the techniques they used, slightly use of secondary text, statistics, use of imagery through descriptive writing like through adjectives, adverbs that sort of thing. So you'd look at those techniques and how the writer is using those techniques to construct a particular viewpoint or presents it, and values and attitudes as opposed to a documentary maker who's using a lot of visual symbolism, juxtaposition, the use of voice over, that sort of thing. So language might come into it a little bit as well because obviously the voice over person's going to be using language but basically, that's what you'd discuss. You'd go how are they similar, how are they different?

S: So in terms of if you were ... if you're teaching a novel, you're getting kids to do certain activities and if you're teaching a documentary while the documentary's going again, you'd do certain activities. Are those activities in any way similar or are they completely different?

T3: I suppose they are similar because I quite often just have some form of note making strategy sheets, some sort of sheet where they're retrieving information and

organising that in a certain way, so it's similar in that way. And I suppose it's similar in terms of the way that they're actually working because when they're watching documentary, they have this sheet in front of them and they're processing that information, putting that information into the retrieval chart whereas I suppose when they're writing notes on a novel, it's very similar because they have the novel in front of them and they're doing the same thing. And then of course, you've got the group work that you can do in relation to those notes and that sort of thing. So I suppose it is very similar, yeah.

S: And what kind of information would they be looking for though?

T3: The information would be very different though because the note making sheets would not be similar in any way. The information on the documentary they'd be looking for would be focused on techniques, so they might have a chart in front of them that's a brainstorm of different techniques, like symbolic codes, audio codes, technique codes etcetera and they need to find examples of those particular types of techniques and how those techniques have been used to construct meanings and that sort of thing. The only similarity that a novel retrieval chart might have is that it would may be look at different techniques and how those techniques are being used. So it wouldn't look at technical codes obviously. It would look at things like imagery, symbolism, adverbs, adjectives so the use of diction, the use of sentence structure so there's different techniques that are focused on. So they're different in terms of the type of techniques but they're similar at the same time because they are both focusing on techniques and how those techniques are being used.

S: Okay, and that's sort of during the reading of the novel or the viewing of the film ...

T3: Mm.

S: ... afterwards so there'll be activities that will come after you've actually experienced the text. Is there any similarity with what would go on there?

T3: Yeah, there is because again, we focus on similar things like ideologies, arguments, values, attitudes, those sorts of things. So the content is very similar as well, how you're positioned, what's your response, how do you think other people in your class or in your society might respond to these based on their cultural beliefs and that sort of thing. So yeah, it is all very similar but it's just focusing on different techniques and how those texts are different in terms of their techniques and how they're doing those things.

S: Okay. Do you have any personal criteria of content when choosing documentary texts?

T3: Yeah. This is probably similar to something that I've mentioned before is I like to look at texts that deal with issues in a way that I think students are going to engage with the text, yeah.

S: So is that a personal thing or ...

T3: I think so, probably and also like I feel that I have to have engaged with it as well. I think that if a teacher really enjoys, is quite passionate about a particular text, that can make the difference between the text being taught well or not. If you can quite often ... and I've found this ... I have actually found this that if you're passionate about a text that the way that you talk about it and discuss it with the class, they take that on. So for example, when I was talking about Mohammed and Juliet and the issues with justice and injustice and government corruption, I was saying it in a very sort of emotional way, talking about it, saying these are the issues. What do you think about this? I can't believe this has happened, blah, blah, blah. They were all focused, they were all listening because I was talking about it in a passionate sort of way. Similar thing with Kirk and Courtney whereas I was looking at the whole idea of truth and freedom of speech, and the idea that Courtney Love was hiding a lot of information about Kirk's death and then she goes ... and at the end of the documentary, she is a guest speaker at a Freedom of Speech in the press conference, so the irony there was like really, really obvious. So I was just like because the end of this text, the first viewing that we had in class, it was actually the first time I'd actually seen it as well and I sort of reacted quite emotionally to it going oh my God, I can't believe it and I sort of paused it and I said what's going on here? Can you believe this is happening? Why is this so bizarre? And the kids, because I was reacting to it, they were reacting to it and discussing it and that sort of thing. So I think that if the teacher reacts well to it and is passionate about the text and the issues within it, then that can overlay onto the kids.

S: And by passionate, you mean that in a fairly wide sense?

T3: Yeah, like you have some sort of a response to it. You're angry about it or you just want to talk about it in some sort of way and give your opinion or whatever.

S: And so when you mean it, is that the documentary, the issues, the people in it?

T3: The issues and the people in it, and the values and attitudes that they present and that sort of thing. Yeah, all of it, everything.

S: Okay. What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentary texts and why do you think these cause problems for students?

T3: Okay, for some reason they don't always remember to talk about techniques. Even though you spend so much time talking about it in class, you give them sheets that focus on retrieving information on techniques and how they have been used. When it comes to essay writing and especially in exams, and I suppose it's because they're in pressured situations, they will write about the documentary, they will write about the issues, they'll write about all those sorts of things, the values, attitudes and that sort of stuff but they won't talk about techniques. They won't have any actual evidence in relation to techniques within that response. That ... they're sort of being ... over the years, they've been getting over that because you're just really into them and you say I do not want you to write an essay without techniques. You need to show me evidence, talk about how the text is constructing those ideas or those responses from you or whatever, so that's been a problem. Also in terms of

identifying the specific values and attitudes of personalities, they find that difficult. I think that the reason they have that problem is probably because they're vocabulary isn't that good. So they can probably ... they probably know what the values and attitudes of the personalities are but they can't label it. They can't say well, he's honourable or loyal or whatever, because they just don't have the vocabulary to be able to express that. That's what I've noticed a little bit over the years. So quite often, I will find that I have to be quite explicit with it themselves and try and help them with that, and say you know what are his attitudes, how can we label? Yes, he's like this but how can we label that? How can we write that and express that in an essay? And generally, I think that they have a lack of confidence in discussing documentary text as opposed to feature film because they're just not used to watching documentaries. It's something that they wouldn't sit down and watch or go to the cinema to watch. They like the sort of escapism type stuff, like Bond and feature films and that sort of thing.

S: What about techniques? When you're choosing texts for study, how often do you consider the techniques used by the documentary? So this is when choosing.

T3: Yeah, quite often. I mean when I ... the reason I chose Mohammed and Juliet was because the techniques in terms of the visual techniques were quite obvious for students and it was a short documentary compared to others. It was only about ... I think it must've gone for maybe half an hour, 45 minutes maybe and the techniques in terms of the editing and the way the techniques were being used were really, really obvious. There was a lot of juxtaposition so for example, there was a scene where they're talking about this immigrant that's been put into this detention centre and he didn't do anything wrong and he was there was quite a length of time. They had this repetition of these scenes where there's ... it's a shot of the detention centre and you've got the bars and the barbed wire fence, and then you've got ... within that shot, you've got the bird and the bird on the barbed wire fence and quite often the birds go flying off and you've got the clouds in the sky in the background. So there's that whole idea of those ideologies behind there in relation to should this person who hasn't done anything wrong be detained? This person should be free like the bird, that sort of thing. So it's just really obvious sort of stuff like that. So you can sort of teach those concepts, you know why have they chosen this particular shot? Why have they got the bird? Why have they got the bars? Why is it in a detention centre? Why have they got the sky in the background as well as the detention centre in the background? That sort of thing. So really obvious stuff like that so you can look and discuss with the kids how those techniques are being used to present certain values, attitudes and that sort of thing. It's not just representing freedom and that sort of thing. It's actually presenting specific ideologies and those attitudes of the people within the documentary, such as the lawyers and the documentary maker and the government officials and that sort of thing.

S: Okay.

T3: Yeah, so when I'm choosing a documentary text, especially the first one, I always make sure that the techniques are really obvious for the kids so that they can ... so it's basically something that they can look at quite easily. It's quite accessible for them and then depending on the class again, I might then look at something like *The Thin Blue Line* where the structure is very absurd I guess and chaotic and a bit

more difficult and challenging for them to discuss but then I might just look at something like Kirk and Courtney where it's just like okay, let's look at how the choice of interview is being used and what are the implications of those particular types of people being interviewed in relation to the issues and that sort of thing. So yeah, I'll quite often look at techniques. I think it's important because depending on the class, it can actually determine whether they get it or not, and whether they pass in the end. I mean that's what we want so.

S: I'm interested in what ways your teaching of visual text, including documentary, might've changed over the years that you've taught Year 11 or 12 English?

T3: I suppose I've probably become a little bit more passionate about the documentaries that I teach and that's been reflected in my teaching. So for example, because I'm being exposed to these issues myself because I'm teaching the documentary, I'll do a little bit more research or I'll see those issues being presented in other texts that I read or view and through my own knowledge, that is being reflected in the classroom in terms of the way that I talk and discuss and question the students about particular issues and that sort of thing, especially if there's issues such as you know, detainees in detention centres. I mean a documentary that we were looking at is probably about four or five years old but the issues are very current because we quite often in the media hear things about detainees and immigrants and boat people and that sort of thing coming into the country and the way the government's talking about them and the way the public feel about those issues and that sort of thing. So over through time, because of my own knowledge and understandings and opinions and that sort of thing, that's helped me in the classroom, especially in terms of how they engage with the text I think. Yeah, so there's that. I was going to say something else but I can't remember what I was going to say.

S: Okay.

T3: Yeah, sorry.

S: That's okay. But does it seem like the main thing is that you've become more passionate about the particular documentaries?

T3: Yeah, yeah. The issues and also like how they're constructed I suppose, because you over the years when you're teaching the same documentary, you notice small things and so you can discuss those additional things with the kids.

S: Are you talking about the same documentary or just ...

T3: Yeah.

S: ... documentary text as a genre?

T3: The same documentary. So for example, if I'm teaching *The Thin Blue Line* one year, when I go back to watch it the next year, I might notice additional things and go oh, great, I can discuss that. I didn't notice that last time. So for me, it's like a learning process as well and then that is relayed onto them. Although that does

create, I suppose that shows a difficulty or a weakness I suppose in terms of teaching documentary because I have engaged with the text at that level over a number of years but these kids, they only have a number of weeks. So to get them to engage with the text at the same level as me within a few weeks is such a difficult thing. You know, you can even say it's impossible. So I suppose that's why I see it as important, see that as an important thing because if I can engage, if I can share my understandings, my knowledge, my passion about a particular documentary that I've acquired over a number of years and hopefully that can help those students when they're looking at the documentary just in you know, four or five weeks. So that's why I think that's an important thing.

S: Okay. What are some of the aspects of documentary texts in general? What are some of the aspects of documentary text do you think students respond to the most?

T3: It really depends on how you teach it, I think. If you focus on particular things then that's sort of pointing them in a particular direction for them to focus on certain things. So the teacher can make the difference there but I suppose they focus themselves a lot on what they think about the people in the documentary, especially based on their appearances in the documentary and how they talk and what they say. Yeah, they seem to be preoccupied more on the people in the documentary than say visual scenery and things like that, and how that's working and I suppose that's because they interact with one another all the time, every day and they've always got opinions about what other people around them say. So when someone in a documentary who's talking and saying something, they'll react to it. They will respond to it. They're not going to necessarily respond to a scene and go oh, I can't believe that they use that framing in that particular way, you know. They're just not going to respond to that. They will respond to what someone says in a documentary. So yeah, it's usually the values and the attitudes of a particular personality within a documentary. So for example, a government official talking about oh, you know, as far as I know the documents were there and like you know, and they just sort of ... they go oh, look at his body language. It's so obvious he's lying and that sort of thing. So they respond to the people and the way that they're behaving and speaking and that sort of thing. That's probably what they're best at, it's probably what their strengths are, I think.

S: Is that the engagement that you're looking for?

T3: It's probably the start of the engagement that I'm looking for. It's something and I'll use that I suppose to increase their understanding of texts. I'll go okay, you've had a great response to him just there, now let's look at your response to that person. Let's look at the symbolic codes and you know, you've got his body language which is a symbolic code. Look at what he's wearing. Let's look at what's in the background. Okay, so there's an Australian flag in the background. Oh my God, that government is supposed to be representing Australia. His values and attitudes oppose mine. He's challenging my own values and attitudes as an Australian. How can that government official be up there representing Australia when he's lying? You know, that sort of thing. So it's taking it a little bit further.

S: And then how do the kids seem to respond to that?

T3: Yeah, quite good. As long as you've done the initial sort of consultation with the kids where you've looked at techniques and you've revised techniques then as long as they can put it altogether because they've revised techniques and how techniques work and that sort of thing, then it should be okay and also I think it's important if you have some sort of retrieval chart that allows them to connect that information quite well and put it together. I quite often, not just use the retrieval charts but then I'll say okay, I'm going to give you a sort of a bit of a focus question here that's going to ask you to use that information in your chart to write some paragraphs. So they're basically I suppose putting that together, they're taking the next step in terms of they've looked at the documentary, they've got the information in terms of techniques and how those techniques are working. Now let's write about it as practice so that you've got that practice before you write an essay. So they're expressing it in words and that sort of thing, because I think that they need to do that before they go onto write an essay, before they're assessed because it's one thing to have the information in a chart form in notes but putting it into sentences and expressing it is totally a different thing. So yeah, I'll have those steps there for them to do to discuss it and that sort of thing, yeah.

S: Now some teachers like to structure their teaching programs according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how would documentary text fit into a program like that?

T3: I have done that before. I do do that but I don't think that it's necessary in any way. Students often get bored if you're continuing with the same theme or issue all the time, and I have noticed that over the years. You know, why are we always doing justice? We know that people are ... you know, that there's systems out there that are unjust and that sort of thing. They do get bored with that, especially if you do say a feature film, an expository text and a documentary that deals with those issues. They like to see different things and I mean that's why they liked Kirk and Courtney because it was something different. It was looking at the music industry and cover ups in the music industry rather than just with government. In TE English, you do have intertextual questions but the intertextual questions aren't necessarily about you know, similarities and differences with themes and issues and connection things and issues, and that sort of thing. It's about how you've ... your understanding of one technique used in one text has enabled you to make sense of how that technique's been used in another text. So in that way, I think that choosing documentaries based on themes and issues and that sort of thing is just ... it's not really necessary in terms of linking themes and issues with other texts. I think it would be more important to choose may be two documentaries that use similar techniques. So let's look at how this technique's been used in this particular documentary in detail and you take them through it step-by-step in detail, and then get them to use their understanding of how that technique's been used in those documentaries for their note making and understanding in the second one. And then if you want to look at an intertextual type question, you say okay, how has your understanding of what we discussed in the first documentary in terms of techniques and how they're being used, how has that helped you to understand how those techniques have been used in the second one? So I think it's probably better to look at the text in terms of techniques rather than choosing them ... choosing to link them in terms of themes and issues. But at the same time, sometimes it can be effective to link text in terms of themes and issues because if

they have a really good background understanding about a particular issue and theme, say from *Dead Man Walking*, they can then use that knowledge and understanding for their discussion of a similar text, say *The Thin Blue Line* or something where they're looking at government corruption ... not government corruption, police corruption and things like that, so they can use their understanding of the first text for their understanding of the second one. But it's just as important not to overdo it, you know because they're just going to get totally bored and then you might even get a question in the exam that just isn't really appropriate for the particular issues that you've focused on, you never know. So you need to ... the idea is to broaden their reading, not to narrow it down just on a few issues and that sort of thing, so you need to think about a variety.

S: On that idea of broadening their reading, why is that a goal or something?

T3: Well, because especially in Year 12 TE English, this is their last year in school so it's basically, it's not all about the exam. I mean yes, it is because it's all about getting them through the exam but it's also about exposing them to something in their last year at being in school ... at being at school, so that exposes them to stuff that they may never expose themselves to later on. If you can expose them to certain things like even just getting them to watch documentaries, I think is an important thing because they may never have seen documentaries and there are occasionally kids that come up to Year 12 and they just haven't seen any documentaries, and I mean the last couple of years has been fantastic for documentary film makers. There's been some excellent documentaries that have been released in the cinema that these kids wouldn't even think about going to the cinema to watch a documentary, but if you can expose them to some good documentaries and say you know, they're just as entertaining and enlightening as feature film, then they may consider watching a documentary later on, especially if they have something like Foxtel where they do show documentaries on different channels and that sort of thing. But it's also improving their literacy I suppose, their understanding of different media texts and how they work, so it's empowering them in that way but just even exposing them to issues to do with society, issues that they may have never have been confronted with before because they just don't watch the news or they don't read the paper and that sort of thing. So it's basically, I see Year 12 as not only about getting them through that exam to help them to get into the uni course that they want to get into. It's not just about that. I mean that is the priority obviously but it's also about I think it's a last year attempt to expose them to things that they haven't been exposed to, issues, texts because I mean if they can suddenly enjoy a particular text type then they might continue looking at those texts later on, or they might ... the news might be on and there might be a news program on I don't know, detainees in Port Hedland or something and go look, they might suddenly show interest in that. I mean they might not. It could backfire but at least they are exposed to that and yeah, just things like that, just exposing the stuff that they wouldn't necessary be exposed to previously. That's how I see it.

S: How does the documentary text type fit into your view of English as a discipline?

