Critical Pedagogy and Youth: Accounts of Enactment in Multiliterate Culture

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Abstract

Curriculum and policy documents in Australia, and specifically Queensland, are underpinned by a socially critical agenda which foregrounds the principles of active participation and social justice. The implementation of these curricula requires teachers to employ the methods and approaches of critical pedagogy. What is in question is the capacity of such pedagogical and curriculum approaches to be genuinely transformative such that young people lead lives where social justice and social betterment are paramount. This study seeks to understand the extent to which young people are prepared to invest in such principles when they are part of a choice generation, with its focus on lifestyle and consumerism.

The study focuses on the accounts of a group of high school students for whom emancipation is not a key issue. These accounts are contextualised within the broader social discourses that influence the choices made by these young people. The discourse worlds that are evident in their accounts include youth culture, schooling and broader society. These discourse worlds have been captured as instances by using the participants’ multimodal texts as prompts for learning conversations, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. They have been interpreted within a (critical) poststructuralist framework, whereby the transformative possibilities of critical theory could be utilised, viewed through a poststructural lens. The key analytical foci involve the processes of subjectification, and the role of power and hegemony in the heteroglossic lives of these young people.

The data were analysed using an approach that is informed by the tradition of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This is a multidisciplinary approach that enables critical engagement with questions of power and subjectivity, while at the same time paying close attention to the specificity of text.

The study illuminates the negotiations of these young people as they traverse the complex terrain of their worlds which comprise competing and contradictory discourses of youth, schooling and society. The visual metaphor of a kaleidoscope has been used to (re)present the multifarious nature of both the study itself, and the worlds of the youth participants.
The findings from this study indicate that these young people show evidence of achieving the socially critical outcomes which are embedded in their school programs. However, their accounts show little evidence of transforming such outcomes into everyday practices or performances of emancipatory participation. Contradictions in the discourses of schooling have been made visible through the findings in this study. It is concluded that even though schools (as illustrated at the site of this study) may underpin their curriculum with the ideals of active participation for social change; other more potent neo-liberal discourses negate such ideals in the enactment of such programs.
DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed

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Mary Elizabeth Ryan

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Date
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Part A

The Study as a Kaleidoscope

This study is concerned with multiplicity; from the various modes through which we make meaning; to the multiple lived experiences, subjectivities and constructions of youth. Bakhtin’s notion of ‘heteroglossia’ whereby our understandings and our articulations of them through language and text are constituted by a multitude of intersecting ideas from ourselves and from others, is integral to the performance of this study. I have chosen to use a visual metaphor to represent the study, which is indicative of the visual landscapes within which the participants of this study live their lives. I am guided by the idea of artistic forms of research (for example Diamond & Mullen, 1999a; Jipson & Paley, 1997; Mullen, 1999) which seek to interrupt our experiences so that multi-layered meaning-making is foregrounded. Hence, I employ this metaphorical strategy to stimulate the reader to approach this thesis with difference and complexity in mind; and to highlight the constructedness and incompleteness of this (re)presentation. Foucault (1977) used the extended metaphor of the ‘carousel’ as the Panopticon so that issues of power and dominance could be explored as dynamics within everyday contexts. So too, the use of the kaleidoscope as a metaphor for this study has prompted me to think in different ways about the intricate relationships of power and regulation that operate in schools and in broader society.

The kaleidoscope is often associated with a childhood toy or optical device which can be manoeuvred to create new and different patterns and colour combinations. The metaphor of the kaleidoscope has been variously used in different texts and contexts to denote multiple possibilities or interpretations, complexity and change. I describe some of these examples, and then I explain the significance of the kaleidoscope for this study. One of my own memories of the use of the kaleidoscope was in popular culture from the Sixties (albeit I discovered it some years later), in the song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* by The Beatles. They use the line ‘the girl with kaleidoscope
eyes’ in a song which has been arguably described as signifying hallucinogenic drug use. Nevertheless, the use of the kaleidoscope denotes many possibilities not only for ‘the girl’, but also for the listener. The kaleidoscope has also been used in children’s fiction (Farjeon, 1986) to denote the fragments of the main character’s life; as the name of a play (Flynn, undated) which incorporates eight slice-of-life scenes for teens to indicate their complicated lives; to describe readings in education from multiple perspectives (Ryan & Cooper, 1988); as the name of a user interface for Macintosh shareware, which allows numerous screens, shapes and colours to be displayed at one time; and as the name of various other organisations such as a youth centre focusing upon different sexual and gender identities (Kaleidoscope Youth Centre), and a marketing communications company (Kaleidoscope Marketing Communications) specialising in creative, multimedia presentations. This linking of previously separated understandings (Mullen & Diamond, 1999) within this study has enabled me to restructure concepts and actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) as I search for a way to (re)present the study (see Figure 1 on p. 62 for my own visual patterning).

The kaleidoscope in this study signifies multiplicity and complexity within the worlds of the youth participants, and also reflects the various interpretations and pathways that the reader is invited to explore. More specifically, I see the concept of the ‘pattern’ that can be created within the kaleidoscope as signifying the intersecting discourse worlds of the participants. The idea of a ‘pattern’ suggests a design or a model (Delbridge et al., 2001), and within this study, I have used an overall organising design based around the discourse worlds that each of the participants inhabits – their worlds of youth, school and society. My use of the term discourses throughout the thesis is consistent with Foucault’s (1972) conception that discourses constitute social practices, knowledges, subjectivities and the power relations within them. They comprise the body, the emotions and both the conscious and unconscious mind of the subjects within them.

Each of the participants (or indeed any youth) do not experience these discourse worlds in the same way; hence the moveability of the kaleidoscope denotes the differences of lived experiences, performances of self and subjectivities of youth as they shift their perceptions and priorities in the slippery terrain of their lives. The multitude of colours and shapes that is apparent in the kaleidoscope represents the many different texts,
contexts and cultural artefacts with which these participants engage, some of which are the same for their peers, and some of which are different.

Chapter One introduces the study and provides an overview of the thesis.
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Researching and Understanding Youth

Within sociology, youth and teenagers have only since the late 1920s been constructed as a group with a separate identity that moves away from childhood, yet is not quite adult (Hebdige, 1988). Youth has historically been described in many ways, including wayward, troublesome, fun, emotional, spontaneous and hormonal (Featherstone, 1992; Hebdige, 1988; Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Lesko, 2001; White & Wyn, 2004). Definitions of youth are diverse and ambiguous, as James (1986) points out, the only boundaries which define teenagers or youth, are boundaries of exclusion which define what they are not, what they cannot do or what they cannot be. James cites some examples of this, which can be found in legal classifications such as the age of being able to drink alcohol, drive, consent to sexual intercourse, all of which can be at different ages, and are context and gender specific. The use of physical age as an indicator is problematic in that it denies individuality of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical growth, and it patronises youth as not having any inherent ‘value’ other than their yet to be completed process of ‘becoming adult’ (Soares, 2000). They don’t really belong anywhere - they are denied access to the adult world in many ways, yet they distance themselves from childhood (Frankenberg, 1992; Pais, 2003; Sibley, 1995).

A common thread through various descriptions and definitions of youth is opposition. The sense of ‘otherness’ or individuality runs deep through the culture of youth, and it often turns adult surveillance into a pleasure of being watched and noticed (Grace & Tobin, 1997; Hebdige, 1988; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Generally, youth are brought to our attention when they upset the equilibrium of society, or cause a ‘problem’, and induce media outrage about delinquency or difficulty. Media texts such as photographs in newspapers and magazines, television, movies and internet sites, construct youth in particular ways, depending on the purpose and audience of the publication, however they are almost always portrayed as independent from adult culture in some way, and therefore ‘othered’ in society.
Representations of youth in the institutional domain of ‘youth studies’ according to Kelly (2000), must also be interrogated and problematised in terms of their abstract nature, and of ‘the implication of these processes in the regulation of populations of young people; populations which are rendered knowable in all their diversity through the activities of those who do youth studies’ (p. 302). Whilst I am cognizant of Kelly’s warning about the attempt of youth studies to ‘know and manage the uncertain in the name of certainty’ (2000 p. 312), I do not attempt in this study to render the worlds of these young people as ‘certain’. I seek instead to understand how the youth participants negotiate their uncertain worlds. Moreover, my investment in the emancipatory agenda is not an instrument of individualised regulation as warned against by Kelly (2000), but rather as a way to problematise the subjectification processes of youth, so that they may better understand their own choices with regards to a ‘common good’ or social justice in society.

1.2 The Multiliterate Worlds of Youth

For youth in contemporary, globalised society, the struggle for control over their lives involves creation of new meanings through new texts, new literacies and new technologies that are often largely unfamiliar to adults. New meanings for old words, the creation of hybrid texts (blending of more than one genre), hybrid languages and explorations into the electronic and digital world, are some of the ways that youth create spaces that attempt to exclude adults and/or to signify particular youthful ways of acting. Although most schools now embrace new information technologies and embed them into the curriculum, schools remain ‘relatively marginalised from kids’ exploration of and growing expertise in the digital world’ (Bagnall, 2000 p. 26).

The term ‘multiliteracies’ focuses on ‘the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioural, and so on. This is particularly important in the mass media, multimedia, and in an electronic hypermedia’ (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000 p. 5). The social aspects of literacies and texts are fore-grounded in this notion of multiliteracies, and membership of particular social groups is often marked through particular literate practices within these groups. Practices continually change and
evolve through the community of users, a phenomenon which is intensified within our
digitised, globalised world, therefore adults may find it increasingly difficult to ‘keep
abreast’ of the discourses of youth (Luke & Luke, 2001). The power that this
generates for youth may allow them some control over their lives and life choices.

1.3 Context and Rationale for the Study

This study uses Foucault’s (1972; 1977) theory of discourse to describe the many
spheres within which young people interact. A key discourse world for the
participants in this study is enacted at school. Thus I draw upon texts throughout this
thesis which are specifically constituted in Queensland (the context of this study).
English Syllabus documents in Queensland are underpinned by an emancipatory
agenda; in particular, the three principles of social justice – diversity, equity and
supportive environments. These principles also underpin newer reform here
(Education Queensland, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). This means that Queensland as a state
is committed to an agenda that supposedly does not eschew the realities of a market
economy in a globalised world. Indeed all syllabus documents in Queensland have
four cross curricula priorities which include a ‘Futures’ orientation. In this sense the
acknowledgement is made that within an uncertain world, our role is to ensure that
everyone has a ‘social future’ of participation rather than exclusion. Educators are
called upon to achieve this through a pedagogy which is immersed in the language of
critical theory and emancipation. These syllabus priorities have led to recent highly
vocal criticisms in the national media that ‘the traditional academic curriculum has
been jettisoned for ideology’ (Donnelly, 2006), and it becomes evident that pursuing
an emancipatory agenda is a difficult, contested and visible task.

To further complicate the emancipatory goals of the curriculum, Kenway and Bullen
(2001 p. 151) refer to the ‘uneven hybridization of education, entertainment and
advertising’ (p. 151), where education is being subsumed by consumer-media culture,
and students expect, and get, little gratification from regulative educational contexts
(Bernstein, 1996; Blackman, 1998) such as school. It may be possible that students in
the middle and senior years simply ‘play the game’ of schooling between 9am and
3pm, then invest heavily in their own cultural capital and life politics as an expression
of their salient priorities. I explore these issues with students in Year Nine (middle
years) and Year Eleven (senior years) at a Queensland state high school. These participants are white, middle class students for whom emancipation is not a key issue (See Chapter Six for more information on participants).

This study has been influenced by the work of Kenway and Bullen (2001) and others (Brodhagen & Apple, 2004; Green, 2003; Kellner, 2002; Sadowski, 2003), who see critical pedagogy as essential, yet acknowledge the difficulty in encouraging youth to be critical of those practices in which they have a personal investment. Multiliteracies practices using new technologies can be harnessed as incentives for enacting social change, rather than simply as exclusionary devices against adults. Green (2003), Sadowski (2003) and Brodhagen and Apple (2004) also suggest that problematising one’s own investments and place in the world is integral to contemporary critical pedagogy. Attempts to enact a critical agenda with young people must be situated within the intersecting, often contradictory discourses of youth, schooling and society. These broad issues frame the context within which this study is located.

1.4 Research Issues and Questions

This study seeks to arrive at some understanding of a central issue:

How do contemporary youth account for their enactment of the tenets of critical pedagogy in their multiliterate lives?

This issue is explored through a series of more specific questions, which relate to self-identification of the multiliterate practices of youth (question one), how and why they make the choices they do, to determine the possible influence of schooling and critical pedagogy (questions two and three), and whether the analysis of multi-modal self-narratives, and collective memory work (Haug, 1987) prompt a resistant reading of their own investments and practices (question four). This final question in some ways is a testing of a methodology which may have implications for the classroom.

The specific questions are:

1. What are the embodied multiliterate practices that these young people account for in their talk?
2. Do these young people intellectualise the youth culture and embodied practices that they account for in their everyday lives?

3. How are the participants’ embodied subjectivities seen to be shaped through bodily practices of multiliteracies, and through positioning of self and others?

4. What forms of resistance to hegemonic discourses are evidenced through these accounts at this institutional site, and how do they impact on the enactment of a critical agenda?

As researcher, I also figure prominently as a participant. My background in literacy pedagogy and my own engagement in popular culture influence the way that I frame this study, the way that I make meaning from the data, and the way that I (re)present my findings. Therefore my role is also be fore-grounded through the use of a personal tenor, through my reflective notes at the end of each part of the thesis, through my multi-linear emphasis of the constructed nature of the research, and through the explicit descriptions of my role within the methodology in Chapter Six.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in three main ways: First, through the methods employed to collect the data; secondly through the problematising of the discourses surrounding the enactment of the critical agenda; and finally through the simultaneous analysis of macro and micro discourses as they emerged in the study.

Inevitably (and ironically) much of the research into youth culture and practices is written from the perspective of adult researchers analysing and making sense of what youth do or say. Youth perspectives are largely absent (Kenway & Bullen, 2001), even though students have perhaps the strongest interest in the adaptation of schools to a changing environment, yet perhaps the least influence over the course of educational change. Schools could learn much from talking more – and from listening more – to students (Rudduck, Chaplain, & Wallace, 1996). This study on the other hand, foregrounds the voices of the youth participants and their engagement
in cultural practices and multiliteracies. It does this through their self-analysis of multi-modal texts that they produced for assessment at school; and through their sharing of personal artefacts to reflect their investments in life, their interests, values and everyday practices. Rather than simply asking youth about their personal investments, I encouraged them to draw upon cultural artefacts appropriated from their lived experiences to prompt more thoughtful self-accounts (see Chapter Six). I acknowledge that my accounts in this study are necessarily seen from an adult perspective as I produce this document for the purposes of being awarded a doctoral degree; however, I have endeavoured to (re)present the data in a multi-linear form, so as to disrupt the ‘authority’ of my voice (see below for more detail).

This study is also significant in that it problematises the capacity of syllabus documents to deliver their emancipatory goals in order to influence students for whom emancipation is not a key issue. The conflicting discourses within the syllabus are explored in relation to the data generated by the youth participants and other intersecting discourses, so that the enactment of the critical agenda can be understood as a complex process. For youth who have changing priorities and who are immersed in the neoliberal discourses of individual success and self-fulfilment (along with popular media discourses that denigrate social justice and emancipation as curriculum objectives) the critical agenda is both uncertain and unpredictable. In this way, the study is significant not only for schools, teachers and education authorities, but also for me personally as an educator committed to a critical agenda.

Finally, this study is significant in terms of the conduct and (re)presentation of the data analysis in Part D of this thesis. I have consciously oscillated between micro and macro elements of the transcripts generated within the study. I have also simultaneously woven through my analysis of these ‘local’ data; a micro and macro analysis of ‘global’ texts which themselves form part of the macro discourses which influence the study. I have chosen a pastiche of texts for this purpose, which illustrates some of the competing macro discourses of contemporary society within which the youth participants, and this study, are a part. I have taken this hybridised approach so that the multi-faceted worlds of the youth participants can be reflected. To this end, I have created links between linguistic elements, contexts and surrounding discourses of these data from the youth participants and the macro texts.
that I have chosen to weave throughout. I consciously recognise that ‘any form of representation serves to filter, organise, and transform experience into the meanings that make up and display our knowledge’ (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b p. 23), therefore I have endeavoured to (re)present the data in this study in ways that challenge some of the dominant forms of empirical research, as I foreground the participatory nature of my role as researcher, and invite the reader into the analysis to disrupt a ‘univocal authority’ (Lather, 1991b p. 91).

1.6 The Performance of the Study

The process of conducting and (re)presenting this study has been a performance of self for me as researcher. My decisions and actions must necessarily be accounted for in this study as it has been guided by the theoretical perspective of (critical) poststructuralism. Poststructural theory is useful as it allows me to call attention to the unmarked and invisible. In particular, I take up the challenge that poststructural theory makes to the structuralist notion of ‘idealised, given social constructs’ that would always be reproduced by subjects to secure their eventual subordination, as opposed to complex, historically produced constructs that were constantly being re-made and produced anew (Haug, 1987). My use of the terms (re)production and (re)produce within this thesis suggest that the youth in this study do not simply reproduce the social and institutional structures within which they live. Rather, they negotiate, re-make and re-shape practices, beliefs and strategies that are certainly influenced by broader social discourses, yet are often paradoxical and highly individualised. Further, I have sought to realise the potential to be politically generative and socially transformative (Weedon, 1997) with regards to the civic participation of young people. Within the next section, I explain the approach I have taken to this thesis, so that my motivations are made visible to the reader.

1.6.1 A Multi-linear Approach

The conduct of this thesis has not taken a linear trajectory recommended by authorities such as some national research councils. They suggest that an early aim is to complete a literature review, before describing methods and collecting and analysing data (Silverman, 2000). Rather, I have taken a multi-linear approach whereby I have oscillated between relevant literature, the methods, and the data as a
way of maintaining relevance, and to ensure the appropriateness of the methods for
the issues I was pursuing. Hence, the study has been reflexive in the sense that I have
responded to issues that have arisen during my data collection and initial data
analysis, by reconfiguring some of these methods. For example, while I did not
originally intend to conduct separate interviews with the two participant groups, the
initial interviews revealed that the different priorities of the two groups necessitated
separate interviews so that such differences could be explored further without undue
influence of the other group. Similarly, as the data analysis unfolded, I found that I
needed to access new and different literature to help me understand and account for
the emerging discourses within the data. It was only after an initial analysis of the
data transcripts, that I made the decision to weave ‘macro’ texts through my analysis
to illustrate the conflicting discourses that were emerging. I also reconfigured the
organisation of the thesis during the analysis, as major discourses (Foucault, 1972)
became apparent. The youth in this study indicated their engagement in three broad
discourse areas in their lives.

1.6.2 Organising Discourses
My initial analyses of the data transcripts revealed three intersecting, overlapping and
often conflicting discourse areas within the accounts of the youth participants. These
were: discourses of youth; intentional discourses of schooling; and discourses of
society. The discourses of youth included talk about their own practices, investments,
values and beliefs; and about their peers and influential adults. The intentional
discourses of schooling included talk about subject hierarchy; curriculum issues
including intellectualisation; school performance and expectations; positioning of
teachers and students; and collusionary behaviour. The notion of collusionary
behaviour is based on the work of Fuller and Lee (1997), whereby these students draw
upon the appropriate resources of articulation to perform successfully at school. The
discourses of society included talk about multiliterate practices; social issues;
positioning of and by parents; and societal expectations of teenage behaviour and
characteristics.

I decided to use these three distinct, yet overlapping discourse areas as organising
areas both within my data analysis in Part D, and within the review of the literature in
Part B. They were for me the most promising organisers to ensure relevance in my
discussions. In the next section I provide a brief overview of the remaining chapters in this thesis, each of which concludes with my reflections as a way of drawing attention to the participatory (Smith, 2005) and reflexive nature of this study.

1.7 **Overview of the Thesis**

The thesis is comprised of five parts, which collectively contain nine chapters. Part B – **Organising Discourses: Relevant literature** includes Chapters Two, Three and Four. This part focuses upon the literature that informs my understandings of the intersecting discourse worlds of the youth participants. Chapter Two positions the discourses of youth as complex and manifold, and questions the disjuncture between ideals of civic participation and the enactment of such ideals by youth. Chapter Three explores the conflicting discourses of schooling that permeate educational policy, curricula and schools which can de-rail the critical agenda, and Chapter Four describes the discourses of society, including the impact of broader social, political, technological and corporate change on the work of schools and on individual performances of self.

Part C – **The Research Process** comprises Chapters Five and Six, and explains the theoretical influences and the methods utilised within the study. Chapter Five focuses upon the theoretical perspective of (critical) poststructuralism and argues for a ‘complimentary thesis’ of such disparate theories. Chapter Six explains the underlying methodologies including the ‘study of instances’ and the analytic design of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); it also pragmatically outlines the procedural methods undertaken within the study.

Part D – **Pastiche of (Re)presentation** includes Chapters Seven and Eight, which convey the story of the research using a pastiche of texts, including the local data transcripts, global macro texts, visual texts and my textual analyses. Such an assemblage reflects the kaleidoscopic nature of the study and invites alternative readings. Chapter Seven outlines the story of the Year Eleven participants, whilst Chapter Eight describes the accounts of the Year Nine participants.

Part E – **Discussion and Implications** utilises the visual metaphor of the kaleidoscope once again to draw the study together as a multi-faceted interplay of
discourses within which discernible but shifting patterns are evident. Chapter Nine therefore, reiterates significant aspects of the study, and addresses the research questions through comparison and contrast of the data analyses as understood through reference to the literature which has informed the study. Finally, I offer some concluding thoughts and recommendations about the implications of this study for educators, education authorities and researchers.
Part B

Organising Discourses: Relevant Literature

Introduction
Part B of the thesis outlines the contextual issues in the literature that inform this study. This part is comprised of three chapters which reflect the organising discourses of the thesis. These are: The discourses of youth, the intentional discourses of schooling, and the discourses of society.

Chapter Two - Discourses of Youth begins with an examination of the literature dealing with the nature of youth and its culture. It explores the labelling of youth, and problematises the linear notions of youth in transition. This chapter also describes some of the ways in which young people construct self and others, and critiques the depiction of youth in popular culture, together with the unitary positionings that serve to limit and marginalise young people. Various influences are described within the spaces that young people play out their lived subjectivities and cultural investments, and finally the notions of civic participation and resistance are examined in relation to young people.

Chapter Three – Intentional Discourses of Schooling begins by situating the discourses of schooling within Queensland policy documents, juxtaposed against current popular discourses which serve to undermine such policies. The ‘phases of schooling’ that are relevant to the participants in this study (middle and senior years) are examined in terms of how they position students. This chapter then outlines curriculum frameworks that specifically inform the study, including a review of the literature regarding literacy as an intellectualised practice, along with the notion of critical pedagogy as a transformative practice. Queensland curriculum documents are specifically referred to in this chapter as they discursively constitute (Foucault, 1977) the intentional discourses of schooling for the participants in this study who attend a Queensland state high school. The anticipated emancipatory outcomes of such curriculum frameworks are juxtaposed against life politics (Giddens, 1991; Tucker, 1998) as I explore the enactment of a critical agenda by youth in a ‘choice generation’
(Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Finally, this chapter explores some of the difficulties surrounding a curriculum framework that on one hand seeks to promote a critical, emancipatory agenda, whilst at the same time, is delivered through school systems that are steeped in modernity, regulatory behaviour and institutional power (Giroux, 1996).

Chapter Four – **Discourses of Society** explores a basic underpinning of this thesis; that we live in an age of multiliteracies. Therefore this chapter locates the study within this context. This includes an examination of the meanings and practices associated with multiliteracies as interpreted for this study. The notion of a changing society and a new work order are explored, including current attention to race relations in Australia as a ‘politics of resentment’ (Singh, 2005) which serves as a refuge from the uncertainties of globalisation. This chapter provides a way of situating this study within these broader societal discourses so that some understanding can be made of the choices made by youth and by schools to produce legitimated performances.

It is acknowledged that these discourse areas intersect and overlap, so any separation is always artificial; however, for the purposes of highlighting pertinent influences on this study, I have (re)presented them in separate chapters.
Chapter Two

Discourses of Youth

2.1 Constructions of Youth

Historically, the term ‘youth’ has been variously constructed as a category of people who are not children, yet neither are they adults. One of the problems of this definition of youth is that it is not clear exactly when one passes from childhood to youth or indeed from youth to adulthood. Jones (1988) argued that youth could not be seen as a homogenous or static group, but that ‘youth’ should be conceptualised as an age-related process, with an emphasis on the different experiences of different social groups as they pass through the transitions of youth to adult. Wyn and White (1997) suggest that ‘youth’ is a socially constructed term, and whilst it is multifarious and moveable, it is a useful construct in terms of understanding the intersections and processes of change in society. They see ‘youth’ as a relational concept, ‘which refers to the social processes whereby age is socially constructed, institutionalised and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways’ (p. 11).

Soares (2000) agrees that the concept of youth is a social one, and that it changes as modern societies evolve. He argues that the traditional concept of youth as a passage or transition between childhood and adulthood is ‘falling apart’ (p.210) and that youth can no longer be defined only in terms of age or stage of schooling. Accordingly, it has become more difficult to ascertain when ‘youth’ begins or ends, or even exists for some. Soares (2000) uses the example of child prostitution to illustrate the blurred nature of contemporary age brackets from childhood to adulthood. Furlong (2000) similarly dismisses the usefulness of ‘youth’ as a distinct life phase, as adults strive to maintain ‘youthful’ qualities and appearances. ‘Youth’ or ‘youthfulness’ constitutes a much sought-after image in popular culture, where popular magazines, television shows, advertisements, movies and other highly proliferated forms of media tout the ‘fountain of youth’ image as the object of desire. Children’s consumer culture also shows that children or ‘tweens’ (7-13 year olds) are targeted as a viable consumer group at the age of seven years old (Allison, 2004), which increasingly blurs the lines between childhood and youth. In this sense, generational attributes are also
becoming more blurred, as people carry ‘youthful’ habits and attitudes right into their twenties, thirties and beyond. Within this study, which posits the performances of self within intersecting discourse worlds as multi-linear or kaleidoscopic, the labelling of generations and the notion of ‘life stages’ as a linear process is, as Soares (2000) suggests, inadequate.

2.1.1 Linear Transitions and the Labelling of Generations
The increasing complexity of society, and consequently of life courses or pathways, means that a linear view of the life trajectory is no longer appropriate (Pais, 2000; 2003). Intersecting discourse worlds of youth, schooling and society for young people today often involves negotiating incompatible choices, and as such, the notion of uncertainty is a defining feature of their lives. Such destabilised and less predictable (Côté, 2002b) life pathways mean that young people must continually make choices about what is salient for them at particular times (Wright, Macdonald, Wyn, & Kriflik, 2005). Sometimes such choices may be at odds with the expected attributes or behaviours of the ‘phase of life’ that is applied to them by adults and society, and as such they are marginalised or further tagged as ‘problem’ cases. Social, cultural, economic and institutional factors can influence their ‘performances of self’ (Threadgold, 1997). Hence the labelling of distinct life phases which assumes homogeneity and similar trajectories through life, needs to be considered in more wide-ranging ways. According to Soares (2000), ‘a vision which sees development in linear terms is incapable of understanding processes, differences, and particularities’ (p. 209). This suggests that a multi-linear approach to concepts of youth is required. Pais (2000; 2003) sees ‘the line’ as a visual metaphor for traditional linear methods of understanding life. He calls for a post-linear approach, and hints at various visual metaphors to replace ‘the line’, such as the ‘maze’, ‘comic strip with its discontinuous iconic images’, ‘roller-coaster’ and ‘yo-yo’, or as I suggested earlier in Part A of this thesis, a kaleidoscope.

The view of ‘youth’ as a transition phase is also problematic. It assumes that there is no ‘present’ for youth, ignoring that this point in their lives is ‘full of vitality, the result of a multiplicity of past decisions, shaping a chaotic present and an uncertain… future’ (Soares, 2000 p.211). In society just as adulthood is not positioned as a ‘transition’ to old age, so too ‘youth’ should not be constructed as transitory, as
though real meaning or purpose will not be realised until one is deemed by an unknown authority as having reached ‘adulthood’.

The history of labelled generations includes a more recent term of the ‘Y Generation’, born between 1980 and 1995 (also referred to as the Echo Boomers), and comprising a demographic almost as large as the post-war Baby Boomers (Kellner, 1997; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). The use of ‘conceptually dubious labels’ such as these which are usually applied by adults rather than derived from young people (Wyn & Dwyer, 2000 p. 153), can also trivialise the diverse experiences of youth. For example, a Time magazine article (Wallis, Cole, Steptoe, & Sturmon Dale, 2006) coins a new label for the current generation as ‘gen m’ or the multi-tasking generation, which assumes that all young people simultaneously absorb several media at the same time, on a regular basis. Such broad-sweeping categorisations are not indicative of all youth; however, it is useful to consider the specific social and economic contexts of these times, so that the lives of those generations within them can be situated in these broader contexts.

The focus for analysis of this generation (born 1980 to 1995) is generally their identity as potential consumers, and particularly of technology. They are characterised as having more money than previous generations, being more consumption oriented, and more sophisticated in their tastes, aspirations and shopping skills (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Similar to this generation, Mackay (1997) describes the generation born in the 1970s and beyond as the Options Generation, who respond to the world as they find it, and are not anxious about rapid change or social destabilization because they have been brought up on change and adaptation, and consequently they are fluid and patient, keeping options open, and remaining non-committal. Mackay suggests that this generation resists conformity and generalisations about them as a group, yet as Kenway and Bullen (2001) suggest, they are probably more dependent on parents, education and welfare, as employment is not readily gained. This generation constructs its identity through image and style, so they are ripe for marketing strategies, and are not afraid to explore new personae through technology. They have developed particular cultures of youth that they invest in, in the various spheres of their lives, including home, school and society, and they
are not afraid to voice opinions about how they are constructed by others, and how they construct self.

2.1.2 Youth Constructions of Self and Others
The subjectivities of youth are constructed through intersections of the material and the discursive in their situated discourse worlds. Therefore youth perceptions of self and other can not be taken as ‘normal’ or ‘natural’, but rather as products of their elaborate social negotiations which are infused with emotions (de Castro, 2004) and which are subject to notions of power, regulation, desire, dominance and exploitation. Butler (1993) takes the view that identities, which are incessantly contested, reconstituted, ambiguous and aligned, are constituted by a process of exclusion. That is, the human self is produced and understood by ‘what it is not’, by that which is ‘other’, and is therefore bound by ‘otherness’. As the self is confronted by new and different situations and material or human resources, it must necessarily be renegotiated and reaffirmed; therefore the subjectification process is significant in shaping the ways that youth position self and others through their talk and their actions. De Castro’s (2004) study conducted in five schools in Brazil found three dimensions associated with children’s and youth’s discourses about self and others, these included: A supplementary identity, where a perfect image is posited as a stereotype against which to evaluate self and others; an exclusion of difference, where notions of self are clear-cut and are highly valued at the expense of ‘others’; and image as persuasive and illusory, where one can be misjudged on the basis of superficial assessment such as how they look. These dimensions can also be found in popular culture, where youth are constructed in value-laden ways, and more specifically as is shown in this study, where evaluations of self and others are constantly re-negotiated and often superficial.

2.1.3 Popular Culture Constructs Youth
With the advent of the youth consumer market, and youth as a category distinct from childhood and adulthood, media texts also began to portray youth as a group. Popular culture texts carry ideological messages which are often implicit, contradictory and manipulative in their construction of youth and youth behaviour (Giroux, 1996). Kanpol (1997) identifies various constructions of youth through television and cinema texts, including:

- Succumbing to capitalistic virtues
• Nerd
• Agents of innocence
• The depiction of being number one
• The spokes(man) of youth justice
• The mediator between working and upper-middle class life
• Nostalgic
• Upcoming yuppie

He points out that such portrayals represent common desires and interests that perpetuate hegemonic notions and colonise identity patterns within the youth market. Giroux (1996) explores the role of film in pointing not only to economic and social conditions at work in the formation of youth, but also to the depiction of sensibilities and moods of youth. He suggests that many films engage in a politics of despair, as they depict youth with no sense of hope, and with no aspirations for the future. It presents a ‘slacker culture’ of consumerism, rather than youth as social subjects. Youth in this scenario are both overwhelmed and captivated by the media and future technologies, and they are drawn in by consumerism and brand name culture.

2.1.4 Marginalisation of Youth: From Unitary to Multiple Constructions

Popular discourses of youth include the dominant representation of youth as ‘troubled’ or ‘troubling’ in terms of social problems such as drug abuse, crime, teenage pregnancy, truancy, sexuality, racial and ethnic relations, and sometimes spirituality and religion (Griffin, 2001; White & Wyn, 2004). Such a discourse of ‘troubled’ youth tends to use particular ‘markers’ as signifiers of possible deviant or troubling behaviour, and fails to consider the intricacies that shape the subjectivities of youth. These ‘markers’ include class, race, ethnicity, gender, and location, and whilst these facets of identity must be considered, they should not be taken in isolation, without regard for the diverse, intersecting aspects which continuously shape and form the subjectivities of youth. For example, whilst class is an issue that permeates the lived experiences of youth, alone it cannot explain the disparate opportunities and pathways that are offered to, or chosen by youth. Whilst unemployment, for example, is a serious issue for working class youth, not all working class youth are unemployed, and therefore their experiences of class will be different (Griffin, 2001). There are also differences in the impact of class on youth
who are employed. Youth are over-represented in the casualised labour market, which affects their job security and limits their income source, and may mean that illegality is far more secure and satisfying (White & Wyn, 2004). For those who do have full-time employment, for example in Lindsay’s (2004) study on female hairdressers, class has an impact on their leisure activities whereby they work hard in stressful conditions, and then party hard in particular ‘working class’ venues.

Similarly, when considering race and ethnicity, it is important to see such facets not as the defining features of identity, but rather as aspects of influence on the subjectification process (Morris, 2005). Palmer and Collard (1993) found that popular and media constructions of Indigenous youth tended to focus on crime-related issues, whilst in academic writing, Indigenous people were positioned as passive victims. Such binary representations fail to consider the diverse contributions that Indigenous persons make to society. White and Wyn (2004) suggest that it is often assumed that Indigenous or ethnic minority youth have similar interests, opportunities and experiences; a view which does not consider differences in tribal or family connections, affiliations, language, relationships between generations or immediate social contexts. Rather than viewing aspects of race or ethnicity as ‘the’ defining characteristic of particular groups, it must be considered how identity is represented and used in diverse and strategic ways, depending upon different contexts, relationships (Noble, Poynting, & Tabar, 1999) and intersecting discourse worlds.

Issues of gender and sexuality are often framed by notions of ‘difference’ or ‘other’ (Blackman, 1998), where the body is used as a marker for labelling oppositional understandings of social groups such as ‘male’ or ‘female’ (Young, 1990). As Walkerdine (1999) argues, unitary categories of ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ are social constructs, and should not be used as defining markers of subjectivity. Instead, the intricate and often paradoxical facets of identity (of which gender is one), must be considered. Young (1990) suggests that such reductionist or unitary views of social groups perpetuate inequality because they fail to recognise the differences and specificities of the individuals within such groups. There is also evidence that many youth (including some of the participants in this study) invest in notions of individual agency, and hence downplay the impact of gender in their lives (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001; Roberts & Sachdev, 1996; Willis, 1998).
The complexity of raced, classed and sexed bodies (Britzman, Santiago-Vallos, Jimenez-Munoz, & Lamash, 1995) needs to be explored in any study about youth, as their subjectivities or positionalities are seen as unpredictable and continually negotiated (Griffin, 2001; Luke & Luke, 2001; Pais, 2003; White & Wyn, 2004). Within this kaleidoscope of negotiations, young people’s priorities change at different times in their lives and in different contexts (Wright et al., 2005), depending on the salient influences. In the next section I explore some of these influences on youth as they negotiate such multi-linear subjectification processes.

2.2 Influences on Youth

Youth are influenced and shaped by diverse interactions within their intersecting discourse worlds of peer culture, schooling and society. Quart (2003 p. xxvi) refers to ‘the unbearable commercialization of youth’, which frames the consumption of objects, practices and spaces (Russell & Tyler, 2005). In this section I explore corporate and peer influences on youth, along with the influential spaces of home and school.

2.2.1 Corporate Pedagogues

The entertainment industry provides people with a seductive means of escape and pleasure in today’s fast-paced world. Within education circles, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between formal education and entertainment, as both have melded into one another (Giroux, 2000b; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). As Giroux (2000a p. 108) says, ‘The concentration of control over the means of producing, circulating and exchanging information has been matched by the emergence of new technologies that have transformed culture, especially popular culture, into the primary educational site in which youth learn about themselves, their relationship to others, and the larger world’. This includes such media as Hollywood films, magazines, billboards, television, videos, internet, newspapers, posters, and various other media forms. Our meanings, values and tastes are being regulated as these media texts set norms and conventions that offer legitimised readings of the world (Russell & Tyler, 2005). With media texts monopolising our time, it is no wonder the effects of such legitimations are powerfully felt, especially by youth, who
are negotiating a range of identities and are juggling priorities. Part of the corporatisation effect is Klein’s (2000) notion of a ‘branded world’, where corporations are less concerned with making products, and more concerned with creating an image of their brands. Klein suggests that the forays into the youth market by the corporate sector have resulted in a burst of creative energy which sees ‘cool’, ‘alternative’, ‘young’ and ‘hip’ as the make-or-break quality of brands. In the rush to cultivate such an image, the corporate sector has aggressively marketed the notion of image as an essential factor in lifestyle and peer acceptance, and of course, this means buying the ‘right’ brands to make it happen. Moral and normative concerns have been raised through analytical perspectives concerned with branding that young consumers are being commodified through ‘branding enchantment’ (Langer, 2004). These perspectives position children or youth as malleable and as needing protection from corporate consumer culture. Russell and Tyler (2005) argue that the relationship between childhood and consumer culture is influenced by both branding and bricolage. As defined by Gabriel and Lang (1995 p. 139), bricolage is one of the techniques employed by the ‘unmanageable consumer’ involving ‘a mixture of creative makeshift, improvisation, cunning and guile’. Such a view positions consumers as active subjects with the capacity to improvise, recreate, recycle and reappropriate (Russell & Tyler, 2005). The cultivation of particular discourses is integral in producing image, and the objects that form part of these interactions are the brand names that are promoted. Part of the marketing strategy is about promoting particular behaviours and sensitivities, hence educating and manipulating child and youth consumers by targeting inner desires and vulnerabilities, and creating a culture to aspire to. Whilst bricolage may be evident in youth culture, the strong influence of the peer group is evident even as youth improvise or creatively design their style. Carter, Bennetts and Carter (2003) found that, although adolescents did not necessarily admit to being influenced by their peers, ‘much of what eventuated in and across groups amounted to group influencing pressures’ (p. 235). The students may have been influenced by institutional discourses of independence and self-reliance, and the expectations of self-regulation (Kohli, 1998) so as not to be ‘led astray’.

2.2.2 Youth Performances in Different Spaces
Many studies of youth have tended to focus on disengaged or ‘problem’ youth, and most often this is in relation to working class boys (Valentine, Skelton, & Chambers,
1998). Such studies have documented life on the streets and in other public spheres where youth engage in and explore aspects of teenage culture (Corrigan, 1979; Hall & Jefferson, 1976; White, 1990). More recent studies have examined the perceptions of youth about ease of access to youth friendly public spaces and preferred places to ‘hang out’ with friends (White, Aumair, Harris, & McDonnell, 1997). Shopping centres, commercial venues and the street were found to be the most popular public spaces in which to spend time, and Lynch and Ogilvie (1999) found that access to amenities had an impact on youth satisfaction, and therefore an indirect effect on potential offending behaviour. It is more common now to find that engagement in youth culture is increasingly taking place in supervised and protected spaces (James, 1993; McNamee, 1998) such as in the home, at a ‘friend’s place’ (White & Wyn, 2004) and at school. Mundane domestic happenings in the lives of middle class youth have rarely been considered significant in studies of youth culture; however, with the opportunity to explore the world and its culture at our fingertips in the home using new technologies, more and more cultural exploration by youth is occurring in these more supervised environments. Pais (2000) suggests that youth who engage in the virtual scenario of the computer game or who surf into cyber space are on flight from true realities to find the ‘refuge of synthetic realities’ (p. 22). He argues that, when faced with the uncertainty of real life including unpredictable employment opportunities, youth engage in such ‘virtual leisure’ where they can exercise a ‘performative power’. A report in *The Australian* newspaper (Foreshew, 2005) recounts a study of Adelaide secondary students (13-17 years), which found that they spend an average of thirteen hours per week on the internet; that more than half of the participants reported no parental guidance; and that less than 7% of boys reported parental concern over chat room participation compared with almost 40% of girls. Similarly an Australian government NetAlert internet safety report (2005) found that 42% of teenagers downloaded content that they did not want their parents to know about, and that parents were less likely to check the online activity of their children if the computer was in a non-social room such as a bedroom or home office. These reports indicate that perhaps so-called ‘supervised environments’ (James, 1993; McNamee, 1998) may not be so for many youth, and particularly for boys if the data from the Adelaide study is considered, as parents are caught up in the ‘busyness’ of life and more significantly, may not have the technological expertise of their children. Thus, they become outsiders to their kids’ insider know-how (Luke & Luke, 2001).
Studies since the 1970s have documented the centrality of the bedroom in girls’ cultural consumption practices, arguing that girls were limited in their use of public space or street time – that being the domain of boys (Frith, 1978). Baker (2004) found that, contrary to the popular notion that bedroom musical pursuits by teenage girls are passive, they were integral in the testing of boundaries, exploring subjectivities and becoming ‘other’ away from the often critical gaze of parents, teachers and peers. Other research findings indicate that boys’ explorations of youth culture are increasingly taking place in the home – the traditional domain of girls (Haddon, 1992; McNamee, 1998). McNamee argues that girls generally used the bedroom as a space for exploring culture, in resistance to boys’ use of the streets; however, such use of space is now being eroded, and computer games are being used as objects of power by boys to control and regulate girls’ opportunities for engagement (McNamee, 1998).

Schools are also sites of dominance, power and masculinisation, where problems of cliques, competition and dominance are normalised and considered inevitable (Blackman, 1998; Johnson, 1993). Selwyn (2003) similarly suggests that schools are disciplining sites of physical and ideological control, where desirable identities such as ‘good worker’ or ‘able student’ are defined and normalised through practices such as streaming, testing and examining. They produce what Foucault (1977) calls ‘docile bodies’. Lesko (2001) discusses different categories in the ‘norms’ of the corporate organisation and culture of secondary schools, such as ‘Jocks’, ‘Burnouts’ and ‘In-betweens’. She considers that, whilst schools claim to celebrate and encourage individual success, generally they want all students to be like ‘Jocks’, whose values are in-sync with school and institutional expectations, and who are then able to manipulate the system for their own purposes. The ‘Burnouts’ are considered to be those students who don’t conform to the ‘norms’ of the school, and consequently reject a system that is failing them – they become the resisters of both institutional and adult control. Blackman (1998) has also studied resistant groups in school settings, and has found that such groups want to resist dominant forms of behaviour and values, and reclaim power both as individuals and as members of particular alternative groups within the school. Such students cultivate personae that often make them visible, as well as confident and strong in their challenge of institutional
‘norms’. ‘In-betweens’, Lesko (2001) says, are those students who share some values and expectations with both ‘Jocks’ and ‘Burnouts’, and consequently adapt to a divided social order. Eckert (1989 p. 175) suggests that schools expect and produce particular characteristics in student relationships, including:

- Isolation from outside communities
- Internal hierarchical structures
- Emphasis on role-oriented individual identity
- Task-oriented determination of interpersonal associations

Such a coercive culture encourages a tacit acceptance of adult authority and oversight. Similarly, Brady (2004) identified various peer groups such as Jocks, Preps, Skaters, Teckers, Punks, Stoners, Rappers, Goths and Nerds at their schools. Inclusion in a particular group determined how both peers and teachers treated particular students. If a curriculum based upon a critical agenda is then introduced, it makes for slippery terrain for youth to navigate. These unpredictable discourses of schooling which are a reflection of the macro discourses of society mean that for today’s youth there is no easy formula for school or ultimately life success. The next section outlines aspects of youth culture that are relevant for this study.

2.3 Youth Culture

Young people today are growing up in a world that is characterised by change, new technologies, globalisation and turbulence. They have varied perspectives and priorities, and experience a range of circumstances across the world. Increasing access to products, lifestyle commodities and cultural trappings through multi-media texts including the World Wide Web, has created a number of niche markets and hybridised youth cultures across the world. ‘For many youth, meaning is in rout, media has become a substitute for experience, and what constitutes understanding is grounded in a decentered and diasporic world of difference, displacement, and exchanges’ (Giroux, 1996 p. 68). As a consequence of such poststructural understandings of difference and multiplicity in contemporary society, youth research is moving away from the notion of subcultures towards a focus on identities and subjectivities (White & Wyn, 2004). Blackman (2005) argues that ‘the category of
subculture not only homogenizes the practices of youth, but fails to allow for local variation’ (p.7). Transnational, national, regional and local factors influence youth style and participation (Butcher & Thomas, 2003) in different facets of their cultural lives. One example of such a unitary classification is the ‘misleading hype’ of ‘cyber kids’ or the ‘net generation’ (Thurlow, 2003), which falsely assumes that all young people have high degrees of mastery and use of all new technologies (Facer & Furlong, 2001). Wright et al (2005) found that youth have a multitude of changing priorities in their lives, so even technology-savvy youth do not necessarily focus solely on technology as the defining element in their lives. It is only one of the many repertoires of their lived experiences, including sport, drama, music, work and so on. Whilst I do not suggest that all young people indulge in the same cultural expressions, there are some aspects of youth culture that I explore in the next section, which are pertinent to the lives of the youth in the current study.

2.3.1 Snapshots of Youth Culture: Some Expressions of Self
Mobile telephony, including text-messaging or SMS (short-messaging services) ‘epitomises a significant technological shift as ICTs rapidly converge into highly mobile and individualised artefacts’ (Selwyn, 2003 p. 132). New multimedia platforms constitute the latest in mobile ‘gadgets’, as the phone/organiser/music player means that young people have constant and independent access to information, entertainment and social networks on an ‘anytime anywhere’ basis. Studies of corporate consumer culture did not predict the extraordinary rise in popularity of such devices and techniques. For example, SMS was originally intended for purely commercial purposes (Thurlow, 2003). Consumer advertising has jumped on this lucrative ‘bandwagon’, and now purposefully targets young people as the major consumers of such technology, as evidenced by the brochure (Optus, undated) used in Part D of this thesis to illustrate some of the macro discourses that surround youth. Predictably there are criticisms of the use of SMS by some adults who subscribe to the ‘troubling youth’ discourse whereby young people’s truncated manipulations of language are seen as detrimental to their literacy competencies and their use of electronic communication is positioned as socially inadequate. Thurlow (2003) found that such communications did not replace face-to-face communication. They simply extended it, and creative manipulations of language were in fact more ‘correct’ for this context and mode. Further, a metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness was
evident as young people saw the act of texting as a form of cultural capital which they ‘perform’ and which positions them in particular ways (Thurlow, 2003). The phone in this sense becomes not only an information communication device, but also a fashion accessory and a resource of credibility as part of their identity.

Music has consistently been associated with youth culture. White and Wyn (2004) suggest that ‘contemporary music has provided successive generations of youth with cultural forms that have marked their age group and distinguished them from their parents since the 1950s’ (p. 191). The variety of music choices by contemporary youth have been influenced by peer pressure, parents’ tastes or backgrounds, and the varying opportunities to consume or produce music (Butcher & Thomas, 2003). Particular ‘styles’ or ‘forms’ of music have evolved and continually change in youth culture, including: ‘straightedge’ which shows a committed opposition to drugs, alcohol and casual sex (Wood, 2003), among other ‘social causes’; ‘hip hop’, ‘rap’, or ‘break-dance’ which vocalise social, cultural or political concerns and often threatens mainstream values (Butcher & Thomas, 2003); and even ‘Indie’ which comprises relatively unknown bands who record on independent record labels, and which has a culture of ‘being at the fore-front’ or ‘listening to bands that others haven’t heard yet’. Many youth invest in these and more traditional forms of music such as rock, pop and even classical as they locate themselves in their kaleidoscopic cultural worlds.

Butcher and Thomas (2003) cite a rapid rise in youth activities that largely escape parental control, such as ‘blogging’ (web-based online logs or diaries), online or networked game playing, and the exchange of MP3 music and other illegal files. Gee (2003) suggests that involvement in activities such as online gaming is complex and sustained, and that Discourse communities are formed around the playing of such games, which includes resources such as the games themselves, associated websites, language used, events organised around them, online auctions of in-game items (Steinkuehler, 2006) and the hardware devices to enable the play. Websites associated with such games, for example the HALO 2 website (http://www.bungie.net/games/) that is explored in Part D of this thesis, form part of the discourse worlds of the players and provide further avenues for interaction with other players through discussion boards, and resources to enhance game play. Steinkuehler (2006) argues that the virtual worlds that these players inhabit are
‘persistent social and digitally material worlds… which are clearly nontrivial’ (p. 40).
She explains that they are sites for:

(a) socially and materially distributed cognition;
(b) individual and collaborative problem solving across various multimedia;
(c) multimodal ‘attentional spaces’ (after Lemke);
(d) significant identity work;
(e) empirical model building;
(f) joint negotiation of meaning and values; and
(g) the coordination of people, (virtual) tools and artefacts, and multiple forms
of text (p. 41).

So, rather than positioning such gaming activities as passive or as fostering ‘antisocial
behaviour’, they must be seen as ‘complex spaces of affiliations and disaffiliations’
(Steinkuehler, 2006 p. 51). Hence, Gee (2003) has used the ‘pedagogy’ of such
games as a stimulus for thinking about how teachers in schools can harness the
strategies that they employ to engage and progress learners, even with the most
difficult material.

Religion and spirituality are aspects of youth culture that are also being highlighted as
important areas to study, with the (sometimes harsh) realities of modern living serving
to impel more people to seek such fulfilment (Abbott-Chapman & Denholm, 2001).
Adolescence is a group that is targeted by churches, religious organisations and
spiritual groups so as to exert influence in their lives (Smith, Faris, Lundquist Denton,
& Regnerus, 2003). Webber (2002) found that Witchcraft, pagan and other
earthbound religions are the fastest growing spirituality groups in the Western world.
A number of studies have found that spirituality for youth is no longer bound by the
confines of organised religion, but rather that youth are dabbling in other forms of
spirituality (de Souza, Cartwright, & McGilp, 2004; Eckersley, Wierenga, & Wyn,
2006; Engebretson, 2006) in order to find connectedness to the human and non-human
world and a sense of purpose for their lives (de Souza et al., 2004). In Australia,
organisations such as Mission Australia have been set up to provide services to the
community and particularly to young people, and to provide information about how
young people can find meaning in their lives through social responsibility, and
community activities. Such organisations provide information to the government about the needs, beliefs, values, practices and circumstances of young people by conducting large-scale surveys (Mission Australia, 2005) such as the one explored in Part D of this thesis.

The centrality of the body is evident in all accounts of youth culture. Mallan and Pearce (2003) suggest that ‘it is through the sensuous body that youth learn how to experience themselves’ (p. xii). Bodily expression through dance (Fensham & Gardner, 2005) and other forms of physical activity (Wright et al., 2005) have been variously explored, particularly in terms of the ‘new public health’ whereby health status and the vulnerability of the body have become central themes in contemporary Western society (Tinning & Glasby, 2002). Youth in particular are constructed in media and popular culture texts as susceptible to dangerous or risky bodily practices (Kline, 2005), or as desirous and desired bodies in the consumer market (Mallan & Pearce, 2003).

2.3.2 Lived Experiences and Subjectivities: Plaisir vs. Jouissance
Pleasure is at the core of children’s consumer culture, and it is evoked as different kinds (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Plaisir is defined by Grace and Tobin (1997) as a pleasure derived from conforming or relating to the social order. Lesko’s (2001) category of ‘Jocks’ in a school setting displays behaviours that are in-sync with social norms. They derive pleasure from praise and reinforcement of such behaviours. They also derive pleasure from being able to use the system to their advantage. These students’ lived experiences and subjectivities are bound up in their desire for these pleasures (Kanpol, 1997). They hold power in dominant institutional systems and social spheres, so they have no investment in the change of such systems.

Jouissance, on the other hand, is defined as a voluptuous pleasure which knows no bounds, and is derived from transgressing the social order (Grace & Tobin, 1997; Kristeva, 1982). This type of pleasure is often quasi-erotic, and when such indiscriminate pleasures are taken by children, they are considered by adults as ‘abject’ as they are induced through ‘improper’ behaviour according to social norms. Many aspects of children’s consumer culture evoke jouissance in children. ‘Children and youth are encouraged to delight in the impertinent and the forbidden, to transgress
adult codes, to live only in the present’ (Kenway & Bullen, 2001 p. 70), so consumer and media culture represent ‘the irresistible aura of power and danger’ (McDonnell, 1994 p. 42), and is usually ‘designed precisely to exclude adults and their values’ (Bazalgette & Buckingham, 1995 p. 7). Similarly, ‘cyberspace offers a new space…without the fears attached to the public space and indeed without undue interference from adults: it is adult-free, unknown and unsupervised’ (Walkerdine, 1999 p.6). Jouissance is experienced by resistant students such as the ‘Burnouts’ (Lesko, 2001), who take pleasure in acts of resistance to social norms and hegemonic systems, and invest in a subculture of rebellion (Wyn & White, 1997). Girls in particular may celebrate their capacity to exploit and use different forms of sexual expression derived from their view that their sexuality is ‘natural’. By freely expressing it, they are breaking down and challenging patriarchal values within the school hierarchy (Blackman, 1998). These students may have an investment in the change of the dominant social order because they reject it. Some students, however, may not want to change dominant structures because of the pleasure derived from transgressing them.

2.4 Civic Participation and Resistance

Since the 1970s, projects concerned with ‘participation’ have become common, and many of these have a social change agenda embedded within them (Wierenga, 2003). Such projects related to youth, according to Stacey, Webb, Barratt, Lagzdins, Moulds and Stone (2005), have generally had a human rights focus, however they argue that often such projects are concerned with what adults can do to help youth rather than how youth themselves can take action. Youth are not recognised for their involvement in environmental, human rights or peace movements, and are consequently often regarded as apathetic community members. Turner’s (2005) study of ten 18-24 year olds found that those youth were deeply concerned about the environment and embraced the principles of social justice; however, Ellis (2004) discovered that, although youth may support human rights and social justice ideals ‘in principle’, they tend not to actually engage in any real social action to promote change. She indicates that their reported reasons for non-engagement include: It doesn’t affect them and therefore it is not their problem; it is not seen as their responsibility as people in the community are paid to do such work, or governments
are responsible; and they foster feelings of helplessness in terms of effecting change. Those who did engage in some form of active participation, according to Ellis (2004), were personally affected by the cause, for example having a disabled family member, and therefore taking some responsibility for accessibility, or having gay friends, and defending them in public. White and Wyn (2004) point out one of the ironies of youth participation; that is, youth are encouraged to ‘actively participate’ in society through youth forums and so on; yet they are not taken seriously if they mobilise politically. They argue that ‘legitimate’ participation is framed in such a way as to reside solely in government-defined activities and spheres, and that if youth step outside such parameters, they are positioned as trouble-makers or as easily influenced by organisations labelled as left-wing.

Raby (2005) suggests that adolescence is a time when resistance to structural or dominant norms in society is probably most readily achieved as they experience powerful ‘new’ emotions and behaviours, they are under intense scrutiny, and they have a growing awareness of the wider world. She draws on Butler’s (1993) work on disidentification, whereby one takes ‘dominant signs, roles, discourses, or interpellations’ (p. 219) and redeployes them in new and creative ways to disrupt dominant messages. Raby (2005) argues further that the possibility of ‘strategic deployment’ of the category ‘teenager’ could be used, so that young people can actively engage in experimental activities that are unavailable to adults because ‘teenage-hood is a time of experimentation’ in the dominant discourse (p. 165). Subjectivities are shaped by many dynamic and conflicting discourses, and Raby (2005) argues that such conflict may allow a temporary ‘stepping outside’ of dominant discourses to locate new ways of thinking or behaving, thereby disrupting the dominant discourse and possibly effecting change.

This chapter has described the often contradictory discourses of youth, how they are represented by others, their culture, and their propensity for active citizenship. There is some disjuncture between ideals of civic participation that are generally promoted by schools and curriculum documents, and the enactment of such agendas in real terms by youth. The next chapter focuses on these intentional discourses of schooling for those students in the middle and senior years.
3.1 **Education under Siege: Conflicting Discourses**

Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) proclaimed that education was under siege from neoliberal discourses which call for an emphasis on individual success in the market economy (Fairclough, 1989), a ‘back to basics’ curriculum, and focus on imparting particular cultural knowledges (Apple, 2004) for the ‘good’ of the country. During the eighties, such conservative notions of schooling were enforced directly and strongly by governments (for example the Thatcher government in Britain, and the Reagan administration in America) to combat what was seen as the radical left who advocated critical pedagogy and the study of ideology supposedly at the expense of ‘the basics’ and the literary canons. In Britain a national curriculum was established to standardise programs across the country in an attempt to standardise student learning. A corollary outcome was the confining of teachers to the parameters of conservative government agendas. Contemporary education debates are taking a similar turn; however, in a much more insidious way, through popular media texts which purport to champion the views of parents and the community about ‘failing schools’ (Donnelly, 2004; 2006). For example in Australia, Donnelly has been accorded ‘official’ (Apple, 1993) authority in education through his commission to report on ‘Why our schools are failing’ by the Menzies Research centre, which is chaired by conservative Liberal member Malcolm Turnbull, and whose reports have influenced Government policy (Donnelly, 2004); and through his regular articles appearing in *The Australian* national newspaper.

Whilst policy regarding schooling and curriculum in Australia has been influenced by this steady political shift to the right (for example in Queensland under the Bjelke-Petersen regime particular texts about ideology were removed from school shelves), there have also been educational influences such as specific declarations from ministerial councils for education, including the *Hobart Declaration on Schooling* (Australian Education Council, 1989), and more recently the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (MCEETYA, 1999). Such
declarations espoused, among other things, the principles of social justice, morality, ethics, sustainability and active participation as informed citizens, including the skills of problem-solving and analysis. Strategies for the future, such as 2010 in Queensland (Education Queensland, 2000c) were based upon similar ideals, and hence curriculum documents contain outcome statements which are posited to help students become ‘multiliterate, active and informed citizens’ (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a p. 3). Other states in Australia have similar ideals and purposes embedded in curriculum documents. For example the Essential Learnings in Tasmania (Department of Education Tasmania, 2006) include learnings related to social responsibility and world futures.

These ideals and purposes that underpin education in Australia are today again in conflict with conservative and neoliberal discourses that are touted through media and ‘officially commissioned’ reports such as the aforementioned Menzies Report. Such discourses bemoan the ‘loss’ of the traditional academic curriculum in favour of ideology, social change and social justice (Donnelly, 2006). They have gleaned support in the press from Prime Minister John Howard who has criticised the teaching of History and English from an ideological perspective. He is, however, reluctant to tie federal funding to ‘appropriateness’ of curricula (Box, 2006b p. 8). These discourses have sparked hot debate in editorials and letters to the Editor (for example April 22-23, 2006) in the national newspaper *The Australian*. Such conflicting discourses permeate the business of schooling at local, national and global levels. While this is not a study directly related to policy, it is necessary to understand the competing discourses surrounding schools and teachers as they provide educational opportunities for young people. The remainder of this chapter focuses on those aspects of schooling (themselves comprised of often contradictory discourses), which directly inform this study.

### 3.2 ‘Phases’ of schooling: Middle Years and Senior

‘Phases’ of schooling have become popular in educational discourses, with terms such as ‘early years’, ‘middle years’ and ‘senior phase’ proliferating school policy documents and curriculum and organisational structure within schools. Education for early adolescents (typically ages 9-14) known as the ‘middle years’ have been a locus
of reform for countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States and Singapore (Carrington, 2002). These reforms have typically challenged the notion of adolescents as incapable of difficult and analytic thinking (for example Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000) and have posited these middle years as significant in terms of the changes that young people experience, their increasing awareness of the world around them, and their increased susceptibility to alienation. Middle years discourses in Australia have drawn on similar tenets of adolescent development and transition, and particularly in Queensland (the site of this study), have instigated policy which suggests that students in these years should be engaged through connectedness to the world, intellectual stimulation, and the recognition of difference and diversity (Carrington, 2002; Education Queensland, 2003; Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal, 2003). The notion of transition is evident in such documents as they describe the ‘stage’ of the middle years as an important transition phase for students to get ready for the senior phase of learning (Education Queensland, 2003). The use of developmental discourses to explain and address the middle years of schooling needs to be problematised, as it assumes that being in a ‘transition’ phase, the students in those years have no real meaning or purpose in the ‘present’ (Soares, 2000). This may contribute to disengagement or alienation. This study includes participants from both the middle phase and the senior phase of schooling in Queensland, with the data showing marked differences in their perceptions of schooling.

The ‘senior phase’ of schooling is ironically also described as a transition phase as ‘young people get ready to move onto work, training or university’ (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005b p. 8). This view no longer ‘fits’ the different priorities or patterns of life that characterise contemporary youth in society. For example Wyn and Dwyer (2000) argue that youth no longer necessarily move from study to work, rather they often engage in both at the same time; and moving from education to a full-time job is no longer a reality for many young people, with the casualisation of the workforce and unemployment cited as serious factors undermining their ‘transition’ into the workplace.

Senior schooling as described in Queensland policy reform documents (for example Queensland Studies Authority, 2005b), is beset with conflicting discourses. For
example, ‘team work’ and ‘active participation’ are espoused values, whilst at the same time, it is suggested in the above reform document that all syllabuses could include ‘entrepreneurship’ so that students are able to ‘create new ways of doing business’ (p. 10) – a neoliberal discourse of the market economy which values individual success in the market over care for the ‘common good’. Similarly, the skills of critically analysing, arguing a point of view convincingly and applying skills to real world situations (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005b p. 13), can be juxtaposed against student regulation to achieve outcomes; and individual success legitimated through institutional values (Blackman, 2005; Selwyn, 2003). These conflicting discourses are also evident in the accounts of the senior school participants in the current study.

In the next section I move from the overall organisation of schooling and curriculum, to focus on specific aspects of curriculum and pedagogy which inform this study.

### 3.3 Curriculum Frameworks: Literacy as an Intellectualised Practice

Recent research has shown that, when students are expected to engage in work that is of high intellectual quality, they perform better academically (Newmann & Associates, 1996; School Reform Longitudinal Study, 1999). As explained in Chapter One (see section 1.3), Queensland is the context of this study. Its curriculum frameworks are used as a basis for analysis of research question two - related to intellectualisation of texts and practices. One of the key curriculum frameworks that underpins teaching and learning in Queensland state schools is a pedagogy policy and guidelines that are based on Productive Pedagogies (Education Queensland, 2000b, 2004). Education Queensland states on their website, that ‘Productive Pedagogies is a balanced theoretical framework enabling teachers to reflect critically on their work’ (2004, unpaginated), and includes elements within four broad areas: intellectual quality, supportive classroom environment, recognition and valuing of difference, and connectedness. Intellectual quality is the focus in this review, as it is the basis for the intellectualisation of literacy that is a core component of this study (research question 2).
Intellectualisation is discussed using the Education Queensland curriculum framework as a basis; however, other literature is also reviewed and included as reference points. The components that are considered to be intellectual practices within Productive Pedagogies includes: the use of a metalanguage to talk about literacy and texts, higher order thinking, substantive conversation, deep knowledge and understanding, and critique which sees knowledge as problematic. These elements are interrelated and often overlap.

### 3.3.1 Metalanguage

The basis for a metalanguage of multiliteracies, according to Unsworth (2002), is ‘a clear theoretical link between the descriptions of the visual and verbal elements of texts and how they make meanings, and their relationship to the parameters of the social contexts in which they function’ (p. 71). Other scholars recognise the importance of a metalanguage in the intellectualisation of literacy (Lankshear, 1997; Luke, 2000; Rassool, 1999; The New London Group, 2000). It not only gives students a language to talk about text and textual practices, but also an understanding of the social implications of the use and interpretation of texts and textual structure. Education Queensland describes the optimum situation in a classroom utilizing metalanguage:

*High-metalanguage* instruction incorporates frequent discussion about talk and writing, about how written and spoken texts work, about specific technical vocabulary and words, about how sentences work or don't work (syntax/grammar), about meaning structures and text structures (semantics/genre), and about how discourses and ideologies work in speech and writing. (Education Queensland, 2004)

This includes knowledge and understanding of functional grammar (Department of Education Queensland, 1994; Unsworth, 2001), and the ability to talk about the textual features of different genres. The focus here tends to be on written and spoken texts; however, Unsworth and others argue that, with the prevalence of multi-modal text, a metasemiotic knowledge is also necessary as part of a metalanguage of new literacies and new texts (Kress, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990; Lemke, 2002; Unsworth, 2002). A challenge with new and hybrid texts is the ability to utilise a metalanguage which acknowledges the multimodal relations between different
meaning-making systems, and the different emphases on various realms within one text (The New London Group, 2000).