T3: Okay. I see English as being about literacy and understanding the world around you and how texts reflect those worlds. Students, I think, they need to have

the literacy and the capability to question everything around them because they're exposed to text all the time. I mean we know that. They're exposed to media text and even writing, you know advertisements and things like that. They need to have I think the capability, the understanding, the literacy to question everything. To question things like representations, representations of power, ideologies that are underpinning or underlying in particular texts. And they need to be able to question you know, information that's provided to us in the media and the power that's behind that information that's in the media and they need to be able to question it. You know, like why are we seeing this in that particular way? What political agendas are underpinning here? That sort of thing. A lot of students, they assume that there is such thing of freedom of speech for example. They think that ... and freedom of information. They believe that the news is there for the purpose of giving us information, exposing all the news and information that's out there. They don't ... they would never consider ... I mean there may be some students and I could be wrong here but they, in my opinion, would never consider that there's a whole heap of news out there that we never see. It's filtered, it's hidden and there are certain people who have power in society to be able to stop that news from getting to us, and they would never, in my opinion, think about that. They would never consider that. Especially in relation to not just government power, because governments ... I think ultimately students see governments as being the most powerful entity in Australia or in any economy or country. They don't consider that there are other groups of people or entities that have power to filter information in the news and determine whether we are given the information in the news. So for example, they wouldn't consider that corporations have more power than governments. So they wouldn't ever consider that you know, oh there's this really fantastic, amazing news story about how this drug has been used in a particular society and how it's been passed onto all these people through milk or whatever, so all these people have been exposed to this cancer-causing drug but we don't hear about it because of corporate power. So they would never consider that what we're seeing on the television is only part of what's out there. So I think it's important for not only students to be able to have the literacy and the capability to question what we see but also to question what we don't see, and to realise that there are those huge gaps out there in every way, yeah.

S: So how does documentary fit into, if that's the image?

T3: Because quite often, documentaries expose those gaps and expose us to the idea that there can be those gaps in the media and what we see in the information we're given and provided with. For example, a really obvious one is *The Corporation* where they expose the power of corporations over government and that sort of thing. There was also another documentary recently that was on ... I think it was on SBS where it was looking at the idea that they have probably already found a cure to cancer and yet will never ... we will never find out that there's a cure for cancer because the people who have control of that cure are corporations, not the government because the government isn't giving any funding into cancer research. So the corporations are making their money, their billions of dollars through treatment of cancer but they will never make money through the cure of cancer. So this documentary is exposing that idea that okay, this may be the case for cancer but it could also be the case for AIDS. We will never get a cure to AIDS and this is why. So it's sort of exposing these ideas of different power relations in society and how corporations have a lot of power especially over the government because kids, they

assume that governments are the power entities in the world and they're not, and they're victim to that. And I think that documentaries like those documentaries can expose kids to make them question what ... the world basically, everything around them. I mean to expose an idea to a kid, to a Year 12 student, we will never get cure to cancer and we will never get a cure to AIDS. I mean this is what this documentary was saying, and to them, you know students, I mean especially students who know someone who's dying of cancer, that is a huge thing. So it starts to bring up questions, well why will we never get a cure to AIDS or cancer? And it's because simply that information is being filtered by corporations. So documentaries like *The Corporation*, documentaries like that can sort of expose those gaps and power relations in society. Also I think that just the way that the documentaries are constructed themselves enables us to sort of question things like the power, like the power of the documentary maker because of course, documentaries are really a text themselves. So okay, yes this documentary is exposing certain truths or ideas to us but shouldn't we be questioning the way that's presented to us as well, because obviously that film maker has their own political agendas. So it goes two ways. I mean yeah.

S: Often English teachers like to see themselves as being aligned with a particular theoretical approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

T3: I suppose engaging students to think about language, to think about the documentary and just to respond to it, like as I've been discussing. I basically want reactions from them, so reactions like how does this text enlighten you? How does it make you think about things that you perhaps didn't think about before? How is it exposing you to emotions of anger? Is it making you upset? Why is it making you upset? How is it challenging your values and your attitudes? How is it challenging how you thought the world was before? That sort of thing. So making them think about themselves, about the world, their relationship with the world, power relations that exist, the power of corporations, governments, you know all that sort of stuff. Making them just ... just enabling them to be exposed to things that they weren't exposed to before and then questioning those, and discussing those, and giving them the ability to look at how those documentaries are working, and questioning how those documentaries are working, and that sort of thing, yeah. So basically, empowering them I think is what my main role is, empowering them to question everything in the world. Documentaries allow you to question things in the world because documentaries do that. They question things but at the same time, I want them to question the documentary and how it's been constructed and that sort of thing. Yeah, so to me, it's probably my theoretical approach is about empowerment, I suppose.

[Tape pauses]

Okay, to start with go through media codes with them so all the different swap codes so techniques that are used in documentary film and I just discuss how it's used, how different techniques are used in documentaries and things like that, and once they get the ideas in terms of how techniques are used in documentary film and how it's different to how they're used in feature film or television or whatever, or how it's similar, I give them a media codes checklist and basically, we watch the

documentary. This is one that I used for Mohammed and Juliet, the documentary and I just get them to write notes on the symbolic and audio technical codes that are actually used in the documentary. I also add some, so there are some boxes that aren't included on here, so I get them to add like on the back, I get them to write voice over narration and interview questions and answers, and that sort of thing as well, and they just basically do a list of techniques. I also tell them to talk about if they can while they're taking notes to also write some notes on how it's been used, like why that technique's been used, like what's the effect of it?

S: So is this something that they do when they watch the documentary the first time?

T3: Mm, first and second.

S: Okay.

T3: First and second time. So usually after the first ... it depends on the group, how good the group is but usually after the first time they've watched it, they don't have much information down here and I noticed that. So what I do is I discuss what they've come with and/or I get them to write what they've come up with on the board, and I go through what they've come up with and I say this isn't good enough, you need to do this, you need add this, you need to talk about these sorts of things because this is not going to help you to construct any arguments, it's not going to benefit you when you get to the assignment in any way. There's not enough detail here. So I go through what they're lacking, what they've done well and what they're lacking so that in the second viewing, they are writing more detail down in that.

S: What kinds of things would you be expecting them to focus on may be, because you've got about 16 or 20 kind of categories here? Are there any of them that you'd want to focus on?

T3: Yeah, it depends on the documentary because some of the techniques might not be as relevant to a certain documentary as it is to others. So I'll discuss specific examples in the documentary that we were watching and saying these are the things that you need to be looking for. What was the interviewer wearing? What was the interviewee wearing? What was in the background? What sort of setting were they in? Why did they have that setting? How was those objects around them associated with that person? What did they say during that interview? What was their facial expressions and body language and tone of voice like and what does that indicate to us? Those sorts of things. You know, what were the opening themes of and what techniques were used? What was the framing like? What objects and settings do we have in the beginning and what sort of values or ideas are being presented within that setting and through that juxtaposition or whatever technique it happens to be? So I'll talk them through examples based on the specific documentary to give them ideas of what they need to be looking for.

S: Okay.

T3: Okay, and then what they do later on is they transfer that information to this second sheet where basically, we're focusing on different meanings, so it's an

argument, issue, idea or a question that's actually raised in the documentary. So this one for example, it looks at Australian government corruption and the fact that they're hiding information and suppressing information, and that sort of thing.

S: Which this is an issue raised in this specific documentary?

T3: That's an issue in this specific documentary, and then what I do is I tell them to then look at the techniques that they've written down. What techniques have you written down that presents this issue, constructs this issue? So what examples of interviews and dialogue, voice over narration have you got in your notes that indicates or presents to us or constructs this particular issue? So they'll transfer those swap codes there and then they follow it through on the chart. They look at what values and attitudes are presented through those techniques and through that issue. They look at how the viewer's being positioned to respond to the people with the places and the events described based on those techniques and they look at their own personal response based on their own ideologies and that sort of thing.

S: Okay. So hang on, this is ... it's something that they've taken notes on the media codes?

T3: Yes.

S: Then you give them this and say go for it?

T3: I don't really say go for it. I talk them through it very sort of carefully because if I just give it to them, they won't know what to do. I start off just with the first column and again, it depends on the group, okay. If it's a group that I've done this sort of stuff with before, I might just say go for it but it's not usual. I focus on the first one and I'll talk them through it and for example, I've here an example of the technique used to present the issue of human rights. So I'll go through examples of what they need to be writing down in here and I'll get them to focus just on that first column to begin with. And I'll go around and make sure that they get it and they're writing it in and they're filling it in okay, and they know what they're doing and I'll make sure that they've done that column properly before they go onto the next column which they're actually looking at the values and attitudes of the producers of the documentary or the people presented in the documentary through those examples.

S: Okay, and then the next two columns?

T3: And how the viewer's been positioned here. So they're basically following it through based on the techniques being used.

S: Right.

T3: Okay, so they're using their knowledge of the technique in terms of yes, it constructs that idea but it does more than construct that idea. It presents it in values and attitudes, positions viewers and that sort of thing.

S: Okay. Can you go in a bit more detail about the positioning and then also the last column on personal social context?

T3: Okay. Well, the second last column is looking at how viewers are positioned to respond to the people, places and events. Basically looking at do we sympathise for certain people in that particular interview or in that particular scene? Based on the voice over narration, do we sympathise for the person being described and the experiences they've gone through? Do we reject other people so for example, positioned to reject the government bodies in particular parts of the actual documentary? So basically how the techniques are being used to position us to reject or sympathise with certain people, make us think about places in different ways. So for example, this documentary makes us think about Australia differently because we all assume that Australia is a place where the government does not try and hide information, they're not as corrupt as they actually are, and this is sort of opening up that whole idea of government corruption and the fact that human rights have been violated and that sort of thing. So basically, how you're positioned to respond to the events and the experiences described and that sort of thing.

S: Okay.

T3: Okay. The last column is looking at how the text challenges or confirms your own experiences or beliefs and ideas about society and culture, or the way society is or the way the country is and the way things happen. So based on your own experiences, how do you respond to this? So you might be able to relate to it quite well because you may be for example, an immigrant who has had relatives or close friends or even yourself has experienced being actually put into a detention centre, or something like that. So therefore, this would ... obviously, you'd be pretty connected to the issues that are being presented within the actual documentary. It may challenge your ideas, so a lot of these students are isolated from reality. They don't really watch sort of the current affairs and stuff like that, so a documentary like that like to us, yes we know that governments are corrupt and they hide information and lie and all that sort of thing. We know that because we watch the news but these kids don't. So it's looking at how this text perhaps challenges their initial ideas and beliefs about the government is someone that you can trust. Well, no, they're not. That sort of thing. So it's just sort of looking at how it challenges their knowledge and experiences and values and that sort of thing. And also like their preconceived ideas about society and culture and other societies. So this documentary for example, uses a juxtaposition of where the main person Mohammed came from, which was Syria, and it looks at the conditions that he came from and his desperation to escape from the conditions in Syria, and then it juxtaposes that with the conditions of Australia and they're actually shown to be pretty much the same. So that's really quite confronting for students to see that the conditions that Mohammed was living in, in Australia was basically very similar to the conditions that he was living in a first world country. Okay?

S: Okay, so following that then, write an essay or?

T3: Yeah, from this, they've basically got the information all in there, like each of these parts here, so each because the information is obviously divided into different

issues and ideas but that can form like one or two paragraphs right there using that information.

End of recording

***Interviewee: (T4)**

***Interviewer: Stuart Bender (S)**

S: Could you briefly outline which classes have taught documentary text to you in recent years?

T4: Right, okay. Well obviously Year 12 TEE, Year 11 with a two way course, and I've also done documentary with senior English 12 and Vocational English as well.

S: Okay. And how recently is this?

T4: Well this year it was Year 12 TEE and also the Year 11 2A, and I did a documentary with my Vocational 12s last year.

S: What are some of your preferred documentaries to teach, and perhaps why?

T4: Okay. Well, I like to teach Errol Morris, I like his stuff very much, including the Thin Blue Line. I like Nick Broomfield's stuff, Kurt and Courtney. I've worked with a documentary called Mohammed and Juliet by a young documentary film maker, Sophie MacNeill. And I'll probably go into why ... do you want me to go into why now?

S: Yes, that'd be good.

T4: And Startup.com I've used and things like Supersize Me. And probably I'll start with the Sophie MacNeill one. The reason I chose her was because she was a very young documentary film maker. I think she's about 19, I think she's about 18 or 19 when she first made this documentary. And so it's very easy for the kids to see the style of documentary that she uses, the kind of techniques that she uses because it's very text book and it's very ... it's very obvious, I suppose, in terms of ... because obviously being young, being an amateur, I suppose, you can see her interviewing techniques are a little bit unpolished, so she doesn't have that artifice, I suppose is what I'm saying. So for a young class of students, they can sort of access it and also knowing that she's quite similar to their age groups, quite appealing. Kurt and Courtney, I like Broomfield's style, because he has that self-reflexive style, I suppose, where he's on the journey and particularly good with young teenagers because it's got that sort of rawness to it. Although the irony of it is, it is pure artifice. And so I like his. And also his subjects are normally quite interesting. Errol Morris, obviously very quirky, very much you can identify the trade marks of his styles, or style. Startup.com I like because again it's raw, it's spontaneous, it's happening as the action goes on, nobody's designed it, there's no structure, there's no narrative, it's just as the action happens, the person's just rolling a very small camera, or it just happens to be in the room. Supersize Me obviously because of the

content, very topical, something that teenagers would relate to and obviously the character of ... I've forgotten his name now. But anyway, the guy who made it, he's obviously a very interesting man that young people can relate to.

S: Okay, thank you.

T4: And I have used one about women in Pakistan. But I'll probably talk about that a bit later because it relates to why I stopped using it.

S: Are you able to describe a particularly successful experience of teaching documentary text, and this could be any Year group. It doesn't have to be Year 12 TEE.

T4: Oh, okay. I would say probably a couple of years ago I had a very able class who were quite self-motivated, and I felt that it worked very well because they were able to not just access the information of all the documentaries that we looked at, but they were able to do their own viewing of text and bring that into their discussion. And I believe that was very much to do with them as a cohort. They were actually a very strong body of students who were motivated and interested. And to me that was a successful class because in their essays, it wasn't just the documentaries that we had studied in class. They were also, as I said before, viewing other text and bringing that into their discussion. Whereas I found that particularly this year's class, although it was successful in that they could recall a lot of the information we studied in class, I didn't feel it was a successful because they weren't drawing on their own research as much. If that makes sense?

S: Okay. Yes it does. In terms of the successful ones that has helped motivated students, can you recall much about what transpired in class?

T4: There was a lot more discussion, a lot of debate. Again, I used a similar method to, I suppose, what I always do which is where I'm looking at a range of documentaries and we're analysing them because they're from all different styles. I don't think ... I suppose to get back to the beginning of what I'm talking about here is ... like for instance, the students I had this year I found to be very ... they wanted me to spoon feed them all the time and okay, just give us the stuff so we can learn it so we can do the exam. Whereas I found that this other class I considered to be very successful, weren't doing the same kind of learning, and I don't know whether that was before ... because they had their Year 11 English experience was better in that they were more versed in film analysis, documentary analysis, so therefore they were further down the track than the ones ... yeah, I can't really attribute it.

S: Sure. I'm interested in a point you mentioned which is that there was more discussion and debate.

T4: Yes.

S: That's something that you were driving, they were driving? How did that take place.

T4: Well I was driving it. I always drive it. Because I suppose, I'm a reactive teacher in the sense that I will go with what's happening in the classroom. And that's what drives my lessons, very much, and I will respond to their needs and their level of knowledge. And so therefore probably what I found this year was the level of knowledge I found to be quite inadequate, so I was constantly having to fill up those gaps. So I found I was having to do a lot more stand up teacher talk. Whereas with my other class, I didn't have to do that quite so much because their knowledge was already there, and so therefore they had the words, they had the language, the expertise, yeah, to be able to discuss, to be able to go into that kind of discussion. And also to be able to investigate the underlying value systems and ideologies that operate within documentaries. So they could actually take part in that kind of discussion. Whereas I found this year, they couldn't do it to the same extent.

S: So what ... did you recall the documentary that you looked at with that last one?

T4: With that last one, yeah. I managed to do a lot more, obviously. I managed to do the Sophie MacNeill one. I did the Startup.com one, and Errol Morris. I think there might have been another one that I did, but I can't totally recall, but yeah, they seemed to have a lot more ownership over the actual class time than I feel the ones did this time where I seem to be standing up, sort of just blah, blah at them.

S: Suppose you're about to plan the teaching for documentary text with the Year 12 TEE English students. What would your first steps be?

T4: Okay. Well the very first steps would be, in any kind of thing that I teach, is always to ascertain their knowledge of what they already know, to gain an idea of what I need to target and work on. So what I always do in a situation like that is brainstorming, getting them into groups, getting them to talk about, okay, what do you know about documentary, what do you consider are the ... just tell me ... blurt out everything you know about documentary, brainstorming it or discussing with each other and then we put it onto the board. And then I have a sense of where they're coming from. And then what I do with that is with the kids, I generally ... we try to sort of categorise it, put it into categories, so we separate it up into genre, film's language I suppose, issues. Okay, so you're talking about a film has to have ... a documentary, for a documentary to be a documentary it has to be about something meaty like euthanasia, okay, so that'll go under topics, that'll go under issues. Somebody else will talk about music or camera movements, so that will go under style. So we're sort of categorising, so I'm building up that sort of range there. So I suppose what we're doing there is I'm getting to know what they know about documentary, whether ... and very much concentrating on that very first think of film language, let's make sure that we know what film language, let's make sure we can use what terminology we're going to use to discuss the films. And then probably the next lesson, we then start looking at ideology and social structure and the whole idea of what's the difference between a feature film and a documentary? What do you think is the difference? Do you think there's a different purpose? Do you think there's a different audience? Why is the genre different? And that would then enable me to start them thinking an investigation about ideologies, social value systems, that sort of thing.

S: And at what point would you start to think about the actual text you're going to use?

T4: I'd probably ... yeah, third lesson, yeah. Yes, with Year 12, I suppose what I'm doing is finding ... accessing their information and then giving them the language and the vocab to start to talk about it. And then we start to look at them.

S: Okay. Thanks. What about issues? When you're choosing a text to study, how often do you consider the issues that presented in the documentary?

T4: Now that's interesting, because I think when I first started teaching, I was very issues ... I would go for an issue first. So I would choose something that had a very specific issue. Like for instance the one I was talking about was a film made by a woman called Olga Frankie about women in Pakistan and it was all about the social inequities that were obviously being put upon them. And so yes, I was very issues oriented. And then I found that that detracted from ... the kids got very distracted from the actual film style itself, so it became more looking at narrative and characters. It became more like a written text kind of situation. So I changed and found that I chose good film makers, people who had specific style, there was a specific filmic language that we could identify, like ... and then the issues would come out of that. Because there's always issues and things. So then later on, I would say, that I probably wasn't looking so much at the issues.