In visual text, there have been various approaches to developing a grammar of visual design. One approach variously looks at the use of colour, line, shape, form, perspective, texture, medium and style (Emmison & Smith, 2000; Norton, 1995; Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown, 1996), and the relationships between them and in relation to the viewer. For example, posture and gesture (form) of characters, as well as perspective on the page, can indicate power relations between them, and the use of line can direct the viewer to items of particular importance in the image. Bright colours can signify importance, and jagged lines can suggest danger.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1990) suggest a far more functional linguistic approach to visual text through their metafunctions of textual systems. They outline three major metafunctions: ideational, which includes a range of ways of relating represented participants; interpersonal, including a range of ways of relating interactive participants; and textual, which includes a range of ways of establishing the identity of participants in the different representations in a text (p. 18). They focus on compositional arrangements, vectors, gaze, perspectives, angle, placement on the page, size of elements and other representative realisations. These indicate relationships between the elements on a page and between these elements and the viewer. Unsworth (2002) discusses the implications for multimodal and digital texts, by stressing the importance of a metalanguage (including metasemiotics) of hypertext links and windows, within the multimodal features of cyber texts. The ‘connections’ of such links and windows, he argues, need to be explicitly discussed and problematised. Further discussion about the problematisation of text occurs later in section 3.3.4.

3.3.2 Higher Order Thinking and Substantive Conversation

Education Queensland defines the higher order thinking aspect of intellectual pedagogy as:

(T)he transformation of information and ideas. This transformation occurs when students combine facts and ideas and synthesise, generalise, explain, hypothesise or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve
problems, gain understanding and discover new meanings. When students engage in the construction of knowledge, an element of uncertainty is introduced into the instructional process and the outcomes are not always predictable. (Education Queensland, 2004)

There is a strong sense of student directed learning to construct new meaning, rather than domination by the teacher. Kellner (2002) also calls for a pedagogy which allows students to be creative and transformative, rather than dominated and manipulated. He stresses the related ability to interact intelligently through vibrant conversational environments. The social and communicative aspect of critical thinking he says, is all important, to develop the ability to interact and to participate in a democratic culture and society. This resonates with Lave’s (1996) notion of changing participation in changing practices. Similarly, the Productive Pedagogies framework describes substantive conversation as involving sustained, intellectual dialogue between and across students and teachers, with logical extensions, and opportunities for further reflection and discussion, and is not completely scripted or controlled by one party (Education Queensland, 2004). Snyder (2002) also highlights the important function of literacy classrooms in providing discourses and opportunities for dealing with experience through discussion. She maintains that students interpret their experiences through talk.

Critical reasoning, along with the ability to formulate and ask pertinent questions to raise discussion, is a key element of higher order thinking. Students need to be aware of grounds for disagreement, and be able to make analytical distinctions. This necessarily involves the use of a metalanguage as discussed in the previous section, and also relies on a deep knowledge and deep understanding of content, but also of the nature of texts and textual practices.

3.3.3 Deep Knowledge and Deep Understanding
The Productive Pedagogy framework focuses on topic or discipline knowledge when it describes deep knowledge and deep understanding (Education Queensland, 2004). Students displaying a deep knowledge and understanding are considered able to make elaborate connections within and across the central issues or themes of a topic, and to construct new knowledge based on relationships, generalisations and conclusions drawn during the study of a topic. Unsworth (2002) suggests that it is crucial to understand how different meaning-making systems within texts are used to normalise
and perpetuate dominant hegemonic interests. This extends the notion of deep understanding to also include multiliterate understandings of texts and textual practices within topics. Snyder (2002) and Bauman (2001) consider that shared understandings, and the construction of new knowledge through multimodal communication and comparison of new meanings, are essential for achievements of growth and change. An understanding of the nature of the contemporary conditions in which we now operate, including changing social and cultural realities, is necessary before any forms of adaptation or resistance can take place. There have been other calls for deep understanding in our information society (Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs, 1997; Taylor & Saarinen, 1994). Information and knowledge are deemed ‘out of control’, and little critical insight and understanding is generated (Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs, 1997; Melody, 1994). Green (1997) proposes that we establish a learning society rather than simply an information society, which would necessitate deep knowledge and understanding of larger social and cultural settings of practice.

The literature in this section suggests that there are three dimensions of knowledge and understanding intersecting and informing one another. These relate to content and topic, multiliteracies and textual practices, and broader social/cultural/economic/political conditions in which we operate. This final dimension is a key factor in the final element of intellectualising literacy that is discussed in this section: critique, and the problematising of knowledge and text.

3.3.4 Critique: Knowledge as Problematic
This element of intellectualising literacy involves drawing upon all other elements, in order to have the resources to critique and problematise knowledge and text, and to understand how texts are constructed for the reader/viewer, and by the reader/viewer (Education Queensland, 2002). This means that not only do students need a metalanguage to talk about and decode text, they also need to look at how particular textual elements such as verbs/processes or adjectives/attributes can be combined to situate certain groups in particular ways. Not only do students need to draw upon situated meanings to interpret a text, but they also need to know how different perspectives can mean that multiple meanings are constructed from and through text, and that modes and mediums can be just as ideologically powerful as the content. Not only do students need to know how to use texts in particular ways for particular
purposes, but also that texts can be used by particular groups in particular ways to manipulate and exploit others.

The Productive Pedagogy Framework explains this element of problematising knowledge in the following way:

Presenting knowledge as problematic involves an understanding of knowledge not as a fixed body of information, but rather as being constructed, and hence subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications. Multiple contrasting and potentially conflicting forms of knowledge are represented. (Education Queensland, 2004)

This explanation is supported by others, who indicate that in a world of numerous and competing literacies and diverse social forces such as politics, gender, race, class and so on, the necessity for critique of oppositional representations, design, and competing world views, is crucial (Garrett-Petts & Lawrence, 2000). Kellner (2002) also indicates a need to pose the question as to whether new technologies and literacies are ‘producing conditions for a more vibrant, democratic society, or simply reproducing existing inequalities and inequity’ (p. 165).

Lankshear (1997) observes the difficulty of developing a workable approach to social critical literacy, as ‘critical’ is used widely in different contexts, with different nouns attached to it (for example, pedagogy, thinking, awareness, literacy), and it often has either too little meaning, or no clear meaning. Gilbert’s (1993) view seems to encompass what various theorists have tried to convey in discussions about critical literacy:

A grasp of ‘critical’ literacy – of what I would call the social contextualisation of language practices – necessitates a grasp of how language operates in a social sense…Such understandings are learnt in functional settings and cannot be divorced from social practice. To work with a commitment to critical literacy, therefore, will inevitably necessitate an engagement with the politics of language practices…to explore…networks of power that are sustained and brought into existence by such practices…how language practices are used in powerful institutions like the state, the school, the law, the family, the church, and how these practices contribute to the maintenance of inequalities and injustices. For teachers, it means engaging with issues that are often controversial, certainly contemporary, and perhaps quite volatile. (p. 324-325)
This approach would include interrogating text in specific ways, such as those proposed by the ‘Literate Futures: Reading’ report produced for Education Queensland, and derived from Luke and Freebody’s work on the Four Resource Model:

- What kind of person, with what interests and values, produced this text?
- What are the origins of this text?
- What is the text trying to make me believe and do?
- What beliefs and positions are dominant in the text?
- What beliefs and positions are silenced or absent?
- What do I think about the way this text presents these ideas, and what alternatives are there?
- How do intertextual links (including hypertext) construct the world, values or attitudes?
- Having critically examined this text, what action am I going to take?

(Education Queensland, 2002; Luke & Freebody, 1997)

This approach posits the critical reader/viewer as one who has the power to transform or redesign social futures, a view that is in keeping with critical pedagogy as a transformative agenda, which is discussed in the next section.

### 3.4 Critical Frameworks: Critical Pedagogy as a Transformative Practice

Critical Pedagogy has been described as a cultural politics (Giroux, 2000a; Kanpol, 1999) which attempts to challenge existing values structures that are oppressive, alienating and subordinative, in the struggle for meaningful public life. Shapiro (1995) suggests that:

Even within a culture that so powerfully and pervasively manipulates and distorts our sense of reality and what constitutes the nature of the social world, it is realistic and possible to establish spaces where this culture might be genuinely interrogated, and where knowledge has an emancipatory function. (p. 191)
Shapiro also maintains that acts of intellectual resistance about the way in which our roles, our lives and our subjectivities are defined and determined, can be developed through critical pedagogy. Kanpol (1999) reminds us that critical pedagogy itself is not innocent or devoid of choice, that it too has an agenda that is rooted in history and narrative, and that it interrogates the multiple realities of subjectivities from a particular stance.

Syllabus documents and curriculum policies nationally, internationally, and specifically in Queensland, are underpinned by the language of critical pedagogy and social justice, supporting the notion of developing students’ knowledges, abilities and attitudes as critical consumers and citizens, with the power to transform or redesign social futures (Department of Education Queensland, 1994; Education Queensland, 2000a, 2002, 2004). This study is concerned with the enactment of the critical agenda in students’ lives; however, the task for schools and teachers in engendering such a take-up, can never be a straightforward process. The focus in this study is not on holding teachers accountable with regards to critical pedagogy, but rather to highlight the intricate nature of the implementation of the critical agenda in schools. Some of the issues related to developing students’ knowledges, abilities and attitudes as critical consumers and citizens who can potentially transform social futures, include: coping with social change; the corporatisation of education; constraints or spaces of enclosure; life and emancipatory politics; and new ways of thinking about pedagogy.

3.4.1 Coping with Social Change

Within our changing society, we have to cope with changing labour markets, family structures, new technologies and literacies, political structures and power authorities. The role of schools, school systems, teachers and resources has become somewhat ill-defined as schools adapt to social change (Levin & Riffel, 1997). Halpin (in Levin & Riffel, 1997) suggests that schools can imitate a particular version of the past or they can engage with and anticipate change. Critical Theorists and pedagogues argue that schools should initiate change and challenge hegemonic ways of seeing the world, rather than simply coping with change (Featherstone, 1992; Giroux, 2000a; hooks, 2003; Kanpol, 1997; Shapiro, 1995). Such theorists believe that, in our postmodern world of corporate culture, the critical pedagogy agenda is important to engender a revitalised, vibrant, informed public forum in which ‘media realities’ of our social
world can be interrogated and contested at school (McLaren, 2003; Shapiro, 1995). As evidenced in this study, this is no easy task. Government officials and vocal media personalities call for a return to ‘the basics’ in schools, rather than advocating for the place of schools in initiating change.

3.4.2 Corporatising Education
Corporations across the world have, to a large extent, disregarded the boundaries between education and commerce, and have posed ethical and moral dilemmas for schools, teachers and parents (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Profit and resources seem to provide the bottom line in all areas of education, particularly where government funding alone cannot sustain well-resourced school programs and activities. According to Giroux (2000a), private gain cancels out the public good, and commercial power is celebrated over broader civic and public values. Corporations are interested in schools as they harbour the new generation of consumers, and this has led to in-school advertising, sponsorship and vending rights. Schools who partake of such corporate alliances are essentially delivering entire school populations to corporations with little effort on their part (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Corporations can improve their reputations through school endorsement, and by including corporate images in curriculum material, they assume authority and credibility. Corporatisation has become normalised in educational spheres, with little attempt by government bodies to intervene in such practices.

This normalisation of corporate influence on education only adds to the power that corporations have over young consumers in their social lives. Large corporations such as Disney and Microsoft permeate our social and cultural lives. They affirm our captive identities and subjectivities through cultural texts, and regulate and shape our meanings and behaviours (Hall, 1997a). The appeal of unlimited access to information is too little tempered with the knowledge that such information is controlled by a handful of multinational corporations (Giroux, 2000a). Media culture has become a substantive, if not the primary educational force in the lives of consumers, particularly young consumers (Giroux, 2000a, 2000b; Hall, 1997a; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). This is particularly disturbing for parents and teachers. Such corporate pedagogy is often implicit and unproblematised; for example, the innocent, wholesome image portrayed by Disney is at odds with its political and
economic structure (Giroux, 2000a). This politics of innocence seems to assume no politics at all, and it essentially gives the impression of separating corporate culture from corporate power. Teachers and schools need to resume their responsibility for education through critical pedagogy. This brief, as suggested earlier, is not without its challenges.

3.4.3 Spaces of Enclosure
The practical implications of critical pedagogy are sometimes impeded by particular structures, practices, policies and dominant ideas within the school system and the curriculum. Lankshear, Peters and Knobel (1996 p. 153-4) identify several issues and concerns emerging from the theories and practices of critical pedagogy.

- Teachers remain mostly in control, and conceptualise issues to be discussed and texts to be critiqued
- Curriculum and syllabus demands require a norm of a coherent, sequenced program of study which often includes demonstration of specific outcomes and standardised assessment
- The book is usually still the central medium and mediator of knowledge and knowledge production
- The community of experience to draw upon is generally limited to that within the class itself
- Social positions and identities are often centred and reductionist
- Ideals intended to provide direction are often too abstract and decontextualised eg liberation, justice, emancipation
- Lack of true transformative action

These scholars argue that schools are steeped in modernity, with structures and traditions that form ‘spaces of enclosure’ within which education takes place. Even critical teachers must incorporate generative themes within the bounds of the obligatory curriculum, often working with required texts, imposed pedagogical and assessment structures and school rules, so they are caught in the very web of power structures that they purport to reject and challenge (Shor & Freire, 2003). Kanpol (1997) also suggests that teachers and/or students sometimes resist oppressive structures, yet such acts of resistance often accommodate such structures. They are
caught in a ‘Catch-22’ situation. Lather (1995) also asks: ‘How do our very efforts to liberate perpetuate the relations of dominance?’ (p. 169), when too often such pedagogies couch empowerment as something done ‘to’, ‘for’ or ‘by’ someone to enlighten the ‘as-yet unliberated’. Berry (1998) similarly argues that students are immersed in a world not of their making, which is created, produced, circulated and maintained by bodies of authority such as teachers, discipline knowledge, and school structures, and that they are considered passive recipients of knowledge. This flouts the ideals of critical pedagogy, in which such power dominance and authority are contested, and students are encouraged to be independent, critical thinkers who challenge such structures and norms in our society. This produces a hypocritical curriculum, and often simply reinforces the dominant constructed nature of school knowledge and the hidden curriculum. ‘Schools divide their clientele into social slots, with minimal hopes of social transformation’ (Kanpol, 1997 p. 132).

Kanpol (1997) also discusses the concept of ‘resistance’ as questioning and interrogating the dominant ideology. This ‘cultural political resistance’ leads to acting upon such interrogations, and subsequently to social change. Students need to become aware of their own dominated lives in order to remodel their collective experiences.

3.4.4 Emancipatory Politics vs. Life Politics
Giddens (1991 p. 210) defines emancipatory politics as ‘… a generic outlook concerned above all with the liberating individuals and groups from constraints which adversely affect their life chances’. This then is wrapped up in the emancipation of the self and of communities. In modern society, the conundrum of ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’ re-emerges. An individual may want to claim some freedom to express certain opinions and yet that may lead to the oppression of others – it is at odds with the social justice principles in syllabus documents in Australia. The two elements that Giddens (1991) claims to represent emancipatory politics are: the effort to ‘…shed shackles of the past … permitting a transformative attitude towards the future, and the aim of overcoming the illegitimate domination of some individuals or groups by others’ (p. 210). These ideals appear to be unobtainable within a choice generation.
This choice generation is at the heart of life politics, which is the politics of choice – the politics of lifestyle. Life politics stem from the reflexive project of the self. As Giddens (1991) says, ‘the narrative of self-identity has to be shaped, altered and reflexively sustained in relation to rapidly changing circumstances of social life, on a local and global scale’ (p. 215). In some respects it is easy to get the impression that life politics is a politics of self indulgence. It is conceivable that this politics of self actualisation has actually been detrimental to the emancipatory class struggle. For example, Klein (2000) argues that the lobby groups who have had considerable success in changing policy over the last 20 years have, in their quest as individuals for self actualisation, abandoned the higher common cause of alleviating oppression. This suggests a burgeoning middle class and an assumption that life chances are improving for all, negating the need for emancipatory causes. Most data, however, point to poverty as a worsening phenomenon with large percentages of poorer nations experiencing deprivation of the most extreme kind.

So what does this political environment mean for today’s youth? The youth in this study are not directly affected by the emancipatory agenda. They are white, middle class students whose lives are reasonably comfortable, and who are not persecuted in their communities. They are part of the ‘choice generation’ (Giddens, 1991). They make decisions about what will most benefit them individually at this time. Teachers claim to be educating these young people through critical pedagogy to be part of the emancipatory agenda. Are they being regulated to ‘fit’ (Grossberg, 1994) into the politics of social justice, only to lose them to globalised culture and what Steinberg & Kincheloe (1997) argue are modern society’s most successful teachers, the ‘corporate pedagogues’? For example, Disney and Microsoft corporations with their emphases on lifestyle choice and individual fulfilment may well be more influential than a concern for the ‘common good’. Giroux (1997; 2000b) calls this corporate culture’s war on children.

In the next section I deal with a review of the ways in which pedagogy can be reconceptualised to overcome the issues discussed here, including: teacher control, standardised curricula, reductionist and/or abstract positions and a lack of true transformative action from those who invest in a politics of choice.
3.4.5 Re-Thinking Pedagogy?
Shapiro (1995) proposes an emancipatory pedagogy that enables the silenced voices and lived experiences of students to be heard and to begin accounting for and naming their own worlds. He argues that those who have sat passively and been most dominated by institutional powers of schools and official discourses of classrooms, need to begin interrogating dominant ideologies beginning with their own lived experiences. Lather (1995) also argues that deconstructing our own practices can animate and expand our sense of possibilities for change-oriented practices. This study advocates a focus on ‘self’ with regards to the critical agenda, whereby students should interrogate their own views and practices as a first step to enacting a critical agenda. One of the data collection strategies for the focus groups outlined in Chapter Six relates to collective memory work (Haug, 1987). This is a direct attempt to transform students’ preconceived ideas using this focus on self as a strategy.

Similarly, Green (2003) emphasises the unveiling and disclosure of one’s own memories and investments as integral to a contemporary critical pedagogy, so that a new passion can be aroused in students and they may see how their own interests along with interests for the common good can be realised. Brodhagen and Apple (2004) also describe how adolescents should be encouraged to explore and problematise ‘their place in the world’ (p. 29). Oliver and Lalik (2000) argue that, to encourage a pedagogy of transformation, young people (particularly girls in their study) should be given opportunities to write and talk about ‘their bodies and their experiences’ (p. 121) to move towards critique and change of dominant marginalising perspectives. In a similar vein, Sadowski (2003) calls for a pedagogy whereby both students and teachers must problematise their beliefs, values, investments and choices – the latter so that they can better understand their students.

On the other hand, Kellner (2002) advocates a critical pedagogy of technology, which uses and redesigns technologies for education to enhance democratic principles and social reconstruction in accordance with the principles of social justice. This approach highlights new forms of media literacy as necessary components, thus cultivating multiple literacies in education. He particularly focuses on the use of technology to highlight multiculturalism and difference, which is portrayed through popular media texts and cyberspace. Such texts are forms of socialisation and
education, and need to be critically analysed to highlight the often invisible and subliminal ways that they construct and educate youth. It would also involve the use of media as instruments of social communication and change. This position is also taken up by Kenway and Bullen (2001) who propose a pedagogical approach whereby students undertake a cultural and social biographical analysis of the ‘objects of cool’ in their own consumer culture. This is the very strategy criticised by Donnelly (2004; 2006) as it allegedly displaces the literary canon and the traditional academic curriculum. In this pedagogical approach students look at their own practices and cultural icons to develop their study of self-investment, including historical issues, patterns of use, functionality, change, stereotypes associated with it, pleasure, pain, risk and so on. Students are also encouraged to link into and contribute to activist websites so their transformative practices take place from cyberspace. One of the keys to this approach is personal investment – youth are usually resistant to criticism of those practices in which they have a huge emotional investment (Klein, 2000), until they find out how they have been manipulated and taken advantage of, by corporations which seek to gain profit at their expense. The potential to become political activists via the web environment is touted as an appealing notion for youthful ‘cyberflaneurs’ (Kenway & Bullen, 2001 p. 178) as is the possibility of engaging in an environment free from authoritarian constraints.

The key argument in this chapter relates to the conflicting discourses that permeate educational policy, curricula and schools which can in many ways de-rail the critical agenda. Bringing ‘the self’ back into students’ analyses, critiques and active participation provides an opportunity to harness their personal investments. It also problematises the choices of young people so that they can truly become more active and informed citizens as proposed by the Declarations of Schooling (Australian Education Council, 1989; MCEETYA, 1999) that underpin education in Australia. Chapter Four now explores the impact of broader social, political, technological and corporate change on the work of schools and on individual performances of self.
Chapter Four
Discourses of Society

This chapter focuses upon a changing society so, whilst this is not a study about globalisation or new capitalism or the technological revolution, it is important to contextualise this work within the discourses of a new work order. The proliferation of multiliteracies that signify different modes of meaning and diverse contexts and knowledges are described and I explain the impact of these on schools and particularly on the youth in this study.

4.1 Knowledge Societies: Multiliteracies and a New Social Order

The age of multiliteracies is described in terms of new information and communication technologies; reconfigured ways of communicating; multiple literacies; globalised and new languages and intertextuality; and the ways that these elements of a knowledge society intersect to produce a new social order.

4.1.1 New Information and Communication Technologies

In our increasingly mediated world, the hybridization of information, learning, culture, entertainment and advertising (Burnell, 2002; Kenway & Bullen, 2001) has become ‘the norm’, and cries of a technological information revolution are being sounded by social critics and commentators (Luke, 2000). Over the past two decades, the innovations in information communications technologies that have had the most profound effect on our private, social, educational and working lives, are the video cassette recorder (VCR), computer, and more recently, mobile phones and the Internet. The VCR irrevocably changed the nature of our favourite leisure pastime – watching broadcast television, as it introduced flexibility in viewing times with the capacity to pre-program and tape record television shows. Viewers no longer had to rely upon television or movie theatres to provide movie entertainment. Movies became readily available on video soon after cinema release. As the technology has become more sophisticated, digitised versions of these now familiar technologies (for example digital televisions) have made the use of these technologies even more interactive (Thurlow & McKay, 2003).
Computer technology has lead to a plethora of products: hand-held organisers, video games, Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs), entertainment software for home computers, digital mobile phones with capacity to take photos and connect to the internet, Digitised Video Disc (DVD) players, compact disc (CD) players, game boxes, digitally catalogued and online libraries (Gee, 2003; Selwyn, 2003; Steinkuehler, 2006; Thurlow, 2003). These and other computer technologies have had an enormous effect on communications, information storage, retrieval and dissemination, business practices, education and everyday social practices. Digital text, unlike conventional printed text, is eminently changeable and convertible. It allows simultaneous processing of image, word and sound, and with digital text we shift from an author-controlled textual environment where words are fixed on the page in a top-down, left-right, beginning-end materiality to a reader-controlled environment, infinitely flexible and open to manipulation. (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997 p. 152)

This has important implications for education and particularly literacy, as the interactive reader of digital text can control the size, style and shape of screen print, they can add, delete, scribble notes, rearrange paragraphs and save changes before printing (Lanham, 1993).

Contact with computers, and particularly electronic games in any medium, teaches children that some learning can be fast-paced, absorbing, interactive and infinitely rewarding (Gee, 2003; Papert, 1993). This is in contrast to traditional didactic teaching methods characterised by distinct binaries of expert-novice, where the teacher is the expert. Internet technology has not only globalised mass culture and communication, as did television and telephones, it has also provided for interactivity and large-scale choice. It is no longer the prerogative of the media networks to decide what will be consumed - users themselves have the capacity to make choices about which sites to ‘visit’, how much involvement they will have, what other connections they will make through hypertext (sites linked through and across the world wide web) and when they will ‘log on’. This level of choice may suggest that consumers are active participants with a high degree of agency; however, it has been argued that having an array of consumer and media choices does not necessarily equate to ‘agency’ (Phoenix, 2003). Instantaneous connection to almost anywhere in the world from the comfort of your own home, has induced a reorientation to text, information
and the organisation of time (Luke, 2000), and has led to the emergence of new forms of discourse unlike anything experienced in the print world, such as those found in electronic journals, news groups, email, web pages, message boards, multi-user domains, MP3 players, text messaging, cell phones and online shopping sites (Berger & Fleming, 2005; Okerson, 1994).

Lankshear and Knobel (1997) outline some examples of technological literacies which they define as social practices in which texts are used and engaged within processes using electronically digitised codes, primarily through micro computers, but including hand held games, compact disc players, electronic organisers and the like. Their examples include typical technological literacies such as ‘word, sound and image processing’, ‘emailing’, ‘netting’, and ‘gaming’ (p.142). These literacies have evolved to include instant messaging on mobile phones (Selwyn, 2003; Thurlow, 2003) and massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) (Steinkuehler, 2006), where mobility and interaction have become key features of the ‘networked society’ (Castells, 2004). The advent of such technologies and the literacies required to engage with them has meant that new domains and multimodal designs of meaning have become essential components of everyday literacies and of literacy education.

### 4.1.2 Multiple Literacies

In the face of such changes in society and technologies, it is no longer viable to see literacy as a single notion that encompasses the diverse multiplicity of purposes in contemporary society. A more expansive view of literacy has been taken by various scholars using terms such as ‘multiliteracies’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004; The New London Group, 2000; Tyner, 1998; Unsworth, 2002) and ‘multiple literacies’ (Abbott, 2002; Kellner, 2002; Street, 2000). Frequent intercultural interactions with a wide variety of multimodal, multimedia and hybrid texts for various personal, social, school and work related purposes, reflect changing social and economic purposes, which is evident in the practices of the young people in this study.

New terms such as ‘multiliteracies’ and ‘multiple literacies’ have been coined in an attempt to define the
changing, amorphous shape of communication needs for a society awash in electronic sounds, images, icons, and texts. Indeed, these neologisms have contributed some defining characteristics that might be considered for literacy needs within contemporary contexts. (Tyner, 1998 p. 64)

Members of the New London Group (2000) argue that one of the key ideas informing the notion of multiliteracies is the complex interrelationship of different modes of meaning. They have identified six major designs of meaning, those being linguistic design, visual design, audio design, gestural design, spatial design and multimodal design.

- Linguistic design includes aspects of transitivity, metaphor, vocabulary and metalanguage, structure, coherence and other linguistic elements (see also Fairclough, 2000b; Kalantzis & Cope, 2004).
- Visual Design incorporates the use of colour, layout, design, vectors, perspective, size relationships and other visual elements (see also Kress, 2000).
- Audio design relates to the use of music, sound effects, voice-over and other audio components within a text.
- Gestural design focuses on body placement, behaviour, gesture, kinesics, proxemics, sensuality and emotional effect (see also Rossi & Ryan, 2006).
- Spatial Design highlights the relationships between information or design, for example architecture, eco-systems, geographic designs; spatiality on a page; or the physical space in a sporting game or even shopping environment (see also Rossi & Ryan, 2006).
- Multimodal Design, is different to the other five Designs, in that it represents the connectivity between them (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004; The New London Group, 2000).

These designs of meaning have been utilised in the presentation of the data (see Chapters Seven and Eight) in this study to reflect the multiliterate lives accounted for by the youth participants.

Other scholars argue that, whilst literacy is changing, it is not necessarily fragmenting into a series of different yet allied literacies that are technologically determined
Abbott, 2002). Street (2000) emphasises that they are socially grounded. Kellner (2002) defines the term multiple literacies as capturing ‘the many different kinds of literacies needed to access, interpret, criticize, and participate in the emergent new forms of culture and society’ (p. 163). He emphasises ‘multiple’ as the key: the multiple media and forms that demand multiple competencies, understandings, skills and abilities to access, interact and add to the semiotic terrain that is our world.

### 4.1.3 The New Social Order

With the impact of new technologies and multiliteracies, our social lives are changing rapidly. Much of the business of everyday living can be done without leaving home or computer screen (Luke, 2000; Thurlow & McKay, 2003). This means traditional socialisation practices are changing to incorporate cyber-practices that include virtual meeting places where social exchanges occur in both real and delayed time.

Experimentation and creativity in social practices are given greater scope through digital text, evident in the creation of new signs, codes and vocabularies by users (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997; Selwyn, 2003; Thurlow, 2003). Global networks enable individuals to be part of numerous overlapping social communities based on such things as interests or hobbies, work, ethnicity and sexual identity (Kalantzis, 1997). The potential to be part of a ‘social community’ is possible even if youth live a long way from other members. This changing nature of ‘community’ has contributed to changing values for young people towards self-enlightenment and self-liberation as they actively and continuously form new connections in family, the workplace and society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) in a bid for individual fulfilment.

The concept of privacy has also changed, and in an age when an indiscretion can go global on the internet in an instant, the idea of privacy or anonymity is a thing of the past (Appleyard, 2004). Any email can be traced, encrypted and made publicly accessible, digital photos or video recordings can be taken anywhere and uploaded onto the Web within minutes, so privacy and publicity dissolve into one (Bogard, 1996). Cyber-cafes are virtual sites that are considered ‘safe’ places to meet socially online, where narratives are co-constructed by participants, and where written description is important, to take the place of visual modes of interaction. ‘Real’ identities, physical appearance, ability, professions or class don’t matter in such social environments (Luke, 2000) so you can be yourself or ‘be anyone you want to be’
(Optus, undated). Young people in this environment can easily escape what is ‘right’ or ‘acceptable’ as they see material loaded onto the web environment which pushes the boundaries of acceptable social or public behaviour. The ethos in many such environments seems to focus on self-gratifying, experimental, attention-seeking behaviour with little regard for the parameters of ‘right and wrong’ or a concern for the ‘common good’ with regards to values or practices.

Members of the New London Group (2000) consider that lifeworlds are becoming increasingly multi-layered, and interwoven with commodity narratives; as mass media culture, global commodity culture and communications and information networks manipulate, invade and exploit our personal spaces to serve commercial and institutional ends. As Postman states that we are ‘amusing ourselves to death’ (1985) with ‘reality’ TV and Web Cam. Our private lives are now being used as forms of voyeuristic entertainment. Television shows such as Big Brother in Australia, which document the lives of several young people who live in a closely monitored house and whose actions, behaviours and conversations are televised for several months; have engendered an ‘anything goes’ mentality when it comes to live television. Such “reality” shows have also fostered and promoted the notion of individual competition and ‘selling yourself’ metaphorically to ‘win’ the hearts of the viewers, and ultimately the competition prize as the ‘last person left standing’. This and other ‘reality’ television shows, for example Survivor, inculcate the values of the market economy, where individualism and initiative are promoted. In this environment, competitors do anything they need to do, including alienating other team members and strategic manoeuvring, in order to win.

The new social order, with its focus on individual fulfilment and competition, seems to directly contradict the tenets of the critical agenda that are embedded in school curriculum documents (see Chapter Three). These underlying tenets include social justice, civic participation for social change; and working together for a ‘common good’. New work orders described in the following section are similarly focused upon individual agendas.
4.2 Changing Society: New Work Orders

Postman (1993) gave a sober commentary on the effect of technology on culture, which he termed ‘technopoly’, over a decade ago. He lamented the loss of morals and stability, which he said had been replaced by efficiency, interest, economic advance and the ecstasy of consumption. More recently, Gee (2000) agrees that we are in the midst of a major shift in how we react to, and work within our physical, social, biological and mechanical worlds. He variously uses words such as ‘chaos’, ‘complexity’, ‘flexible’, ‘fluid’, ‘dynamic’, ‘adaptive’, and ‘networks’ as the catch words in our ‘new capitalist’ society. No longer do we ascribe to ‘top-down’ authoritarian, hierarchical power systems within organisations, where workers will be told what to do by someone higher up in the power structure. Flexible teamwork and harnessing available resources on a global scale, is the name of the new game, so workers are allegedly more autonomous, more involved and active citizens, and more adaptable social beings within the new global knowledge economy (Kellner, 2002).

These changing characteristics of workers and society have taken place within and have been fuelled by neoliberalism (Phoenix, 2003), which serves to individualise workers to take responsibility for self-fulfilment and achievement (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). This process of socialisation, releases workers in the new economy from traditional fixed ties such as family, occupation, neighbourhood, region or culture as they enter the workforce. Community-oriented policies and production-based lifestyles are being replaced with market-oriented policies and consumption-based lifestyles (Côté, 2002b). Such a system and its philosophical underpinnings has been normalised through the hegemonic practices of governments and institutions over the past thirty years. Singh, Kenway and Apple (2005) suggest that individuals are induced to play the enterprise game as they see their own interests being served by such a culture, which results in a powerful, persuasive environment of calculative and self-centred views of the world. Phoenix (2003) argues that neoliberalism is about ‘continually changing the self, making informed choices, engaging in competition, and taking the chances offered by the market and the government to consume and take advantage of lifelong learning’ (p. 229); however, it is assumed under such a system, that every individual is autonomous and therefore able to take advantage of what the market offers.
Within such an economy, not only do individual workers need to market their skills, but schools also must market themselves as education is increasingly seen in terms of ‘exchange value’ (White & Wyn, 2004), whereby the qualification or place of education can be more ‘marketable’ than the education itself. Young workers in this scenario are often required to show evidence of saleable qualifications when applying for jobs in which such qualifications are not strictly needed. Individuals are no longer defined by fixed qualities such as intelligence or a particular skill. Instead, as Gee (2000) argues, they must see themselves as ‘an everchanging ‘portfolio’ of rearrangeable skills acquired in their trajectory through ‘project space’…’ (p. 47). Within this portfolio concept, Ball, Maguire and Macrae (2000) suggest that there has even become a blurring of the worker and the work, where the embodied attributes or capacities of the worker are key to work roles or portfolios. For example young people are increasingly being employed in ‘interactive’ service industries such as hospitality, hairdressing, DJ-ing, modelling and so on, where their performances of self include emotional, mental and manual aspects that entertain, excite, give pleasure, and encourage consumption. These ‘new style workers’ (Ball et al., 2000 p. 282) have embraced self-imaging as part of their working worlds, and as such their portfolios are not just about skills and knowledge, but also about image and the production of desire.