S: Was it a conscious change?

T4: Yes, quite definitely because I found that students were just talking to me in their essays and in the class discussion in the same way that they would about a book and I felt I need to get them to concentrate more on the film language.

S: Okay. What do you think are the key aspects that essay questions should ask about documentary texts?

T4: I think they should link techniques with a persuasive element of film, the impact that it has on the audience, the emotive effect, the persuasive effect, the way that it's trying to establish its viewpoint or its argument and I think the questions need very much to encourage the students to say how was I persuaded? Not to such an extent where they're actually labelling things like talk about the structure, talk about the special effects, talk about the non-verbal impact. But it should link all those things and obviously in terms of targeting what argument is coming across, what sort of social ideologies are probably being perpetuated within that or through that argument. So the social context as well would need to be a part of the question. So social context, ideology, techniques, impact on the audience, all those things.

S: Is it possible for teachers to approach documentary texts the same way that they approach a novel?

T4: No.

S: How do you feel about that idea?

T4: I feel very strongly that it's not, definitely not, because obviously there are some documentaries ... I mean in terms of narrative, no, you can't, it would just be too limiting.

S: Because?

T4: Because it's a visual and an aural text and it impacts upon you in a non ... what's the word ... for words ... you're not necessarily looking at the language or the words, the spoken words or the written words, you're looking at the impact that it has on you unconsciously, I suppose, in terms of things like music, editing, graphics, all these sort of subliminal aspects of film that obviously you wouldn't talk about in a novel.

S: Do you have any personal criteria of content when choosing documentary texts?

T4: Okay. My criteria is for a clearly identifiable style where there's definite techniques, definite trade mark, and also I would be looking for something where the kids, students can actually research that film maker as well so that that film maker would have a body of work that they can access, that they can actually watch themselves at home, they can actually research and be able to link it up with the watching of the film. Because I've tried one-off films in the past, I've just sort of pulled off the television, and it's a bit limiting. I mean, they can use them as a reference point, as a secondary text, but not as a primary text. So I tend to choose people like Errol Morris because he's got very definite, identifiable style that the kids can talk about, particularly with something like the Thin Blue Line where he's using the interrator and he does the rashomon effect with all the multiple perspectives rolling into one, which obviously is a form of ... it's his form of narrative. There's a lot of repetition. There's some definite trade marks that the kids can identify, there are, I can see that, his use of light when he uses the flashing lights. Broomfield, I chose him because he has got a very definite presence as a narrator within his film. He's very much somebody who's with the film, going on the journey, self-reflexive, talking to the camera. So that they're very specific things that the students can pick out. And I will also look for films that are very different so that they can then contrast and look at the different styles.

S: So that's all kind of, I suppose, criteria for what the kids are going to get out of it. And I'm also interested in just, sort of, your personal reaction or personal response or personal feelings towards a particular text. Does that come in to it when you're choosing a film?

T4: Yes. Yes, I suppose ... yeah, there has to be a certain intellectual element within it. Broomfield, I like him because there's that irony too, there's that twist. And obviously the more intelligent kids can get what he's doing. The less intelligent ones will just take him at face value so there's that ... something that has a clever style to it, something that has a passion to it, I suppose, and a belief. Like for instance the Sophie MacNeill, that was a very passionate documentary. It's something as a subject about refugees that she was totally ... believed in, and that passion came across very strongly in the documentary and it had a very emotive impact on you. So I chose that one for that. And Morris is just very clever, very interesting, quirky, and

the fact that he focuses on the different types of people. He doesn't go for mainstream, he goes for the marginalised groups and comes in at things from a different angle. So I suppose I go for documentaries that are less obvious. Is that what you mean?

S: What do you mean by less obvious, specifically?

T4: I suppose documentaries I think that have different levels and different layers that can be unpacked and that aren't trite and formulaic.

S: Is that because when you're watching something yourself, independent of teaching, is that what you're looking for?

T4: Yes. Yes, I get very frustrated with things that preach at me and that are just ... you know, you can access the meaning and you just feel like you're being manipulated in a very formulaic kind of way. I like things that sort of send you off on a bit of an intellectual quest.

S: What are some of the common things you find students have trouble understanding when you're teaching documentary text?

T4: Okay. Well I think with all films, they have a problem with interpreting film language. I find that they tend to be passive viewers. They tend to look at film as something that's purely for entertainment and probably don't ... they have difficulty switching into that mode of let's analyse this. And so really just getting them to concentrate initially on let's interpret this, let's investigate this, let's analyse this, let's take it apart, let's deconstruct it. There's that initial reluctance, I think, there. Being able to identify an argument I think is often quite difficult for them. They want to take something at face value, where in fact what you're saying, there's actually irony being used here, he's actually subverting society's values here. So obviously irony and satire is something that's quite difficult I think for young students to access. And as I was saying before, trying to identify an underlying argument instead of just going for the very obvious, that's sort of staring them in the face. And so those are the more subtle, rhetorical features. And I think also a lack of understanding of ... possibly a lack of interest possibly, and apathy about what's going on in the world because a lot of documentary film makers are motivated by a deep need to expose some sort of truth, some sort of ... yeah, create an awareness about what's going on in the world. And for some students who are that way inclined themselves, and that's fine, but there are some who are just very apathetic, not really have a great knowledge of what's going on in the world, so may not see a variety of perspectives.

S: Okay. Just taking the point you mentioned about students have difficulty identifying arguments, have you any idea why that might cause problems for students?

T4: In Year 12 TEE, obviously it would be difficult for them to answer the essay questions. So what they could do is they could be identifying the impact, okay, I'm feeling this, this is having this effect upon me, I can see how it's having it. But then

saying, well why, what is this person's argument, why are they making you feel this way?

S: And what do you think might be getting in the way of them actually being able to identify that?

T4: Well as I said before, I think lack of knowledge of the world, lack of understanding of a range of perspectives and arguments. Possibly a lack of ability in debating and looking at alternative perspectives, and a lack of ... yeah, a lack of knowledge I think, seeing those different arguments, being aware of those different arguments.

S: Now when you're choosing a text for study, how often do you consider the techniques when you choose a documentary?

T4: Always, always. That's a very significant part when I choose a documentary. I look for the techniques, I look for the style.

S: So it's one of the first things you look for, or it's just sort of part of a list of things that you go in for?

T4: If they don't have interesting style or techniques, then I won't bother to use it. So it's part of a list, but it's very high up on the list. It's a very strong priority.

S: Why is it ranked that highly?

T4: Because I believe that's a very significant part of documentary film analysis, otherwise you may as well just be looking at a book or a short story. That's what ... you need to look at the skill of documentary film making, that ability to entertain, inform, I suppose inspire, through certain techniques, the subtle techniques of subtly influencing people I suppose through emotional impact which that kind of genre is able to do that maybe a written text couldn't.

S: Sure, okay. I'm sort of curious about what you mean specifically by interesting techniques.

T4: Okay. Well I suppose using music, special effects, editing, the way that certain shots are juxtaposed with other shots, that symbolic level of creation.

S: In what ways is your teaching of visual text, including documentary, changed over the years that you've taught Year 11 or 12 English?

T4: As I said before, I've gone very much from an issue sort of narrative based approach to a more visual, stylistic way where I'm looking at the documentary as a specific genre in itself.

S: Okay. And that's ... this can also include sort of visual text, it can include feature film, maybe advertising, that sort of thing. Has there been a shift overall?

T4: Yes, I would definitely say so. Looking at text, at face value, I suppose, looking at it symbolically, looking at it subliminally, looking at it ... at semiotics, as the sign systems really, rather than trying to find a narrative within it.

S: What's prompted those changes?

T4: I suppose feedback from the students. Also, yeah, I mean I wasn't brought up in a visual age, so also my own knowledge, my own reading of texts, visual texts, my own interest, my own exposure to different documentary film makers, films, professional development things I've read, things I've gone to, new courses of study where viewing is a very specific, separate strand.

S: Has there been any sort of change in, I suppose, actual classroom practice? So what you're doing when you're in the room with the kids and you've got the TV there and you're doing a non-print text, has there been a change in what you're doing at all?

T4: I suppose I spend more time looking at individual ... getting the kids to look at individual frames and looking at the relationship between the frames. You know, let's have a listen to this music, let's have a look at that particular camera angle, this particular shot, this particular special effect. So I suppose it's become more fine tuned, it's become more detailed, more texturally detailed than it was before when maybe I looked at it more as a narrative. I probably looked at it more as a structural piece, like a whole piece, let's look at the beginning, the ending, the climax, the conflicts, the goodies, the baddies, the issues, yeah, looking more at it as a piece of film, the film language.

S: Now what are some of the aspects of documentary text that you think the students respond to the most?

T4: Music, action, fast pace, clear sense of good and bad, sort of the villain, the hero, subjects that are clearly characterised, subjects from their own world. So that's why Broomfield I think is very, very persuasive because they see people like Courtney Love and Kurt Cobain and they're obviously of their genre, that era, they can relate to them. These people are often quite shocking, quite unusual, quite extreme. And again, they just love the music, the fast pace, the kind of hand held jerk of the camera, the sense of going on a journey, all of that, those sorts of techniques I think. I think, I mean looking back on it, the Thin Blue Line, I don't know whether I will use it again because ... I mean, I have to cut some of it out when I show it to them because it's very slow and it's very atmospheric. And I think some of them get a bit bored with that.

S: And that gets in the way of their analysis and study of it?

T4: It does a little, because there are some points where the interviews get ... go very ... go on quite long and you often ... they can't work out why that person has been selected to talk and a relationship between that person and the action and also because he uses so much silence and the lack of narrative intrusion, he's not interpreting for them and he's not directing them or guiding them through the film ... and they often forget ... I mean I find I do that, I need to give it to them a bit, and

you sort of think well that is sort of taking away from the truth of that style. But yes, I suppose the more popular kind of documentaries, the Morgan Spurlock *Supersize Me*, where it's all ... it's lots of graphics, very fast editing, juxtaposition, music, shocking, things like him vomiting and it's just very ... all of that sort of stuff they seem to love.

S: Now, some teachers like to structure their teacher programmes according to a theme that links different texts. What are your opinions about this approach and how a documentary text fits into a programme like that?

T4: Right, okay. I think when I first started out, I was very much into the thematic, but I'm not any more. I don't intentionally choose texts for, as I said, for their thematic purpose or their structure, or their issues or anything. I actually find that once we actually start to look into the documentary, that you'll find common themes, you'll find common issues because obviously when they go in to the exam, it helps them if they've got common themes and common issues that they can link. Once you've actually ... when you're in the study of the text, you will find that there are certain themes that you can link up with other texts. So I wouldn't say theme first, text later. I would say, yeah, we could then think okay, what does this have in common with the film we've just studied? What does this have in common with the book? Because that helps them with their revision and also when they go into the non-print part of the exam, they're frequently asked to compare a feature film to a documentary, so it would help if there's some connection.

S: Now how does the documentary text type fit into your view of English as a discipline?

T4: I think it's essential. I think it's really good. Okay. I suppose that comes back to that sort of old argument of is English about exposing truths in society? And I think documentary is very much about that, it's very much individuals wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards. And it's often a very passionate kind of text form that people go in to because something stimulated them, that they want to express maybe the ... if you like, provide a voice for people who can't speak for themselves which obviously Sophie MacNeill was doing with the refugees, and Olga ... I can't remember her name now, was doing with the women in Pakistan. And to an extent, Morris was doing with that whole idea of truth and justice. So I think it's a really, really essential part of the English curriculum, a very essential part of the viewing section of the English curriculum.

S: Often English teachers like to see themselves as being aligned with a particular theoretical approach to literature and language. Are you able to describe what your theoretical approach might be?

T4: Yes, I suppose. I mean, I came from a very traditional background in England where literature was everything and you were told what to think about literature. And I remember going to ... because I repeated, went back to evening classes because I left school very young. And I remember going along to this working men's college in London and this professor, this guy, was just ... he'd worked at Cambridge

University and he was carrying on about Shakespeare and I sort of put my hand up and said, does that mean that there's nothing new that we can say about literature? And he just looked at me and laughed. And I suppose at that point I sort of felt very frustrated by that very traditional approach of well this is what Elliot was saying, this is what Shakespeare was saying, this is what Austen was saying, and you just regurgitate that and write that down in your essays. But then I went to Murdoch Uni which is very, very political and we learned all the theories, Marxist theory, structuralist theories, psychoanalytical theory, all of them, and we were just applying all these theories to these books and I found that very limiting as well. Very frustrated with it to an extent. I enjoyed the game playing. It was great fun to sort of ply these theories and play these games, particularly the psychoanalytical one, getting right into Jung's theories and applying them to books and Freud and all that sort of stuff. So I suppose what has come out of it for me, from both of those things, has made me ... my theoretical approach is I've taking something from both and I look at the texts as very important in that it's the use of language within a text and it's how a write uses language and the skill of a write to use language. And so in order for you to appreciate that, or a student to appreciate that, they have to have an understanding of how language functions, the structure of language, words, vocabulary, clever syntax, clever sentence structure, just what constitutes beautiful prose, and prose that can sort of transcend and can inspire and can take you places. You know, prose that people are still quoting, that people will quote Orwell, they'll quote Shakespeare, they'll quote Austen, Swift, people like that, the great masters, the canon I suppose. Although I hate the elitist side of it, I can see why these people are quoted because they are beautiful writers, they have the most fantastic facility with prose which is something that we're losing. And then when you compare that with what's happening today with a lot of formulaic writers who are basically being plot driven and aren't particularly skilful prose writers, I feel it's important for an English teacher to teach students the ability to identify and appreciate and see what good prose is. But at the same time, I think it's also good to see power relations in texts where you can identify oppression, you can identify social disempowerment, all that sort of stuff. But I tend to think that Year 12 students are a bit young for that because I know when I was at university, I mean I was a mature age student having fun with all these theories, but I really don't think I would have been able to do it as a 17 year old. So I have to say that my theoretical approach to literature is I don't like teaching them Marxist theory, feminist theory, psychoanalytical theory, post colonial theory. So I won't teach it to them as a theory, but I will talk about it in terms of value systems and I tend to come in from a historical perspective where I would ... my ideal would be to link it with history and look at different historical times and maybe the social values that are coming through there and the impression of certain people, but not be looking at it as a theory as such. Does that make sense?

S: It does, yeah.

T4: So I believe in teaching literature, and I think it's absolutely essential that students are exposed to literature of a range, and I think you need to have the old masters with the new. And I think literature can also encompass things like the new text types, you know, there's a lot of new novels now that are made up of things like the emails, letters, sort of interpolated sort of texts. Because they have very strong relationship, but I think they have to be taught the range, there has to be a range I think. But I think good writing, I think still has to be able to create images in a

reader's head, it has to be able to transcend, it has to be able to take you somewhere. I'm sort of going off the track there a bit.

S: No, you're drawing a broad picture of what your approach is. Are you able to just nut down and say look, this is it, this is a theoretical approach that I align myself with, or what you're sort of saying earlier was that you've taken bits from this and bits from this.

T4: Yes. Well I suppose I tend to think ... I'm always moving on, I suppose. I always see myself as a teacher that ... I never teach anything the same, really. I try to bring freshness to it. I suppose that's my big motto. And I always try to learn something. I always think well if I'm learning, then they're learning. So I'm always open to things. But at the same time, I suppose my theoretical approach would be I'm a traditionalist in that I will work with students using things like grammar and syntax and I think that's very important. I think it's very important to teach them the fundamentals like vocabulary, correct terminology, but not ... but to also be able to investigate the social context within text and the social ideologies that are operating within texts. But I do think that in today's Year 12 course, I think it's very hard for students of 17 years of age to grasp an awful lot of what they're being asked to grasp, particularly in Lit. I think it's far too difficult for them to understand some of the political nuances that are coming through in some of these theories, because I mean I found them hard when I was at university. And so what ends up happening if you're not careful I think is you end up thinking oh well, I've got to get these kids through an exam at the end of the year, so I'm just going to give it to them because there's no other way that they're going to be able to get all of this information because it presupposes an incredible amount of knowledge that they don't have.

S: Wouldn't mind just being able to have a chat about what you actually do.

T4: Right. Okay, well I tend to ... as I said before, I'm very ... I tend to work out what the individual class is like, because each class is completely different. So I'll spend quite a lot of time in my first couple of lessons with them trying to draw out of them what they know, what their information is, and work from there and then diagnose and then design my programme according to them as an individual class, which obviously is a much harder thing because it means I'm having to think on my feet there a lot more. But I tend to do a lot of chart making, but get them to do it. So we'll put up the headings on the board and then I'll just give them A3 paper and pens and say right, okay, use those headings, and draw up your chart. So they might decide to do lines like this, and across and then do their note-making accordingly when they're watching the film.

S: Okay. So let's go with that. The documentary is playing?

T4: Yes.

S: And the kids have got A3 paper and you've said, here's the headings, you figure out how you're going to do notes.

T4: Well, basically ... I'll do one up on the board, so we'll have film language, written codes, this one ... symbolic, written, audio, technical. And I'll have drawn a

line around ... down this side and of course they're taking notes here and then they're making their interpretations on that side. So what they're doing is they're taking notes on what they can see in terms of what clothing people are wearing, the colours, the setting, the objects, the body language, the performance, looking at the written codes, looking at what kind of audio codes there are, and then what they're noticing in terms of the technical codes. And then I'll stop them at intervals, we'll discuss it. I'll say okay, can somebody give me some example of the symbolic, we'll discuss it and we'll say okay, what was your interpretation of that, what would you understand, is there a stereotype attached to that, what is this saying about him, what interpretation can we have? He's wearing ... he's got tats, he's got leathers, you know, so we would assume ... the connotations of that would be that maybe he's belongs to a sub-culture of bikie or something like that. So negative connotations are attached to this character who is all in black, that sort of thing.

S: Okay. So you're pausing the documentary and doing these kind of discussions?

T4: Well what you would do is we'd watch it all the way through first, as an entirety thing. And then go back to ... I'd select specific scenes, maybe at the beginning, maybe at the end, maybe at certain points. Or I might even say to them what scenes did you consider to be the most significant? Which ones shall we go back to? And then we go back to them. And quite frequently, depending on the level of knowledge they have, if they seem to be very ... their knowledge doesn't seem to be so good, I'll do an example. I'll take a particular scene and I'll go through an analysis of it with them, a detailed analysis in terms of symbolic written audio technical as a model to show them what they need to do, and then get them to choose another scene and then they'll take the notes and work through it and talk about it in a group of, say, four and then come back to the class and we'll talk about it and then we'll board it with the details. I might do it or I might get somebody up there to do it. And then the interpretation. And then take that interpretation to look at why is he doing this? Why does he want to ... why has he characterised these people in this particular way and those people in this particular way? Are there any kind of connotations attached to the fact that this person is viewed in an office with books behind them and that person is viewed out in the open with lots of leaves and grass and trees and that sort of thing. And that'll form part of the discussion.

S: So these are questions that you are asking the kids? And how do these questions come about?

T4: I'm asking them, as a response to what they're telling me, they're identifying what they're seeing. And then I'm saying, well, why do you think that is? What does that mean? And then getting them to answer back.

S: Okay. So that happens, that's maybe a period of a week or so.

T4: Yes.

S: What happens after that?

T4: I generally get them to do some research for homework on that particular film maker, have some notes on that. I'll get them to do some ... while that's happening, I'll get them to do some independent research so that they're researching the documentary film maker, they're also hopefully looking at other documentaries at home. And then we come back. We generally have, by that stage, we've generally got an oral that we have to do with 12 TEE, so I'll be getting them to work towards the oral presentation which might be something like take a particular scene from the documentary and analyse it, or ... talk about how that particular documentary film relates to certain issues. And so I'll be helping them work, they'll be working on their own or working in groups on that and I'll be going up and working with them individually. And then by the time that's finished ... so I mean obviously what's happening is that I'll have done that with that one film, and then they've gone to the oral with that one film, and then after that we'll be looking at a couple of others in that kind of detail.

End of recording.

Carine Senior High School English Course 2B

Programme Term Two - Three

Time/Weeks	Key Concept	Delivery ideas	Assessments	Due
2B Term 2 9-11 continued Term 3 1-2	Representations Discern and discuss the themes (the ideas and views of human experience) in the texts they read and understand the influence of audience on language and genre. Novel Short Stories Autobiography	Study the ways in which narrative structures, characters, and understanding of audience contribute to reader response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the use of narrative point of view in positioning the reader in relation to the characters and events depicted, and the effects of context on interpretation. Narrative and generic conventions Select written genre appropriate for a variety of tasks 	1. Oral Production (S & L) Tutorial on representations in two or more texts. * 2. Written Production (R, W) In class response on development of a common theme in two or more texts writing in appropriate genre.	Week 2 Term 3
3-6	Viewer Positioning Develop awareness of key strategies effective in positioning viewer and critical thinking regarding values and attitudes of film in comparison to audience. Film Documentary	Study the ways in which filmic codes work to encourage acceptance or rejection of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social values of the film/documentary compared to those of the viewer Preferred and dominant readings In addition to which closely examine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre, film language including technical codes. 	* 3. Response (V) In class essay discussing key strategies effective in positioning you to respond to one or more issues in at least one text. (comment on values)	Week 5
7-10	Audience Read and view a range of advertisements (print and non-print). Develop students' abilities to discern messages, images and values with reference to the target audiences. Advertising TV Drama Current Affairs	Study the choice of language in texts in relation to target audience values. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the use of symbolism, connotation and emotive language (including scientific language used for emotive purposes). Critically question the way advertisements create and reflect stereotypes, values and attitudes, representations Investigate historical advertisements 	* 4. Response (W, V) Write an invited and resistant reading of an advertisement and explain which you prefer. 5. Oral Production (S & L) Speech for specific audience on the role of non-print texts in modern society.	Week 8

CSHS, (2006). *Carine Senior High School English Course 2B*. (pp. 1).

De Grauw, J. (2006a). *Things are not what they seem?* (p. 38 – 39).

HO 6: FILM STUDY – Part 2



Unit 3A Language and Subjectivity: THINGS ARE NOT JUST WHAT THEY SEEM

- **COMPLETE Qu. 1-3 for the film/s you have studied. Either use the generic questions or the specific questions, as directed by your teacher.**
- **THEN answer the remaining film questions, 4-7.**

ACTIVITY: Generic Film Questions

1. What terms are used to describe the characters and their differing situations? How are they represented?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented as those of each of the different groups in the movie. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes?
3. How has the film's producer represented the different subjective viewpoints?

ACTIVITY: *Hotel Rwanda*

1. What terms do the Hutus use for the Tutsis? Why? From what you have learned about Sociology, what is happening here? Why?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented as those of each of the different racial groups in the movie – the Hutus, Tutsis, the Belgian hotel owners, the Belgian army unit, the UN. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes? (You might like to compare and contrast this with the Australian intervention in the Solomon Islands in 2006.)
3. How is the hotel manager used by the film's producer to represent all these different subjective viewpoints?

ACTIVITY: *Spitfire Grill*

1. What terms are used to describe a former jail inmate? How is she represented by some in the town? (Who? Why?) There is another outsider in the town. Who? How is he viewed by various characters? Why? What language is used in this case?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented by the husband and nephew of the other two women represented. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes?
3. Despite the death of the main character, three outsiders (the original and the new owner of *The Spitfire Grill* and the original owner's son) are **included** at the end. How is this inclusion represented?

ACTIVITY: *In Good Company*

1. What terms are used to describe an older and a younger man in this work situation? How is each represented by the other? What language is used in each case?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented by the four main characters represented in the film. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes?
3. How does the film make use of film language to comment does the film make about age-groups, attitudes and values? (What comment?)

ACTIVITY: *A Waltz through the Hills*

1. What terms are used to describe the children as well as old Tom and their differing situations? How are the children and the old man represented?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented by the main characters or groups of characters (the children, the hotel keepers, Tom, the Nyoongahs, the police, the politicians) represented in the film. What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between groups, language and attitudes?
3. How does the film make use of film language to comment these characters and/or groups' attitudes and values? (What comment?)

ACTIVITY: *Witness*

1. How do the Amish treat outsiders? Why? From what you have learned about Sociology, what is happening here? Why?
2. Examine the values and attitudes represented as those of each of the different groups in the movie – the Amish, the townspeople, the police, John – as a representative of the outside world. What conclusions can you draw?
3. How are John, the young widow and the boy used by the film's producer to represent *all* these different subjective viewpoints?

ACTIVITY: *Educating Rita*

1. Rita wants a change. She recognises that education is the way to move from one social group to another. What expectations does her husband have of her? How does he express these? How does Frank view her at first? How are these attitudes expressed in language (and/or action)? What conclusions can you draw?
2. Rita values language. How? Why?
3. Rita does change. What does Frank think of the change? What does she think? How has language been important in this process?

General Film Questions (Answer with reference to one or more films)

4. Keeping in mind what you have just learned about film technique, describe how one film represents subjective viewpoints. What do you see? What don't you see? Why?
5. How are identities expressed, constructed, represented and critiqued through film language? (**NB** This is an in-depth question.)
6. Examine the relationships between people's sense of identity and the way in which they themselves use language, view themselves, other people and the world in which they live.
7. Interpret, analyse and critique the relationship between, on the one hand, particular choice of text and use of language (film as well as verbal) and, on the other hand, conceptions of identity.



Unit 2A Language and Action: CHANGING THE WORLD

Unit Rationale: This unit was actually planned before the London bombing. However, this major event highlights the need to think about positive and constructive ways of dealing with perceived major problems. Hope brings change for the better. Despair gives rise to destruction and fear.

Unit Core: Students are to negotiate and select a major international issue and how it affects people. The unit will address how people have brought change in the past, or could now bring change in the present, together with the impact of that change on all parties involved. The choice of topics could include:

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Solutions</i>
Poverty Trade injustice	Sir Bob Geldof - Live 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People power to demand justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political powerlessness • Occupation by another nation • Political control by another race or group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guerrilla warfare – Mandela and the ANC • People power – mass gatherings Poland, Philippines, etc. • Civil disobedience (Gandhi) • Passive resistance (Martin Luther King) • Terrorism
Globalisation	Protest cf <i>McLibel</i> Exposure <i>Supersize me</i>
Slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Empire • USA • Asia today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law change in the UK – William Wilberforce • Civil War (USA 0 Abraham Lincoln)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Global warming • Hole in the Ozone layer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific research • Governmental negotiation
Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching alternative supply
Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling • Limiting harmful emissions

Research into the chosen issue needs to address:

- Situation
- Action
- Outcome

NSHS. (2007). *Unit 3A Language & Identity 2007*. (p. 4)

Student Task Sheet: Unit 3A

ORAL PRODUCTION

Overview

Part B

Analyse one scene from a Viewing text studied in class and present that analysis in a tutorial for the class.

OUTCOMES TO BE ASSESSED:

Outcome 1: Listening and Speaking

ESSENTIAL CONTENT - Unit 3A

Conventions

Contextual understandings

Processes and strategies

LEARNING CONTEXT

Personal

Cultural

How long will you need?

Four weeks

Due date:

Term 1, Week 8

Process:

3. Discuss the protocols associated with tutorials
4. Students will select a key scene from the documentary and prepare an analysis of that scene.
5. Analysis should focus on:
 - Ideology
 - Identification of visual language codes and conventions (SWAT)
 - Discussion of the effect of the use of the above. Consider:
 - nuances of meaning
 - use of connotation and/or symbolism
 - positioning of audience
 - representation of social groups
 - values and beliefs
 - The importance of this scene to the development of the documentary's thesis.
6. Prepare a handout for the class. Organise own notes - plan tutorial sequence.
7. Conduct a recorded tutorial.

What needs to be in your folio for assessment?

	Comprehensive notes on the documentary
	Prepared tutorial materials: handout for class and notes used

STUDENTS MUST KEEP THIS RECEIPT AS PROOF OF SUBMISSION

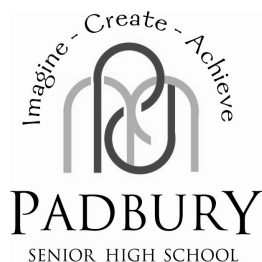
Task: **Oral Production**

Student:

Date:

Teacher: Lavan Wright

Received by:



Padbury Senior High School
English
Scheme of Assessment
SEMESTER ONE 2007



Teacher: Mrs W Cody

- ♦ A tick (✓) indicates where evidence of outcomes can be demonstrated
- ♦ An asterisk (*) indicates possibility of additional supporting evidence
- ♦ Final dates for submission are subject to change, with advance notice and by negotiation.

TASKS	FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION	ENGLISH 3A Language and Identity Identity of race, ethnicity and nationality	Outcomes			
			1	2	3	4
			Listening & Speaking	Viewing	Reading	Writing
RESPONSE TASK (a) (Comprehension and interpretation)	One piece approximately every 2 weeks.	Portfolio of written responses to representations of race, ethnicity or nationality in literary print texts and non-print texts. Responses to be in varied forms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report • essay • journal entry 		✓	✓	✓
INVESTIGATION TASK (Researching and presenting)	From beginning of Week 8 Term 1	Investigate representations of race, ethnicity or nationality in a range of print and non-print texts. Findings to be presented in one of the following forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation • Tutorial discussion • formal speech • other (confirm with teacher) 	✓	*	*	*
RESPONSE TASK (b) SEMESTER 1 EXAM	Week 7 Term 2	The exam will consist of three sections, one on Viewing, one on Reading and one on Writing.		✓	✓	✓
WRITTEN PRODUCTION TASK	Week 2 Term 2	Written text based on study of identity, race, ethnicity and nationality. Suggested forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short story • drama script • novel chapter • newspaper article 				✓
ORAL PARTICIPATION/ PRODUCTION	From beginning of Week 5 Term 2	Oral presentation on a theme relating to study of race, ethnicity or nationality. Suggested forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dramatic performance of scene • reading and interpretation of a scene/sonnet etc • panel discussion on a key aspect 	✓			

Curriculum Council of Western Australia. (2006b). *Sample WACE paper*. WA: Curriculum Council. (pp. 8).

ENGLISH

8

SAMPLE WACE EXAM PAPER

SECTION TWO: READING OUTCOME

In this section you will be assessed on your achievements in relation to:

Outcome 3

- your interpretation of the conventions of written texts
- your critical awareness of the ways language varies according to context and how language affects the way you view yourself and your world
- your use of a repertoire of processes and strategies when reflecting on the way language works.

Instructions

In this section there is ONE question. This question has TWO parts. Complete BOTH parts of the question, which are related to the text given on the page opposite.

Allow approximately 60 minutes for this section. It is suggested that you divide your time according to the following table:

Planning and preparation	10 minutes
Writing: part (i) and part (ii)	45 minutes
Checking work	5 minutes
Total	60 minutes

7. (i) What arguments are presented in this essay? What evidence is presented to support these arguments? How might readers be positioned to respond to the arguments and evidence presented in the text?
[Suggested length: 400 words]
- (ii) Explain how your context and your knowledge of other texts and/or wider social issues shape your interpretation of this text.
[Suggested length: 200 words]

SEE NEXT PAGE

Appendix V: Summary of Level II codes and original coding of the transcripts

Teacher 1 (T1)

Documentary texts: Bowling for Columbine
Fahrenheit 9/11
McLibel
Supersize Me
Nicaragua No Pasaran
TV Doc's: Cutting Edge (Series)

Aesthetic concerns:

Different styles, different ways documentaries can be constructed, they respond to fast-moving “American” style but they need to know about different styles, students are familiar with “types of shot” etc (film language) from Year 11 study – but kids need to understand the differences of genres, distinction of entertainment/information, students need to understand that doco's can be entertaining (ie: not just informative).

Rhetorical concerns:

We identify scenes that are pivotal or demonstrate an *interesting device* [these scenes are often obvious], we focus on how the director is trying to create a particular effect through techniques (juxtaposition, music, length of shots etc), how does the structure of the documentary itself used by the filmmaker to construct meaning?; the concept of “version of reality” is difficult for students to understand; it's not deliberate manipulation it's just a version;

Ethical concerns:

Try to do things that are “up to date” so the kids are “in tune” [engaged with the issues] with them; the importance of syllabus definition of “versions of reality,” students must identify “whose version is this [in the doco]?”, we choose documentaries that will fit in with the issues we're looking with other texts; we ask the students: “Why are these people behaving this way?”; kids are dealing with the same issues at their age – it's part of their experience; students have got to learn that documentary is not about “the truth” – it's someone's version of the truth; how has your context influenced your interpretation?; it's useful to focus on “men's issues” because we've focused so much on “female issues” and at the end of the year sometimes the boys open up about their own issues, and girls haven't looked at these issues so they find it interesting; documentaries lend themselves to this – depending on the one that you choose; often struggle to relate their own context to the interpretation of documentary, I ask them to consider their personal context (eg: you're a 16 year old and I'm in my 50s, how are our contexts different and how will that affect our response?); this gets them to ask questions about themselves (“who am I?”) which the syllabus seems to be getting at; if they're aware of how they're influenced, they can become more critical viewers – which is what we trying to achieve; when doco's were first introduced I didn't know what to do so I just looked

at issues; students respond well to documentaries with issues that affect them personally (eg: McLibel/Supersize Me); doco's may support an issue from a text you studied earlier in the year; we don't just try to "comprehend" the doco, we analyse the version of reality and its construction; with a bright class I might explore questions about "truth" and "right and wrong;" one of the questions that is relevant to the syllabus is whether or not doco's get close[r] to the truth.

Teacher 2 (T2)

Documentary texts: Bowling For Columbine

Aesthetic concerns:

I mostly assume students don't know about the background of the "documentary film" genre; students often think doco's are boring and you have to fight against that unless it's gross/bloody or really funny; students prefer doco's that entertain them; you can't just link anything together *just* because it's the same genre/theme.

Rhetorical concerns:

Columbine is good because there's so much material that helps show kids how it's been constructed; you can teach them *how* they're being constructed because they don't often understand this; we want them to realise they're looking at "constructed facts"; I alert students to techniques while watching it (I prepare things in a hurry); retrieval charts help them see how they're being positioned through the construction; [as an example of how easily they get positioned by the construction], they think B&W footage is news-reel/history; give them information about how documentaries are not always factual (version of reality);

Ethical concerns:

Columbine worked because the kids didn't have much "cultural capital" and so they understood the reference to South Park; *demonstrate* how to critically analyse a simple documentary before looking at the actual one that they're to analyse; always think about issues, particularly ones that resonate with kids because they have to have some link to it from their context in order to critically view; important to look at why they're watching the doco, and what's involved in the particular version of reality (who's privileged); teachers must be careful not to impose their own values on the students; I don't want a text that's so hard I have to explain what's going on – that might influence their response; documentary can be used to support other texts – to "fill in the context", especially for kids who don't have much cultural capital; Columbine is good because it is *slightly* out of their context now so it's easy to view it critically; Columbine is good because there's so much information with it that it's easy to see how it's been constructed to present a version of reality; students will often "glaze over" a text, so we're "taking them back to look at why they're looking at something"; they feel like experts if they can look at the construction of something critically; doco genre is helpful at teaching students about construction, so they can view *other things* critically.