These changing worlds of work have sparked tension between conflicting discourses of ‘individualisation’ on the one hand, and the ‘teamwork’ of the new work order on the other, whereby individual workers must be able to learn and adapt quickly within teams, and communicate effectively to be a ‘team player’ in the organisation that is characterised by ‘flat hierarchies’ and flexible work structures (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). This tension can be seen between the new Australian workplace agreements (AWAs) which encourage individual work contracts rather than collective agreements through unions; and employment advertisements which generally tend to require teamwork skills in their applicants. Examples of these texts are explored further in Part D of this thesis, as they are juxtaposed against the local data generated by this study.
Schools must also negotiate these conflicting discourses of individual success versus concern for others. Yates and McLeod (2000) show how some schools within this market economy of privatisation, actively contribute to class-based inequalities in Australia as they inform students’ understandings of either an elitist, individualist way of life, or an orientation towards social justice, which in turn influences the level of sympathy for those who are disadvantaged or mistreated either at school or in broader society, including diverse racial or ethnic groups.

4.2.1 Uncertainty and Resentment: Issues of Race and Ethnicity
The uncertainties of a globalised market economy have induced concern over the inability of the state to provide stability and protection for its citizens. Singh (2005 p. 117) suggests that a ‘politics of resentment’ against racialised ‘others’ has emerged to deflect attention from the disinvestment of the state in educational and economic security. Singh argues that discontent has been fuelled by state-based incitement of fears of racialised ‘others’, and this attribution of blame for perceived declines in lifestyle has been variously reconstituted in waves since the 1980s. Currently in Australia and elsewhere it seems that another ‘wave’ of ethnic and racial disharmony has become apparent (Menadue, 2003). Recent popular media texts are running articles about ‘white supremacy’ (Box, 2006a; Pittam, 2006) re-emerging in Australia and America, alongside accusations of public hatred of the Australian Muslim community (Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006). These issues have been particularly foregrounded since the terrorist events of 9/11; and the highly publicized Cronulla riots in Sydney (Burchell, 2006), which have sparked debates about the ‘incipient racism at the nation’s core’. A selection of such articles are juxtaposed against the local data generated by this study in Part D of this thesis. Castles and Vasta (1996) suggest that, in Australia, ‘the two centuries in which racism was an almost universal tenet have left their mark on institutions, social practices, intellectual discourse, popular ideas and national culture’ (p. 4). They argue that there is no single racism in Australia, but rather that there are a range of racisms which affect different groups, including Indigenous Australians and ethnic groups in different contexts, in different ways. The current uncertainty of world events, including terrorist activity, has once again provoked these debates, and in many ways, has given licence to ‘ordinary Australians’ to convey racist viewpoints which are seemingly based upon the safety and economic interests of ‘the common Australian’. In this sense, care for the
‘common good’ is positioned as care for those who are not ‘othered’ by dominant hegemonic discourses of exclusion.

This chapter has outlined the conflicting discourses in a society which values individual success and achievement in a neoliberal environment, whilst at the same time encourages flexible team-work in a workplace characterised by ‘flat hierarchies’ (Gee et al., 1996 p. 29) and fluid team organisation. The impact of multiliterate practices on the social order; and the impact of the market economy on schools and on the contemporary workplace; were discussed as a way of situating the practices of youth and schools in the powerful discourses of broader society.

4.3 Reflections on Part B
Part B of this thesis has outlined the predominant contextual issues in the literature that inform this study, including the discourses of youth, the intentional discourses of schooling, and the discourses of society. Whilst it was acknowledged that these discourse areas intersect and overlap, the separation of these areas into three different chapters enabled me to highlight those discourses in each area which were most relevant to this study. I found that focusing on one discourse area at a time was useful as it allowed me to explore the particularities of each area as both distinct and interconnected influences on the study and on the youth participants within it.

In Chapter Two – Discourses of youth, I problematised the unitary and linear constructions of youth, and instead argued that youth should be explored in terms of multi-faceted positions and changing priorities. This focus on multiplicity and change was important to account for the contradictory positionings of the youth in this study, particularly regarding the enactment of the critical agenda.

The conflicting discourses around schooling that I described in Chapter Three illuminated the slippery terrain that youth must negotiate, particularly when positioned in official documents as being in ‘transition’. Constructions of critical pedagogy and those structures and contradictions which serve to de-rail the critical agenda were juxtaposed against the notion of re-introducing ‘the self’ into discourses
of analysis, as I saw this as a possible way forward to develop more active and informed citizens.

The exploration of our changing society in Chapter Four, including the effect of multiliterate practices and multimodal designs of meaning on the social order, was useful to explain how individuals growing up in such a world may differ in approaches to life, schooling and work compared with previous generations. The conflict between discourses of individual success and flexible team-oriented approaches was introduced as a way of understanding the pressures that are placed upon young people in a market-oriented, yet highly audited society.

Part C of this thesis now explains the research process of this study, including the theoretical perspectives which have informed the process, and the methods which have been employed to conduct the research.
Part C

The Research Process

Introduction
This research is strongly informed by the philosophy and tenets of poststructuralism in which the centrality of power is interrogated and challenged in the process of making meaning. The theoretical perspective of this study is informed by Bakhtin’s (1981; 1994) work on heteroglossia which suggests that language and understanding are touched and influenced by the multiple intentions of others. Whilst poststructural theory is integral to my understandings, it is touched, or to use Bakhtin’s (1994) term, ‘brush(ed) up’ (p. 76) by elements of transformative critical theory and feminist thought. The work of Gramsci (1971) and of feminist poststructuralists (Davies, 1999; Fuller & Lee, 1997; Kamler, 1997b; Lather, 1992; Threadgold, 2000; Weedon, 1997) has also shaped my understandings of the generative possibilities for poststructural theory. Foucault’s (1980) theory of discourse permeates these theoretical understandings as I explore relations of power within discursive and non-discursive practices. I refer to my theoretical perspective as (critical) poststructuralism in order to call attention to the transformative influences and possibilities within the study. Chapter Five thus begins by reconciling the tensions between textual authority and representation of fragmented subjectivities, and describes how poststructural theory can be shaped by a critical perspective. Figure 1 shows a visual representation of the methodology which is described in detail in Chapter Five. This diagram is included as a way to invite the reader to make meaning of the framework in visual and spatial modes, rather than offering a purely linguistic or propositional representation.

This study is aimed at drawing out the ways in which the participants experience and account for their subjectivities within the culture that they are learning to critique (Kanpol, 1997). Therefore, in Chapter Six the study of instances (Freebody, 2003) are described within a (critical) poststructuralist framework, acknowledging the possible tensions referred to above, along with the delimitations specific to this research. The latter part of Chapter Six describes the procedural aspects of the study, including a description of the
context and participants, and an explanation of the data collection, (re)presentation, and analysis procedures as they relate to the theoretical framework and to the research questions. The specific methods are described, including the use of multimodal texts and collections of personal artefacts compiled by the participants as prompts for learning conversations about self, along with the use of oral narrative and transcripts to create a pastiche of (re)presentation. The analytic tool of Critical Discourse Analysis, drawing on aspects of Fairclough’s (1992; 2001; 2003) work, along with other applications such as those used by Threadgold (1997), Kamler (1997b) and Fuller & Lee (1997), are described.

Figure 1  Critical Poststructuralist Methodology
Chapter Five

Theoretical Perspective

5.1 Textual Authority and Representation

The issue of textual authority is significant within the theoretical framework of this study. The particular discourses that are central to the study are made transparent (Davies, 1999; Jones, 1992) through my self-conscious and self-reflexive role as researcher. Through poststructural inquiry, the study emphasises the many narrative positions within, and disrupts the search for absolutes and authorial certainty, as it acknowledges its partial, incomplete and constructed nature (Lather, 1991a; Prain, 1997). I also have transformative motivations consistent with elements of Marxist critical theory; and, as Kanpol (1999) suggests, a critical agenda like any other is not just an innocent bystander – it is rooted in personal histories, and is motivated by particular aims, interests and perspectives. As a critical researcher, Fairclough (2003) also acknowledges that our ability to ‘know’ is inevitably limited and partial, and the questions we ask necessarily arise from particular motivations which go beyond the reach of the study.

As Gramsci (1971) argues, a critical perspective must necessarily involve a consciousness and a problematising of the powerful socio-historical forces that shape one’s own perceptions and the sense they make of the world. These processes of subjectification (Davies, 2003) influence the interpretations that are made throughout the study. To this end, my self-reflections are included at the end of each chapter as a way of making visible my own account of the processes involved in my engagement with the study. I consciously oscillate between third person and first person (personal tenor) throughout this thesis as I attempt to illustrate my embodied influence on the study as I live it and shape it (Smith, 2005), and yet also (re)present the heteroglot of texts and contexts or macro discourses of academia within which I work (my kaleidoscope).
5.2  (Critical) Poststructural Theory

The study draws on poststructural notions of subjectivity through discourse and language, which focus on:

the shifting, fragmented, multi-faceted and contradictory nature of our experiences…as we find ourselves positioned now one way and now another, inside one set of power relations or another, constituted through one discourse or another, in one context or another. (Davies, 1994 p. 3)

Through the discourse of critical researcher, the tenets of poststructuralism are significant not only because of their potential to call attention to the unmarked and invisible, but also because of their potential to be politically generative and socially transformative (Harris, 2001).

Within this study of the enactment of the tenets of critical pedagogy by youth, the focus on multiplicity and positioning within the poststructural framework is particularly useful for a number of reasons. First, to describe youth as a discursively constituted group in which not all members are the same, yet share a unity of positioning. This can be juxtaposed against the discursive category of adults, with its assumption of power and authority. Hegemonic practices within this youth/adult dualism can be made visible in the context of interaction at Bellevue State High School (a pseudonym), a site which presents a contradictory perspective on critical pedagogy and its enactment.

Secondly, the ways in which individual youth take up the critical agenda in their everyday lives can necessarily be seen as complicated and ambiguous, rather than just a question of whether they do or don’t enact the tenets of critical pedagogy. Such a reductionist view of enactment would fail to recognise the intricacies of subjectification and positioning that is possible (Davies, 2003; Weedon, 1997). Thirdly, the multiliterate culture in which the youth in this study participate is constituted by repertoires of ever-changing designs of meaning, possibilities for engagement with numerous texts, text types, discursive practices, technologies, and social and cultural groups. A variety of choice abounds, including the array of political and social issues which may or may not be taken up, resisted or challenged in various forms and degrees of investment. Negotiation of such choices can be explored and problematised in relation to the critical agenda in Queensland.
The potential for social transformation within the poststructural framework of this study is made possible through the alignment with the reconceptualised theorising of those in the critical arena, such as Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) and Kohli (1998). These and other theorists have been influenced by postmodernism, critical feminism and poststructuralism, and have developed an interpretation of critical theory for the new millennium which acknowledges the specific social and historical forces that shape the multi-faceted forms of self. Peters (2003) work is also helpful. He suggests that Marxist critical theory has not become extinct or over-ridden by a newer poststructuralist theory; rather it has been strengthened by poststructuralist readings of Marx. Peters (2003) argues that a ‘complimentary thesis’ is entirely feasible, whereby poststructuralist readings of Marxism are suspicious of meta-narratives or ‘truths’ and understand Marx’s ‘power’ differently – ‘to view it, in Foucault’s terms, as pervasive, productive, positive and operating as the micro-physics of everyday life’ (p. 122). In this way, by using Peters’ ‘complimentary thesis’, I am able to draw upon the transformative possibilities of critical theory, overlaid with a poststructural lens, so as to explore the paradoxes that underpin the enactment of critical pedagogy.

Further, Harris (2001) suggests that, whilst poststructuralism rejects the reductionist tendencies of Marxism, if it is to be a ‘working theory’ for reform, it needs to acknowledge and account for older questions relating to social justice, institutional power and so on, or ‘risk distanc[ing] itself from questions central to the shape, pace and locus of reform’ (p. 337). Poststructuralism’s potential for real reform, rather than simply as a means to theorise about reform, lies in its recognition of traditional critical concerns (Marxist, feminist, social democratic), whilst continuing to be wary of reductionist politics and theories of power which place governance at the centre of everyday life. Such theories of power and governance are important to recognise, yet it is how such governance is taken up at individual sites, by individual people in different ways at different times, that delineates a (critical) poststructural approach, where difference provides the starting point (Harris, 2001).

I now explain in more depth, the theoretical concepts that inform my interpretation of the alignment between critical theory and poststructuralist theory.
5.2.1 Subjectivity and Subjectification

An individual’s subjectivity is multi-layered and uncertain, and is made possible through the varieties of experiences and intersections of discourses and storylines through their life history (Davies, 1994). This view of subjectivity rejects the notion of a fixed, humanist identity in favour of one that sees the subject as dynamic and fluid, and in that sense, as open to differing and imposed interpretations. The process of actively taking up discourses in dynamic ways through one’s own desires and choices, is called subjectification (Davies, 2003; Threadgold, 2000). These discourses then shape the subject and the ways in which they exist in the world. Subjectification concerns power, the powerful forces of discourses that constitute the subject, and are then reproduced through the subject.

Gramsci’s (1971) work is a useful starting point to make sense of the significance of the processes of subjectification for the youth in this study. I then draw links from his work, which is extensively used in critical theory, to Foucault’s (1972; 1980) theorising of discourse and power. The work of Bakhtin (1981) and other linguists concerned with social aspects of language such as Rossi-Landi (1977), Fairclough (2003), Threadgold (2003) and Fuller and Lee (1997), have also informed my analysis of the data within the study: An analysis which is concerned with the interplays between broad notions of power and discourse and the discursive articulations within them.

Gramsci’s (1971 p. 242) writings are conscious of the nature of power as multi-faceted and ambiguous. He suggests that a political class or group can persuade other classes or groups to accept its own political, moral and cultural values through a combination of force and consensus. An example of this combination in society might be when governments ‘force’ laws upon the people; but do so with the appearance of the support of the majority. Gramsci uses the term hegemony to describe how particular discourses in society saturate culture and personal consciousness, so that individuals take up such discourses as their own, often not realising that such discourses should or could be challenged. He refers to schools, religious groups and the military; alongside governments as examples of such institutions. Power relations such as this are evident in contemporary society, and
more specifically in this study whereby institutional consensus can be achieved through strategic media propaganda, endorsed opinions from celebrities and other forms of popular culture.

Gramsci’s (1971) notion of hegemony permeates Marxist political theorisations as a way to understand in practical terms, how a social, political or economic system maintains its hold and retains its support from the people. He describes his work as a ‘philosophy of praxis’, whereby he advocates a unity of theory and practice so that a revolutionary movement might gain ground even if an old regime continues to hold power. Gramsci (1971) rejects the ‘crude materialism’ (p. 435) of some Marxist thought which posits economic or class factors as underpinning the power relations in society. He instead opts for a much broader notion of power, which includes cultural, social and moral factors, as well as economic systems. He also suggests that the histories and developments of such systems should be studied, including ‘the development of all the other parties too, in so far as they include elements of the hegemonic group or of the other subaltern groups which undergo such hegemony’ (p. 53). In this way, he highlights how the hegemony or dominant discourse can be strengthened by using oppositional positions or contradictions as points of persuasion and action (p. 405), thereby rendering them less harmful.

Gramsci’s work helps me as researcher to understand the broad interplays of power within this study. In particular, his conceptions of power as permeating all aspects of social and cultural life are more useful than a purely economic Marxist stance. In addition, his philosophy of praxis which acknowledges both social group consciousness and individual will as important elements of action; informs my concern for both (macro) social influences of power, and (micro) discursive articulations of such power. While Gramsci (1971) recognises contradictions within the hegemony of groups in society, he suggests that such contradictions are then accounted for or reconciled to fit within the hegemonic assumptions of the group. He suggests that one ‘participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct’ (my emphasis) (p. 9). Multiplicity of one’s subject positions is not accounted for here as he emphasises the taking up of a conscious, yet unitary positioning. This is the point at which I turn to poststructural theorising as I reject the
unitary positionings of subjects, and instead embrace the plurality and paradoxes inherent in compliance with, and resistance to forms of power.

Foucault (1980) refers to a new ‘economy’ of power that ‘took off’ from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whereby the effects of power were seen as a productive network that could be circulated in a continuous, uninterrupted fashion; or could be adapted or individualised throughout an entire social body. His theories of power as productive and beguiling have many similarities to Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. Both theorists suggest that power is not always negative, but rather that it can induce pleasure and knowledge; and that the positive effects can be used much more efficiently than repressive forms (using force) to gain the support of the people. Foucault’s (1972) earlier work on discourse looks more specifically to the microphysics of power and sees contradictions not as ‘appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered’ (p. 169), but rather as objects of significance to be described in terms of how they are expressed or embodied and how they intersect within, and form the historicity of the discourse.

5.3 Discourse and Discursive Articulation

Foucault (1972) defines discourses as more than simply ways of thinking and constructing meanings, rather he suggests that they constitute social practices, knowledge, subjectivities and the power relations within them. They comprise the body, the emotions and both the conscious and unconscious mind of the subjects they seek to govern. Foucault (1972) suggests that, whilst discourses are composed of signs, they are not merely reducible to language (langue) and speech. Rather, discourses do more than use these signs to designate things, and this ‘more’ must be revealed and described. Foucault (1972) seeks to discover this ‘more’ by interrogating issues related to the speaker, the site and the subject. His first question asks: Who is the speaker and what authority or power do they have? The second question seeks to describe the institutional sites from which the discourse derives its legitimate source and application. Foucault’s third question considers the different positions that the subject may take up at different times or even at the same time.
Whilst the study of language and text is integral to my methods of discourse analysis (as outlined later in this chapter), I am conscious of Foucault’s (1977) broader notions of discursive enactment within discourses, for example his interest in the body as a site of power. He theorises the body politic as a set of techniques and elements which both analyse the body, and manipulate it. He sees the body as an object and target of power, which can be explored, broken down and rearranged. His interest is in the mechanics of power which work to produce docile bodies through subtle coercion rather than overt domination, so that subjects willingly submit, and increase their capacities and aptitudes to meet the demands of the regulating institution. I take up this notion of the body as a site of power later in this chapter through the work of McWilliam (2003), Threadgold (1997), Grosz (1994) and others as I discuss the embodied articulations within the discourse.

The elements of Foucault’s concept of archaeology, whereby one interrogates the discourse to uncover the power relations within it, inform many of the understandings within this study. As suggested earlier, I am guided by the focus on discourse as more than just language; the importance of context and power relations within the discourse; and the possibility of many subject positions that one may take up at any one time. There are unrecognised issues in Foucault’s archaeology work, however, which are key foci in this study. These issues include the role of the researcher and the historical shaping of the discourse, which are taken up and resolved in Foucault’s (1977) later work.

Foucault’s early theories tend to reflect his position as detached theorist (archaeologist) whose work is to describe governing rules, in an objective way: free from influence or involvement. In later work, such as Discipline and Punish (1977), Foucault concedes that he, along with any other investigator, is involved in and to a large extent produced by, the social practices that he studies. In this later work he foregrounds genealogy as a way to make sense of social practices from within them. The archaeologist is still present as a way of stepping back to interrogate the supposed continuity and ‘normalness’ of the discourse in order to suspend the groupings or categories that are accepted without question (1972; 1977). The genealogist on the other hand, comes from a position within, and seeks to unmask the small details, minor shifts and discontinuous discursive formations of the discourse, particularly through the relations
of power, knowledge and the body. Foucault’s (1977) genealogist finds that there is no fixed meaning of text or context, but rather that there are only other interpretations which have been created and imposed by other people, not by the nature of things. Genealogy for him, records the history of these interpretations.

In this study, I consciously recognise my role in both shaping the study and as being shaped by the social institutions within which I and the study exist. I am also conscious of disrupting the ‘normalness’ of structures, by starting with the idea of ‘difference’, and by describing the many seemingly inconsistent shifts in the subject positions and meanings accounted for by the young people within the study. Relations of power are imbedded in the terms that these young people use, as they attribute power first to others, then to themselves, according to the articulated categories they use to position themselves and others. Aligning oneself explicitly, yet denying full participation in discourse categories that may not be seen as powerful, or at least not powerful socially in the school setting, can serve to construct power delineated sub-categories within categories, so whilst some of these young people proclaim themselves as ‘nerds’, they provide the disclaimer that they are not the ‘real nerds’, who are supposedly even further down the social ladder than they are themselves. In this way, power is relative, and is bound up within the articulated categories.

The centrality of power in the construction of meaning, knowledge and values, is significant in Foucault’s theorising, and within this frame, dominant and ‘taken-for-granted’ knowledges which are continually legitimised can be seen as politically and socially crafted in persuasive and pervasive ways so that their value and power-laden nature is disguised and taken as ‘normal’ by members of the social group. This process of discourse legitimation supports and protects particular understandings and knowledges, while at the same time discounting or repressing others through social sanctions that marginalise deviations from the norm (Brown, 1994; Keddie, 2003). MacNaughton (1998) suggests that at any point in time ‘contradictory discourses about what is normal, right and best circulate and compete with each other’ (p. 160), so it is not so much about what is ‘true’ or ‘right’, rather which is dominant at a particular time.
Hall, Critcher, Jefferson and Roberts (1978) argue that discourse legitimation is achieved through ‘cultural mapping’. They suggest that events (or texts) only make sense if they can be located within known social and cultural systems of belief and representation. Media texts and other ideological representations such as school texts effectively juxtapose, realign and recycle the memories, stereotypes and desires of their readers or participants as they inscribe and summon maps of meaning within the context of predominant cultural premises and relations of power (Britzman et al., 1995). Intertextual cues are used to summon given and possible meanings as they work to constitute the social subject. In this sense, particular discourses can be normalised and can be co-written by members of the discourse as genuine and familiar and therefore right. The pervasive power of cultural mapping relies upon this familiarity, along with the deep investments of social subjects as it seeks to position them in opposition to the ‘other-ness’ of non-members. The process of cultural mapping ensures the loyalty of discourse members as hegemonic assumptions are reproduced, however it is only one possible interpretation within the intersecting discourses of students’ lives. It foregrounds particular elements, backgrounds others, draws elements together in different and involved ways, and specifies which discursive types are likely to be relevant. The power of the cultural map is difficult to subvert as investment and familiarity run deep. Indeed even critical dialogue can be assimilated into the cultural map, so oppositional positions or ideologies can be used to strengthen the dominant discourse.

This perspective is useful to conceptualise the ways in which the youth in this study construct knowledges and understandings, and how such understandings shape their lived realities. Compliance with dominant discourses can be seen as pleasurable, and with the acknowledgement of such compliance from powerful groups within the discourse (for example teachers and parents) comes the power to stretch the boundaries of ‘acceptable practice’ with little or no negative consequences, in ways that are unavailable to those who do not comply (Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Lesko, 2001). Such compliance can also be seen as ‘normal’ and ‘right’ because it is constructed by those compliants as serving their ‘best interests’. There is though, space within the discourse for resistance and interrogation. As Foucault (1980) suggests, whilst the legitimation of a discourse serves to reinforce its power, it also renders it weak, and makes it possible
to break down. The possibility of exposing dominant discourses and attempting to re-write or thwart them is significant in terms of the transformative nature of this study.

Foucault (1977) theorises the relationship between non-discursive practices such as institutional, political and economic factors; and discursive practices which articulate, influence and are influenced by such factors. His work on discursive practice is more concerned with the conditions under which such practices occur and by which they can be interrogated. Whilst he refers to grammar systems in *Archeology of Knowledge* (1972), he is more concerned with the *false unity* of such systems at a more abstract level, than with the everyday workings of language in practice. This is consistent with the views of a number of analysts, for example Dreyfus & Rabinow (1983) and Fairclough (1992), who suggest that Foucault’s *archaeology* work was more concerned with abstract theory than with practice. In this study, I am concerned with the interplay between broader (macro) dimensions of power and discourse, and the local (micro) practices which are articulated within the discourse. Foucault’s (1972; 1977; 1980) work facilitates an understanding of the broader dimensions of power and discourse within the study, however I turn now to linguistic theories to provide the discursive tools with which to interrogate texts (in practice), to locate discursive practices and to understand the intricacies of the discursive articulations.

### 5.3.1 Resources of Articulation

The meanings that one constructs and articulates through text are constituted through complex relationships with other texts, text types, discourses, narratives and modes of meaning (New London Group, 1996). This view of textual engagement emphasises the historicity of texts through intertextual chains. In this section I draw together different yet complementary theorisations about such relationships within and between texts, contexts and participants, and discuss their significance for this study.

Bakhtin’s (1994) philosophies of ‘dialogic discourse’ and heteroglossia are helpful as a starting point to discuss the processes of articulation:

> The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it
cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. (Bakhtin, 1994 p.76)

Bakhtin suggests that active understanding, whereby one assimilates words into their conceptual system, necessarily involves establishing a complex interrelationship of agreements and disagreements, contradictions and understandings of the words, whilst enriching them with new elements. This continuous dialogic struggle between discourses is inherent in any text, as both the producer and the consumer of the text draw on various resources in its design and interpretation. These intersections between multiple (often conflicting) social discourses within any text or context constitute what Bakhtin (1981; 1994) refers to as ‘heteroglossia’. Language is never neutral, and even in the ownership of the producer, it is ‘populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others’ (1994 p. 77).

Bakhtin’s (1990) work concerns itself with the broad notions of *architectonics*, or the study of how entities relate to each other; and *aesthetics*, which he defines as a subset of the former that is concerned with how the (potential chaos of) parts are shaped into the whole (*consummation*). His dialogical understandings, whereby the ‘whole’ is never absolute, and is always a relative term from a particular point of view, has many attractions for poststructural inquiry. Bakhtin is not concerned with a simplistic pluralism, but rather with the sophisticated and complicated intertextual relationships between the general and the specific, between the whole and the parts, between the individual ‘I’ and ‘the other’.

Bakhtin is (controversially) considered to have written under the name of Valentin Volosinov in the 1920s (Holquist, 1990), in which he attempts to devise a Marxist philosophy of language. This work (Volosinov, 1973) accounts for the ways in which the *individual* and the *social* interact to constitute the diverse, multi-faceted identities or subjectivities of individuals as they construct and express meaning. His *intersubjective* understandings about how self is both socially constructed and individually experienced led to his development of a philosophy of the *sign* or semiosis (including language and non-verbal signs) which sees individuals drawing upon an intricate and continuous interplay between self and the ideologies of society. Thus any study of meaning construction and expression must necessarily include a
synthesis of both as a continuous intersection (see also Pietikäinen & Dufva, 2006). Meaning-making that is regarded as exclusively socially constructed does not account for the varied and often contradictory perspectives that an individual simultaneously takes up and rejects, yet theories that consider meaning-making to be based only on individual psychology neglect to explain the influence of the social milieu on any verbal or non-verbal interaction.

This thesis has been *consummated* using Bakhtin’s (1990; 1994) notions of aesthetics, heteroglossia and intersubjectivity. The study is underpinned by a theoretical framework that is woven from (potentially chaotic) standpoints. The data are woven together as an intertextual pastiche of specific (micro) discursive practices intertwined with broad (macro) social influences, and the metaphor of the kaleidoscope is used to theorise the complex and often contradictory positions of the young people within the study. Drawing from Bakhtin’s philosophies of language and meaning, I now establish relationships between the linguistic works of Rossi-Landi (1977), who emphasises the corporeal artefacts that one draws upon to make meaning; Fairclough (1992), who provides a methodology with which to analyse discourse from a macro to a micro level; Threadgold (1997) and Kamler (1997b), who explicitly focus on the discursive practices of the body; and Fuller and Lee (1997), who provide a way to analyse the successful use of linguistic resources in different texts and contexts.

Whilst I use systemic functional linguistics as a basis for linguistic analysis in this study, I highlight elements of the system that are not always explicit in its use. The exclusive use of field, tenor and mode as the immediate context of utterance as outlined in Halliday’s (1978) system of language and interpretation, whilst being a fully explicated social view of language, tends to be inadequate in explaining how what the body brings to any encounter goes beyond the immediate context. Rossi-Landi’s (1977) emphasis on the equal importance of linguistic and material (bodily, non-verbal, physical and visual) artefacts is important when considering any context of meaning, but I find it particularly pertinent in a study of young people who are increasingly immersed in a society that is preoccupied by the body and its images. Rossi-Landi (1977) suggests that text creation is not simply a matter of linguistics, rather one draws on ‘parking lots of artefacts’, which enables a ‘chunking’ together of various texts (or contexts) that you know or understand in ways that make sense to
you in this context, at this time. This involves drawing on linguistic resources, or knowledge about cultural text forms and structures, and also on other resources of articulation and embodied practice. Rossi-Landi and Pesaresi (1981) argue further that any sign system (linguistic, non-verbal, corporeal) is but a slice of reality, and is a form of social planning. In this way, they point out the inseparability of sign systems (including language and material resources), and socio-historical influences or ideologies. This continuous cycle of influence and meaning making is inherent in any text or context that we encounter.

This theory of meaning-making is consistent with the New London Group’s (1996) model of multiliteracies designs of meaning (which I explored in Chapter Four of this thesis), which emphasises the potential of language as a productive and innovative meaning-making system. Their design elements include linguistic design, audio design, spatial design, gestural design and visual design, with combinations of these as multimodal design (p. 26). Not only are these design elements drawn upon to produce text, they are used to distribute and to consume text, whereby the consumption necessarily involves the consumer of the text in a process of meaning design. Fairclough (1992) refers to a similar notion through his term ‘members’ resources’, which he describes as ‘effectively internalized social structures, norms and conventions, including orders of discourse, and conventions for the production, distribution and consumption of texts’ (p. 80). He suggests that processes of production and interpretation are constrained by the available members’ resources, as well as by the nature of the social practice, which determines which resources are called upon and how they are utilised in ‘normative, creative, acquiescent or oppositional ways’ (p. 80). Britzman, Santiago-Vallos et al (1995) also posit such a notion when they suggest that the evocative power of texts depends upon the ways that readers (consumers) supply possible meanings through the intertextual process, or how texts inscribe or summon given or possible meanings by leaving traces or cues for the reader to take up.

This view of members’ resources is particularly significant for the youth in this study, as their worlds are characterised more than ever by rapidly changing technologies, hybrid texts and smorgasbords of ‘edu-tainment’ possibilities (Kellner, 2002; Lankshear & Knobel, 1997; Tyner, 1998), along with new forms of ‘acceptable’
social behaviour, which are woven through the texts that they both consume and produce. They are encouraged through electronic media, to combine and recombine their knowledges and ideas to construct new and different texts and to push the limits of what is acceptable ‘school practice’ by drawing from the corporate and social pedagogues such as Microsoft, Disney and Sony and so on (Giroux, 2000b). Today’s youth literally have access to the world as a knowledge arena at their fingertips, so for them, school is only one of many places of learning, as it constitutes one part of the heteroglot of competing discourses about pedagogy, social behaviour, politics and authority.

Fairclough’s (1992) methodology on critical discourse analysis (CDA) relies upon the interplay between the power of these broad social discourses, the way that the members’ resources are taken up and used within and across discourses (similar to Hall et al’s (1978) notion of cultural mapping); and the specific textual cues which articulate the discursive practices within the discourse. Fairclough (1992) posits his conceptions of discourse and language as ‘a reading of Foucault from a particular point of view’ (p. 39). He considers that Foucault’s social theory of discourse, particularly the relationship of discourse and power; the discursive construction of knowledge and subjects; and the functioning of discourse in social change; is useful as he tries to ‘operationalize his insights in actual methods of analysis’ (p. 38). He argues that Foucault’s theories of discourse are limited in that they refer only to specific kinds of discourse (human sciences) and do not include the analysis of spoken and written language texts. Fairclough’s (1992; 2001; 2003) method of CDA is articulated more fully in Chapter Six as it directly informs the methodology of the study.

Kamler (1997b) and Threadgold (1997) utilise the broad principles of CDA as an approach that is cognizant of the interplay of macro and micro elements within and across discourses, however they argue that discursive practices are accomplished not only through language, but through bodies and bodily discipline. I am drawn to their work as it expands upon Rossi-Landi’s (1977) corporeal focus in meaning-making and Foucault’s (1977) concept of ‘docile bodies’. Textual participants behave, talk and produce work in socially branded, inscribed ways (Grosz, 1990) as embodied subjects within a matrix of power relations across several discourses. The shaping of
minds has long been privileged in the history of Western thought which posits the mind as the site of human ‘being’, distinct from the body (McWilliam, 2003), yet more recently critical and poststructuralist scholars have argued for the notion of the ‘lived body’ which avoids the mind/body dichotomy (Grosz, 1994; Kamler, 1997b; McWilliam, 2003; Threadgold, 1997), and sees embodiment or corporeality as a generative principle (McWilliam, 2003). Individuals are shaped to act and feel in the ways that they do through disciplined and regulatory material and cultural processes (Kohli, 1998), so it is not only their minds that are shaped, but their bodies, their physicality, and their desires.