Teacher 3 (T3)

Documentary texts: Mohammed and Juliet
The Thin Blue Line
Kurt and Courtney

Aesthetic concerns:

Because students aren't familiar with doco conventions, start with a simple one (Mohammed and Juliet) to teach symbolism and other visual techniques; discuss similarities/differences between doco's and other media texts; if the class is "good" I might look at something with a challenging structure (The Thin Blue Line); students are mostly "preoccupied" with the people rather than other visual elements; students won't independently notice aspects of framing;

Rhetorical concerns:

I use Mohammed and Juliet because the techniques are obvious, I always do this for the first documentary; The Thin Blue Line has lots of techniques, so I split the class into groups which each took notes on one technique while viewing the documentary; *before starting*, we revise film techniques (because students have studied feature film earlier) and some of these are relevant to doco's; I look at how issues are constructed/presented through the documentary's techniques, I ask students to find this in their notes on techniques from viewing, and to identify how the techniques present issues rather than just "an idea"; you might compare a documentary's persuasive techniques (visual symbolism, juxtaposition, voice-over) with an expository text's use and ask how they're similar/different; during the viewing of the documentary students would identify techniques (SWAT codes) and identify how they have been used to construct meanings; in essays students often don't remember to talk about techniques, so I emphasise that they need to write about techniques; What are the implications of the juxtaposition of Mohammed's country of origin with the detention centre to suggest they're essentially the same conditions; if you "consult" with students about what techniques are used (before viewing) then they will be able to identify them as long as they can put them together (ie: it's up to them to put it together); it would be important to choose two documentaries that use the same techniques; I encourage students to write down the effect of the technique while note-taking, or example: "What was the interviewer wearing?"; teacher has to point out elements (for example: "There's an Australian flag in the background of that shot"); I explain the different codes (SWAT) used by documentaries in general, and how they are used in general, then the students watch the documentary and take notes on these codes.

Ethical concerns:

I like to choose texts that deal with issues in a way students will engage with them; the teacher's passion can make a difference also: when I was talking about Mohammed and Juliet and the issues with justice and injustice and government corruption, I was saying it in a very sort of emotional way, talking about it, saying these are the issues. What do you think about this? I can't believe this has happened, blah, blah, blah. They were all focused, they were all listening because I was talking about it in a passionate sort of way; students have a lack of familiarity with doco's because they wouldn't watch them normally, and therefore they have a lack of

confidence in discussing doco's; the study of doco's exposes them to a genre they wouldn't ordinarily watch, and they might use this knowledge later on when they watch doco's; Mohammed and Juliet deals with "good issues" like justice, truth, race, power of government; apart from techniques, The Thin Blue Line deals with issues like government corruption, police corruption, truth, justice in the American system – these link with the expository text Dead Man Walking, which we have already studied; if I know the interests of the class I might choose a documentary that relates to their interests; the issue can make the difference of whether or not the class engages with the text – engagement is *very* important in TEE English, engagement with the text and the question and this is why I think issues are important because students will engage with the issues; engagement means response, such as anger or concern about something presented in the doco; I ask the students what are the implications of the particular interview subjects chosen by the filmmaker, for example: "Based on the voice-over do we sympathise with this person?"; TEE is all about students responding to values and attitudes; students react well to issues such as how the government can conceal the truth and students all have different beliefs about current political issues in Australia; when studying Mohammed and Juliet I look at how they are fighting for truth and the government is covering up the truth, and I look at the different ideologies of the different groups presented in the doco; essay questions should focus on how a text has been constructed to present only one point of view, or how it has challenged your (the students') beliefs; students should use the issues to respond to questions; the content (of studying documentaries and novels) is very similar as well, how you're positioned, what's your response, how do you think other people in your class or in your society might respond to these based on their cultural beliefs and that sort of thing; I pause the tape when something that challenges my values and ask students "What's going on here? Can you believe this?"; students find it difficult to identify specific values/attitudes; because I get interested in the issues of the documentary we're studying, I'll read more about the issue and use this information when discussing the text and asking students questions about it; students react mostly to the people in the documentary, for example if it's obvious that an interview subject is lying and this challenges their values/attitudes they will respond to it; after students respond initially to the personalities (interviewees) I'll take it further by questioning whether that person should be representing a certain group – for instance if they're lying and they should be representing "my" values and attitudes; sometimes it can be effective to link texts by issue (or theme) because students can use their knowledge of the issue from one text to help them understand the other text; the study of doco's is important because it exposes them to issues they might not ordinarily think about, and later in life they might show interest in these kinds of issues; English is about empowering students to question everything about texts – for example, to question the representations they see in the news because these are filtered and controlled by governments and corporations for specific interests, and students would never consider this themselves; doco's are important because they often expose the gaps in the way truth is represented in the mass media – but also we need to get students to consider how the doco itself has represented the information ("it goes two ways"); after students have a reaction to the text, I want to make "them think about themselves, about the world, their relationship with the world, power relations that exist, the power of corporations, governments, you know all that sort of stuff. Making them just ... just enabling them to be exposed to things that they weren't exposed to before and then questioning those, and discussing those [...] questioning how those documentaries

are working”; in the note-making stage students record their responses to the issues and the way they’re presented, for example if they’re personally connected to the issue because it’s about detainees in an immigration camp and the student is a migrant; (continues to talk about the importance of the issues of government corruption that are revealed in Mohammed and Juliet, even while ostensibly talking about the note-making process students go thru: eg, “a lot of these students are isolated from reality. [...] We know that because we watch the news but these kids don’t. So it’s looking at how this text perhaps challenges their initial ideas and beliefs about the government is someone that you can trust. Well, no, they’re not. That sort of thing.”)

Teacher 4 (T4)

Documentary texts: Mohammed and Juliet
Kurt and Courtney
The Thin Blue Line
Supersize Me

Aesthetic concerns:

Mohammed and Juliet uses very easy/obvious techniques (because the filmmaker was young); Broomfield’s style is self-reflexive and raw (teenagers enjoy it); Errol Morris’ style is very obvious and quirky; Startup.com has a raw style and structure; I look at a range of doco’s and analyse the different styles; if the class doesn’t have the “language of film” then I need to do more stand-up teacher talk to “fill in the gaps”; get students to brainstorm (to the class board) what they know about documentary film language; ask students to consider the differences between doco and other film genres; *now* I choose doco’s where the filmmaker has an obvious style (we can have success identifying the techniques); students can view other doco’s by the same filmmaker (at home) and compare different styles of the different filmmakers looked at in class; doco’s have “subliminal” elements that students have to identify the effect of (eg: music); I won’t choose a documentary that doesn’t have an interesting style or use of techniques – I don’t focus on issues anymore, but I used to; now I focus on the text as a genre; the study [that I get students to do] has become more textually detailed, after various PD and self-learning; if I choose more intelligent doco’s then the more intelligent students will get something more out of it (eg: Broomfield); [Students respond most to documentaries with] action, fast pace, clear sense of good and bad, sort of the villain, the hero, subjects that are clearly characterised, subjects from their own world – they enjoy Kurt and Courtney & SuperSize Me for this reason, and they don’t always enjoy The Thin Blue Line;

Rhetorical concerns:

Essay questions should expect students to articulate *how* the rhetorical features of the text have persuaded them to accept the argument, although not to the extent where they have to *label* the rhetorical elements; students have difficulty identifying the underlying argument and the subtle rhetorical techniques such as “irony” and satire that present these arguments; it’s important to be able to analyse these aspects of the genre; students need to be able to identify the argument presented so they can analyse *why* the text is making them respond in some particular way; The Thin Blue Line often presents problems for students to understand/comprehend what’s going on because the rhetorical elements are not used directly – they don’t guide the viewer directly; after my demonstration of notetaking SWAT codes on one scene, students

take notes on the SWAT codes while viewing the doco, and I pause it occasionally and ask for examples of different codes and for the student's interpretation of these codes; then I start asking them *why* the filmmaker has tried to create that particular interpretation.

Ethical concerns:

A good class can discuss/investigate the underlying value systems (and ideologies) operating within the doco, when brainstorming with the students we might say “for a documentary to be a documentary it has to be about something meaty like euthanasia, okay, so that’ll go under topics, that’ll go under issues” and this would allow them to start an investigation about ideologies and social value systems; when I first started teaching, I was very issues ... I would go for an issue first. So I would choose something that had a very specific issue – but this distracted from the film style and it became more like looking at a “written text”, focusing on narrative and characters; there are always issues anyway (and students can find these to be helpful in linking more than one text in their essays/exam) – this was a problem because students were just writing about issues in their essays; questions need to link the rhetorical argument with the values/ideologies being presented in the argument; Mohammed and Juliet has a strong emotional impact because she’s passionate about the topic; I get frustrated with doco’s (and other texts) that aren’t intelligent and don’t have “layers of meaning”; students tend to be “passive viewers” and have difficulty activating the “analysis” mode; doco’s often expose the truth about what’s going on in the world; is English about exposing truths in society? Doco’s certainly do that; many students have a lack of understanding (apathy?) about what’s going on in the world; students have a lack of knowledge of the world, lack of understanding of a range of perspectives and arguments. Possibly a lack of ability in debating and looking at alternative perspectives; it’s good for students to be able to identify oppression/power-relations in texts, but sometimes they’re a bit young for that, so if I teach it I won’t teach it as a “theory” but just as “value systems” that we can analyse in the text; students are a bit young for some of the political ideas they’re being asked to grasp in the theory of the course; students can relate to Kurt and Courtney because the students know the [musical] genre; individuals [filmmakers] wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards. And it’s often a very passionate kind of text form that people go in to because something stimulated them, that they want to express – this is why doco’s are an important part of the curriculum;

CODING OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Teacher 1

Level I Codes	Question	Level II Codes
Aesthetic references		
I've tried to have a look at, say, some English and some American documentaries and some Australian documentaries because I find them quite different in style. Like you know, Columbine is very different to say MacLibel. So I'll do both and I'll point out the differences in style to the kids because Columbine's such a fast moving, so it 9/11, so fast moving.	2	Documentary texts: Bowling for Columbine Fahrenheit 9/11 McLibel Supersize Me Nicaragua No Pasaran TV Doc's: Cutting Edge (Series)
Supersize Me, I've done Supersize Me as well. So I like to choose documenters from basically different countries because I find their styles are different and expose the kids to different styles.	2	
I will just show the first 10 or 15 minutes of it to show kids that there are different ways in which documentaries can be constructed and that the styles do vary.	2	Different styles, different ways documentaries can be constructed, they respond to fast-moving "American" style but they need to know about different styles, students are familiar with "types of shot" etc (film language) from Year 11 study – but kids need to understand the differences of genres, distinction of entertainment/information, students need to understand that doco's can be entertaining (ie: not just informative).
Simply because the kids are more in tune with them.	2	
I always find documentary ... the kids are in tune with documentaries and they enjoy them, they look forward to it.	3	
I have found, say with Nicaragua: No Pasaran, there's some music right towards the end. And it's very electronic music and it's a very powerful scene right towards the end.	3	
But they used to do feature film beforehand anyway, so ... and of course in Year 11 they used to do TV drama. So all that stuff about film language they should all be familiar with, the types of shots, all that stuff on use of the length of the shot, the colour and so on and so forth.	4	
But obviously there are differences. There are generic differences between the ... difference between the texts. So the kids need to also understand what is it that makes a novel a novel, what is it that makes a short story a short story, a feature article, a feature article and so what are the characteristics of those things.	7	
The other thing that we do ask the kids do, also though, is about whether documentaries can be as entertaining as feature film. So there's another aspect that we talk about that's entertainment, and whether something can be both entertaining and informative at the same time. And what's more important.	9	

<p>they respond to documentaries that are fast moving and American style, if you want to put it that way. And very entertaining. And while I don't mind showing some of that, I also make a point of showing different sorts of documentaries as well. But the kids, they like to be entertained. And they like things that are fast moving because that's what they're used to and they find it sometimes difficult to sit through a different type of documentary like MacLibel, for instance, which is also quite long, which is a quite slow movie. But that's one of the reasons I some ... I hopefully ... at least show parts of MacLibel because I want to show them that there are different sorts of documentaries and that they are still very interesting, but they've got to make perhaps a bit more of an effort.</p> <p>And thirdly, [talking about the Quinn book] the other issue is that ... to do with entertainment, that documentaries can be as entertaining as feature films. Discuss that as well.</p>	12	
<p>Rhetorical references</p> <p>And as we are watching it, we'll decide which scenes to look at, which scenes will be good ones to look at. So often they're obvious. They're pivotal scenes or they're scenes that demonstrate an interesting device or an interesting technique of some sort.</p> <p>And a transcript will be information on obviously the dialogue, but also the type of shot that's being used, the length of the shot, the lighting, any juxtaposition of scenes and so on and so forth. So anything that's obvious that we need to point out. And as to how the actual documentary work, or how that scene is actually constructed, how the director is trying to make a particular effect, does that make sense?</p> <p>the kids often find it difficult to understand what the difference is between say a version of reality and bias.</p> <p>...why have they chosen to use those devices? What's the reason? So I suppose what I'm trying to do is to get them to be a little bit more aware of how they are being influence? And also aware of how a particular version is being presented.</p> <p>So you're talking about the type of shots being uses, the use of music, the use of the juxtaposition of particular shots, the selection of information, the selection of detail. Yeah, because the way in which something is done is ... if they can understand that, they can understand to some extent the way in which ... I'm trying not to use the word "manipulated", but they can understand how they are being influenced. So it's not just what is the person saying, it is also how are they going about doing this?</p> <p>...these are devices that are available to documentary makers. These are the range of devices, okay. Let's just see what devices this person has used...</p> <p>we look at the structure of the documentary itself, how is it constructed and how does it contribute to the way in</p>	<p>Resources discussion</p> <p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>14</p>	<p>We identify scenes that are pivotal or demonstrate an <i>interesting device</i> [these scenes are often obvious], we focus on how the director is trying to create a particular effect through techniques (juxtaposition, music, length of shots etc), how does the structure of the documentary itself used by the filmmaker to construct meaning?; the concept of "version of reality" is difficult for students to understand; it's not deliberate manipulation it's just a version;</p>

<p>which the person who's making the documentary is trying to make meaning in some way.</p> <p>So read that and become familiar with it. As far as the film language and so on is concerned, I usually often just put it up on the board for them. I start talking about such things as type of shots that are being used and the effect of ... you know, we talk about camera distance, camera angle, camera movement and we talk about lighting and music and sound effects and all the ... I will put it up on the board for them. But by the time they've got to year 12, they're pretty familiar with that by now because they've done it in TV drama in Year 11 and they also have been exposed to it in feature film in Year 12 which we did earlier than documentary.</p>	Resources discussion	
<p>Ethical references</p> <p>Recently, because you try to do things that are more up to date and that the kids are more familiar with and perhaps more in tune with.</p> <p>[Choosing texts because of issues.] Quite a lot, quite often, because over the last few years we've had a general theme running in our Year 12 TEE and it's a gender theme. It's really to do with men rather than women, alright. The type of text we choose is reasonably important, but it's not the most important thing.</p> <p>So we look at Manhood and then consequently some of the documentaries we choose down the track hopefully will fit in with some of those gender issues as well. And even Football Hooligans for instance because it's dealing with a very, almost cult like male sect of people who ... of Chelsea supporters, Chelsea Football Club supporters, you can even look at that from a gender perspective and ask the kids why are these guys behaving this way.</p> <p>And also gender I think is a good one to do because the kids at the age of 16, 17 years old are also dealing with issues of masculinity and femininity and their own gender issues and so they can tap into that and their relationships with their parents, their brothers and their sisters and so on and all the stereotypes of the things that are expected of them in terms of their behaviour. So it's a good thing to tap into because it's part of their experience.</p> <p>when they look at the documentary, is to say what is the version of reality that you're getting here, whose version is this, and how does he or she go about doing this. So they're the three things ... that's the focus of the whole, of our whole approach. And so that's the key basically, you know, the kids have got to get out of their mind that just because it's a documentary, it's somehow the truth. It's not. What it is, it's a version of someone's truth. And that's a very important thing for kids to learn.</p> <p>the syllabus looks at documentary in terms of versions of reality. What the kids have got to understand, this is what I explain to them very clearly, right up front, is that documentaries is not fact. It's not fiction either, but it's not the fact, it's not the truth as such. What it is, is a version of the truth, or a version of reality.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Try to do things that are "up to date" so the kids are "in tune" [engaged with the issues] with them; the importance of syllabus definition of "versions of reality," students must identify "whose version is this [in the doco]?", we choose documentaries that will fit in with the issues we're looking with other texts; we ask the students: "Why are these people behaving this way?"; kids are dealing with the same issues at their age – it's part of their experience; students have got to learn that documentary is not about "the truth" – it's someone's version of the truth; how has your context influenced your interpretation?; it's useful to focus on "men's issues" because we've focused so much on "female issues" and at the end of the year sometimes the boys open up about their own issues, and girls haven't looked at these issues so they find it interesting; documentaries lend themselves to this – depending on the one that you choose; often struggle to relate their own context to the interpretation of documentary, I ask them to consider their personal context (eg: you're a 16 year old and I'm in my 50s, how are our contexts different and how will that affect our response?); this gets them to ask questions about themselves ("who am I?") which the syllabus seems to be getting at; if they're aware</p>

Who's version is it and who is this person. And I think it gets back to context as well. What is the context of the author, okay, of ... and also perhaps the characters, alright?	7	of how they're influenced, they can become more critical viewers – which is what we trying to achieve; when doco's were first introduced I didn't know what to do so I just looked at issues; students respond well to documentaries with issues that affect them personally (eg: McLibel/Supersize Me); doco's may support an issue from a text you studied earlier in the year; we don't just try to "comprehend" the doco, we analyse the version of reality and its construction; with a bright class I might explore questions about "truth" and "right and wrong;" one of the questions that is relevant to the syllabus is whether or not doco's get close[r] to the truth.
Okay, well the similarities would be what are the issues, and what ... and I suppose the similarity would be what's the version here?	7	
What's your context and how does that influence your interpretation of the actual story itself?	7	
I like the idea of doing ... looking at men's issues. I think that we've looked at women's issues for a long period of time and maybe it's about time men look at their issues as well.	8	
And I think that's a good thing to do because there aren't many male English teachers, I don't think. And maybe it's about time that some of us did that. I'm being careful about what I say here. [laughs]. Yeah, maybe it's about time some of us did that and say look, let's focus on issues that men might face now.	8	
And sometimes at the end of the year, the boys will open up a bit and they'll talk about the relationships they have with their fathers and with each other and the expectations they have on them. And the girls will comment on it as well. And the girls find it quite interesting also to this ... often they haven't actually looked at the issues that boys or men face, or fathers face.	8	
I think it's somehow or other it lends itself to it. I mean, depending on the documentary that you choose.	8	
I think it's another Cutting Edge documentary that I use, and it deals with a men's group in Hobart. And the kids find it quite bizarre, the sorts of things that these blokes get up to. And we talk about it and afterwards they're not quite as alarmed, once we've had a chance to talk about it, they're not quite as alarmed as they first are when they first see it.	8	
Suppose the sorts of things that kids might find it difficult with, I mean the only concept would be okay, what is ... what do we mean by a version of reality? Some of the kids who aren't as clever might find that difficult to get their head around...	9	
and they can sort of see how that might be important, but they find it difficult to relate their own contexts also, sometimes to the interpretation of a text. I don't know why, but some of them do struggle with it.	9	
Well the problem is that I say to the kids, well, who are you, what are you? Obviously if you're looking at a text and it's to do with gender issues, and you're a 16 year old boy, you're going to look at it differently to what I'm going to look at because I'm over 50 years old. We're going to have a different view of all of this. So what do you think my view might be and how is it different to your view and why are these views different? So that's looking at their personal context.	9	

The kids are only 16, so they don't have a lot of experience in ... they often though haven't even questioned who or what am I? So this is forcing them, I suppose, to start looking at questions like that which I suppose is part of the syllabus, is getting them to think about themselves, think about the texts and start asking those sorts of difficult questions.	9	
And quite often documentaries are not trying to deliberately manipulate you in any way. What they're ... all they're doing is they're trying to show you a particular version of a story. And it doesn't mean they're trying to directly manipulate you, they're just trying ... they're just showing you a version of events.	9	
What they really need to do is get beyond that and say, well, it might have a bias, what is the bias however, what is the version you're being presented with, whose version is it, that's the context part of it, and then how are you being presented with this version, how are you being presented with that version.	10	
So if they know how they're being influence, then they can become more crucial and more aware viewers of documentary which is what I think is one of the things we're trying to do.	11	
When I first stated, when it was first introduced in the course [...] I really didn't know that I was meant to be doing. And so I'd show some documentaries in class and I was simply looking at the issues. It's a simple as that.	12	
I think that, you know, obviously the controversial issues, or issues that affect them. So obviously the MacDonald's one and MacLibel and what's the other one that we mentioned?	12	
Supersize Me, they really respond well to those sorts of documentaries because they're issues that affect them, and we've got a lot of kids working at MacDonald's at Thornlie Senior High School. And they're things that ... they're often ... weren't even aware of until they've seen these sorts of documentaries. And so they respond to the issues and documentaries that affect them personally...	13	
Well only in the sense that if you can look at documentaries that have a [...] I choose, then they'll fit in with other texts that we looked at. And it's often very interesting because when you look at, say for instance, some of the things that Biddulph has to say in Manhood, and then you have a look at other documentaries later on, you can well, you might be able to say things like well there you go, I mean, you thought a [unclear] was ridiculous, but nevertheless here are these guys who are acting like this in Football Hooligans, why are they like this?	14	
We don't just look at what the documentary has to say. [...] What we're looking at is things like [...] at the version of the story and the context	15	
if I've got a small class and they're bright, I'll go the next step and I'll say, well you know, is there such a thing as the truth, as a reality, is there such a thing? And I might short of throw the question open to them and I might put it to you in exactly the way I've said to you right now, I mean there is such a thing as right or wrong. We're	Resources discussion	

<p>talking morality here. And I just think with the bright kids, it might just ... I might expose them to another way of thinking and might get them to question.</p> <p>The questions that they need to answer are things such as documentaries are versions of reality, discuss. That's one. The other question is that documentaries get closer to the truth than any other type of text, discuss that. So that's where that whole issue of what truth is.</p>	Resource discussion	
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Teacher 2

Level I Codes	Question	Level II Codes
<p>Aesthetic references</p> <p>I would give them the background to documentaries, background notes, teaching notes, whatever to documentaries that get them to look at what they're looking for and what to expect, and mostly I don't assume that they have the knowledge or the skills to do that.</p> <p>They often think they're boring with the ... like the narrative voiceover is boring. So you're fighting against that for a start and they ... if ... they expect humour in things like it's got to be blood or humour. Like if it's grossly bloody and gory, they'll go yay and they'll watch it or if it's funny but anything in between, they have trouble with.</p> <p>the documentaries they prefer are ones that entertain them as well as inform them that are not just information.</p> <p>I love that approach but only if it's working. Like I don't think you can just pull anything in together because it's of the same genre and hope that that will work.</p> <p>Like you don't go I'm going to do horrors so therefore, we will look at everything horrible, like there's no point to it.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>13</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Documentary texts: Bowling For Columbine</p> <p>I mostly assume students don't know about the background of the "documentary film" genre; students often think doco's are boring and you have to fight against that unless it's gross/bloody or really funny; students prefer doco's that entertain them; you can't just link anything together <i>just</i> because it's the same genre/theme.</p>
<p>Rhetorical references</p> <p>But there's so much support with that [Bowling For Columbine], like so many articles and things that it's sensational enough to teach to kids that don't understand the nature of construction well.</p> <p>Well, because you could teach them how they were being constructed by the ideas that were presented and the fact that kids don't often understand.</p> <p>They think of documentaries as real life, they think of them as factual and so that was an easy one to show them</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Columbine is good because there's so much material that helps show kids how it's been constructed; you can teach them <i>how</i> they're being constructed because they don't often understand this; we want them to realise they're looking at "constructed facts"; I alert students to techniques while watching it (I prepare things in</p>

<p>how they were being constructed as audience to view the ideas in a certain way.</p> <p>So getting across that point [documentaries are always biased] and getting them to look at it in terms of their construction and their narrative really so that they ... they stop thinking about the fact that they're looking at the real facts but they're looking at constructed facts.</p> <p>Get them to do retrieval charts to see how they're being positioned,</p> <p>Well, definitely just background information about documentaries if they didn't know about that, but talking about documentaries as narratives and talking about the fact that they are constructed to present a certain view, they're always biased, they're always from one particular stand-point and they're not always factual, like it is a version of reality, not the total of reality.</p> <p>Okay, they think that black and white is news reel and history, and they're very swayed by that. So if they ... if there's black and white footage, they see it is absolute version of events and reality.</p> <p>in the course of watching it, would alert kids to techniques and that's probably more about me than them because I do things in such a hurry that often, I've only seen something quickly myself before I present it to kids</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p>	<p>a hurry); retrieval charts help them see how they're being positioned through the construction; [as an example of how easily they get positioned by the construction], they think B&W footage is news-reel/history; give them information about how documentaries are not always factual (version of reality);</p>
<p>Ethical references</p> <p>Lower end TEE but low socioeconomic, low ... just not really great kids with cultural capital. Kids that don't know a lot about anything and the reference is to South Park and whatever else is a big hook-in for them, so yeah</p> <p>what information's been privileged and whose point of view it's from and those sorts of things before you would look at the one that you're critically trying to view.</p> <p>[How often do you think about issues?] Always, I think I probably ... it ... I think that that's what I would base it on really and mostly, the ones that will resonate with the kids probably, ones ... because if we're teaching them to be critical viewers, it's got to interest them and it's got to have some sort of link to them so that they can understand it from their context.</p> <p>Construction of reality, versions of reality, who's privileged by them. I think they've just got to look at why they're watching it, who they're intended for, who they exclude, who's marginalised, those sort of things because I think kids tend to view them as fact and the reality rather than a version of events or a single perspective reality.</p> <p>I think it's really easy to impose your own values on kids and I think you've got to be really careful about the</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Columbine worked because the kids didn't have much "cultural capital" and so they understood the reference to South Park; <i>demonstrate</i> how to critically analyse a simple documentary before looking at the actual one that they're to analyse; always think about issues, particularly ones that resonate with kids because they have to have some link to it from their context in order to critically view; important to look at why they're watching the doco, and what's involved in the particular version of reality (who's privileged); teachers must be careful not to impose their own values on the students; I don't want a text that's so hard I have to explain what's going on – that might influence their response; documentary can be used to support other texts – to "fill in the context", especially for kids who don't have</p>

things that you choose to not be imposing your personal values on kids, and I think it's easy to do if you aren't careful about what you're choosing.		
I don't want to be overly explaining in order to influence. So it's something that they need to be able to draw information out of fairly readily rather than me imposing knowledge on them.	8	
So I think that more and more we're taking them back to look at why they're looking at something rather than looking at something for information sake or entertainment sake rather. So often, their eyes will glaze over when you say that you're going to show a viewing text because they're I've already seen this or oh, that was boring and so I think more and more we're trying to sell why you look at things and how you look at things rather than just looking at them for entertainment sake.	11	much cultural capital; Columbine is good because it is <i>slightly</i> out of their context now so it's easy to view it critically; Columbine is good because there's so much information with it that it's easy to see how it's been constructed to present a version of reality; students will often "glaze over" a text, so we're "taking them back to look at why they're looking at something"; they feel like experts if they can look at the construction of something critically; doco genre is helpful at teaching students about construction, so they can view <i>other things</i> critically.
Like if you can scaffold it enough to get them to look at something critically, I think kids get great satisfaction out of being able to draw extra information out themselves and they feel like experts, and I think that's really satisfying and I think they ... that success leads to other successes.	12	
It's supporting the values and things of Victorian times or whatever in that specific example. It gives them an overview of the history of that time and then underpinning to why the gothic genre was explored through those things. [...] I think it's great for underpinning information, particularly with kids like this that don't have access to that kind of cultural capital that some other kids do.	13	
[Documentary is]... it's a really important part of English. It's ... you know, it has cross-curricular things too but unless we understand how we construct it as an audience, we can never view anything critically for anything else. So yeah, I think it's really important.	14	
It's just interesting to read his text and the way that that's constructed to present himself as a hero and everything else, and make money out of it or whatever. And then to use the actual footage and the ... you know, the ... because by this time, a lot of kids hadn't watched it too. It's a bit out of their range of what they would choose at the video store. So you can view it critically from afar now with younger kids who don't really know a lot about that, and I'm trying to think.	Resources discussion	
There's newspaper clippings, there's the novel and then there's the film as well, and how it sets up three very different versions of events and the writing style of each, the presentation of each and how it privileges some and excludes others, and just the whole manipulation by the media to get you to accept a certain view.	Resources discussion	

Teacher 3

Level I Codes	Question	Level II Codes
<p>Aesthetic references</p> <p>so I quite often start off with that one [Mohammed and Juliet], just to teach concepts like symbolism and the use of how visual techniques have been used in the documentary, because a lot of students aren't really that familiar with documentaries</p> <p>So we would discuss similarities and differences between documentary text and other media texts, just so they get an idea of the genre and they're a little bit more confident with the genre before we actually start viewing that sort of thing. So we might do something like I suppose a Venn diagram looking at the differences and similarities between documentary and feature film.</p> <p>depending on the class again, I might then look at something like The Thin Blue Line where the structure is very absurd I guess and chaotic and a bit more difficult and challenging for them to discuss</p> <p>Yeah, they seem to be preoccupied more on the people in the documentary than say visual scenery and things like that, and how that's working</p> <p>They're not going to necessarily respond to a scene and go oh, I can't believe that they use that framing in that particular way, you know. They're just not going to respond to that.</p> <p>so that exposes them to stuff that they may never expose themselves to later on. If you can expose them to certain things like even just getting them to watch documentaries, I think is an important thing because they may never have seen documentaries and there are occasionally kids that come up to Year 12 and they just haven't seen any documentaries, and I mean the last couple of years has been fantastic for documentary film makers. There's been some excellent documentaries that have been released in the cinema that these kids wouldn't even think about going to the cinema to watch a documentary, but if you can expose them to some good documentaries and say you know, they're just as entertaining and enlightening as feature film, then they may consider watching a documentary later on, especially if they have something like Foxtel where they do show documentaries on different channels and that sort of thing.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>10</p> <p>12</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Documentary texts: Mohammed and Juliet The Thin Blue Line Kurt and Courtney</p> <p>Because students aren't familiar with doco conventions, start with a simple one (Mohammed and Juliet) to teach symbolism and other visual techniques; discuss similarities/differences between doco's and other media texts; if the class is "good" I might look at something with a challenging structure (The Thin Blue Line); students are mostly "preoccupied" with the people rather than other visual elements; students won't independently notice aspects of framing;</p>
<p>Rhetorical references</p> <p>[Mohammed and Juliet] it's just a really straight-forward sort of documentary where the techniques are really obvious.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>I use Mohammed and Juliet because the techniques are obvious, I always do this for the</p>

<p>the documentary was just small group work where each group had to focus on a particular part of the documentary, like a particular type of technique and how it was being used in the documentary [...] There was a lot of techniques being used in the documentary and I felt that the best way for them to be able to take in those techniques was to do the small group activity where they were focusing on one main one each while viewing it and then sharing those findings.</p> <p>I would revise techniques, different filming techniques because obviously, we would have already studied feature film earlier in the year and yes, some of the techniques are similar but some of them are different in documentaries.</p> <p>I would look at more to do with how those issues are constructed or presented</p> <p>So you'll be looking at expository texts, you'd look at the techniques they used, slightly use of secondary text, statistics, use of imagery through descriptive writing like through adjectives, adverbs that sort of thing. So you'd look at those techniques and how the writer is using those techniques to construct a particular viewpoint or presents it, and values and attitudes as opposed to a documentary maker who's using a lot of visual symbolism, juxtaposition, the use of voice over, that sort of thing. So language might come into it a little bit as well because obviously the voice over person's going to be using language but basically, that's what you'd discuss. You'd go how are they similar, how are they different?</p> <p>The information on the documentary they'd be looking for would be focused on techniques, so they might have a chart in front of them that's a brainstorm of different techniques, like symbolic codes, audio codes, technique codes etcetera and they need to find examples of those particular types of techniques and how those techniques have been used to construct meanings and that sort of thing.</p> <p>Okay, for some reason they don't always remember to talk about techniques. Even though you spend so much time talking about it in class, you give them sheets that focus on retrieving information on techniques and how they have been used [...] stuff but they won't talk about techniques. They won't have any actual evidence in relation to techniques within that response. [...] I do not want you to write an essay without techniques. You need to show me evidence, talk about how the text is constructing those ideas or those responses from you or whatever</p> <p>There was a lot of juxtaposition so for example, there was a scene where they're talking about this immigrant that's been put into this detention centre and he didn't do anything wrong and he was there was quite a length of time. They had this repetition of these scenes where there's ... it's a shot of the detention centre and you've got the bars and the barbed wire fence, and then you've got ... within that shot, you've got the bird and the bird on the barbed wire fence and quite often the birds go flying off and you've got the clouds in the sky in the background. [...] So really obvious stuff like that so you can look and discuss with the kids how those</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>7</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p>	<p>first documentary; The Thin Blue Line has lots of techniques, so I split the class into groups which each took notes on one technique while viewing the documentary; <i>before starting</i>, we revise film techniques (because students have studied feature film earlier) and some of these are relevant to doco's; I look at how issues are constructed/presented through the documentary's techniques, I ask students to find this in their notes on techniques from viewing, and to identify how the techniques present issues rather than just "an idea"; you might compare a documentary's persuasive techniques (visual symbolism, juxtaposition, voice-over) with an expository text's use and ask how they're similar/different; during the viewing of the documentary students would identify techniques (SWAT codes) and identify how they have been used to construct meanings; in essays students often don't remember to talk about techniques, so I emphasise that they need to write about techniques; What are the implications of the juxtaposition of Mohammed's country of origin with the detention centre to suggest they're essentially the same conditions; if you "consult" with students about what techniques are used (before viewing) then they will be able to identify them as long as they can put them together (ie: it's up to them to put it together); it would be important to choose two documentaries that use the same techniques; I encourage students to write down the effect of the technique while note-taking, or example: "What was the interviewer wearing?"; teacher has to point out elements (for example: "There's an Australian flag in the background of that shot"); I explain the different codes (SWAT) used by documentaries in general, and how they are used in general, then the students watch the</p>
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techniques are being used to present certain values, attitudes and that sort of thing.		documentary and take notes on these codes.
when I'm choosing a documentary text, especially the first one, I always make sure that the techniques are really obvious for the kids so that they can ... so it's basically something that they can look at quite easily.	10	
let's look at how the choice of interview is being used and what are the implications of those particular types of people being interviewed in relation to the issues and that sort of thing.	10	
As long as you've done the initial sort of consultation with the kids where you've looked at techniques and you've revised techniques then as long as they can put it altogether because they've revised techniques and how techniques work and that sort of thing, then it should be okay and also I think it's important if you have some sort of retrieval chart that allows them to connect that information quite well and put it together.	12	
Let's look at the symbolic codes and you know, you've got his body language which is a symbolic code. Look at what he's wearing. Let's look at what's in the background. Okay, so there's an Australian flag in the background.	12	
It's about how you've ... your understanding of one technique used in one text has enabled you to make sense of how that technique's been used in another text. [...] I think it would be more important to choose may be two documentaries that use similar techniques. So let's look at how this technique's been used in this particular documentary in detail and you take them through it step-by-step in detail, and then get them to use their understanding of how that technique's been used in those documentaries for their note making and understanding in the second one.	13	
I also tell them to talk about if they can while they're taking notes to also write some notes on how it's been used, like why that technique's been used, like what's the effect of it?	<i>Resources discussion</i>	
What was the interviewer wearing? What was the interviewee wearing? What was in the background? What sort of setting were they in? Why did they have that setting? How was those objects around them associated with that person? What did they say during that interview? What was there facial expressions and body language and tone of voice like and what does that indicate to us? Those sorts of things. You know, what were the opening themes of and what techniques were used? What was the framing like? What objects and settings do we have in the beginning and what sort of values or ideas are being presented within that setting and through that juxtaposition or whatever technique it happens to be?	<i>Resources discussion</i>	
What techniques have you written down that presents this issue, constructs this issue? So what examples of interviews and dialogue, voice over narration have you got in your notes that indicates or presents to us or constructs this particular issue?	<i>Resources discussion</i>	