The effects of educational practices and institutional discourses of schooling, family and religion, are deeply inscribed and Kohli (1998) argues that the ‘complexity and historicity of the bodies before us: those raced, classed, sexed, and gendered bodies of difference that have been produced…and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, and femininity’ (p. 519), must be explored with regard to the possibilities for resistance to such regulation and normalisation. Mead’s (1934) work suggests that bodily experiences become part of self through self-consciousness in his delineation of the ‘conversation of gestures’ as the taking of the attitude of others, and thinking about self, or acting towards self as others have or would act (p. 171). Olesen (1992) suggests a further dimension to this work as she foregrounds the lived body as a social body, and considers that the self as knower not only engages in this ‘conversation of gestures’, but ‘reviews a history of body’s own experiences, some quite private, some interactive, many…quite emotional’ (p. 215).

This notion of the lived body as social body illuminates for me how schooled behaviour and thought within this study is based on hegemonic assumptions of life success. These students make choices, and act in ways that emulate the attitudes of their teachers and of broader educational discourses, and they do so as a result of witnessing ‘the success’ or otherwise of others who have gone before them (older siblings and other students who have since finished school), along with their own experiences of the consequences of particular ways of acting. It is important to note the difference between the year nine and year eleven students in this study, where these students explicitly (in the case of the year elevens) or implicitly (in the case of
the year nines) account for their first three years of high school (Years Eight, Nine, Ten) as important socially, yet not important academically. These years of schooling were both explicitly and implicitly described almost as an apprenticeship to educational performance, the formation of the educational subject, where oppositional (to the dominant discourse) performances of self can be tried out with few negative consequences, providing it does not continue into Year Eleven, where the serious process towards educational, and therefore life success begins.

The young people in this study are constrained and organised by this school context, as they write, rewrite and improvise performances of self (Threadgold, 1997) in the formation of the ‘successful student’ subject (Kamler, 1997b). They are positioned, or position themselves, within this context to act out, believe and value certain points of view that reflect the interests of the group (the broader institutional discourse of education). Through these practices they construct or have constructed for them a position within the group as ‘subordinate or dominating, as central or peripheral, as learner or expert, as knowledgeable or ignorant’ (Kamler, 1997b p.373).

Fuller and Lee (1997) interrogate how subjects draw upon textual resources to position themselves successfully as ‘schooled selves’ (p. 410). They suggest that texts not only set up dialogues between writer and reader, but also between themselves and other texts. Drawing from Bakhtin’s (1981) heteroglossia, and further from Fairclough’s (1992) work on ‘manifest intertextuality’, which explores how texts both explicitly cue (through quotation marks, indirect speech and attributed paraphrase) and less explicitly cue (through presupposition, irony and negation) other texts, they coin the term ‘manifest dialogia’. The focus is on how intersubjective dialogue enacted in text works to weave other texts into one’s own. They explore how notions of ‘other-ness’ and ‘own-ness’ operate in the ‘textual collusions’ of literacy, and suggest that the degrees to which such notions are utilised in textual performance, and the choices that are made about combining and weaving these textual cues, can indicate success or otherwise in a particular textual instance.

Fuller and Lee’s (1997) concept of textual practices as collusions define the latter as necessary conditions of socio-discursive practices. Their work is significant for this study, as it seeks to understand the complexity and productivity of texts in the
enactment of pedagogies and (re)production of curricula knowledges in educational sites. The relations of power in the context of this school need to be read and negotiated by the colluders in the game of schooling, as the dialogue that is enacted in such a site through various texts, is also mediated by the ‘institutional discursive regime’ (p. 411). Successful colluders not only draw upon the appropriate textual resources for a particular genre or purpose, they draw upon the appropriate resources of articulation for the many intricate dialogues between subjects and sites. Within any literacy task in the classroom, students straddle a range of intersubjective positions: that of the literate subject, the critical subject, the pedagogic subject, the regulated subject, the social peered subject. Each of these positions entails expectations of particular articulations of knowledges, which the successful colluder will weave through their text, possibly taking one position, then another as they negotiate both explicit and implicit dialogues with their teacher. Fuller and Lee (1997) suggest that:

Within any given textual instance, the writer will enact a series of textualised personae that may or may not correspond to ‘who they are’ in terms of social subjectivity. These personae, or textually instantiated ‘I’s’, may differ from one moment to the next, and depending on the specific context of that moment, may or may not have the appropriate rhetorical charge to be deemed a successful collusion (and, in terms of literacy studies, a successful text). (1997 p. 413)

This emphasis on diverse and changing personae in a text, or indeed a context, resonates with poststructural theory, and provides a practical application (explained as a method of analysis in Chapter Six) of Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogical work. The notion of textual collusion is a useful lens through which to view the production of multimodal texts by the youth in this study, along with their accounts of pedagogic and multiliterate practices. This lens helps to make visible the social and institutional discourses that shape their practices, so I may explore how successful collusions in school literacy relate to and possibly contradict the enactment of the tenets of critical pedagogy in their everyday lives. enactment of teacher expectations often calls for clarity, closure and monolithic understanding, yet these are subverted by the contradictions that we live and embody (Britzman et al., 1995). Unless the embodied subjectivities of both teacher and students are problematised in terms of the wider social discourses at play, particular ‘authorised’ subjectivities will be played out, as students construct meaning based on their dominant cultural maps (Hall et al, 1978),
rather than the ‘slippery, treacherous signifiers of difference, social order (and) communities…’ (Britzman et al., 1995 p. 163).

The significance of this work is important specifically for these young people, who invest not only in discourses of schooling where they take pleasure in conforming (plaisir) (Kenway & Bullen, 2001), but also in forms of embodied practices that seem to contradict such conformity. Poststructural theorising including the work of Foucault (1972, 1977), and feminist perspectives such as those of Davies (1999, 2003) and Threadgold (2000) enable me as researcher to live with the contradiction and difference that this study has made visible, as I resist the urge to find a neat answer to my research questions. My alignment of transformative critical theories with poststructuralism has also enabled me to see unity in the transformative struggle of this critical agenda. Although individual subjects take up various discourses at different times in different ways, the unity comes from collectively examining, as youth or as students in a school system, the processes of subjectification, so that hegemonic notions of racism, classism, and sexism for example, can be problematised, transformed and rewritten.

The powerful processes of legitimation understood as not only about the mind, but also about the body, are useful as I explore the ways that these young people account for, and interpret the ways that they, their peers, their teachers and their parents and siblings act, dress, speak, feel, and ‘perform’ (in an evaluative sense). In this sense, their performances of self (Threadgold, 1997) are shaped and legitimated by the dominant discourses at play, and they are difficult to dismantle as investments are deep and familiar. Performative institutional discourses such as these may well be contradicting the very tenets of critical pedagogy that this school purports to value through an emancipatory and socially just curriculum. Unless students are encouraged to explore their own multi-faceted subjectivities as shaped by such hegemonic discourses, and see possibilities for rewriting normalised assumptions, the critical agenda will not enact change in any socially transformative way.

The transformative potential of this study is at the macro level, concerned with how educational and bureaucratic practices may be de-railing the critical agenda, rather than at the micro level of necessarily effecting immediate change in the lives of the
participants (although I do not discount this possibility). The use of macro texts woven through my analysis (see Parts A and D for more information) is to illustrate the influence of macro discourses on the youth participants, on the critical agenda, and indeed on this study. My interaction with these participants at the micro level may well influence their practices as I pose questions to encourage them to consider and problematise their processes of subjectification. Weaving examples of macro discourses explicitly through my data illustrates the powerful influence of such discourses on the enactment of the critical agenda, and posits possibilities for change at the macro level of educational policy and curriculum.

5.4 Social Transformation: Interrogating Self
Critical theory has been integral in my own subjectification process. I have subscribed to such theories both as a classroom teacher and as a teacher educator, believing that my work in guiding students to explore different perspectives and ideologies, and to deconstruct and problematise hegemonic ideologies within texts, would in some small way lead to social transformation. I have struggled with the idea that students could grasp such notions, and ‘perform well’ educationally, they could use the metalanguage and apply it to classroom activities, yet when I listened to some of them talking informally about their lives and interests away from school/university, they often used racist, sexist and other discriminatory language, seeing no problem because ‘no-one was offended’. Even within my own practices, I have to acknowledge that my moral stance only goes so far. I know that McDonalds Happy Meals include toys that are made by underage workers in Asian countries for a pittance, yet I occasionally buy such meals for my children ‘as a treat’. Similarly, I sometimes buy running shoes that were produced in similar conditions because they meet my needs. I have begun to wonder whether there is a definitive answer to whether critical pedagogy actually works. I have realised that it is a more involved issue than that simple question. I am drawn to poststructuralist theory and the interrogation of one’s processes of subjectification to make visible those forces that have shaped their subjectivities. Kohli’s (1998) work has influenced my thinking, particularly her contention that ‘one did not change deeply held political, social and philosophical positions simply by acquiring new knowledge or new perspectives through conversation with others’ (p. 515). She asserts that we cannot separate reason
from emotion in any theory of change, as personal investments are deeply rooted in the material and cultural conditions in which we live. From this work, and the feminist poststructural work that I have drawn upon, I perceive the first step towards enacting change to be the interrogation of self and one’s processes of subjectification. Thus, within this study I have not only interrogated my own processes of subjectification, I have also utilised data collection strategies (outlined in Chapter Six) which seek to prompt the participants to interrogate self and their own processes of subjectification.

5.5 Institutional Power and Hegemony in a Multiliterate World

In a postmodern age, where youth have access to numerous forms of information and communication technology, and are often more proficient than their teachers and parents in its applications in a globalised world, it is important to examine the significance of institutional power in their lives. Many scholars argue that the use of technology and cyberspace in postmodern youth culture epitomises the struggle of youth to break out of the regulative, disciplinary discourses of educational institutions (Kellner, 2002; Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Lankshear et al., 1996; Luke, 2000; Weaver & Grindall, 1998). Lankshear, Peters and Knobel (1996) suggest that the ways in which youth utilise technology as one of their many available repertoires of literate practice, serves to break down the binaries of formal/informal, teacher/student, classroom/home, and print/electronic text, and enables them to be reworked within cyberspace. They argue that old practices can be understood and recombined in new and different ways through new forms of intertextuality, hypertext and multimedia within this cyberspace environment.

This concept of recombinining is useful to include in the theoretical framework of this study, as I attempt to explore how these young people are regulated by hegemonic discourses and institutional power, whilst at the same time resisting aspects of the discourse and rebelling against adult control. The extent to which they take up new technologies can be examined from a number of positions. First, how such texts and contexts are drawn into the heteroglossia of their discourse worlds, including the explicit or implicit traces that are cued into their accounts of self and everyday practices. This includes how ‘other’ spaces (such as cyberspace or dramatic or
musical performances) collide with the discursive practices of the dominant discourses of school, and what gestural and bodily practices are involved in their engagement with such spaces. Secondly, how these texts and contexts are utilised in textual collusions in terms of whether they are successfully or unsuccessfully drawn into school texts and contexts. Do they for example, ‘unsuccessfully’ use the informal language of email or text messaging in assignments that insist upon formal ‘academic’ styles of writing, or do they ‘successfully’ utilise new technologies in the research or presentation of such assignments? Thirdly, how such embodied practices shape their subjectivities. Are they more self-regulated, more autonomous, willing to hybridize genres, more accepting of difference? Or do they approach technology in a controlled way, and use it simply to validate their hegemonic beliefs and deny oppositional viewpoints?

These practices of youth can be contextualised within the institutional dynamics of adult culture and within regulating structures of school and family, which sits in juxtaposition to the ‘liberating’ or autonomous spheres of cyberspace and popular culture. Exploring these contradictory positionings of youth can enable me to make visible their subjectification as successful students.

5.6 Reconciling Tensions
Poststructural theory has incited many critiques which often focus upon its limitations as a force for social transformation or affirmative political vision. In an attempt to enrich the study’s methodological framework, and account for the tensions between critical theory and poststructuralist theory which I have utilised in this study, I address some of these critiques as supplements to my theorisations. McLaren (1998), Seidman (1993), and Fuss (1989) provide critique of poststructuralism’s subversion of identity and lack of affirmative action in its ‘anything goes’ theorising. McLaren (1998) argues that postmodern and poststructuralist theories are based on questionable assumptions which defer to any viewpoint, which abandon ‘truth’ values and grand narratives in favour of local narratives and giving voice to the symbolically dispossessed, and which abandon ‘reality’ as historical fiction (p. 442). He asserts that such ‘avant-garde apostasy’ has become blind to issues of class and economic inequality. He blames such theories for the current crisis of critical pedagogy as being
‘domesticated’ and ‘reduced’, ‘devoid of social critique and a revolutionary agenda’ (p. 442). In later work, McLaren (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) seems to revise this opinion as he draws upon postructuralism and critical feminist theory to reconceptualise the critical agenda.

Seidman (1993) suggests that poststructuralism’s refusal to ‘anchor experiences in identifications’ (p. 130) ends up forsaking the acknowledgement of differences through ‘submerging them in an undifferentiated oppositional mass or by blocking the development of individual and social differences through the disciplining compulsory imperative to remain undifferentiated’ (p. 130). Whilst Seidman views poststructuralist notions of anti-identity politic as a ‘welcome critique of the essentialist celebration of a unitary subject and tribal politic’ (p. 134), he suggests that its problematisation of identity renders it incoherent and weak as a force of positive social change.

Similarly, Fuss (1989) disputes the tenability of poststructuralism’s rejection of essentialist notions of identity, as she suggest that ‘essentialism is essential to social reconstructionism’ (p. 1). She suggests that, whilst we can never really get beyond essentialism, she views deconstruction as deploying ‘essentialism against itself, leaning heavily on essence in its determination to displace essence’ (p. 13). Whilst ‘identity’ and ‘essence’ are problematised in poststructural theory, they are still usable terms, yet notably seen as historically contingent signs that are continually subject to change and redefinition. Davies (2003) also suggests that identity is a term that is not excluded from poststructural discourse, rather it is redefined and problematised.

Modern knowledge production by intellectuals is often a site for ‘cold war’ tendencies and ‘either/or’ positions (Kohli, 1995), where articles are produced and critiqued, then the critique is critiqued and so on until it almost becomes a game of textual tennis. A case in point is Carlson’s lament that ‘enough is enough’ when referring to ‘Lather’s critique of Giroux’s critique of Ellsworth’s critique of Giroux’ (in Lather, 1998 p. 487) in the argument about critical pedagogy versus poststructural deconstruction of such pedagogy. Such dualistic thinking seems to me to be inconsistent with poststructural theory, and I consider that such arguments are superfluous in the search for what is appropriate to help describe and make sense of the particularities of this
specific study. In this study I take the position that Peters (1998) (incorporating Derrida 1990) suggests:

The notion of a pure poststructuralism – one uncontaminated, disrupted, or transformed that lends itself to a “taxonomic objectivization” or a “static tabularization” – discounts the way in which contemporary theory is a field constituted by plural forces…Each species of theory – for example, structuralism, psychoanalysis, neo- or poststructuralism, to say nothing of Marxist discourse – “constitutes its own identity only by incorporating other identities – by contamination, parasitism, grafts, organ transplants, incorporation etc”. (p.17)

Dualistic notions of critical theory and poststructuralism are problematised in this study. Instead I use them as complementary ‘plural forces’ to make visible those interests that are different from the ‘we’ and ‘us’ and even ‘them’ norms which may have been rendered invisible in many theoretical positions (Kohli, 1995). In this way, the theoretical position I take is heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981), reflexive, and resists the concept of ‘absolute’ authority.

Whitson (1995) suggests that many of the criticisms aimed at postmodernism and poststructuralism do not in fact, apply to poststructural theory, and he argues that poststructuralist textuality is a necessary basis for counter-hegemonic practice in education. He defines textuality in this sense, as ‘the condition of the material world that we live in, as a world constituted by institutions, practices, and power relationships operating through the unbounded and dynamic textual interweaving of diversely structured networks of signs and codes’ (Whitson, 1995 p. 130). He argues that by utilising these poststructural principles of textuality in education, it enables us to reveal otherwise unsuspected structural relationships within educational institutions. He explains that unlike postmodernists, the poststructuralists have learned from the structuralists, yet break from such traditions to reject extreme notions of fixed and predetermined structures.

The integration of critical theory and poststructuralist theory in the framework of this study is seen as a complementary rather than a contradictory union. A poststructuralist perspective can provide a means to counter-hegemonic practices not by legislating ‘the right story’ of critical pedagogy, but as Lather (1998) proposes, by:

…thinking within Jacques Derrida’s ‘ordeal of the undecidable’ and its obligations to openness, passage, and non-mastery. Here questions are
constantly moving and one cannot define, finish, or close. This is a praxis of not being so sure, of working the ruins of critical pedagogy towards an enabling violation of its disciplining effects. (p. 488)

This perspective of incompleteness and transparency has informed my conceptualisation of this study, viewed as it is through a (critical) poststructuralist lens. In the next chapter I describe the procedural aspects of the study.
Chapter Six

Methodology

6.1 Study of Instances

This study draws in some ways upon case study methods within a (critical) poststructuralist framework to look at ‘instances’ (Freebody, 2003 p. 81; Holt, 2000 p. 425) of the enactment of a critical agenda. This allows for a ‘laying open’ of the complex and multiple intersections of the participants’ subjectivities, particularly as influenced by the context of this school. Through ‘thick’ descriptive representation (Geertz, 1973) of the social texts generated by and accounted for within the study, any interpretations are made in relation to the contextual dynamics. This type of research focuses on meaning and understanding from the perspective of the participant(s) (Hickey, 1997; Keddie, 2003) at this time, in this place, rather than a search for a definitive ‘truth’ or a sense of ‘what they really believe’.

Given the poststructural emphasis on specificity and historicity, a study of instances can be used to explore the particularities of individual subjectivities, and the in-depth representation of these individuals can make visible the historical and social forces that shape them. Threadgold and Kamler (1997a) suggest that context is vitally important when conducting (sociological) research, as context and text can construct one another. The study of instances can enable a focus on the context of the research so that the data can be considered as a product of that context, lived by these participants, yet related to the broader institutional discourses of which they are a part. Stake (2000) suggests that case study research champions diverse perspectives and tolerates ambiguity while still being conscious of the validity and clarity of its findings. Thus the narratives or accounts that encapsulate the various meanings of these instances into a necessarily reductionist report, need to be sufficiently descriptive so that readers can ‘vicariously experience these happenings and draw conclusions (which may differ from those of the researcher’s)’ (Stake, 2000 p. 439).

Confining the instances within the study to a single site enables a more thorough understanding of the subtlety and specificity of the youth practices and experiences as
influenced by this site of critical pedagogy. The pronounced contextuality and embeddedness of case study research (or the study of instances) within a broader real-life situation is generally seen as the search for particularity competing with the search for generalizability (Stake, 2000). Stake also proposes that the intimate knowledge and understandings of such an approach can allow for generalisations within the particular study, and this can have implications for other sites. The reader is thus able to respond to descriptions of instances in terms of similarities, differences and relevances from their own lifeworlds, and particularly with regard to their engagement in similar sites.

The specificities of the instances are seen as being moulded by, and enmeshed with, the wider social discourses and realities at play, as such social factors, to some extent, determine the scope and possibilities of the study (Burns, 1994; Roman & Apple, 1990). Wider power structures can be seen as significant in shaping and regulating the behaviour of the participants within the culture of youth. This includes the media constructs of youth, adult and family influence, and regulative school influence and structure (Bernstein, 1996). The central focus of the study is delimited to a critical examination of the embodied, lived experiences of the youth participants drawn from a particular site. However, an attempt is made to relate such understandings to the broader social and institutional discourses at play, and how these influence the subjectivities of the participants (Roman & Apple, 1990). In any research the researcher decides what will be represented and what the criteria for representation will be. In the study of specific instances, despite all attempts to represent the participants faithfully, the researcher decides what the study’s ‘own story’ will be in the final report (Stake, 2000 p. 441). To this end, I now explicate my role as researcher in this particular study of instances.

6.1.1 Positioning of the Researcher

This study rejects the positivist notions of research which minimise the involvement of the researcher. Such notions remove the social and human nature from the research, and can be seen as trying to present an ‘objective’ way of seeing things, as if it were not an interpretation or a point of view, but the only way (Cuff, Sharrock, & Francis, 1992). The role of knowledge and domination is important to this discussion
as concealment of the researcher’s voice can be construed as dishonest persuasion with the voice of authority. Rather, it is the voice of someone who has been historically and socially shaped, and who will therefore shape the research to align with their own cultural maps. It is with this in mind that I acknowledge my positioning within the study as an important methodological and practical concern. My self-conscious stance, in recognition of my ‘researcher-locatedness’ (Davies, 1999) is seen as essential to the performance of this thesis. I endeavour not only to explicate my positioning of self, but also to interrogate the impact of my interactions with the participants and their positioning of me.

6.1.1.1 Self Positioning
This study, and its (re)presentation of the participants has been shaped by my research intentions, my own subjectivities and personal characteristics, and my construction of the research environment. I openly position myself as a (critical) poststructural researcher who is concerned with analysing power relations and their discursive effects:

> Research in the critical tradition takes the form of self-conscious criticism – self-conscious in the sense that researchers try to become aware of the ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions that inform their research as well as their own subjective, intersubjective, and normative reference claims. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000 p. 292)

My own engagement with students and schools, where I would describe myself as a critical educator, has influenced the design and the sense I make of this study. I began this research with intervention in mind, so my methods of data collection were conducted in active (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997) ways to prompt new ways of thinking, both by the participants, and by those with broader educational investments. My investment in poststructural theory has been an interesting process, as someone who historically has liked to control events and situations so that they could be neatly dealt with. Recent life events have caused me to question ‘the way things are’, to reject the notion that there has to be a simple answer for difficult situations, and that I need to feel and act in a particular way because of my ‘role’ as wife, mother, catholic, daughter, sister or academic. I live with contradictions and ambiguities, and poststructural theory has enabled me to see that I can not simply find ‘the answer’ to make things ‘right’ or fastidiously tie up all of the loose ends, as was my wont. I come to this study then, knowing that complexity and paradox underpin my
interpretations; expecting and embracing multiplicity and difference in the subjectivities of these young people. I embrace diverse perspectives, yet my own values and beliefs are apparent in the learning conversations and interviews, which I see as co-constructed (Baker & Johnson, 2000). My analysis attempts to account for this in the data, as it necessarily shapes the data, which in turn shapes my researcher practices. For example, when I include chunks of data to illustrate analysis, I include my question/comment prior to the participant’s response, so that I can account for the response in the discursive event of the interview. Figure 2 below shows an example of a section of transcript to illustrate the co-constructed nature of the data.

This transcript shows the co-constructed nature of the data in these ways: I as researcher instigate topics such as friends (turn 1), asking for moral judgement (turn 3) and gender differences in how sexual behaviour is perceived (turn 5). The participant on the other hand, instigates talk about sexual behaviour (turn 2), and sexual activity of he and his friends (turn 6). My analysis must necessarily account for the interactive nature of this discursive event and its co-constructedness.
6.1.1.2 Interactive Positioning

The dynamic and interactive relationship of researcher and participants is also important to consider in the exploration of positionality. I was conscious of how these young people would perceive me and respond to me during the study, given my concern for the power relations within this context; particularly those of adult ‘authority’. I attempted to reduce my position of power as an adult in a school environment by outlining background details about me, the university, my position as lecturer; and by explaining to the participants my purpose for being there. I stressed that I was not there to evaluate them; rather I was interested in their talk about their literacy practices and material effects of such practices, including the multimodal texts they had constructed. I encouraged them to use my first name, and I deliberately chose to wear casual ‘funky’ clothing to try to identify with them as teenagers. This was a construction on my part of teenage representation and I acknowledge that such a generalised, unifying construction is rejected within poststructural theorising. However, I decided to tap into this aspect of teenage culture to establish ‘street cred’, and position myself as other than a person of authority in that setting. This may, of course, have introduced other diverse responses such as highlighting the difference between their incomes and mine, or their cultural investments and mine. Nonetheless it was a choice I made and any choice would have induced possible varied responses.

During the conversations with these young people I occasionally talked about aspects of my own life as they did about theirs, so that they would develop an affinity for me as a person. This prompted them to talk to me more as a friend (albeit a new one) rather than a university lecturer or teacher. I attempted to treat the learning conversations and semi-structured interviews as co-constructed, rather than researcher-controlled. While I had particular kinds of questions to ask the students, I encouraged them to talk about other experiences, feelings and examples of practice during our sessions together. ‘Because of the underlying trust in conversation, this methodology may end up probing more deeply than aggressive questioning techniques’ (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999 p. 137).

Similarly, during the focus group activity (explained more fully under Data Collection, section 6.3 of this chapter) I involved myself in developing a collection of artefacts along with the participants. This positioned me as part of the session and the
group rather than as teacher-like in an authoritarian way; in telling them what to do rather than ‘doing together’. I emphasised that the students’ talk was confidential so they would feel able to talk freely in the sense of not being constrained by possible negative consequences. Burgess (1989) suggests that studying participants within institutions can lead to ethical dilemmas as the researcher can become privy to information that contravenes institutional rules. I made the decision that our conversations would remain confidential unless knowledge of abusive or threatening situations was divulged. In such a case my duty of care as a responsible adult in a school would have prompted me to discuss such issues with my contact teacher at the school. Fortunately no such information was divulged.

6.1.1.3 Positioning by the Participants
While I cannot account for the various ways in which I assume that these young people positioned me during this research, I had a strong sense from some of the participants that they were seeking my approval. I wondered whether this meant that they purposefully positioned themselves in what I might see as positive ways. I tried to counter this in some way by encouraging different ways of talking about self through some of my questions, which challenged traditional notions of ‘success’ and approval.

The students seemed happy to attend our sessions, and two students particularly expressed disappointment at the conclusion of the data gathering sessions. This may have been a case of positioning me as ‘fun to talk to’, a direct source of attention, a means to avoid some classes (although many of the sessions were conducted during recess breaks), or as an adult who had no desire to control them. I acknowledge within the study, the impact that I may have had on the subjectivities of these students. An attempt to reconcile these implications are manifest in: my self-reflexive voice in the pastiche of (re)presentation; my analysis (Part D) and discussion (Part E) of said (re)presentation; as well as in my transparent reflections throughout the study which are included at the end of each chapter.
6.2 Site and Participants

The research was conducted at a State High School in regional Queensland which I have called Bellevue State High School. This site was chosen because of its reputation in offering programs informed by critical pedagogy, particularly in relation to visual and multimodal text.

6.2.1 Site of Critical Pedagogy

The school English Program states that it calls upon ‘future oriented understandings about the relationships between language, textual studies, multi-literacies and culture’ (p 4) and it explicitly highlights the influence of a range of theoretical positions, including (some examples p. 5/6):

- Paulo Friere (undated in English Program)
  - That we need to place emphasis on the socio-political influences on text
  - That we cannot ignore world centred readings of texts

- Peter Freebody and Allan Luke (undated in English Program)
  - That we need to talk about language in class and present text types other than those which are generated only by school discourses
  - Context – assessment is not done in isolation but embedded in cultural and social situations
  - Descriptive metalanguage – for students to understand and explicate their language choices
  - New textual practices and integrated modalities – to take into account the generation of new and altered text types

This program is based upon the Queensland English syllabus of 2005 (trialled in previous years), which looks at cultural, critical and operational dimensions of language and text, and which is underpinned by a critical social agenda. The school program indicates that students utilise and manipulate the language of their cultural contexts and social situations through the processes of deconstruction, construction, reconstruction and explication. It suggests that language is seen as ‘shaping and being shaped by discourse, genre, register and textual features’ (p. 6).
Table 1 below indicates some of the integrating devices or organising themes and some examples of understandings/outcomes that are promoted in the English program at the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrating Device</th>
<th>Understandings/Outcomes</th>
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| **Language of Persuasion**  
Including the diverse discourses of:  
- Advertising  
- Public speeches  
- Propaganda  
- Feature articles  
- Poetry  
- Satiric cartoons  
- Drama  
- etc |  
- Language is a system of choice, and such choices influence meaning making  
- Construction is a process of selection, omission, privileging and silencing  
- We operate within discourses, and aspects of discourses include attitudes, beliefs and understandings about the world and the social roles we play, and are not neutral |
| **Youth and Popular Culture:**  
representation of youth in the texts of popular culture  
Engaging with print, visual, audio and multimedia texts to examine issues such as:  
- Gender  
- Race  
- Heroes  
- Politics/human rights  
- The family  
- History  
- The nature of change  
- The migrant experience |  
- Representations are constructs  
- Texts position readers  
- Readers can respond to texts along a continuum of alignment/resistance  
- Representations promote particular values and beliefs of the writer and the culture  
- Contextualise how discourses, genre, register and textual features work together in texts to make and influence meaning making  
- Speculate about, and trial alternative options to generate different meanings  
- Critically evaluate their life experiences in order to construct themselves for an audience |

Table 1 Integrating Devices from School Program

Students are expected to critically analyse and problematise texts and language choices, and speculate about alternatives. They particularly study historical materials, film and narrative. The human rights issues that this program purports to focus upon are marginalised groups in Australia, limited (due to time constraints) to Aborigines and Gays (p. 28). The program states that ‘with the trend to globalisation we believe
It is important to study ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ in both historical and contemporary contexts.

The themes and issues that provide the basis for content and pedagogy in English at Bellevue are located squarely within a social justice agenda of equity, human rights and justice for all.

6.2.2 Participants
The participants were drawn from a group of students at Bellevue State High School, identified by their English teacher as being competent in visual and critical literacy. Hence, the possible transfer, according to their accounts, of such abilities into their everyday lives could be studied. I was particularly interested in participants for whom emancipation was not an issue. Possible participants were identified by the English teacher, and then from this pool, volunteers were called for (in the age range of 13-17 years old) at an information session about the project conducted in the school setting (with the teacher present). Letters were sent to parents/guardians through the school, informing them of the nature and aims of the project, and including a permission slip that was signed and returned through the school. Participants were also given a letter outlining the nature and aims of the project, with a consent form attached, that was signed by them and returned to me through the teacher (see Appendix One for permission letters). By gaining informed consent from the participants (not just from parents/guardians) I acknowledge, drawing from the work of Danby and Farrell (2005), that children have the right to be considered as competent and legitimate participants in research. Three Year Eleven (16-17yr old) students and four Year Nine (13-14yr old) students agreed to participate in the study. All of these participants were white, middle class students who claimed that they did not experience repressive circumstances in terms of race, gender or socio-economic status.

6.3 Collecting the Data
The data for this study were gathered on five levels across a period of five months:
The first level of data (analysed by the participants only) was the construction of a multi-modal popular culture text (magazine) by the participants as part of normal class activity.

The second level of data consisted of learning conversations with the participants, using their self-constructed texts as prompts for their accounts of self.

The third level of data was generated through semi-structured interviews or co-constructed accounts between the participants and the researcher to determine the degree to which the participants intellectualise their literate practices.

The fourth level of data was generated through more focused interviews/co-constructed accounts between the participants and the researcher to interrogate the participants’ subjectivities, lived experiences and the influences that they perceive to be integral in shaping their everyday practices.

The fifth level of data involved two focus group discussions (one with the group of 13-14yr olds, and the other with the group of 16-17yr olds). The decision to separate the two groups was made after an initial reading of the data, which suggested that the different age levels resulted in quite different readings of self as constituted in this context.

The use of narrative inquiry has been used extensively in educational research with teachers and pre-service teachers (see Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hankins, 1998), where it is considered that knowledge is generated and passed on through story-telling or narrative accounts. Garner (1997) extended this concept to the use of visual materials as a stimulus to uncover subconscious thinking (see also Johnson 2000). I would argue that a similar principle can apply to students in their understanding of themselves, particularly as they are of a generation that has been brought up on the consumption of both visual and oral text (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). The use of the participants’ own multi-modal texts as prompts for their narrative accounts of self was an attempt to draw on their lived experience (of creating the text) to prompt further accounting and discussion about other lived experiences or discursive practices. Shapiro (1995) and Britzman, Santiago-Vallos et al. (1995) suggest that critical pedagogy must begin with the lived worlds of students, so students must begin by
accounting for, and naming this world of discursive practices as it constitutes their subjectivities. They state that: ‘Becoming aware of how subjectivities carry the effects of racism and sexism and so on, and the deep investments that map these effects, must serve as the place of departure in critical practices’ (p. 163).

The learning conversations (level two data) were to some extent informed by Chamber’s (1993) framework which focuses on using questions to aid students in articulating their responses to text with little guiding influence from the researcher. In saying this, I acknowledge that a situation such as this is a site of meaning making not simply of knowledge extraction, so the interaction itself within this context would have generated particular meanings (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). The stories or textual instances that were created through these learning conversations (Rossi, 1999; Thomas & Harri-Augstein, 1985) contributed to the self-accounting by the participants through their dynamic subjectivities. This method attempted to provide ownership of voice(s) to the participants, and the opportunity to make visible ‘mediating experiences’ (Rossi, 1999) that might not have been included through more structured interviewing techniques at this level. It was considered that the participants’ texts would prompt accounts of self, which would then be further explored in subsequent, more structured levels of data collection as the participants became more comfortable with the context and with the researcher.

The interviewing methods that I adopted for this study resonate with the approach suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (1997) which conceives of the interview as interpretively active and unavoidably collaborative. The ‘how’ of interactional meaning making during an interview is considered just as important as ‘what’ is asked and conveyed. They consider that a dual interest in the ‘hows’ and the ‘whats’ is vital in the ‘appreciation of the constitutive activeness of the interview process’ (p. 114). To this end, my self-reflexive account of researcher positioning was considered crucial in my own account of the data gathering methods.

The first round of interviews (level three data) were semi-structured, and were designed to encourage the participants to explicate a critical reflective reading of their self-constructed texts (Johnson, 2002). Questions were devised to encourage students to use the language of visual and multi-modal literacy to articulate such things as:
What does my multi-modal text say about my assumptions, values and beliefs for example socially, culturally, age, gender roles?

How have I used particular tools such as line, shape, colour, form, perspective to position the reader/viewer?

What have I left out or silenced?

What alternative readings to the text are there?

The second round of interviews (level four data) were more focused and drew from a social reconstructionist perspective. This encouraged a critical/political reflection by the participants on their subjectivities and lived experiences within a broader social and political context (Johnson, 2002; Lather, 1992). This approach attempted to encourage a more resistant reading of self, to interrogate and challenge dominant institutional discourses at play in shaping the participants’ subjectivities and lived experiences. Questions were devised to encourage students to articulate:

What are the practices that I engage in?

Who benefits from them?

Who is disadvantaged by them?

Which forms of power influence my practices?

Am I complicit in perpetuating dominant ways of seeing the world?

What do I do to change inequity and inequality?

Do I care?

Do I need to change my practices?

Am I prepared to change? How?

The final focus group discussions (level five data) were unstructured in that only broad areas for discussion were decided upon prior to the sessions. Some preparation was asked of the participants to focus their thinking about self. My own immersion and investments in the literature shaped my preparation of these sessions. I drew from Shapiro’s (1995) assertion that a collective reinterpretation of our lived worlds, rather than an individual one, is necessary to oppose that which is hegemonic. I was also influenced by the theorizing of Haug et al (1987) using collective memory work, which they present as a bridge to span the gap between theory and experience. As a
group, they assembled autobiographical texts from memory, in response to a particular issue (in their case, female sexuality). From their collective ‘rememberings’ it was possible to make visible inconsistencies, contradictions and appropriations in their subjectification as female sexual beings. These narratives could then be collectively rewritten and subjected to critical analyses as a springboard for social action. Such collective work began with British work on youth culture in the mid 1970s which was strongly influenced by Althusserian structuralism. It focused on the ways in which social subjects engage with the ‘structures’ into which they are born, and help to ‘secure’ their eventual subordination (Haug, 1987). Such structures were later challenged, particularly by poststructuralist theorising, which criticized the notion of ‘idealised, given constructs’ that would always be reproduced. Instead they are complex, historically produced constructs that are constantly being re-made and produced anew. Whilst this study does not utilise this strategy of collective memory work specifically as outlined by Haug et al (1987), it does draw on the principles of collective work to make visible and attempt to rewrite accounts of subjectification.

The term ‘artefacts’ is used by Rossi-Landi (1977) in reference to the ‘parking lots of artefacts’ or resources one draws on to both produce and make meaning of texts, as well as behave socially. This prompted me to consider how one draws upon various artefacts from their lived experiences to trigger memories, and to shape practices. Thus the participants were asked to prepare a collection of personal artefacts that they chose to represent their diverse subjectivities at this point in time, and to be prepared to talk about them. As a participant in these collective sessions, I decided that I too would prepare a collection of personal artefacts to minimise my positioning as powerful and ‘in authority’ (although as the adult driving these sessions I acknowledge that I was already in a position of power). I also used my own reflections and self-accounts of my subjectification as prompts for the participants to interrogate their own discursive practices. These group sessions were collective accounts of beliefs, values, personal investments and everyday social practices within the structures of power that influence and shape our subjectivities.

The decision to use focus groups for the final (fifth) level of data collection was made in an attempt to complement the deeper, more extended accounts of self generated through the
previous data levels. They prompted talk directed not just at the researcher, but also at other members of the participants’ everyday social groups. They also allowed for responses to others, revisions and collective rememberings. Focus group sessions enabled me to explore poststructural concerns with different layers, conflict and contradiction (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004), whilst also drawing in generative, critical possibilities by presenting alternative framings to those cultural maps suggested by the participants.

Macnaghten and Myers (2004) suggest that focus groups work better with participants who have well developed routines for talking to one another (for example teenagers). They argue that whilst differences are inevitable and welcomed, there should also be some common ground between participants, so that talk is not impeded by decisive and familiar divisions. I considered in this study that to include the older and younger groups in one focus group may in fact construct a situation where a decisive and familiar division was in play, that of peer hierarchy (considered important in the teenage years). This convinced me to run two separate focus group sessions for the different age levels.

My role within the focus group sessions, as indicated previously, was that of participant and prompt for the talk. At times it involved moderation of the talk when participants attempted to derail the interaction by directly questioning me about my personal opinion of them and their views. I sought to reassure them that I was not there to judge them in any moralistic way, and that I was trying to represent their multifarious accounts rather than validate my own opinions. Of course such assurances are always a little hollow as any researcher makes decisions about how and what to represent, and cannot help but form opinions. I did tell them how some of their responses made me feel in terms of my (critical) poststructuralist agenda, and this prompted more discussion about what is ‘seen as appropriate’ in society, and what they rejected as radical, non-productive and unrealistic viewpoints and/or behaviour.

6.4 Tools of (Re)presentation

In this section I discuss the ways in which the data are represented within this study. Ultimately as the researcher I choose the story of the research and represent it in ways that I consider to be most helpful in making visible the multiple discourses of the research story. By making such choices explicit within the study, I attempt to acknowledge my role and the constructedness of any research story.
6.4.1 Transcripts
The data gathering sessions were recorded digitally and stored electronically so that I could use original voice recordings in my analysis of the data. I transcribed each of the recordings to ensure a permanent print record of the sessions that I could revisit at any time. The consistent presentation of all transcripts including font size, vertical format, numbered lines and nomenclature enabled me to access these records quickly and easily, as such cohesive devices were expected throughout. The transcripts were seen as an effective reference tool, rather than an original data source. They were used in conjunction with the digital recordings and other data texts so that additional notations could be made as conceptual developments arose. ‘To ensure that significant but subtle factors are not left out, it is important to listen to recordings repeatedly throughout the course of a study and to update the transcript to reflect developing insights’ (Edwards, 2001 p. 322).

The transcripts were considered to be a necessarily biased (re)presentation of the data. I made decisions about how to present them, for example in vertical, single column format which indicates equal dominance and interdependence (Edwards, 2001), I also decided which conventions and coding systems would be used to make sense of the data. While my use of critical discourse analysis (see section 6.5) incorporated both macro and micro levels of analysis, my interest in the talk was not deeply linguistic. Thus the transcripts did not include extensive detail regarding lengths of pauses or categories of turn-taking etc. I tended to use standard punctuation where possible, indicating lengthy pauses (considered by me as more than a full stop pause) with ellipsis marks (...). My major consideration was consistency across the transcripts.

I entered my initial transcripts into the software package NVivo, which is a computer-assisted tool for qualitative data management, and allows for coding and linking to other data sources. I discuss my use of this package in more detail in sections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 on data management. My intimate knowledge of the sessions as the interviewer enabled me to decipher words that were difficult to interpret or sections with multiple voices that were difficult to distinguish. To aid this process I transcribed as soon after the sessions as I could.
6.4.2 Multiple Accounts of Lived Experience

Consistent with poststructural thinking, I considered that my (re)presentation of the data should illuminate the dynamic and varied accounts of lived experience by the participants. My (re)presentation resonates with my theoretical concerns for multiplicity and the notion that any text or context is a heteroglot of interweaving intertextual chains. Further to this notion of text and context, and the poststructural concept of multiple subjectivities of self, Gergen (1991 p. 71) refers to the self as a ‘pastiche’ or an assemblage of images. I have used the term ‘pastiche of (re)presentation’ to describe my data chapters. It represents for me the assemblage of various images and other texts that I have drawn together as my account of the study. This includes the participants’ accounts of self, of their practices and their accounts of others. This is a collective (re)presentation of many voices and subjectivities, with contradictions and particular positionings of researcher and youth participants.

The use of narrative accounts in educational inquiry is situated within an implicit framework of human cultural and social life as experienced and made sense of through story. Narrative structure reflects how we organise our thinking and perception of our experiences (Mishler, 1995) as an alternative to the positivist stance. Brown (1994) suggests that it makes transparent the historical contingency and rhetorical constructedness of any text (including scientific texts). The narrative accounts that constitute my pastiche of (re)presentation are seen to reflect my attempts to (re)present the participants’ narratives of (lived) experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as recounted in this study. They could then be used as a basis for further analysis and interpretation (Mishler, 1995). Within case study research or the study of instances (Freebody, 2003; Holt, 2000), the use of narrative is intended to appeal to the reader so that they can connect with the data and draw their own conclusions based on their own experiences in similar situations. In this way, my positioning can be considered in relation to the reader’s own memories of experience and positioning, as they are cued by traces of ‘own-ness’ and ‘other-ness’ within their meaning-making of this text. Connelly & Clandinin (1999) suggest that such elements of alignment and recognition are crucial for the ‘authenticity’ or plausibility of empirical narrative construction. My interpretations of such experiences through my observations of the participants and my analysis of their language must be mediated by my inferences of the acts and meanings ‘encoded by linguistic constructions’
Pink (2004) suggests that visual material can be used effectively alongside the written word, not just as an illustration or add-on to written text. She says that each can be used to ‘represent the ideas, experiences and knowledge that it best communicates’ (p. 402). This could also be extended to other modes of meaning such as spatial, audio and gestural. I have drawn on different designs of meaning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004; The New London Group, 2000) to reflect the multiliterate aspects of the study. I (re)present the participants through multimodal text design including visual, linguistic and spatial design. Along with the ‘usual’ linguistic (re)presentation using print text, I have designed the data chapters in Part D to include visual material such as photographs of artefacts (from level five data collection) and digitally scanned images of the participants’ texts (from level 1 data collection). Spatially, I have linked various sections and types of data to show relationships and to illustrate my sense-making of the data within categories of analysis (this was aided by the use of the NVivo software). This included text boxes using different font colours to weave the macro texts through my analysis. My decisions about page design in the data chapters were also influenced by ‘alternative’ spatial considerations to reflect multiplicity, juxtapositioning of several components or accounts, and melding of media forms. This is much like a hypermedia environment where the reader can choose various pathways (Snyder, 2002) through the sections.

6.4.3 Nomenclature
The nomenclature assigned to the different sources of data was chosen according to logical abbreviation and consistency. The individual sessions are tagged using the type of data (eg l.c. for learning conversation or int. for interview), followed by a number indicating which level of data (eg 03), then the initials of the interviewee (eg P.H.) (note: all names are changed to comply with ethical considerations), so Paul’s learning conversation would be tagged ‘l.c., 02, P.H.’. The focus group sessions are tagged with f.g for focus group, then the level of data, followed by the year level of the group (eg 9 or 11). Note that lower case letters are used for the data types, and upper case letters are used for participants’ names.
6.5 Tools of Analysis and Interpretation

I have utilised an approach to data analysis that is informed by the tradition of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This is a multidisciplinary approach that Fuller and Lee (1997) with reference to the work of McHoul & Luke (1989) suggest ‘draws upon other disciplinary methods of text analysis outside linguistics, notably semiotics, critical theory and poststructuralism, in order to engage critically with questions of power and subjectivity, while at the same time paying close attention to the specificity of text’ (p. 410). Fairclough (1992; 2000b; 2001; 2003) is one of the major proponents of this approach, as he considers that approaches to discourse analysis which focus only on linguistic features at the expense of broader social theoretical issues, or on broader social theoretical issues at the expense of linguistic features, are not holistic enough to provide understanding of social phenomena. His view is that rather than an either/or position, such approaches can be used together to ‘oscillate’ between a focus on broader discourses and a focus on specific texts which constitute the representation of such discourses (Fairclough, 2003). The use of CDA in this study is not only as a data analysis tool, but also as a methodology which draws together micro and macro influences on the study (Chouliarakis & Fairclough, 1999; Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). Hence I have decided to highlight the broader context of this study by organising my thesis around three discourses that encompass the macro discourses that influence the study (as outlined in Part A). These are: the discourses of youth; the intentional discourses of schooling; and the discourses of society. Part D of this thesis, which includes my data and analysis, is organised around these discourses. I have tried to make visible the textual and contextual links between the micro and macro elements of the data and of the study. To this end, I have included examples of texts that illustrate some of these macro discourses in each area, and I have interwoven an analysis of these texts with my analysis of the data. The introduction to Part D includes criteria for selection of these texts, and provides a rationale for the inclusion of each one. The texts I have chosen are:

- Discourses of Youth
  - Mission Australia Youth survey (Mission Australia, 2005)
  - ‘HALO’ X-box game official internet site (Bungie.net)
  - Optus SMS Chat brochure (Optus, undated)
• **Intentional Discourses of Schooling**
  
  - English Syllabus documents (Department of Education Queensland, 1994; Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a)
  - Kevin Donnelly newspaper article “Let’s go back to the basics, beginning with the three R’s” (Donnelly, 2006)
  - Education Queensland 2010 strategy (Education Queensland, 2000c)

• **Discourses of Society**
  
  - Information about new Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) from Government (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) and Union (National Tertiary Education Union)
  - Job descriptions from Career One (*The Australian*) online ("Career One: Positions Vacant,")
  - Media reports about Cronulla riots/ terrorism (Burchell, 2006; Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006)

In this way, I hope to call attention to the importance of the context within which this study lies, and highlight the various, often paradoxical macro influences on the lives of the youth participants (see Part D - Introduction for more information).

I am conscious of critiques of CDA concerning openness and reflexivity in the process of analysis, including the role of the researcher in this process (see Rogers, 2004). Therefore I have endeavoured to explain clearly my processes of analysis, including the specific linguistic micro elements that I focused on and why, and how these relate to broader macro discourses (see also sections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 on data management and coding for explicit explanation about locating coding categories and discourses within the data). I have also tried to maintain self-awareness of my role in the research process and to document my influence on all aspects of the study. I explicate my role as researcher in section 6.1.1; and in my analysis of the discursive context of the data (that is, the interview genre) I examine my part in producing the accounts in the data.

I am drawn to many aspects of Fairclough’s work which I explain briefly in terms of how they are significant for this study. My methods of analysis have also been
informed by the work of Kamler (1997b) and Threadgold (1997) which more specifically deal with notions of embodiment and performance; and Fuller and Lee’s (1997) emphasis on the interpersonal functions of language interactions that constitute textual collusions. Fairclough’s (1992) notion of intertextuality (after Bakhtin’s heteroglossia and dialogia) is useful in my analysis as I explore how these young people draw upon other texts, contexts, dialogue and modes of meaning during their talk. This is helpful in my analysis of how subjectivities are shaped and how the participants position themselves and others through their talk as they take up multiple discourses. I utilise Fairclough’s linguistic point of reference, that of Hallidayan linguistics which is concerned with the social character of text and the relationship between language and other elements of social life, to examine the ideational or what Fairclough (2003) terms ‘representation’ function of language. This includes how clauses, as basic units of meaning, convey a message and represent the world through transitivity. That is, who is taking part (participants), how they are described (attributes), what is happening (processes) and what the circumstances are surrounding the what (circumstances). My analysis here specifically focused upon the transitivity processes and their participant realisations within the clause, as well as the use of modal adverbs. Thus, I could determine how the participants account for their practices, which practices are afforded value or are criticized, and how this fits with broader macro discourses of youth, schooling and society. This function of language is also interested in the relationship between text and context (lexis). I looked at the lexical choices made in the data to indicate how the participants were describing themselves and others in certain contexts through language, particularly how attributes were ascribed and explained. Analysis of the specificities of the texts in this way allows me to explore how the participants’ language is used to position themselves and others, and to legitimise their dominant cultural maps or hegemonic assumptions.

I have also drawn extensively from Fuller and Lee’s (1997) application of Halliday’s interpersonal function of language. This is concerned with the interactions within and between texts, or the enactment of social relations; and how this can be related particularly to dimensions of power and solidarity as part of broader institutional discourses. They work with the term ‘collusion’ as:
…a way of discussing the necessary conditions of any socio-discursive practice. Collusion is about moving around inside relations of power. The term resonates with the silences and ambiguities, the elusions and complicities between writers and readers which inhabit all textual practices…mediated through institutional discursive regimes. (p. 410-411)

Fuller and Lee (1997) have taken a poststructuralist perspective on this interpersonal function, which they see as being ‘problematically located within humanistic, rationalist and individualist discourses’ (p. 413) and they have replaced it with the term ‘intersubjective’ to reflect the ‘shifting positioned practices negotiated over the course of the text’ (p. 413). Further to this, they take Fairclough’s (1992) term ‘manifest intertextuality’ and refashion it as ‘manifest dialogia’ to reflect their intersubjective motivations. They suggest that manifest dialogia is realised grammatically on a scale from ‘other-ness’ to ‘own-ness’, through:

- Quoting, or making another’s text explicit in one’s own.
- Interpolation, or explicitly constructing a dialogue between textual interlocutors such as I believe/argue or you think, and
- Probabilisation, or evaluations around the probability or surmisability of propositions such as maybe, apparently (p. 415).

This perspective has been particularly useful in the analysis of how the participants’ changing personae within textual instances, along with their weaving of other texts into their own, particularly their utilisation of particular multiliteracies, can determine the success of a collusion or text. I focused here particularly on the use of pronouns, the transitivity processes, and the mood and modality of language functions. This intersubjective focus enabled me to situate my linguistic analyses within the particular discursive events of my data collection, particularly the generic structure, the top-level cohesive structure and other cohesive ties within the interview genre and the context within which it was conducted. Similar to Fuller and Lee’s work on textual collusion, Holt’s (2000) work on reported speech in interaction suggests that quoting direct or indirect speech allows the interlocutor to implicitly offer a reaction to or assessment of the utterance, which can be used to coordinate an appropriate and simultaneous response:

Reported speech (within a sequence containing implicit assessment) can be used to give the recipient access to the utterance in question, thus allowing him or her to react to it and the teller to then collaborate in that
reaction. One could view this as one of the subtle ways in which intersubjectivity is established and maintained. (Holt, 2000 p. 448)

This approach to the intersubjective function of language allowed me to explore the possible implications of such collusions on the enactment of a critical agenda.

The other significant focus in my analysis of the data is Kamler’s (1997a; 1997b) and Threadgold’s (2000) use of embodiment and performance. I looked to the language in the data sessions, particularly the transitivity processes and interpersonal use of pronouns, to explore: the centrality of the body in the participants’ accounts of lived experience; their multiliterate practices; and their positioning of self and others as they took up particular subjectivities within the institutional settings of which they are a part. Performative (Butler, 1990, 1993) statements made by these young people indicate particular representations of theirs’ and others’ subjectivities. That is, the subjectivities of youth are spoken in some ways but not others (Shultz, 2000). I am guided in this analysis by Barad’s (2003) argument that ‘statements and subjects emerge from a field of possibilities. This field of possibilities is not static or singular but rather is a dynamic and contingent multiplicity’ (p. 819).

My analysis then (refashioned after Threadgold (2003) and Butler (1993), from Fairclough’s (2001) three levels of analysis) is cognizant of: particular micro elements of the data through detailed linguistic and embodied description; an interpretation of such descriptions in relation to the specific discursive events and performative contexts in which they were collected; and an explanation of how such descriptions and interpretations are related to broader socio-historical discourses of youth, schooling and society. I consciously moved in, out of and through these various levels of analysis as I made sense of the data. I now outline my interpretive focus as I explored the data in relation to my specific research questions.

**Research Question 1**

- What are the embodied multiliterate practices of these young people, and how are they accounted for in their talk?
I looked to the data for transitive representations of the various designs of meaning that these young people utilise in their lived practices. I explored the assigned importance of some literate practices over others, the instances of physicality associated with the various designs of meaning that they indicated, and the descriptors of participants that they associated with such practices. Luke’s (2000), Lankshear and Knobel’s (1997) and Kellner’s (2002) work on new social practices, texts and technology were useful to describe these designs of meaning in terms of broader power and influence on youth, as was Klein’s (2000) work on logos and brand names, and Giroux’s (2000b) notion of corporate pedagogues. For example, I looked for value assigned to particular bodily practices such as using technology, performing drama, playing music, and having or talking about sex. I also looked for ascribed importance by self and others of particular brand names, technology devices, school practices and life-world activities.

**Research Question 2**

- Do these young people intellectualise the youth culture and embodied practices that they account for in their everyday lives?

As with research question 1, I explored the attributes or descriptors used to represent the various designs of meaning (including visual or gestural text), to give an indication of the intellectualisation of such texts (see Chapter 3 for an extended description of my use of the term ‘intellectualisation’). Briefly, this included the use of metalanguage, substantive conversation and deep understanding and knowledge of such practices. The work of Kress (2000), Kress and van Leeuwen (1990), Emmison and Smith (2000), Unsworth (2002) and Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (1996) in the analysis of visual and multimodal text provided useful frameworks for the intellectualisation of such texts, and therefore to the critical analysis of attributes assigned to them.

I was interested in the ways that bodily practices were intellectualised. This included problematising the valuing of particular activities over others; or questioning the ways in which particular actions, speech or dress elicit dominant ideological responses or reinforce particular dichotomies of thought. I also explored the ways in which texts and practices were accepted at face value and described superficially, and the context
or parameters within which this happened. For example, I invited the participants to analyse their own multimodal texts so that I could determine the extent to which they could intellectualise their own texts as opposed to others’ texts. I also invited them to analyse their own practices and values, to determine the extent that they were willing to interrogate self, and to account for such practices and values in the context of broader discourses.

**Research Question 3**

- How are the participants’ embodied subjectivities seen to be shaped through bodily practices of multiliteracies, and through positioning of self and others?

My focus here was on the ways in which the participants represented themselves, their practices and others through their language. I particularly identified how hegemonic discourses were evident through binary thought categories and traces of dominant cultural maps in their accounts. This included the ways that the participants perceived their positioning by others. I looked for instances of textual collusion in their accounts, and how they used successful collusions as forms of power in their lived experiences, or how unsuccessful collusions shaped their lived practices. I explored multiple personae in their interactions with me, with other texts and contexts, and with each other to get some sense of the diverse subject positions that they took up at different times for different reasons (including solidarity and power). I was interested in what types of students were constructed and validated, what types of teachers or other adults were constructed and what types of discourses were legitimated through language and performance. I looked for ways in which social and corporate institutions shaped the subjectivities of these young people and shaped their lived practices; and how multiliterate practices may have been used to perpetuate hegemonic discourses. For example, I was interested in looking at how these participants ‘do school’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in terms of valuing what the school values, behaving in regulated ways, talking about school, peers and social issues in certain ways, and how they negotiate their ways through the complex discourses of youth, schooling and society. Various scholars were useful to draw upon in the area of youth studies and youth culture to critically describe these subject positions in terms of broader social and institutional power and relations. In particular, I used Kanpol (1997), Kenway and Bullen (2001), Lesko (2001) and White and Wyn (2004).
However, others also provided useful guidelines, such as Giroux (1996), Kellner (1997), Mackay (1997), McNamee (1998), Blackman (1998), Soares (2000) and Pais (2000; 2003).

Research Question 4

- What forms of resistance to hegemonic discourses are evidenced through these accounts at this institutional site, and how do they impact on the enactment of a critical agenda?

In addressing this question I looked to the data for instances of resistance to hegemonic discourses in the participants’ accounts of self and others. I explored ways in which multiliterate practices were used to break down dominant structures of binary thought or hegemonic assumptions about the subject of student or teenager or the discourse of school. I looked for accounts of how resistance was perceived and played out. I explored instances of resistant readings of self, whereby participants challenged their subjectification process and began to re-account for themselves. For example, some of the participants were unwilling to interrogate self in any critical way, nor to criticize the discourses of schooling at play in their lives, yet they were able to readily resist discourses in popular media such as magazines, which they found inappropriate and stereotypical.

6.5.1 Data Management

As indicated previously, I used the computer assisted qualitative data analysis program NVivo as a way to manage the data in this study. Whilst the use of such computer assisted programs is now widely accepted in qualitative research as an efficient tool to manage data, it has also come under criticism, particularly the concern that it potentially alienates the researcher from the data. Kelle (2004) suggests that the use of such software programs requires researchers to explicate their data management strategies in ways that have often been neglected in research methodologies. In this section I outline some of the major criticisms of this tool and explain my own position, including the particular applications that I found useful to utilise in this study.
Early criticisms of the use of computer technology to manage qualitative data were concerned that the very nature of qualitative research would be lost as the researcher would be alienated from the data, and analytic strategies would be enforced to reduce the context-relatedness of interactions (Lee & Fielding, 1991; Seidel & Kelle, 1995). Kelle (2004) argues that such criticisms are overemphasised, as the coding, indexing, cross-referencing and comparison techniques of these software programs are simply different versions of the ‘age-old’ techniques of data management used implicitly in social science research at least since the turn of the last century. The problems associated with such techniques, he maintains, are not new. Rather, they have become more visible by the requirement to explicitly code the data in these types of software programs. Making decisions about the types and numbers of coded categories is difficult with or without the use of computer software; however, one of the benefits of using such software is the flexibility of being able to define and alter the coding scheme during the coding process (Kelle, 2004).

The criticism that relates to the exact, precisely stated, context-free, unambiguous requirements for coding using computer technology (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986) is one that needs to be addressed in a poststructural study. I suggest that whilst decisions about codes may need to be precise, they do not necessarily need to be context-free, nor indeed removed from the methodology of the study or the data itself. The codes are not generated by the software program with no regard for the discursive practices and macro discourses surrounding the talk, as the term ‘context-free’ might suggest. As the researcher I decided upon ways to code the data based upon my theoretical framework, my research questions, and my initial sense of the data, which is quite context specific. I used a ‘top-down’ approach consistent with poststructural theory as outlined by Miller and Fox (2004 p. 36) to impose my research questions upon the data and to locate social and institutional discourses. I oscillated between this approach and the ‘bottom-up’ approach (Miller & Fox, 2004 p. 36) whereby social realities are built up from ordinary interactions, as I developed the detailed coding topics or nodes from the talk of the participants in the study. Miller and Fox argue that these approaches need not be disparate, rather they suggest that building analytic bridges can be mutually informative, particularly in cases where social realities are analysed as embodied performances of broader social discourses.
My poststructural cognizance of making visible within the data the numerous accounts of self and others, guided my methods of coding the data. For example I developed the four overarching code categories (tree nodes) directly from my research questions (top-down), yet the sub-categories were developed directly from the topics raised in the data (bottom-up). I took a non-linear approach, whereby I moved between the raw (audio and transcribed) data and the coded data categories that I managed within NVivo, to locate the major discourses of youth, intentional discourse of schooling, and discourses of society within the data. I used the software not as a way to analyse the data, but rather as a way to organise it. This enabled comparison using the categories that I developed (and could change or add to at any time), based on further analysis of the data. I was still able to highlight inconsistencies and contradictions within the data using the software package, as my theoretical framework demands that I approach the data with such ambiguities in mind. Within this study I subscribe to the notion that codes are not ‘factual’ or pre-determined structures. My poststructural thinking enables me to formulate them as ‘signposts that support the identification of relevant text passages and help to make them available for further interpretation and analysis’ (Seidel & Kelle, 1995 p. 484).

I was attracted to the use of technology to manage and organise the data from this study (as distinct from a tool of analysis) as it facilitated the electronic linking of data to show relationships and comparisons or contrasts between the data. Multiple positions could be highlighted using the linking facility of the NVivo software to enable a fine-grained (micro) analysis to be undertaken on related ‘chunks’ of data. The data within this study were (re)presented by such diverse texts as printed transcriptions, audio recordings, scanned images, photographs and written texts. Thus, I found the linking facility to be a useful way of relating different sources to illustrate particular topics that related to wider social discourses and histories.

The other feature of software programs such as NVivo that convinced me to utilise such technology in the data management process, was the quick retrieval feature. The program enabled me to efficiently locate particular ‘chunks’ of data that were related in ways that I deemed relevant for the study. I could retrieve print text, as well as using the external data files within the program to retrieve other data that I entered as (re)presentations of the lived experiences of the participants. The facility to develop
visual models to enhance understanding of my coding categories was also beneficial as another dimension in my quest to provide a ‘pastiche of (re)presentation’ (see section 6.4.2 for my explanation of this term). In this way, I was able to draw upon the multiple designs of text to assemble my pastiche of (re)presentation in more efficient ways than would be possible manually.

6.5.2 Data Coding Methods
To begin the process of devising my coding categories or nodes (as per NVivo) I again went back to my research questions. I chose four overarching nodes which would enable me to draw out sections of data for analysis, so that I could ultimately answer the specific research questions that I had posed for my study. The four broad (parent) nodes which have been numbered by the NVivo program are:

1. *Multiple Dimensions of Meaning (MDM)* which specifically relates to research question one;
2. *Intellectualisation* which specifically relates to research question two;
3. *Positioning* which specifically relates to research question three; and
4. *Resistance* which specifically relates to research question four.

NVivo enabled me to develop tree nodes which show relationships between and within nodes, and consequently between and within data sets. My initial scans of the data were for the purposes of identifying favoured or common topics within the data from the participants in both Year Nine and Year Eleven, and through different levels of data. These nodes were seen as overlapping and intersecting rather than as separate entities, therefore some sections of data were coded in more than one node. I now explain each tree node in more detail. Note that the numbering of each node in the figures that follow reflect the numbers assigned to each node in the NVivo program. For example the node ‘MDM’ is number 1, and the child nodes that sit beneath it are numbered 1.1, 1.2 and so on. Those nodes which have multiple layers, such as ‘Positioning’ (*Figure 5*), include other levels of numbering such as 3.2.1 and 3.2.1.1 to show the connectedness of the nodes.

1. *Multiple Dimensions of Meaning (MDM)*
Related specifically to research question one:
What are the embodied multiliterate practices of these young people, and how are they accounted for in their talk?

This node was designed to pinpoint sections of data that would highlight the multiliterate practices accounted for by the youth participants. I use the term ‘multiple dimensions of meaning’ in keeping with the multimodal and multidimensional nature of our changing world as described in multiliteracies theory (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) to reflect the multiliterate practices of the youth participants. I found both direct and indirect references to three broad topics within the data; therefore I constructed three child nodes (see Figure 3) to sit under the parent node of MDM.

![Figure 3 NVivo visual model of tree node ‘MDM’](image)

These child nodes are: technology – including use of, perceived competence and views about; bodily performance – including participation and views about drama, musical performance and sport, ways of dressing and acting and views about bodily performance of self and others; mind/body subject dualism – including views about school subjects that favour mind over body or body over mind, and views about teachers’ attitudes to such subjects.

2. Intellectualisation

Related specifically to research question two:

Do these young people intellectualise the youth culture and embodied practices that they account for in their everyday lives?

This node was intended to draw out evidence of intellectualisation on the part of the participants, as defined and described in Chapter Two. I developed three child nodes
to sit under the parent node of intellectualisation (see Figure 4), which reflect and encompass evidence of this node in the data.

Figure 4  NVivo visual model of tree node ‘Intellectualisation’

The child nodes are: metalanguage – including use of and awareness of the language of text and context analysis; deep knowledge – including talk demonstrating deep and/or substantive knowledge of texts, contexts, social issues and both life-world and school-world practices; critical analysis – including the ability to talk about different viewpoints and groups in society, relating local issues or school texts and contexts to broader socio-historical discourses, and analysing own practices and processes of decision-making.

3. Positioning
Related specifically to research question three:
How are the participants’ embodied subjectivities seen to be shaped through bodily practices of multiliteracies, and through positioning of self and others?
This node is the most complex of all the nodes, and the complexity is represented in Figure 5. This node was devised to indicate within the data, how the embodied subjectivities of the youth participants are shaped through the positioning of self and others in accounts of both life-world and school-world practices and perceived beliefs.
There are a number of layers within this node, which begin with three child nodes that were developed as major topics within the data – school, school performance and social issues. For ease of reading, I take each of these child nodes in the first layer in turn, and describe the layers which sit beneath it.

School (see child node on left of model in Figure 5) – this child node includes three subsequent child nodes which sit beneath it. These nodes are: ‘levels’ – including talk about levels of importance in subjects at school, degrees of value perceived to be placed upon particular aspects at school, and views about the appropriateness of such levels of importance or value at school; ‘individualisation’ – including evidence of the importance of individual success and achievement, views about individualistic notions at school; and ‘social life’ – including talk about social aspects of school, friends,
lunchtime activities, conflict and conflict resolution with peers, and views about the importance of social aspects of school.