<p>so they're using their knowledge of the technique in terms of yes, it constructs that idea but it does more than construct that idea. It presents it in values and attitudes, positions viewers and that sort of thing.</p> <p>So this documentary for example, uses a juxtaposition of where the main person Mohammed came from, which was Syria, and it looks at the conditions that he came from and his desperation to escape from the conditions in Syria, and then it juxtaposes that with the conditions of Australia and they're actually shown to be pretty much the same.</p> <p>Okay, to start with go through media codes with them so all the different SWAT codes so techniques that are used in documentary film and I just discuss how it's used, how different techniques are used in documentaries and things like that, and once they get the ideas in terms of how techniques are used in documentary film and how it's different to how they're used in feature film or television or whatever, or how it's similar, I give them a media codes checklist and basically, we watch the documentary</p>	<p><i>Resources discussion</i></p> <p><i>Resources discussion</i></p> <p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
<p>Ethical references</p> <p>It [Mohammed and Juliet] deals with some pretty good issues like justice in justice truth, things like that and also race and the power of the government</p> <p>The Thin Blue Line, I probably choose that not only because of the techniques and the structure of the actual documentary but also because it deals with things like government corruption or police corruption, I should say, truth, justice in the American system especially and that does work well because we quite often do that text after we've done Dead Man Walking. So the students are quite familiar with those issues within America already.</p> <p>[When choosing a documentary text.] One that relates to the interest perhaps if I know the class quite well, something that I know will engage that particular type of class.</p> <p>I think the issues that a documentary text deals with can make the difference between whether the class engages with the text or not. [...] how the documentary text deals with those issues and presents those issues. In TE English, it's really, really important, I think it's probably one of the most important things that students engage with the text and they reactions and things like that to the text. [...] they can engage with not only the text but then later on, the question in relation to that text. So that's why I probably see issues as being quite important because it's all about how the students will engage with the issues and the actual text itself.</p> <p>[Response is...] I suppose reaction ... they might be angry about something that's said in the documentary [...] or they're concerned about something [...] that's what TE is all about. It's about them responding to the values and attitudes and the beliefs of other people.</p> <p>Justice and truth, how the government ... I've looked at things like government power and how the government can conceal the truth, and how a lot of injustice occurs because of that. I find that students react quite well to</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p>	<p>I like to choose texts that deal with issues in a way students will engage with them; the teacher's passion can make a difference also: when I was talking about Mohammed and Juliet and the issues with justice and injustice and government corruption, I was saying it in a very sort of emotional way, talking about it, saying these are the issues. What do you think about this? I can't believe this has happened, blah, blah, blah. They were all focused, they were all listening because I was talking about it in a passionate sort of way; students have a lack of familiarity with doco's because they wouldn't watch them normally, and therefore they have a lack of confidence in discussing doco's; the study of doco's exposes them to a genre they wouldn't ordinarily watch, and they might use this knowledge later on when they watch doco's; Mohammed and Juliet deals with "good issues" like justice, truth, race, power of government; apart from techniques, The Thin Blue Line deals with issues like government corruption, police corruption, truth, justice in the American system – these link with the expository text Dead Man</p>

<p>those sorts of things, so yeah, looking at those sorts of things. Like they all have different beliefs in terms of political issues that are occurring, especially in Australia at the moment.</p> <p>So looking at how ideologies I suppose in documentary are working, the ideologies of different cultures or different groups of people and how the ... how those ideologies challenge or confirm the ideologies or the beliefs or the values and attitudes of the audience members.</p> <p>in Mohammed and Juliet, it looks a lot at government corruption and how they're hiding the truth and that sort of thing [...] they're fighting for truth, they're fighting for the government to reveal information [...] There's a lot of denial. [...] it's quite obvious that they're concealing the truth and lying and that sort of thing. So I'm looking at the ideologies of the lawyer, the group of lawyers and also the documentary maker herself and how she is basically fighting ... they are fighting for the truth, they're fighting for some sense of justice.</p> <p>I suppose the essay questions would be something along the lines of discuss how a text has been constructed to filter a particular viewpoint or display ... or how a text has challenged your beliefs or something along those lines.</p> <p>I've looked at these issues. How can I use these issues in my responses? Choose the issues and my understanding of how these issues were constructed within the text to answer this particular type of question.</p> <p>we focus on similar things like ideologies, arguments, values, attitudes, those sorts of things. So the content is very similar as well, how you're positioned, what's your response, how do you think other people in your class or in your society might respond to these based on their cultural beliefs and that sort of thing.</p> <p>I like to look at texts that deal with issues in a way that I think students are going to engage with the text</p> <p>So for example, when I was talking about Mohammed and Juliet and the issues with justice and injustice and government corruption, I was saying it in a very sort of emotional way, talking about it, saying these are the issues. What do you think about this? I can't believe this has happened, blah, blah, blah. They were all focused, they were all listening because I was talking about it in a passionate sort of way. Similar thing with Kirk and Courtney whereas I was looking at the whole idea of truth and freedom of speech [...] it was actually the first time I'd actually seen it as well and I sort of reacted quite emotionally to it going oh my God, I can't believe it and I sort of paused it and I said what's going on here? Can you believe this is happening? Why is this so bizarre? [...] So I think that if the teacher reacts well to it and is passionate about the text and the issues within it, then that can overlay onto the kids.</p> <p>have some sort of a response to it. You're angry about it or you just want to talk about it in some sort of way and give your opinion or whatever.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>8</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Walking, which we have already studied; if I know the interests of the class I might choose a documentary that relates to their interests; the issue can make the difference of whether or not the class engages with the text – engagement is <i>very</i> important in TEE English, engagement with the text and the question and this is why I think issues are important because students will engage with the issues; engagement means response, such as anger or concern about something presented in the doco; I ask the students what are the implications of the particular interview subjects chosen by the filmmaker, for example: “Based on the voice-over do we sympathise with this person?”; TEE is all about students responding to values and attitudes; students react well to issues such as how the government can conceal the truth and students all have different beliefs about current political issues in Australia; when studying Mohammed and Juliet I look at how they are fighting for truth and the government is covering up the truth, and I look at the different ideologies of the different groups presented in the doco; essay questions should focus on how a text has been constructed to present only one point of view, or how it has challenged your (the students') beliefs; students should use the issues to respond to questions; the content (of studying documentaries and novels) is very similar as well, how you're positioned, what's your response, how do you think other people in your class or in your society might respond to these based on their cultural beliefs and that sort of thing; I pause the tape when something that challenges my values and ask students “What's going on here? Can you believe this?”; students find it difficult to identify specific values/attitudes; because I get interested in the</p>
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And generally, I think that they have a lack of confidence in discussing documentary text as opposed to feature film because they're just not used to watching documentaries. It's something that they wouldn't sit down and watch or go to the cinema to watch. They like the sort of escapism type stuff, like Bond and feature films and that sort of thing.	9	issues of the documentary we're studying, I'll read more about the issue and use this information when discussing the text and asking students questions about it; students react mostly to the people in the documentary, for example if it's obvious that an interview subject is lying and this challenges their values/attitudes they will respond to it; after students respond initially to the personalities (interviewees) I'll take it further by questioning whether that person should be representing a certain group – for instance if they're lying and they should be representing “my” values and attitudes; sometimes it can be effective to link texts by issue (or theme) because students can use their knowledge of the issue from one text to help them understand the other text; the study of doco's is important because it exposes them to issues they might not ordinarily think about, and later in life they might show interest in these kinds of issues; English is about empowering students to question everything about texts – for example, to question the representations they see in the news because these are filtered and controlled by governments and corporations for specific interests, and students would never consider this themselves; doco's are important because they often expose the gaps in the way truth is represented in the mass media – but also we need to get students to consider how the doco itself has represented the information (“it goes two ways”); after students have a reaction to the text, I want to make “them think about themselves, about the world, their relationship with the world, power relations that exist, the power of corporations, governments, you know all that sort of stuff. Making them just ... just enabling them to be exposed to things that they weren't exposed to before and then questioning
Also in terms of identifying the specific values and attitudes of personalities, they find that difficult.	10	
It's actually presenting specific ideologies and those attitudes of the people within the documentary, such as the lawyers and the documentary maker and the government officials and that sort of thing.	11	
I've probably become a little bit more passionate about the documentaries that I teach and that's been reflected in my teaching. So for example, because I'm being exposed to these issues myself because I'm teaching the documentary, I'll do a little bit more research or I'll see those issues being presented in other texts that I read or view and through my own knowledge, that is being reflected in the classroom in terms of the way that I talk and discuss and question the students about particular issues and that sort of thing, especially if there's issues such as you know, detainees in detention centres. I mean a documentary that we were looking at is probably about four or five years old but the issues are very current because we quite often in the media hear things about detainees and immigrants and boat people and that sort of thing coming into the country	12	
So the teacher can make the difference there but I suppose they focus themselves a lot on what they think about the people in the documentary, especially based on their appearances in the documentary and how they talk and what they say.	12	
I suppose that's [students' focus on personalities of the people in documentaries] because they interact with one another all the time, every day and they've always got opinions about what other people around them say. So when someone in a documentary who's talking and saying something, they'll react to it. They will respond to it.	12	
it's usually the values and the attitudes of a particular personality [...] It's so obvious he's lying and that sort of thing. So they respond to the people and the way that they're behaving and speaking and that sort of thing.	12	
It's probably the start of the engagement that I'm looking for. It's something and I'll use that I suppose to increase their understanding of texts. I'll go okay, you've had a great response to him just there, now let's look at your response to that person. [...] Oh my God, that government is supposed to be representing Australia. His values and attitudes oppose mine. He's challenging my own values and attitudes as an Australian. How can that government official be up there representing Australia when he's lying? You know, that sort of thing. So it's taking it a little bit further.	13	
But at the same time, sometimes it can be effective to link text in terms of themes and issues because if they have a really good background understanding about a particular issue and theme, say from Dead Man Walking, they	13	

<p>can then use that knowledge and understanding for their discussion of a similar text, say The Thin Blue Line or something where they're looking at government corruption ... not government corruption, police corruption and things like that, so they can use their understanding of the first text for their understanding of the second one.</p> <p>so it's empowering them in that way but just even exposing them to issues to do with society, issues that they may have never have been confronted with before because they just don't watch the news or they don't read the paper and that sort of thing. [...] it's a last year attempt to expose them to things that they haven't been exposed to, issues, texts because I mean if they can suddenly enjoy a particular text type then they might continue looking at those texts later on, or they might ... the news might be on and there might be a news program on I don't know, detainees in Port Hedland or something and go look, they might suddenly show interest in that.</p> <p>Students, I think, they need to have the literacy and the capability to question everything around them because they're exposed to text all the time. I mean we know that. They're exposed to media text and even writing, you know advertisements and things like that. They need to have I think the capability, the understanding, the literacy to question everything. To question things like representations, representations of power, ideologies that are underpinning or underlying in particular texts. And they need to be able to question you know, information that's provided to us in the media and the power that's behind that information that's in the media and they need to be able to question it. You know, like why are we seeing this in that particular way? What political agendas are underpinning here? [...] They believe that the news is there for the purpose of giving us information, exposing all the news and information that's out there. They don't ... they would never consider ... I mean there may be some students and I could be wrong here but they, in my opinion, would never consider that there's a whole heap of news out there that we never see. It's filtered, it's hidden and there are certain people who have power in society to be able to stop that news from getting to us, and they would never, in my opinion, think about that. They would never consider that. Especially in relation to not just government power, because governments ... I think ultimately students see governments as being the most powerful entity in Australia or in any economy or country. They don't consider that there are other groups of people or entities that have power to filter information in the news and determine whether we are given the information in the news. [...] corporations have more power than governments. So they wouldn't ever consider that you know, oh there's this really fantastic, amazing news story about how this drug has been used in a particular society and how it's been passed onto all these people through milk or whatever, so all these people have been exposed to this cancer-causing drug but we don't hear about it because of corporate power.</p> <p>Because quite often, documentaries expose those gaps and expose us to the idea that there can be those gaps in the media and what we see in the information we're given and provided with. For example, a really obvious one is The Corporation where they expose the power of corporations over government and that sort of thing. There was also another documentary recently that was on ... I think it was on SBS where it was looking at the idea that they have probably already found a cure to cancer and yet will never ... we will never find out that there's a cure for cancer because the people who have control of that cure are corporations, not the government because the government isn't giving any funding into cancer research. [...] So this documentary is exposing that idea that</p>	<p>14</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p>	<p>those, and discussing those [...] questioning how those documentaries are working"; in the note-making stage students record their responses to the issues and the way they're presented, for example if they're personally connected to the issue because it's about detainees in an immigration camp and the student is a migrant; (continues to talk about the importance of the issues of government corruption that are revealed in Mohammed and Juliet, even while ostensibly talking about the note-making process students go thru: eg, "a lot of these students are isolated from reality. [...] We know that because we watch the news but these kids don't. So it's looking at how this text perhaps challenges their initial ideas and beliefs about the government is someone that you can trust. Well, no, they're not. That sort of thing.")</p>
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<p>okay, this may be the case for cancer but it could also be the case for AIDS. We will never get a cure to AIDS and this is why. So it's sort of exposing these ideas of different power relations in society and how corporations have a lot of power especially over the government because kids, they assume that governments are the power entities in the world and they're not, and they're victim to that. And I think that documentaries like those documentaries can expose kids to make them question what ... the world basically, everything around them. I mean to expose an idea to a kid, to a Year 12 student, we will never get cure to cancer and we will never get a cure to AIDS. I mean this is what this documentary was saying, and to them, you know students, I mean especially students who know someone who's dying of cancer, that is a huge thing. [...] Also I think that just the way that the documentaries are constructed themselves enables us to sort of question things like the power, like the power of the documentary maker because of course, documentaries are really a text themselves. So okay, yes this documentary is exposing certain truths or ideas to us but shouldn't we be questioning the way that's presented to us as well, because obviously that film maker has their own political agendas. So it goes two ways.</p>		
<p>Based on the voice over narration, do we sympathise for the person being described and the experiences they've gone through?</p>	<p><i>Resource discussion</i></p>	
<p>I basically want reactions from them, so reactions like how does this text enlighten you? How does it make you think about things that you perhaps didn't think about before? How is it exposing you to emotions of anger? Is it making you upset? Why is it making you upset? How is it challenging your values and your attitudes? How is it challenging how you thought the world was before? That sort of thing. So making them think about themselves, about the world, their relationship with the world, power relations that exist, the power of corporations, governments, you know all that sort of stuff. Making them just ... just enabling them to be exposed to things that they weren't exposed to before and then questioning those, and discussing those [...] questioning how those documentaries are working, and that sort of thing, yeah. So basically, empowering them I think is what my main role is, empowering them to question everything in the world. Documentaries allow you to question things in the world because documentaries do that. They question things but at the same time, I want them to question the documentary and how it's been constructed and that sort of thing. Yeah, so to me, it's probably my theoretical approach is about empowerment, I suppose.</p>	<p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
<p>Okay, and then what they do later on is they transfer that information to this second sheet where basically, we're focusing on different meanings, so it's an argument, issue, idea or a question that's actually raised in the documentary. So this one for example, it looks at Australian government corruption and the fact that they're hiding information and suppressing information, and that sort of thing.</p>	<p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
<p>They look at how the viewer's being positioned to respond to the people with the places and the events described based on those techniques and they look at their own personal response based on their own ideologies and that sort of thing.</p>	<p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
<p>So for example, this documentary makes us think about Australia differently because we all assume that</p>	<p><i>Resources</i></p>	

<p>Australia is a place where the government does not try and hide information, they're not as corrupt as they actually are, and this is sort of opening up that whole idea of government corruption and the fact that human rights have been violated and that sort of thing. So basically, how you're positioned to respond to the events and the experiences described and that sort of thing.</p> <p>The last column is looking at how the text challenges or confirms your own experiences or beliefs and ideas about society and culture, or the way society is or the way the country is and the way things happen. So based on your own experiences, how do you respond to this? So you might be able to relate to it quite well because you may be for example, an immigrant who has had relatives or close friends or even yourself has experienced being actually put into a detention centre, or something like that. So therefore, this would ... obviously, you'd be pretty connected to the issues that are being presented within the actual documentary. It may challenge your ideas, so a lot of these students are isolated from reality. [...] We know that because we watch the news but these kids don't. So it's looking at how this text perhaps challenges their initial ideas and beliefs about the government is someone that you can trust. Well, no, they're not. That sort of thing. So it's just sort of looking at how it challenges their knowledge and experiences and values and that sort of thing. And also like their preconceived ideas about society and culture and other societies. [...] So that's really quite confronting for students to see that the conditions that Mohammed was living in, in Australia was basically very similar to the conditions that he was living in a first world country.</p>	<p><i>discussion</i></p> <p><i>Resources</i></p> <p><i>discussion</i></p>	
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Teacher 4