School performance (see child node in centre of model in Figure 5) - this child node has two subsequent child nodes which sit beneath it, which in turn, have child nodes which sit beneath them. The first layer under school performance includes the two nodes of ‘self’ and ‘others’, to draw out accounts of positioning of self and others. Under the ‘self’ node, there are a further two child nodes – ‘self-regulation’ – including both direct and indirect reference to how the participants regulate their own behaviour to fit with school values or discourses; and ‘textual collusion’ – including evidence showing direct and indirect reference to how the participants collude in texts and contexts at school. Under the ‘others’ node, there are three subsequent child nodes – ‘teachers’, ‘parents’, and ‘students’. Each of these child nodes includes accounts of how the participants position the practices and beliefs of these three groups with whom they have contact in the school community.

Social Issues (see child node on right of model in Figure 5) – this child node includes seven subsequent child nodes which sit beneath it. These nodes are: ‘language and power’ – including talk about the power of language, use of language to indicate power and views about the importance of language and power relationships; ‘teenagers’ – including talk that characterises teenagers as distinct from other groups, so-called typical teenage behaviour, views about teenage practices and beliefs, and views about media constructions of teenagers; ‘race’ – including talk that refers to racial issues, to different races of people, views about the importance of racial issues, own experiences with race and racism; ‘gender’ – including talk referring specifically to gender and gender equity, views about gendered practices and beliefs, views about gender issues, talk about own practices in relation to gender; ‘sexuality’ – including specific reference to sexual preference, accounts of sexual behaviour, views about sexual behaviour of self and peers, and reference to sexuality as a means to discriminate or judge the behaviour of self or others (see Appendix 3 for a sample coding report of this node, including working notes of analysis); ‘religion’ – including talk about religious beliefs and practices of self and others, evidence of religion as a basis for discrimination or high morality, and talk about different religions or spiritual groups; ‘society’ – including talk about social issues in society, views about actions
related to such social issues, talk about own experiences of and actions for social causes.

4. Resistance

Related specifically to research question four:

What forms of resistance to hegemonic discourses are evidenced through these accounts at this institutional site, and how do they impact on the enactment of a critical agenda?

This node has two child nodes that sit beneath it (see Figure 6). It was developed to track evidence of resistance to hegemonic discourses in society, including institutional discourses of schooling.

![Figure 6 NVivo visual model of tree node ‘Resistance’](image)

The two child nodes are: counter-hegemony – including resistance to hegemonic discourses of teenagers as rebellious and youth as cyber-intense; resist/take action – including evidence of the participants resisting institutional discourses, evidence of social action for social justice causes in the participants’ life-worlds, and evidence in the participants’ talk that shows resistance to racism, sexism, classism and so on.

6.5.2.1 Locating the discourses within the data

As explained in section 6.5.1, I used a non-linear approach to my data coding and analysis, whereby I oscillated between the raw and transcribed data, the coded categories within NVivo, and the macro discourses informing my study and the context within which it lies. Once I had developed the hierarchical tree nodes and coded the data accordingly, I then looked to the broader social theoretical issues (Fairclough, 2003) which inform this study, and which form the basis of my background literature in Chapters Two, Three and Four. I organised my coded
categories (nodes) to sit loosely under my three organising discourses that are consistent throughout this thesis. These are: The discourses of youth; the intentional discourses of schooling; and the discourses of society. I deem there to be considerable overlap between these three areas, therefore some coded categories were included under more than one area. For example the node ‘Intellectualisation’ and its child nodes, were placed under the ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’ heading, yet the child node of ‘Positioning self’ was included under both the ‘Discourses of youth’ and under the ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’ headings as the talk related to both areas. A feature of the NVivo software program enabled me to see such overlaps of codes within any section of the data. Any sections of the transcribed data sets could be viewed with ‘coding stripes’ along the right-hand side of the document, which indicated all codes for that document and hence coding overlaps on any section were clearly apparent (see Appendix 2 for an example of coding stripes on a document).

During my analysis I looked at each organising principle in turn by printing ‘coding reports’ using the facility in NVivo, whereby any chunks of data that I had coded under a particular node could be included in a report which indicated information about the node, the participant, the interview number and the location of the data chunk itself. See Figure 7 below for an example of this information, and see Appendix 3 for an example of a coding report for one node.

Once I had these reports, I began my fine-grained analysis of the data using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as outlined in section 6.5. This process again involved a non-linear approach as I located the discourses emerging from the data. To reiterate my explanation from section 6.5 then, my analysis (refashioned after Threadgold (2003) and Butler (1993), from Fairclough’s (2001) three levels of analysis in CDA)
was cognizant of; particular micro elements of the data through detailed linguistic and embodied description; an interpretation of such descriptions in relation to the specific discursive events and performative contexts in which they were collected; and an explanation of how such descriptions and interpretations are related to broader socio-historical discourses of youth, schooling and society. I consciously moved in, out of and through these various levels of analysis as I made sense of the data, and identified the most prevalent discourses emerging from them. This multi-linear approach to data analysis reflects the process I have undertaken in the writing of this thesis. I have not followed the common trajectory of completing a literature review early in the process as suggested by some authorities (see Silverman, 2000), but rather have taken this multi-linear approach, whereby I have oscillated between the data, the relevant literature and the different chapters of my thesis in an attempt to maintain relevance and consistency (Silverman, 2000) across these various facets that inform the process and constitute the final thesis document.

6.6 A Note on Reliability and Validity

Questions of reliability and validity in qualitative research have quite different meanings from those in the quantitative paradigm. The notion of traditional reliability is rejected in this study as it is concerned with the replicability of the research. Whilst similar questions could be asked of similar types of students in similar contexts, poststructuralist thinking highlights the historicity and specificity of any text or context, and the contradictory subjectivities of any person. This effectively means that even if I were to ask the same students the same questions at a different point in time, I would not necessarily get the same or even similar answers. The idea that a different researcher may be able to replicate the study to ‘prove its reliability’ is even more unlikely, as the researcher herself brings particular histories and knowledges and interactive techniques to bear in the conduct of the research. Freebody (2003) argues that the relevances at particular sites become part of the analytic framework of qualitative research, and such relevances must consider the histories of language, things, practices and assumptions of the people and institutions involved at the site. It
is precisely the idiosyncratic nature of such research and its emphasis on specificity, which contribute to the credibility of the research.

Orthodox notions of validity must also be revised and expanded in ways appropriate to ‘an interactive, dialogic logic’ (Reason & Rowan, 1981 p. 240), and many researchers increasingly show preference for alternative conceptions of validity such as ‘trustworthiness’ or ‘credibility’ (Lather, 1986) or ‘understanding’ (Wolcott, 1990). Lather (1986) suggests that the best tactic to produce credible trustworthy research is to ‘construct research designs that demand a vigorous self-reflexivity’ (p. 270). To this end, I have carefully explained my positioning as researcher and I have adopted a self-reflexive stance in my interpretation and analysis of the data. I have also adopted various methods of data collection and (re)presentation, and have welcomed contradictions and counter-patterns as well as convergence (Lather, 1986) within the poststructural underpinnings of the study. The credibility of the data is thus more likely to be trusted.

I attempted to develop a relationship of trust or at least ‘ease’ with the participants. I also acknowledge the limitations and partiality of the data as I stress notions of local specificity and historicity. These strategies also contribute to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Freebody, 2003).

6.7 Reflections on Part C

Part C of the thesis has examined the research process of the study. Within the theoretical framework of (critical) poststructuralism, the data collection, representation and analysis were outlined in detail. The issue of textual authority within the study was explored, and the value-laden and perspectival nature of the research acknowledged. The tensions between critical and poststructural theory were reconciled through a detailed explanation of the study’s understandings of the critical applications of poststructural theory. In particular the multiplicities of positioning within complex subjectivities were explored in the critical enactment of multiliterate practices by these young people. Issues of compliance with, and resistance to,
hegemonic discourses were identified in terms of their potential to generate power relations, pleasure and rebellion.

The resources of articulation were described as discursive practices, including the various designs within the meaning making repertoires of these young people. I also showed how these are utilised within the heteroglossia of text and context, illuminating the interweaving of multiple discourses in any textual instance. The significance of cultural maps was considered in the enactment of discourses, and how knowledge of text, context, and interpersonal language features can be utilised in the textual collusions of literate practices. The significance of performance of the body was discussed in terms of its potential in shaping the subjectivities and lived practices of the participants, including how they account for and interpret the ways that they, their peers, their teachers and their parents and siblings act, dress, speak, feel, and ‘perform’. In this sense, their performances of self were considered to be shaped and legitimatized by the dominant discourses at play, and are seen as difficult to dismantle as investments are deep and familiar.

Institutional power and hegemony in a multiliterate world was seen as significant, as I attempted to investigate issues related to how youth are regulated by hegemonic discourses and institutional power. At the same time they resist aspects of the discourse and rebel against adult control by taking up new technologies.

As a means to enhance the methodological soundness of the study, particular critiques of poststructural theory, namely the charge of a ‘weak politic’ and the poststructural problematizing of identity, were acknowledged and reconciled. The study of instances was considered important in enabling the exploration of the particularities of individual subjectivities, along with the historical and social forces that shape them. The implications of my positioning as researcher in terms of my shaping of the research process and story, and my relationship with the participants was transparently accounted for in self-conscious and self-reflexive ways.

Detailed descriptions and theoretical underpinnings of the procedures adopted in the study were provided, including data collection methods, (re)presentation and management of the data, and analysis techniques. The specific methods for data
collection were justified including the use of visual prompts, collaborative learning conversations, active interviewing and focus group discussions based on collective accounts stimulated by collections of personal artefacts. Similarly, the (re)presentative techniques were outlined in an attempt to acknowledge the constructedness of the research story, including the role of the transcripts, the justification of the multiple modes of (re)presentation and the multi-linear approach to the thesis. The use of NVivo software was explained in terms of how it was useful in organising, linking and retrieving the data. The analytical tool of critical discourse analysis was outlined as an approach to enable exploration of the broader discourses and particularities of language and text in the embodied practices of these young people, with reference to the specific research questions.

Part D conveys the story of the research using a pastiche of (re)presentation which reflects the kaleidoscopic nature of the study, and invites various interpretations and multi-linear ways through Chapters Seven and Eight.
**Part D**

**Pastiche of (Re)presentation**

**Introduction**

The purpose of Part D is to tell the story of the research through a pastiche of (re)presentation, which includes cross-sections of data and my analysis of these data, interwoven with other texts that illustrate some of the macro-discourses at play within and around this study about how youth negotiate their roles within and across their intersecting discourse worlds. I am guided by the work of Smith (1999) and Fairclough (2000a) who both use the term ‘textually mediated’ to describe our worlds, our social lives and our lived discourses. Smith suggests that the discourses and discursive organisation that control our societies are textually mediated, and she sees texts as ‘occurrences in time’ (p. 53) which organise relations between people. Similarly, Fairclough argues that ‘contemporary social life is ‘textually mediated’ – we live our practices and our identities through such texts’ (p. 165). This work, and Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia, have prompted me to weave other (macro) texts through my analysis so that direct links can be shown between the micro and macro elements that form and inform the data texts. This links to my analytical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) which compels me to consider texts in terms of micro textual elements, the discursive context and the macro discourses surrounding the text. I am consciously using the terms ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ to distinguish between the local texts or data produced within this study; for example, multi-modal texts from the participants, learning conversations and interviews (micro) and the more global (macro) texts; for example, official documents, brochures, websites and media reports that I have woven through in text boxes in this part of the thesis. I also use these same terms to describe the levels of analysis which I have undertaken on each text. This included, for example, linguistic and textual elements (micro); and broader socio-historical and socio-political discourses (macro); which is consistent with CDA. This multi-layered use of terms for me highlights the heteroglossic nature of this study and of the textual worlds of these participants. To this end, I have created the intertextual pastiches in this part. I link textual features and contexts within and between texts in my analysis of the data. I have used text boxes with different coloured fonts, visual
texts and snippets of data woven through my analysis, much like a hypermedia environment where the reader can choose multiple pathways (Snyder, 2002) through the sections in this part. Landow (1999; 2006) refers to a hypertextual system such as this as an assemblage or a collage, and suggests that it is multi-linear and reallocates the power from author to reader in some way; a reflection on the Derridian emphasis on discontinuity. A similar style was used by Chambers (1978) almost thirty years ago in his adolescent novel ‘Breaktime’, where other texts and styles were woven through the main text to encourage different reading pathways; an innovative approach that tapped into the adolescent world of the future.

Part D of this thesis is divided into two separate chapters so that the two different groups within the study could be represented. Chapter Seven (re)presents the discourses of the Year Eleven group and Chapter Eight (re)presents the discourses of the Year Nine group. The rationale for (re)presenting the groups in this way stemmed from my initial analysis of the data, which indicated quite different emphases and salient topics from the different groups. For example, the Year Eleven group was much more focused on school achievement than their younger counterparts, and the Year Nine group was focused more on social aspects of school such as peer interactions, than on school achievement. Within each chapter I have used my organising discourses as outlined previously in Parts A, B and C to sort the data and analysis. These are: discourses of youth, which I argue to be numerous and complex; intentional discourses of schooling, which I posit as conflicting and contradictory; and discourses of society, which are steeped in neo-liberal discourses of individualism and new capitalism. For each of these discourse areas, I have chosen a pastiche of texts which illustrate some of the competing macro discourses of contemporary society within which the youth participants, and this study, are a part. My analysis of the data is interwoven in each area with my analysis of the macro texts, so that the diversity and multiplicity of the worlds of the youth participants can be reflected. I have created links between linguistic elements, contexts and surrounding discourses of the data from the youth participants and the macro texts that I have chosen.

I do not suggest that those texts that I have chosen are fully representative of the macro discourses that affect the lives of these young people, or indeed that this is an exhaustive list. However, as with every other section of this thesis, I as researcher
have made choices about what to include and how to tell the story, so even though the pastiche is my (re)presentation, I have made the choice of text selection very carefully to consider the integrity of the study and the texts and contexts that have informed it. I now explain my selection criteria for the texts, and I nominate the particular texts that I have chosen in each area, and outline the specific reasons for the inclusion of each one.

Text selection was based upon a number of factors, and I tried to choose texts that had most if not all of these properties, including: widely distributed and/or available; high potential to be influential and/or deemed “official knowledge” (Apple, 1993); different modes, platforms (that is via the internet, newspaper, brochures and so on) and genres; and produced from different sources such as mass media, government departments, community organisations and private companies. The following tables indicate the specific texts for each area and the reasons for their inclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts (Discourses of youth)</th>
<th>Specific reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Australia Youth survey (Mission Australia, 2005)</td>
<td>• This text is from a Christian community organisation that particularly offers help to young people. The data from my study indicate a strong topic thread of Christianity and other spiritual beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The survey captures the voices of over 11000 young people and is readily available on the internet. Comparing the accounts of the participants in my study with their peers around Australia helps me to locate intersecting or divergent discourses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adolescents are targeted by religious groups to exert influence in their lives and it is the life stage where religious conversion is most likely to take place (Smith et al., 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Webber (2002) suggests that young people are on a quest for meaning, and many dabble in spiritual activities that may be contradictory, such as New Age religion and organised religion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ‘HALO’ X-box game official internet site http://www.bungie.net/games/ (Gee, 2003) | • ‘Halo’ was specifically mentioned by one participant in the study as a popular game to play. Produced by “Microsoft”, which is a company deemed by Giroux (2000b) to }
be one of the influential ‘corporate pedagogues’ of young people in these times.

- Websites associated with such games form part of the discourse of the players and provide further avenues for interaction with other players through discussion boards, and resources to enhance game play (Gee, 2003).
- Holds status as the ‘official’ website for this discourse community of players. Can arguably be compared with Apple’s (1993) notion of ‘official knowledge’ in schools.

**Optus SMS Chat brochure (Optus, undated)**

- Mobile phones and SMS chat were cited by every participant in the study as popular means of communication.
- Brochures such as these are readily available as ‘junk mail’ delivered regularly to mailboxes, as well as in mobile phone/service provider stores.
- These technologies have become ‘an essential feature of both popular and commercial rhetoric about new media cultures and especially of so called ‘global communications’…a core feature of almost all young people’s mobile phone use is the text-message… (Thurlow, 2003).
- Mobile telephony, including accessories, pay options and features are one of the largest consumption areas for the 10-16 years age group (Selwyn, 2003).
- This particular brochure targets young people, using such terms as ‘party animal’ (Optus, undated).

Table 2  Macro texts for 'Discourses of youth'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts (Intentional discourses of schooling)</th>
<th>Specific reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The multimodal texts that the participants produced which constituted level one of my data collection were assessment artefacts from English classes, therefore the discourses surrounding curriculum English are important macro influences. |
Kevin Donnelly newspaper article “Let’s go back to the basics, beginning with the three R’s” (Donnelly, 2006)

- Widely available - published in *The Australian* – the national newspaper.
- Donnelly has been accorded ‘official’ (Apple, 1993) authority in education through:
  
  His commission to report on ‘Why our schools are failing’ by the Menzies Research centre, which is chaired by Liberal* member Malcolm Turnbull, and whose reports have influenced Government policy (Donnelly, 2004); and his regular articles appearing in said national newspaper.

*The conservative side of politics equivalent to the Republican Party in the USA and the Tory Party in Britain*

Education Queensland 2010 strategy (Education Queensland, 2000c)

- ‘Official’ (Apple, 1993) strategy for education in Queensland for the current decade
- Available as print document and also flagged on Education Queensland website as an important guiding document for current education in this state.

Table 3  Macro texts for 'Intentional discourses of schooling'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts (Discourses of society)</th>
<th>Specific reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Information about new Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) from Government (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) and Union (National Tertiary Education Union) | - Drawing from Gee’s (2000) ‘new capitalism’ – how society and the workplace is changing and requiring new ‘types’ of people/workers – such workplace discourses are important macro influences on young people and their worlds.  
- Recent wide-spread discourse in the media about changing conditions in the workplace and effects on every worker.  
- Websites from two different viewpoints about AWAs.  
- Individualist (Sumison, 2003) agenda in schools also apparent in new AWAs and comprises a strong discourse thread in my data. |
| Job descriptions from Career One (*The Australian*) online (Burchell, 2006) | - Again, drawing from Gee’s (2000) ‘new capitalism’ and changing notions of ‘worker attributes’ – locating discourses in employment advertisements to make visible a sample of desirable worker attributes.  
- Small cross-section of job descriptions |
from widely available sources – both online and published in national newspaper.

- Include collaborative discourses such as ‘teamwork’ for juxtaposition against individualist agenda of AWAs.

| Media reports about Cronulla riots/ terrorism (Burchell, 2006; Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006) | Recent wide-spread media attention about ‘racial unrest’ and violence in Australia stemming from terrorist activity particularly over the past four or five years.
- Reflects discourses of uncertainty and fear of difference in broader society which influences the life-worlds of the youth participants.
- ‘Race’ was a popular topic raised by and/or discussed by the participants in the study.
- White supremacy is alive and well in both Australia and America according to recent newspaper and magazine articles (Box, 2006a; Pittam, 2006). |

Table 4  Macro texts for 'Discourses of society'

Whole texts are not used in my pastiche for reasons of length and time of analysis; so I have chosen snippets from each text (after an initial macro analysis), which reflect particular discourses that are apparent to me within the whole texts. To locate these discourses I have drawn from relevant literature such as that referred to in the above tables. As with my learning conversation and interview data analysis, I oscillated between macro discourses of youth, schooling and society, and those micro elements within the texts that indicate such discourses in each discursive event. This process necessitated a close look at particular textual features and the genres and platforms in which they were enacted. After several readings of the texts, I chose to focus upon the following textual elements: Elements of top-level structure (Bartlett, Barton, & Turner, 1988; Emmitt & Pollock, 1997) and cohesive ties (Martin, 1992), to determine the ways in which such texts scaffold and appeal to target audiences; mood and modality, to ascertain levels of authority that such texts take on through interpersonal or intersubjective functions of language; information focus and lexicalisation, to determine the expectations that are held of youth in terms of what
they should know, what is important, how it is described, and links that are made through the language; and patterns of transitivity, particularly a look at the processes and related circumstances or adverbs, along with attributes of participants in the text (Fairclough, 2003; Janks, 1997; Williams, 1994), which give me some indication of how youth and influential groups are positioned through such texts. I have focused on some of these elements more than others for particular texts, as I approached each text with a view to difference and inconsistency, and I found that particular features were more salient in some texts than others. For each text I have also looked at the genre and platform (for example; brochure, website, report) so that my analysis of the micro elements is contextualised within the discursive event, which influences the text itself. I have drawn from this group of texts for both chapters in Part D (Year Eleven and Year Nine).

Note that the font colours used for the texts in each table are the same font colours used when referring to each text within the analysis in Chapters Seven and Eight.
Chapter Seven

Year Eleven Discourses

The discourses that are (re)presented in this chapter are described under three main headings, as explained in the introduction to Part D. These are: ‘Discourses of youth’, ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’ and ‘Discourses of society’. While it is difficult to separate such overlapping and intersecting discourses, I have done so for the purposes of organisation in this chapter, yet I acknowledge that overlaps still occur in my analysis. I have grouped the topics related to the life-worlds of youth, such as: practices they choose to engage in; issues they choose to comment on; and ways that they choose to shape their own behaviour; as part of ‘Discourses of youth’. The topics related to schooling, such as: subject hierarchy or dualism; curriculum issues including intellectualisation; school performance and expectations; positioning of teachers and students; and collusionary behaviour; are grouped under ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’. The topics related to broader society, such as: multiliterate practices; social issues; positioning of and by parents; and societal expectations of teenage behaviour and characteristics; are placed under the heading ‘Discourses of society’. After an initial scan of the coded categories within Nvivo (coding process explained in Chapter Six), I applied the overarching discourses of youth, schooling and society to the data as organising discourses; consistent with a ‘top-down’ approach (Miller & Fox, 2004). I used the coded nodes within the data to group topics within these discourse headings for each group, as I conducted my micro-analysis; consistent with a ‘bottom-up’ approach (Miller & Fox, 2004). Again, I acknowledge that overlaps occur across these discourse headings, as they intersect to a large degree.

7.1 Discourses of Youth

My initial scans of the coded data were for the purposes of identifying the organizing discourses for the study (top-down), then a closer analysis of the coded nodes helped to identify those nodes or strands of talk which I felt illustrated particular discourses of youth as legitimate in the accounts of the Year Eleven youth participants. From this early analysis, I grouped together particular instances of talk about teenagers, sexuality, race, gender, religion, society, language and power, self-regulation, bodily
performance, social life, technology and resistance as my early scans of the data indicated that these were favoured topics for the participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes). I then identified a number of common themes in my detailed analysis that seemed to be traceable through various threads of the data, across different texts and from each of the three participants. These included:

- Youth positioned through bodily practices and performative statements
- Youth as negotiating slippery roles and scales of expectation
- Youth as individual agents with expectations of agency
- Youth described through good vs. bad discourses
- Youth positioned as distinct from adults

I provide examples of and discuss each of these themes in turn (although they intersect and overlap), including a pastiche of snippets from the data transcripts and my analysis of them. In the interests of space here, I have not included full transcripts or in some cases, larger chunks of transcripts, however my assemblage of the pastiche in some way reflects the assemblage of intertextual links and chains of any text, where decisions are made (either consciously or unconsciously) to include and/or omit particular elements. I do endeavour to explicate how the snippets relate to the discursive events from which they are drawn.

### 7.1.1 Youth positioned through bodily practices and performative statements

The subjectivities of youth that are constituted in these data tend to rely heavily on bodily practices such as *using* the internet, *playing* console games, *playing* sport, *doing* drama, *sleeping/having sex* with people, *working* either in school or out of school… or not. This of course must be considered in terms of the interview questions being asked, such as what they do on weekends or which practices they engage in, however even in

![Figure 8 Matt's collection of artefacts](image-url)
instances where questions did not specifically relate to practices, the participants often used bodily practices as descriptors of self or others.

For example, in Figures 8, 9 and 10, the collections of artefacts that the participants brought as part of level 5 data collection (the group interview) indicate that each of them define themselves in some way according to bodily practices. This includes playing the guitar and playing squash (see Figure 7, Matt), performing comedy (see Figure 8, Paul), and driving a car (see Figure 9, Ellen).

The information focus of the Optus brochure is what to do in order to construct an identity (or even multiple identities) and have some fun. The relational processes in clauses such as ‘Be whoever you want to be’, and in the examples of possible chat such as ‘I am Twiggy’, ‘I’m mad 4 sports 2’ and ‘I’m a party animal!’ alongside visual images of different animals (a very scrawny monkey is illustrated for a text which describes the user as a ‘solid hunk’), suggest that you lie about yourself and create your own secret identity, so no-one can pass judgement on you because of how you look or what you do. Nor can they find out who you are, which makes it easy to ‘delight in the impertinent and the forbidden, to transgress adult codes, to live only in the present’ (Kenway & Bullen, 2001 p. 70). The brochure provides performative statements to guide the user to ‘get chatting’, with behavioural and material processes such as ‘leave a space…’, ‘type the name…’, ‘register your nickname’, and ‘to change your nickname…’(Optus, undated).
In some cases, own practices were used almost as a ‘yardstick’ for the practices of others, whereby the speaker was able to indicate their ‘authority’ to speak about and pass judgment on such matters. For example, the body is inscribed in the discourse through descriptions of gayness, anti-gayness, Christian or non-Christian activities/beliefs, slutty behaviour, radical actions and regulated behaviours, many of which overlap. Performative statements indicating either what self or others do, or what they will do, are evident in talk that positions both self and others.

Paul’s use of adverbs to indicate strong probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) of Christian and anti-gay beliefs such as ‘very strong’, ‘very, very anti…’ and ‘so anti…’ seem to be used here to illustrate that such beliefs should be evident (in appearance and/or in bodily actions) as he goes on to say “I wouldn’t have guessed” and ‘I never notice’. His lexical choices link ‘Christians’ with ‘anti-gayness’ in a manner that seems normal, and later he also describes particular bodily practices that indicate ‘gayness’ such as crossing your legs in a certain way. Bodily practices are also used to pass judgements on girls at the school.
PH: Well, there’s acting slutty and there’s being slutty... I can’t remember which one I meant.

MR: Well tell me what slutty means.

PH: Acting slutty is acting like you want to have sex, being slutty is having sex with people.

MR: So you think they were acting slutty?

PH: I’d say so, like yeah, because um...

MR: So what sort of behaviours would you characterise as acting slutty?

PH: Ummm... well Cath and Paula, two girls here, you can cross out their names... they um, they I don’t know... they kind of talk about their breasts like in a conversational manner, and oh... yeah, they act slutty, I don’t know if they are, but they talk about giving blow jobs to people... I don’t know if they do or not, but they definitely act slutty. And then there’s Kelly, whose in my English class... um, she sleeps around, she has sex with people, but... and she’ll bring it up in conversation only if it’s mentioned, so she doesn’t act slutty unless you know, it’s what the conversation’s about, but I’d say she is...

MR: So you think if you sleep with people, you’re slutty?

PH: Oh well, sorry I... personally I do, because I don’t sleep with anyone and don’t really want to at the moment, but um... (int, 04, P.H)

His lexical choices again pre-suppose a relationship between ‘popular’ and ‘slutty’, and the term slutty is an attribute used to describe girls who exhibit different categories of behaviour. His use of the processes ‘acting’ and ‘being’ are used respectively to mean ‘talking about sex’ and ‘having sex’. The former, a performative statement is given more negative emphasis through the strong modality of the adverb ‘definitely’, and the low probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) of bringing it up ‘only if it’s mentioned’. It seems that talking about sex is being constructed as worse than doing it.

Throughout the Year Eleven data in this study there is consistent use of a cause/effect cohesive structure using such indicators as ‘because’, ‘so’ and ‘that’s why’, with participants indicating reasons for why things are, or why they believe what they do. This may be attributed to a number of variables: for example the interview genre of this discursive event, whereby questions need answers; the approval sought by the participants who position themselves as ‘good students’ in their successful collusion in the interview; or the participants buying into the discourses of schooling whereby students need to provide evidence of achievement or ‘rightness’. Here Paul justifies his viewpoint and gives himself authority to speak and judge through his unsolicited
statement about his own behaviour regarding sex, through his interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) of textual interlocuters Cath and Paula and Kelly and his indication through the circumstance ‘at the moment’ that he will eventually have sex, but that it isn’t important at this time in his life – read ‘good boy’ who is focused on school. Such a construction of being ‘good’ is also linked with ‘doing as you are told’ or regulating your behaviour.

The Halo 2 website has a focus on involved participation. Halliday’s notion of mood as the interpersonal function of language has also been applied by Kress and van Leeuwen to visual text, where they refer to demand and offer (1995; 2001). This site demands that the audience purchase and play the x-box game, yet it offers information, help and possibilities for connection with other players through discussion forums. The abundance of material and behavioural processes within the Map Guides on the site, for example ‘keep players moving’, ‘will have to defend a wide open corner…’, and ‘if you want to jump behind something that spews out death…’ suggest that this is not a passive activity, nor does it require one particular way of playing. Performative statements offer tips for ‘ideal games’ if you want them, whilst at the same time encouraging players to do what they like and ‘ignore this blabbering and play til your heart’s content!’ . Enacting the practices within games and on websites doesn’t simply involve passively sitting alone at a screen or in front of a console. The FAQs page encourages players to ‘invite friends to join you and form a party’, ‘communicate to team members’, and ‘broadcast to anyone within earshot’ (Bungie.net).

The schooled, regulated ‘docile body’ (Foucault, 1977) is legitimated in the accounts of these young people as they talk about ‘sitting people down and teaching them’ about alternative beliefs (int, 04, E.P), ‘doing what the teacher wants’ and ‘trying to keep my grades up’ (int, 03, M.C). The material processes, passive and active voice respectively, and pronouns used, indicate actions to regulate others who don’t display appropriate behaviours (them) and actions to regulate self (my, I). Then even within the interview ‘please tell me if I’m boring you…’ (l.c., 02, P.H), the verbal and behavioural processes, imperative mood as well as the use of the cohesive device ellipsis in Paul’s statement, where ‘I will stop talking’ is left unsaid, indicate a
conscious acknowledgement that he accepts that I can regulate his behaviour if I choose to, that he should regulate his own behaviour (as good students/teenagers do), yet at the same time is seeking my approval to keep going - an appropriate collusionary tactic in the interview genre.

The generation born between 1980 and 1995 (also referred to as the Echo Boomers or often known as the Y generation) is the generation within which these participants fall. The focus for analysis of this generation is generally their identity as consumers, and particularly as consumers of technology (Kellner, 1997; Kenway & Bullen, 2001). Mackay suggests that this generation resists conformity and generalisations about them as a group, yet as Kenway and Bullen suggest, they are probably more dependent on parents, education and welfare, as employment is not readily gained (Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Mackay, 1997). These participants display characteristics as consumers and as users of technology through the embodied practices they describe, such as ‘surfing the internet’, ‘making animations’ (l.c., 02, P.H), and ‘…people do buy them, like most people have had at least two mobile phones’ (l.c., 02, E.P), which uses strong modality by adding ‘do’, and ‘at least’ to indicate inside knowledge of the ‘truth’ of this statement. However there are also signs of resistance to such indicators of youth culture, which perhaps ties in with Mackay’s argument that youth of this generation resist conformity. For example ‘…I have a mobile phone, but I don’t use it much’, ‘I’m not into brands…’ (l.c., 02, P.H), and ‘I don’t like brand shopping… it’s really pointless (l.c., 02, E.P). The circumstance ‘really pointless’ as a descriptor of the practice of brand shopping, is a strong judgemental statement (intensified with the mood adjunct ‘really’) about the fickleness of consumerism, yet almost in a contradictory statement, Ellen suggests that the novelty of phones wears off, but the newer gadgets come along to keep you interested, which essentially is what feeds consumerism.

Text 3

MR: And what about... we talked about having the latest ring tone, or the latest colour and all the rest of it... what about that? Do all of the friends that have mobile phones, do they all have those sorts of things on there, or is that another reason why they might feel a bit disadvantaged or excluded?

EP: That's true; um... everybody wants to have special ring tones and stuff. I used to be... I'm not as interested in
all that as I used to be… um like, ‘cause I used to get all those ring-tones and picture messages and stuff, but I've had my phone now for a while, and I just... It's lost all its...

MR: Novelty's wearing off?

EP: Novelty, yeah. So I've got my ring-tone set to no 13 or something that came with the phone. But yeah, newer gadgets like camera phone. I guess that's one thing that still has got a bit of novelty ‘cause it can take a photo... with your phone!!!

MR: Do kids have those at school?

EP: Yeah. And um, everybody admires them or wants them or whatever. (l.c.,04,E.P)

Ellen is positioning herself as not so caught up in such consumeristic practices through her comparison/contrast cohesive structure, where she describes what she used to do, compared with what she does now, however she then goes on to describe ‘newer gadgets’ and the unexpected things that they can do. The camera phone itself is given agency and power through the interpersonal use of the pronoun ‘it’ as subject of the action – as in, ‘it’ can take the photo, rather than ‘you’ can take the photo, with ‘your’ phone, almost as if such a gadget has power over the consumer. This is exactly the purpose of marketing strategies within consumer culture, as though you don’t have a choice – you have to have the newest gadget.