Level I Codes	Question	Level II Codes
<p>Aesthetic references</p> <p>The reason I chose her [Sophie MacNeill's documentary, Mohammed and Juliet] was because she was a very young documentary film maker. I think she's about 19, I think she's about 18 or 19 when she first made this documentary. And so it's very easy for the kids to see the style of documentary that she uses, the kind of techniques that she uses because it's very text book and it's very ... it's very obvious, I suppose, in terms of ... because obviously being young, being an amateur, I suppose, you can see her interviewing techniques are a little bit unpolished, so she doesn't have that artifice, I suppose is what I'm saying. [...] Kurt and Courtney, I like Broomfield's style, because he has that self-reflexive style, I suppose, where he's on the journey and particularly good with young teenagers because it's got that sort of rawness to it. Although the irony of it is, it is pure artifice. And so I like his. And also his subjects are normally quite interesting. Errol Morris, obviously very quirky, very much you can identify the trade marks of his styles, or style. Startup.com I like because again it's raw, it's spontaneous, it's happening as the action goes on, nobody's designed it, there's no structure, there's no narrative,</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Documentary texts: Mohammed and Juliet Kurt and Courtney The Thin Blue Line Supersize Me</p> <p>Mohammed and Juliet uses very easy/obvious techniques (because the filmmaker was young); Broomfield's style is self-reflexive and raw (teenagers enjoy it); Errol Morris' style is very obvious and quirky; Startup.com has a raw style and structure; I look at a range of doco's and</p>

<p>it's just as the action happens, the person's just rolling a very small camera, or it just happens to be in the room.</p> <p>Again, I used a similar method to, I suppose, what I always do which is where I'm looking at a range of documentaries and we're analysing them because they're from all different styles.</p> <p>what I found this year was the level of knowledge I found to be quite inadequate, so I was constantly having to fill up those gaps. So I found I was having to do a lot more stand up teacher talk. Whereas with my other class, I didn't have to do that quite so much because their knowledge was already there, and so therefore they had the words, they had the language,</p> <p>So what I always do in a situation like that is brainstorming, getting them into groups, getting them to talk about, okay, what do you know about documentary, what do you consider are the ... just tell me ... blurt out everything you know about documentary, brainstorming it or discussing with each other and then we put it onto the board. [...] we try to sort of categorise it, put it into categories, so we separate it up into genre, film's language I suppose, issues. [...] Somebody else will talk about music or camera movements, so that will go under style. [...] and very much concentrating on that very first think of film language, let's make sure that we know what film language, let's make sure we can use what terminology we're going to use to discuss the films. [...] and the whole idea of what's the difference between a feature film and a documentary? What do you think is the difference? Do you think there's a different purpose? Do you think there's a different audience? Why is the genre different?</p> <p>So I changed and found that I chose good film makers, people who had specific style, there was a specific filmic language that we could identify</p> <p>My criteria is for a clearly identifiable style where there's definite techniques, definite trade mark, and also I would be looking for something where the kids, students can actually research that film maker as well so that that film maker would have a body of work that they can access, that they can actually watch themselves at home, they can actually research and be able to link it up with the watching of the film. [...] So I tend to choose people like Errol Morris because he's got very definite, identifiable style that the kids can talk about, particularly with something like the Thin Blue Line where he's using the interrator and he does the rashamon effect with all the multiple perspectives rolling into one, which obviously is a form of ... it's his form of narrative. There's a lot of repetition. There's some definite trade marks that the kids can identify, there are, I can see that, his use of light when he uses the flashing lights. Broomfield, I chose him because he has got a very definite presence as a narrator within his film. He's very much somebody who's with the film, going on the journey, self-reflexive, talking to the camera. So that they're very specific things that the students can pick out. And I will also look for films that are very different so that they can then contrast and look at the different styles.</p> <p>there has to be a certain intellectual element within it. Broomfield, I like him because there's that irony too, there's that twist. And obviously the more intelligent kids can get what he's doing.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>8</p> <p>8</p>	<p>analyse the different styles; if the class doesn't have the "language of film" then I need to do more stand-up teacher talk to "fill in the gaps"; get students to brainstorm (to the class board) what they know about documentary film language; ask students to consider the differences between doco and other film genres; <i>now</i> I choose doco's where the filmmaker has an obvious style (we can have success identifying the techniques); students can view other doco's by the same filmmaker (at home) and compare different styles of the different filmmakers looked at in class; doco's have "subliminal" elements that students have to identify the effect of (eg: music); I won't choose a documentary that doesn't have an interesting style or use of techniques – I don't focus on issues anymore, but I used to; now I focus on the text as a genre; the study [that I get students to do] has become more textually detailed, after various PD and self-learning; if I choose more intelligent doco's then the more intelligent students will get something more out of it (eg: Broomfield); [Students respond most to documentaries with] action, fast pace, clear sense of good and bad, sort of the villain, the hero, subjects that are clearly characterised, subjects from their own world – they enjoy Kurt and Courtney & SuperSize Me for this reason, and they don't always enjoy The Thin Blue Line;</p>
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That's a very significant part when I choose a documentary. I look for the techniques, I look for the style. [...] If they don't have interesting style or techniques, then I won't bother to use it. So it's part of a list, but it's very high up on the list. It's a very strong priority.	10	
Well I suppose using music, special effects, editing, the way that certain shots are juxtaposed with other shots, that symbolic level of creation. [...] I've gone very much from an issue sort of narrative based approach to a more visual, stylistic way where I'm looking at the documentary as a specific genre in itself.	10	
I wasn't brought up in a visual age, so also my own knowledge, my own reading of texts, visual texts, my own interest, my own exposure to different documentary film makers, films, professional development things I've read, things I've gone to, new courses of study where viewing is a very specific, separate strand. [...] You know, let's have a listen to this music, let's have a look at that particular camera angle, this particular shot, this particular special effect. So I suppose it's become more fine tuned, it's become more detailed, more texturally detailed than it was before when maybe I looked at it more as a narrative.	11	
[Students respond most to documentaries with] action, fast pace, clear sense of good and bad, sort of the villain, the hero, subjects that are clearly characterised, subjects from their own world.	12	
And again [with Kurt and Courtney], they just love the music, the fast pace, the kind of hand held jerk of the camera, the sense of going on a journey, all of that, those sorts of techniques I think. I think, I mean looking back on it, the Thin Blue Line, I don't know whether I will use it again because ... I mean, I have to cut some of it out when I show it to them because it's very slow and it's very atmospheric. And I think some of them get a bit bored with that.	12	
I suppose the more popular kind of documentaries, the Morgan Spurlock Supersize Me, where it's all ... it's lots of graphics, very fast editing, juxtaposition, music, shocking, things like him vomiting and it's just very ... all of that sort of stuff they seem to love.	12	
I'll do one up on the board, so we'll have film language, written codes, this one ... symbolic, written, audio, technical.	<i>Resources discussion</i>	
I'll get them to do some independent research so that they're researching the documentary film maker, they're also hopefully looking at other documentaries at home.	<i>Resources discussion</i>	
Rhetorical references		
I felt I need to get them to concentrate more on the film language.	5	Essay questions should expect students to articulate <i>how</i> the rhetorical features of the text have persuaded them to accept the argument,
you're not necessarily looking at the language or the words, the spoken words or the written words, you're looking	7	

<p>at the impact that it has on you unconsciously, I suppose, in terms of things like music, editing, graphics, all these sort of subliminal aspects of film that obviously you wouldn't talk about in a novel.</p> <p>I think they [essay questions] should link techniques with a persuasive element of film, the impact that it has on the audience, the emotive effect, the persuasive effect, the way that it's trying to establish its viewpoint or its argument and I think the questions need very much to encourage the students to say how was I persuaded? Not to such an extent where they're actually labelling things like talk about the structure, talk about the special effects, talk about the non-verbal impact. But it should link all those things and obviously in terms of targeting what argument is coming across</p> <p>I suppose [I choose] documentaries I think that have different levels and different layers that can be unpacked and that aren't trite and formulaic. [...] I get very frustrated with things that preach at me and that are just ... you know, you can access the meaning and you just feel like you're being manipulated in a very formulaic kind of way. I like things that sort of send you off on a bit of an intellectual quest.</p> <p>Being able to identify an argument I think is often quite difficult for them. They want to take something at face value, where in fact what you're saying, there's actually irony being used here, he's actually subverting society's values here. So obviously irony and satire is something that's quite difficult I think for young students to access. And as I was saying before, trying to identify an underlying argument instead of just going for the very obvious, that's sort of staring them in the face. And so those are the more subtle, rhetorical features.</p> <p>[If students can't identify the argument, then they can explain how they have responded emotionally] But then saying, well why, what is this person's argument, why are they making you feel this way?</p> <p>I believe that's a very significant part of documentary film analysis, otherwise you may as well just be looking at a book or a short story. That's what ... you need to look at the skill of documentary film making, that ability to entertain, inform, I suppose inspire, through certain techniques, the subtle techniques of subtly influencing people I suppose through emotional impact which that kind of genre is able to do that maybe a written text couldn't.</p> <p>[I have to cut out bits of The Thin Blue Line, and that's a problem because] there are some points where the interviews get ... go very ... go on quite long and you often ... they can't work out why that person has been selected to talk and a relationship between that person and the action and also because he uses so much silence and the lack of narrative intrusion, he's not interpreting for them and he's not directing them or guiding them through the film ... and they often forget ... I mean I find I do that, I need to give it to them a bit, and you sort of think well that is sort of taking away from the truth of that style.</p> <p>So what they're doing is they're taking notes on what they can see in terms of what clothing people are wearing, the colours, the setting, the objects, the body language, the performance, looking at the written codes, looking at what kind of audio codes there are, and then what they're noticing in terms of the technical codes. And then I'll</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>12</p> <p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	<p>although not to the extent where they have to <i>label</i> the rhetorical elements; students have difficulty identifying the underlying argument and the subtle rhetorical techniques such as "irony" and satire that present these arguments; it's important to be able to analyse these aspects of the genre; students need to be able to identify the argument presented so they can analyse <i>why</i> the text is making them respond in some particular way; The Thin Blue Line often presents problems for students to understand/comprehend what's going on because the rhetorical elements are not used directly – they don't guide the viewer directly; after my demonstration of notetaking SWAT codes on one scene, students take notes on the SWAT codes while viewing the doco, and I pause it occasionally and ask for examples of different codes and for the student's interpretation of these codes; then I start asking them <i>why</i> the filmmaker has tried to create that particular interpretation.</p>
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<p>stop them at intervals, we'll discuss it. I'll say okay, can somebody give me some example of the symbolic, we'll discuss it and we'll say okay, what was your interpretation of that, what would you understand, is there a stereotype attached to that, what is this saying about him, what interpretation can we have? He's wearing ... he's got tats, he's got leathers, you know, so we would assume ... the connotations of that would be that maybe he's belongs to a sub-culture of bikie or something like that.</p> <p>I'll take a particular scene and I'll go through an analysis of it with them, a detailed analysis in terms of symbolic written audio technical as a model to show them what they need to do, and then get them to choose another scene and then they'll take the notes and work through it and talk about it in a group of, say, four and then come back to the class and we'll talk about it and then we'll board it with the details. I might do it or I might get somebody up there to do it. And then the interpretation. And then take that interpretation to look at why is he doing this? Why does he want to ... why has he characterised these people in this particular way and those people in this particular way? Are there any kind of connotations attached to the fact that this person is viewed in an office with books behind them and that person is viewed out in the open with lots of leaves and grass and trees and that sort of thing.</p>	<p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
<p>Ethical references</p> <p>[With a different class, when the students had more knowledge] to be able to go into that kind of discussion. And also to be able to investigate the underlying value systems and ideologies that operate within documentaries.</p> <p>Okay, so you're talking about a film has to have ... a documentary, for a documentary to be a documentary it has to be about something meaty like euthanasia, okay, so that'll go under topics, that'll go under issues. [...] And that[discussing the difference between documentary and other visual texts] would then enable me to start them thinking an investigation about ideologies, social value systems, that sort of thing.</p> <p>when I first started teaching, I was very issues ... I would go for an issue first. So I would choose something that had a very specific issue. Like for instance the one I was talking about was a film made by a woman called Olga Frankie about women in Pakistan and it was all about the social inequities that were obviously being put upon them. And so yes, I was very issues oriented. And then I found that that detracted from ... the kids got very distracted from the actual film style itself, so it became more looking at narrative and characters. It became more like a written text kind of situation. [...] then the issues would come out of that [looking at good filmmakers]. Because there's always issues and things. So then later on, I would say, that I probably wasn't looking so much at the issues.</p> <p>students were just talking to me in their essays and in the class discussion in the same way that they would about a book</p> <p>But it should link all those things and obviously in terms of targeting what argument is coming across, what sort of</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p>	<p>A good class can discuss/investigate the underlying value systems (and ideologies) operating within the doco, when brainstorming with the students we might say "for a documentary to be a documentary it has to be about something meaty like euthanasia, okay, so that'll go under topics, that'll go under issues" and this would allow them to start an investigation about ideologies and social value systems; when I first started teaching, I was very issues ... I would go for an issue first. So I would choose something that had a very specific issue – but this distracted from the film style and it became more like looking at a "written text", focusing on narrative and characters; there are always issues anyway (and students can find these to be helpful in linking more than one text in their essays/exam) – this was a problem because students were just writing about issues in their essays; questions need to link the rhetorical argument with the values/ideologies being presented in the argument; Mohammed</p>

<p>social ideologies are probably being perpetuated within that or through that argument. So the social context as well would need to be a part of the question. So social context, ideology</p> <p>Like for instance the Sophie MacNeill, that was a very passionate documentary. It's something as a subject about refugees that she was ... believed in, and that passion came across very strongly in the documentary and it had a very emotive impact on you.</p> <p>[Students also have a] lack of understanding of ... possibly a lack of interest possibly, and apathy about what's going on in the world because a lot of documentary film makers are motivated by a deep need to expose some sort of truth, some sort of ... yeah, create an awareness about what's going on in the world. And for some students who are that way inclined themselves, and that's fine, but there are some who are just very apathetic, not really have a great knowledge of what's going on in the world, so may not see a variety of perspectives.</p> <p>In Year 12 TEE, [if the students can't identify the argument of a documentary] obviously it would be difficult for them to answer the essay questions. So what they could do is they could be identifying the impact, okay, I'm feeling this, this is having this effect upon me, I can see how it's having it.</p> <p>they [students] have a problem with interpreting film language. I find that they tend to be passive viewers. They tend to look at film as something that's purely for entertainment and probably don't ... they have difficulty switching into that mode of let's analyse this.</p> <p>I think lack of knowledge of the world, lack of understanding of a range of perspectives and arguments. Possibly a lack of ability in debating and looking at alternative perspectives,</p> <p>Broomfield I think is very, very persuasive because they see people like Courtney Love and Kurt Cobain and they're obviously of their genre, that era, they can relate to them.</p> <p>[I don't look for themes/issues anymore because] I actually find that once we actually start to look into the documentary, that you'll find common themes, you'll find common issues because obviously when they go in to the exam, it helps them if they've got common themes and common issues that they can link.</p> <p>I suppose that [the place of documentary in English as a discipline] comes back to that sort of old argument of is English about exposing truths in society? And I think documentary is very much about that, it's very much individuals wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards. And it's often a very passionate kind of text form that people go in to because something stimulated them, that they want to express maybe the ... if you like, provide a voice for people who can't speak for themselves which obviously Sophie MacNeill was doing with the refugees, and Olga ... I can't remember her name now, was doing with the women in Pakistan. And to an extent, Morris was doing with that whole idea of truth and justice. So I think it's a really, really essential part of the</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>9</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p>	<p>and Juliet has a strong emotional impact because she's passionate about the topic; I get frustrated with doco's (and other texts) that aren't intelligent and don't have "layers of meaning"; students tend to be "passive viewers" and have difficulty activating the "analysis" mode; doco's often expose the truth about what's going on in the world; is English about exposing truths in society? Doco's certainly do that; many students have a lack of understanding (apathy?) about what's going on in the world; students have a lack of knowledge of the world, lack of understanding of a range of perspectives and arguments. Possibly a lack of ability in debating and looking at alternative perspectives; it's good for students to be able to identify oppression/power-relations in texts, but sometimes they're a bit young for that, so if I teach it I won't teach it as a "theory" but just as "value systems" that we can analyse in the text; students are a bit young for some of the political ideas they're being asked to grasp in the theory of the course; students can relate to Kurt and Courtney because the students know the [musical] genre; individuals [filmmakers] wanting to express a certain truth, a certain belief that they have, through different versions of reality, that they are exposing, challenging, identifying, persuading people towards. And it's often a very passionate kind of text form that people go in to because something stimulated them, that they want to express – this is why doco's are an important part of the curriculum;</p>
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<p>English curriculum, a very essential part of the viewing section of the English curriculum.</p> <p>I think it's also good to see power relations in texts where you can identify oppression, you can identify social disempowerment, all that sort of stuff. But I tend to think that Year 12 students are a bit young for that because I know when I was at university, I mean I was a mature age student having fun with all these theories, but I really don't think I would have been able to do it as a 17 year old. [...] So I won't teach it to them as a theory, but I will talk about it in terms of value systems and I tend to come in from a historical perspective where I would ... my ideal would be to link it with history and look at different historical times and maybe the social values that are coming through there and the impression of certain people, but not be looking at it as a theory as such.</p> <p>[As well as teacher grammar] to also be able to investigate the social context within text and the social ideologies that are operating within texts. But I do think that in today's Year 12 course, I think it's very hard for students of 17 years of age to grasp an awful lot of what they're being asked to grasp, particularly in Lit. I think it's far too difficult for them to understand some of the political nuances that are coming through in some of these theories, because I mean I found them hard when I was at university.</p> <p>[Note sheets] they're taking notes here and then they're making their interpretations on that side. [...] So negative connotations are attached to this character who is all in black, that sort of thing.</p> <p>talk about how that particular documentary film relates to certain issues.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>15</p> <p><i>Resources discussion</i></p> <p><i>Resources discussion</i></p>	
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