The embodied practices of these young people seem to be tied to notions of regulation, expectation and choice. These participants make judgements about self and others based on visible practices or performative statements. At the same time they are encouraged by consumer culture to indulge in multiliterate practices using technology to explore and push the boundaries of what you can do in a space that is not monitored by adults or that keeps your identity a secret, such as SMS chatting. To some extent, macro texts such as *Halo 2* and its official website regulate behaviour with regards to the game, using rules or particular features that are made unavailable at certain times, for example on the FAQs page on *Halo 2* website, decisions have been made by the game producers about what is fair and balanced, and therefore what is allowed…
Players must fit within such rules and regulations to play the game, however these parameters don’t change as the game proceeds, and so players can choose and plan their gaming strategies within them. In contrast, often in ‘real-world’ space, teenagers are confronted with slippery, sliding scales of expectation from peers, schools, parents and society, so choices may be more difficult, or contradictory choices may be made to keep options open and/or to keep others happy.

7.1.2 Youth as negotiating slippery roles and scales of expectation
These young people talk about youth and youth culture in terms of change, busy-ness, roles they negotiate, and scales of expectation from peers, teachers and parents. Alongside expectations from adults about school and place in society, there are also expectations from and of peers. Categories are constructed by peer groups which are explained in relation to what they exclude (Fuss, 1991), yet these participants seem to be aware to some extent of what Davies (1994) terms, ‘the limitations and powerful entrapments entailed in the categories’ (p. 2). These Year Eleven youth understand the categories of ‘nerd’, ‘soccer jerk’ and so on in relation to where they sit within, or outside, such categories. This is not a simple ‘in or out’ construction however, as there is a sophisticated delineation of levels or degrees within the categories; the understanding of which seems to be expected within the peer group. Going back to the beginning of Text 1, Paul indicates different levels of friendship, and at different times he talks about ‘the group of friends that I sit with’… ‘we have the same interests’ and then, ‘people I don’t sit with, but I know quite well… don’t exactly have the same interests, but we’re similar people, like same sense of humour…’ (l.c., 02, P.H). Matt also talks about degrees within peer categories in Text 4.

Text 4
1. MC: Yeah, like I say, I hang around with the nerds, but I'm not a nerd... d'you know what I mean?
2. MR: Ok
3. MC: I said that last week to someone... I said... you know, I was talking about how this person came over... like new people would come to the school, and I said you know how they'd hang with your group for about a day, and then they end up with like, the nerds. And
It seems that there are ‘worse’ nerds than others, and that ‘hanging around’ (material process) or physical closeness to certain groups, might have the appearance of you being part of the group, but you deny being (relational process) what that group signifies, or possibly having the attributes that others might ascribe to people in that group. It is also suggested that people should know their categories and their roles, for example, in turn 3, ‘this person (popular group) just looked (didn’t have to say a word) at me’. Then Matt had to explain his position on the ‘nerd scale’. Paul also talks about wanting to ‘beat’ and ‘thrash’ some people who thought they were good at X-Box to ‘knock ‘em down a peg’ (l.c., 02, P.H), because they were overstepping their accepted role. He uses a physical metaphor which suggests controlling and regulating bodies is acceptable practice.

Spirituality and beliefs also seem to be described in relation to degrees of involvement or belief and changing perspectives. Paul’s accounts of his ties with Christianity are complex, as he moves from readily admitting that he has ‘church friends’; that he ‘attended a few little prayer groups’ at school; and went on a ‘Christian camp’ (int., 04, P.H); to claiming that ‘I don’t… like… church groups’, then explaining that he hasn’t completely turned against Christianity… ‘I believe in God. Jesus, I don’t know, but I think he was a nice guy. I think a lot of what he says has been blown up over the years…maybe he was the son of God…’ (int., 03, P.H). Paul’s use of the attribute ‘little’ to describe the prayer groups indicates his patronizing view of such groups, which may be his way of positioning himself to me as researcher (it may not be seen as cool to attend such groups, or he may not want me to think he still buys
into Christianity to this extent), yet his pauses in the statement ‘I don’t… like…
church groups’ indicate low modality as though he himself is unsure about where he
stands on this issue of beliefs.

The discourses of schooling and
curriculum documents, whereby
he is being encouraged to
critique what he reads, may be
placing him in a position of
uncertainty about what to believe
and what not to believe, as he
struggles with the beliefs he has
been brought up with and that
seem to be valued by large
sections of the community and
by the school (only Christian
religion classes are scheduled for
Religious Education in the
school), whilst at the same time
using his skills to critique such
doctrines (skills that are also
valued by the school), yet not
offend anyone in the process (a
politically correct manoeuvre
that is valued in society).

The Mission Australia (2005) youth survey
suggests that there is evidence of a ‘diminished
role’ of ‘faith groups’ in our society for young
people. The language of the preface on the
Contents page then takes on a persuasive or
argument style cohesive structure, where youth
and family are described as ‘central’, where this
organisation is described as ‘passionately
committed’, and where authority is inscribed
through the declarative statements ‘we hear’ and
‘we know’, using italics to emphasise that this
faith group can give you what you need. The
final declarative statement ‘You are accepted’
uses high probabilisation and interpolation
(Fuller & Lee, 1997) of ‘you’ the reader as an
important interlocutor who is valued and who
will presumably be welcomed into the folds of
the organisation. The diminished role of such
groups possibly reflects the complexity of the
subjectification of the youth participants in this
study with regards to faith and its role in their
lives.

Text 5

MR: So, particular personalities?
PH: Yeah it’s like, with Christians, I used to be
Christian, but I don’t agree with their stance on
homosexuality, like I’m not gay myself, but I don’t
um think that you should not like people because
they are gay, or call ‘em sinners or whatever,
cause, um, anyway…?
MR: Keep going.
PH: You’re sure? Um, well um, in the bible it says... I’ve read through the bible once or twice, and homosexuality is mentioned in about 6 places I reckon, like 3 times in the Old Testament, and 3 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, it’s mentioned in Leviticus, is it Leviticus?

MR: I think so.

PH: Well, it goes um, if somebody’s dying, kill them... not these words, but... if somebody’s gay, kill them, so we apparently ignore all the bits except the ones we want to hear, well not we, you know, 'Christians', and... not all, sorry... I’m trying not to put anyone down, but so they pick on that, and they think that’s a good enough reason, they go, what about all these others that are right next to it, like about killing blind people, and they go oh, that doesn’t apply anymore, so they get to the homosexuals... and in the new testament, Jesus mentions homosexuals about once or twice in a huge list, like thou shalt not um, I don’t know, but it’s about adulterers, swindlers, homosexuals and all these other ones, and its mentioned about three times in a list, and people think that’s good enough. 'Cause you don’t see us going out stopping the adulterers, making it illegal, not letting 'em get married and all that, and also, I read a site once that was all about how the bible’s been translated over the years, and they reckon that the homosexuality bit, actually referred to homosexual rapists, when Jesus was talking about it, so I think that people just believe what’s written in the bible cause Jesus said it. It’s like... do some research and just find out... it might not even mean that...

(l.c., 02, P.H)

Paul shows evidence of interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) as he constructs part of this explanation as a dialogue between unidentified third parties, including his own comments on the fictional conversation using second person tenor, which is a way to draw the listener (researcher) in, a collusionary technique often employed as part of casual conversation with friends. He is testing the power relations in this interview situation as evidenced by his interpersonal language: by checking in with the researcher; by adopting familiar conversational techniques and by making comments about his intentions ‘not to offend anyone’. He also positions himself as part of the dominant normal group in society by his use of us and them, and this allows him to introduce ‘own-ness’ (Fuller & Lee, 1997) through his evaluative comments on Christianity and the Bible. The idea of what might be considered ‘normal’ when it comes to Christian beliefs seems to involve the degree to which one takes up the teachings of the Bible. Paul variously uses attributes and adverbs to describe ‘other’ Christians as ‘extremist’ (l.c., 02, P.H), ‘very strong’, and ‘hyper’ (int., 04, P.H), in
contrast to himself, who takes what he wants from the Bible, but ‘stands up for what he believes in’ (I.c., 02, P.H), including the right to be homosexual (although he makes it clear that he himself is not homosexual).

Matt also indicates levels of belief in Christianity. He is much more involved than Paul in the bodily practice of attending church regularly, yet he distances himself and his behaviour from ‘a lot of idiots in the Christian group’ through his use of the pronoun ‘I’ in direct contrast to the attribute ‘other’, which assumes his behaviour is more acceptable than theirs… ‘I’m a Christian, but I’m not like the other Christians’ (I.c., 02, M.C). Similar to Paul, there are beliefs within his religion that he disagrees with, as he takes up issues in society that he believes in (again perhaps as a result of the discourses of schooling and curriculum which have trained him to critique viewpoints, or indeed as a way to be non-conformist within the boundaries of his religion).

**Text 6**

MR: What sorts of things do you think about?
MC: Particularly at the moment, um, I'm thinking about moral issues and stuff like abortion and, like homosexual marriage and stuff, and I don't think that's the right of the country to decide that sort of stuff for people, so yeah... that's one of the main things, because I've... been brought up in Christian society, and they're just like, we should make it wrong, and it's like, you can still have the same... I don't know, it's like, taking away from democracy. I value democracy over moral...
MR: So your morals might actually be different to somebody else's, so who's to say that yours are actually better?
MC: Yeah, and people should be allowed to do, I mean within reason, but... I mean...
MR: When you say within reason, what do you mean?
MC: Yeah, well ok, it's never gunna be popular opinion to kill other people, so therefore that's gunna be a moral issue that everyone agrees on, based on...
MR: You're taking away someone else's rights if you do that...
MC: Yeah, but if, I don't think stuff like abortion is taking away other people's... oh well, abortion's a different one again. Homosexuality is basically not taking away from anyone else's rights, but abortion... then people look at the baby...
MR: The baby's rights...
MC: Yeah, but I don't think abortion is necessarily right... that's not the point I'm trying to make really, it's more...
MR: Do you believe in pro-choice?
Matt’s use of lexical links between ‘moral issues’, ‘abortion’ and ‘homosexual marriage’ indicate that he doesn’t see such issues as legal ones, rather he regards them as moral ones, yet later he cites ‘democracy’ as being more important than ‘morality’ or certain moral issues at least. He seems unsure about stepping outside the bounds of his religion to express ‘counter-opinions’, which is evident through his use of ‘and stuff’ as both a conversation filler and a descriptor of these moral issues. He also points out that abortion is not ‘necessarily right’, a statement of low modality or probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997), again indicating uncertainty about whether to express a strong opinion against his religious beliefs. Some issues on the other hand, are given strong modality or probabilisation, such as killing other people, which ‘everyone’ agrees on, and which will ‘never’ be popular. His interpolation of textual interlocutors (Fuller & Lee, 1997) such as ‘they’ to refer to Christians as a group, excluding him, and pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ to indicate his degree of alliance with Christianity, indicates his dilemma of being part of the group, yet not agreeing with all beliefs of the group, as he struggles with value judgements about what he thinks is acceptable to believe and what is not.

“Our foundation principle is to be motivated by ‘the love of God’ and our action is ‘to meet human need’. Faith sees the possibility and brings its best minds to bear on constructive answers. That is the purpose of this report. Its statistics and analysis are our faith statement” (Mission Australia, 2005, Contents page).

The concept of ‘faith’ in this text is being positioned as something important that is based on scientific fact, with the use of ‘statistics and analysis’ as a participant in the theme position in the clause, excluding the notion of the ‘relational other’, which is an unproven, abstract concept. The use of the abstract noun ‘Faith’ as the subject of the clause which performs the behavioural processes of seeing and bringing minds to bear, suggests that it is ‘faith’ rather than people who will do what is necessary, using the evidence collected. This is almost an assurance that there is no need to be confused about the efficacy of faith in your lives, as faith is based on cold hard facts.
Popularity is also a term that has different degrees of acceptability and levels of meaning attached to it by these participants. Image is seen as part of teenage culture, from having the latest mobile phones... ‘It’s all about what it looks like, what attachments you have, even in the phone, what picture messages… like it’s not just a communication tool anymore…’ (l.c., 02, E.P), to the latest brands of clothing or footwear ‘…cause now even Adidas and Nike aren’t cool anymore… it changes way too much…’ (l.c., 02, M.C). The changing nature of image and popularity have been described as difficult to keep up with, and as placing unrealistic expectations on teenagers, for example Paul talks about popular girls’ magazines... ‘Oh man I hate them, cause they’re all about how… like they’re saying there’s this perfect way to pick up a guy, and there’s this perfect way to do your hair, and that you have to look socially good… well not socially good… but you have to look good to be popular…’ (l.c., 02, P.H).

These participants seem to have taken a stand, to some extent, against such popular media constructions of teenage culture by resisting such things as ‘brand shopping’, which Ellen describes as ‘really pointless’ (l.c., 02, E.P), and by using the word ‘popular’ in a derogatory way by creating a lexical link between that term and the embodied term ‘slutty’ (int., 04, P.H). Paul also inscribes the body into issues of popularity and image by referring to his acne in conversation about unrealistic images of teenagers on television (similar to de Castro’s (2004) dimension of the ‘perfect image’ described in Chapter 2), yet he dismisses this as unimportant... ‘I don’t actually care that I have acne ’cause I have friends and blah, blah, blah, blah….’ (l.c., 02, P.H). By linking the term ‘acne’ with having friends, he is assigning importance to bodily appearance as a determiner of popularity, whilst at the same time seeming to...
dismiss it. His use of the modal adverb ‘actually’ is his way of separating himself from other teenagers who do actually care about such matters.

The body is also drawn into the discourses of youth in the Mission Australia youth survey. It states: “This is the heart-land of our Christian energy…This is not some unreflective response to human distress but a conscious attempt to blend what we believe with what we do” (Mission Australia, 2005). The analogy of the heart is used as a descriptor within the participant ‘heart-land of our Christian energy’, to perhaps mean the life-giving core, and the use of the abstract noun ‘energy’ denotes the embodied enactment of the goals and mission that stem from the document. This mind and body discourse is also evident in linking ‘what we believe with what we do’. Christianity and this group in particular, are positioning themselves as not just about a set of beliefs, but about real action and participation – indicative of today’s youth who want to be actors, players, users and agents rather than passive believers or spectators (Kalantzis, 2006).

Ellen and Matt resist conformity by buying into music which is not seen as ‘popular’ (l.c., 02, E.P), and is valued for other reasons… ‘I probably go for people who can play well rather than what’s popular…’ (l.c., 02, M.C). Both of these participants however, at other times make statements such as… ‘I’d still buy what’s cool’ (int., 04, M.C), and ‘It’s just accepted that you have a phone’ (l.c., 02, E.P), which again suggests different degrees of acceptance of popular teenage culture and sometimes contradictory behaviours or statements regarding their immersion in it.

7.1.3 Youth as individual agents with expectations of agency
Youth are constructed variously as having a repertoire of choices, where they choose particular performances of self based on salient needs, expectations and/or desires at particular times. These participants construct individual youth as having the agency to regulate their own behaviour and make the ‘right’ choices. For example, Paul suggests that teenagers should be able to regulate their sexual behaviour…

Text 7
MR: Right, so you’re not necessarily just attracted to friends who are into the same sorts of hobbies for example, as
you, but you like similar personalities or similar interests?

PH: I like people who are fun to be with, like there’s um a
girl in my English class, so I sit with her in English,
but I’d say I have nothing in common with her in terms of
interests and all that, but we get on great. Like she
sleeps with people, and I um don’t do that…

MR: So you don’t approve of that?

PH: Well, I mean if you’re careful I think it’s fine, but
don’t go killing yourself at the age of sixteen. It’s
just a wasted life.  (l.c., 02, P.H)

Paul suggests that the right choices can and need to be made with regards to sexual activity, and his choice not to sleep with people is being used as the measure of what is right through his interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) of a textual interlocutor (the girl in his class) and his advice to her through the use of a performative material process ‘don’t go killing yourself’ along with his use of the attribute ‘wasted’ to make a judgement that she will ruin her life if she continues to do what she is doing. By introducing the circumstance ‘at the age of sixteen’, he is explicitly foregrounding age as an important factor in choices about sexual behaviour and that sixteen is obviously too young to be sleeping around, yet it is old enough to be making the right choices. Paul also sets himself up as a measure of what is right as he says he wasn’t popular in Year Eight because he ‘refused to compromise’ (int., 03,

“The survey findings are important on a number of levels. They will assist Mission Australia and others working with young people, including government at all levels and service providers, to evaluate and improve their programs, services and policies for young people. They will inform parents, carers, family members, teachers and all in the general community who are concerned about the wellbeing of young people. The findings also provide young people themselves with information, and more importantly a voice” (Mission Australia, 2005, Introduction). This statement positions youth as passive objects of the care, concern, policies and programs for young people in society. The lexical links of ‘The survey findings’, ‘the findings’ and ‘they’ are all placed in the theme position of clauses to indicate that this organization and what it is doing to be the most important thing at play in this text. Youth are being provided with a voice, rather than being portrayed as actively using their voices or physically making a difference.
It is not clear on what he refused to compromise, however it is insinuated that he didn’t behave in ways that might make him popular, such as wearing the latest brands, and being interested in sport, parties and sex. He suggests that teenagers should not be taken in by consumer culture, but that they take control and actively find out which products to buy, based on research.

Text 8

MR: What do you think then, that you’ve left out or silenced through this text? Probably some of your own views by the sound of it?
PH: I think buy something based on how well it sounds, not based on an ad, cause yeah, like I said, that’s what I do, I don’t watch ads and say, ‘Ooh, this is advertised, I must buy it’, I buy it cause...
MR: Might be good for my image...
PH: Yeah. If I’m gunna buy something... I haven’t bought anything recently cause I don’t have any money, but um... I’m just trying to think of something I’ve bought. Probably the last thing I bought was the DVD burner... I didn’t watch TV, wait for the ad to go, I’ll buy that DVD burner. I went online, I actually researched DV... burners, I found out which one would have the most capabilities, and I bought that one, so it wasn’t the ad that sold it to me, it was its technical aspects. (int., 03, P.H)

Again he positions himself as making the right choices, and being able to resist marketing strategies by actively finding out about products. His use of the modal adverb ‘actually’ suggests that this is probably not normal behaviour for teenagers, but that it should be. His constant use of the pronoun ‘I’ as active participant performing behavioural and material processes such as ‘went online’, ‘found out’ and ‘bought’, along with his use of the comparison/contrast cohesive structure, illustrates what is the incorrect behaviour as compared with his correct behaviour. Paul also makes similar statements about self-regulating behaviours when he discusses drug use...

Text 9

MR: So like, if you’re underprivileged, you don’t have much, and maybe there’s an example where you become so low in yourself and your self esteem, and you take drugs ‘cause you think that’s the only way you’re going to feel better... Or maybe you’ve been taking them for medication and then you got hooked on them?
PH: Um... I think if a person’s strong enough, then you can get off it, like, To Kill a Mocking Bird - I’ll just use a literary reference, the lady is hooked on morphine, she’s
strong enough to get out of it, and... without the use of...
being flushed out of her system or anything... she's kind
of... I don't think it was cold turkey, I think she
gradually went down, but...

MR: Do you think anyone could do that?
PH: I think it’s possible for everyone to do it really.
MR: What about all the people who are addicted to things like
alcohol or cigarettes or... Do you think it’s easy just to
get out of it?
PH: Mmm... I think you’re stupid for getting into it in the
first place, but that’s just again, a judgemental thing... I
think if you’re not strong... Okay, sorry I take back
what I said, I don’t think everyone can, but in this day
and age... sorry, I don’t think everyone can cold turkey,
but in this day and age, there are programs to get you
off it, and I think if you focus on the program, then you
can get off it. (int., 04, P.H)

Using top level structure (Derewianka, 1990), there is a definite problem/solution
organisational feature to Paul’s text here, whereby if you are stupid enough to have
this problem of being addicted to
substances, then the simple solution is to
get off it, no matter how hard that might be. Paul directly
quotes from a literary text to strengthen his
argument, and also possibly to show me
as interviewer that he is clever enough to do
so. He makes lexical links between
‘stupid’ and ‘not strong’ as attributes
of someone who can’t beat an addiction, and
his interpolative
(Fuller & Lee, 1997) technique of making judgements about such addicts, indicates to

“The enemies in Halo were no slouches but this time around
expect you opponents to be more cunning and tactical in their
tries to annihilate you. Covenant forces will use the
environment to their advantage and make your job that much
more difficult... It will take all of your wits and skill to
overcome your adversaries this time around” (Bungie.net).
This statement in the FAQs section on the Halo 2 website is
responding to a question about the improvements in the game
since Halo. Its lexicalisation positions the game as difficult,
using such attributes as ‘cunning’ and ‘tactical’ to describe
the game opponents, as well as the strong material process of
‘attempts to annihilate’ so the player can visualise just how	nasty it could be. The player however, is positioned as a
strong agent through a direct address - ‘your job’, who is
capable of overcoming such opponents, including lexical
links of ‘wits’ and ‘skill’ as ‘your’ attributes. There is no
suggestion here that you as the player won’t be able to pull
this task off, no matter how difficult it is...
me as researcher and adult in this interview situation, that he knows what is right and what is wrong, and that such people just need to control their behaviour and fix their problem, whatever it takes.

Ellen also tries to position teenagers as having agency in terms of amusing themselves on weekends. A popular discourse in the media is that of youth as a problem with no aspirations (Kanpol, 1997; Wyn & White, 1997). Ellen suggests that it is up to individuals to take control of their social opportunities; however she seems a little unsure about how this might happen.

Text 10

MR: Do you think that, like you said before, this is Bellevue, there aren't that many shops... um do you ever find that on weekends you're thinking there are things that you'd like to be doing, but you can't because you're in Bellevue?

EP: Not really, I guess you're always able to make your own fun. (l.c., 02, E.P)

Her modal adverb ‘not really’ and low probability behavioural process ‘guess’ are in contradiction with her strong modal ‘always’. Her use of the more general second person pronoun ‘you’ rather than ‘I’, suggests that she believes teenagers should be able to make their own fun, yet she excludes herself from the text by not explaining that she is able to make her own fun, which indicates perhaps the conflict associated with slippery roles and expectations as discussed in section 7.1.2. Ellen may be caught up in the hegemony of ‘good’ teenage discourses, which include making the right choices and taking control of your life, yet she may also be struggling to cope with the myriad of conflicting expectations and contextual landscapes that is salient in her world as a young person in today’s society, including a lack of amusement activities for youth in regional centres.

7.1.4 Youth described through good vs. bad discourse
Youth in these accounts seem to be described in terms of dualist notions of good or bad, which resonates with de Castro’s (2004) dimension of the exclusion of difference described in Chapter 2. Table 5 shows various language descriptors from the participants that indicate ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’, along with my description of the language forms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Good’ Descriptors</th>
<th>‘Bad’ Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptor</td>
<td>Language form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t sleep around</td>
<td>Negative material process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulate their bodies</td>
<td>Performance and performativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make choices/judgements about what is good/offensive</td>
<td>Realized through conjunctions (whereas, but) and modality (degrees of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Christian morals</td>
<td>Relational process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain approval</td>
<td>Realized through high modality for good characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have individual agency</td>
<td>Realized through material processes and adverbs of manner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5  Good vs. bad descriptors of youth

There is an important juxtaposition in these accounts, whereby such dualist descriptors of good vs. bad are reinforced through comparison/contrast cohesive structure, using conjunctions such as ‘whereas’ and ‘but’ to compare behaviours (material processes and performance), relational processes of having particular attributes and strong modality to indicate definite values. There is indication of complexity and multiplicity in their accounts of youth, as they discuss degrees of particular categories. For example, having Christian morals is taken on as a relational process by each of the participants to legitimate and authorise their opinions about particular behaviours, yet there seems to be a sliding scale of those morals or Christian attributes that are desirable and those that are not, as illustrated in my analysis of Text 1 and Text 5 earlier in this chapter. Adverbs such as ‘really’, ‘hyper’ (to magnify the attribute), ‘very’, ‘so’, ‘completely’, ‘actually’ and ‘fairly’ are used to indicate degrees of acceptability, and the ‘good’ students are deemed to have
the authority to decide what is at the higher end of ‘good’ and what is not as they invest in ‘plaisir’ (Kenway & Bullen, 2001) performances that give them approval and power in the school setting. Ellen suggests (int., 04, E.P) that sometimes you ‘pretend to poke fun, not actually poke fun’ at others. Presumably sometimes such behaviour is acceptable if you don’t ‘really’ mean it. Similarly when discussing the morality of downloading music for free over the internet, both Ellen and Paul seem to have sliding expectations about what is ‘good’ or acceptable and what is ‘bad’. For example: ‘Um, I only keep music on the computer, I don’t burn it onto CDs or anything like that… and I’m not about to go and sell it to someone…’ (int., 04, E.P); and ‘Um… well I can’t find it anywhere else, so it’s either that or not listen to it…’ (int., 04, P.H). Their conflict here can be contextualised by the plethora of technology and devices that is at the fingertips of this generation, whereby it is much easier and indeed more prevalent to effectively ‘steal’ information through cyberspace. Matt on the other hand, has an investment in such behaviour through his own involvement in the ‘Indie music’ scene, where little-known bands who record on independent labels (hence Indie) make no money if their music is downloaded for free, rather than bought on compact disc…

Text 11

MR: Yeah ok. So are you morally against that? You know, the illegal downloading of …
MC: Well, a lot of the bands that I listen to are very small. I don’t think… people who download, play really poppy stuff. Even then, I still think it's wrong, but it's more to me, it's more wrong, because a lot of the bands that I listen to mainly, are very struggling, and a lot… most of the money goes to… you think they must be getting heaps, but most of the money goes to the record label. And particularly since I want to be like that when I grow up, I want to do music… (int., 04, M.C).

Matt suggests here that it is wrong to download if you are only getting ‘poppy’ rubbish, so his judgement about what is decent music is one of his parameters for ‘good’ or ‘bad’, as he positions himself with authority because of his own involvement in music. His use of the adverb ‘more’ as mood adjunct to intensify the attribute ‘wrong’ suggests that it is even worse when you download music of ‘struggling’ bands who play real music.
The good and bad descriptors surrounding sexual behaviour and language are evident in my analysis of Text 2 and Text 7 previously in this chapter, whereby Paul is pleasurably positioning himself as both morally superior and a good teenager with his admission about his own sex-life, which means that he feels able to make judgements about his peers. He represents girls in negative ways as he categorises their moral characters according to their use of language about their bodies and their performative statements about sexual acts. These girls may in fact be engaging in jouissance performances, in juxtaposition to Paul’s plaisir performances (Kenway & Bullen, 2001), yet this is not how they are represented by Paul. Importantly, Paul doesn’t position himself as biased or negative, he says he has ‘the ability to look at everything impartially… I call it my sense of empathy…’ (l.c., 02, P.H). Presumably his judgements are deemed impartial and acceptable because he is ‘good’ and does the ‘right’ things and is achieving success and approval both at school and at home.

Regulation of the body and the agency to make the ‘right’ choices are also behaviours that are ascribed to ‘good’ teenagers, as illustrated in my analysis of Text 8 and Text 9 earlier in this chapter. The regulated body (Foucault, 1977) is drawn into the discourse by using bodily practices, performative statements and physical image to make judgements about what is ‘good’ or bad’, based on one’s self-regulation. For example, it is not described as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ if someone has particular physical characteristics, rather such judgements are based on agency and control, such as choosing not to sleep around; choosing not to buy into shallow popularity stakes by wearing the latest brands (see also section 7.1.2); choosing not to get into drugs or if you do, to get yourself off them; and choosing to stand up for what you believe in. In an almost contradictory statement, Paul condemns the notion of regulation through overt force. It seems that ‘Good’ and acceptable behavioural processes that are encouraged using imperative and declarative statements (respectively) in the Optus brochure are lying (‘Never give your real name and mobile number’) and keeping secrets (‘The great thing about Optus SMS chat is you can keep your details a secret’) (Optus, undated). The article ‘the’ at the beginning of the nominal group ‘the great thing’, places importance on these deceptive behaviours as the best part of SMS chatting.
hegemonic notions that engender self-regulatory behaviours are not seen as negative (or perhaps they are not seen at all because of their normalised status), yet overt examples of control and regulation, such as in organised religion (see Text 12) are disparaged in his world.

Text 12

MR: Keep going
PH: You sure? I was reading this essay on the internet, it was ‘You’re all going to hell with a Pom’... it was about a fanatical Christian who had this whole list of people going to hell. I was thinking... ‘cause every now and then I look at my own views and think, Am I being an idiot here? I was thinking ‘What if I’m wrong here and this is the God we are meant to believe in?’ And if I don’t do, I don’t know... I have friends who are homosexual; therefore I’m going to hell... I thought about it, and I thought, if that’s true, just say that is the God, then I’d rather go to hell than worship someone who is forcing me to worship by this threat of hell. ‘Cause I reckon I’m a fairly nice guy... I’m not perfect, but I’m ok, so I’ll go to heaven or whatever it is, but um, yeah I just think that, if I had to, to go to heaven, kill homosexuals and tell everybody about it, then I really don’t want to go to heaven, like even if it is torture forever, I just think I would stand up for what I believe in and be tortured forever. If it turns out I’m wrong and I’m in hell, I reckon after 8000 years I’ll probably change my mind, but... I was thinking about this the other day, and I haven’t told anyone yet, so this was just a chance for me to vent. (int., 03, P.H)

Paul foregrounds his impartiality here through his explicit verbal manoeuvre of reflecting upon and problematising his own views; and also through his reference to reading about this topic on the internet, whereby his multiliterate practices enable him to

‘Good’ and ‘bad’ aspects of the youth survey results are outlined using different processes within sentence stems, such as ‘young people indicated’ (my emphasis), followed by the ‘good’ behavioural and material processes such as ‘highly value their families and friends’; ‘want to feel valued and needed’; ‘are active participants in the community’; and ‘admire the important work of those helping sick or disadvantaged members of the community’. This is then followed by the stem ‘young people are facing...’ (my emphasis), which goes on to describe the ‘bad’ or worrying discourses of youth, such as ‘depression’, ‘physical and sexual abuse’, ‘suicide’, ‘coping with stress’, ‘concern about alcohol and other drugs’, and ‘discrimination and sexuality’ (Mission Australia, 2005).
research and validate his opinions. His use of interrogative mood, for example, ‘Am I being an idiot here?’ and ‘What if I’m wrong here?’ shows his willingness to question himself, and therefore his final judgement is seen to be based on an impartial view. He uses the cause and effect cohesive structure ‘if… then…’ in his analysis of Christian beliefs to effectively position himself as ‘good’, insofar as humans can be good, with such statements as ‘Cause I reckon I’m a fairly nice guy… I’m not perfect, but I’m ok, so I’ll go to heaven or whatever it is…’. He doesn’t want to be seen as a ‘goody-two-shoes’ (not a cool image to portray to a female he is trying to impress) or as boasting about himself too much (an appropriate collusionary device in a conversation with someone you don’t know well), yet through his interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) of his beliefs and behaviours in relation to God, it is quite apparent that he himself believes he is doing the ‘right’ things to get to heaven (a concept which he obviously still believes in, despite his self-proclaimed turn away from Christianity). One of these ‘right’ things is standing up for your beliefs, and he takes pains through his use of overblown hyperbole for example ‘kill homosexuals’ and ‘after 8000 years…’ to position himself as someone who will endure even the worst torture if it means he can stay true to his beliefs.

### 7.1.5 Youth positioned as distinct from adults

There is a thread running through the data which suggests a definite binary between adult and youth. The students talk about ‘when I grow up’ (int., 04, M.C), being ‘disowned’ by your parents if you’re gay, and needing to be regulated to make the right choices or ‘people would do all the subjects that don’t help them out in the long run’ (int., 04, E.P).

Older is constructed in some ways as wiser and more sophisticated – a word used by me as interviewer in

![Figure 11  Matt’s text](image-url)
Text 13 and taken up by Matt as a suitable descriptor (attribute) when discussing his advertisement text produced in class and used as level 1 data to prompt learning conversations and interviews (see Figure 11).

Text 13

MR: Do you think professional people, in that age group you're targeting, what is it, 25-35? Do you think that they have class… you know, professional people in that age-group?
MC: Yep... I don't know why...
MR: You just have that perception of them?
MC: Yeah... and also ads that are aimed at them tend to appeal to me more maybe, whereas ads that are aimed at teenagers seem to be a lot more... exclamation marks, sort of thing... I don't... I don't know...
MR: Would you call that a more sophisticated approach?
MC: Yeah, sophisticated, like subtle... yeah, more aimed at you. Instead of telling you what you should do, it's more aiming at what you are doing, 'cause at that stage of life you become more... like you're not at a school or somethin', you're at a job, that's based on... a lot more limited and stuff... (int., 03, M.C)

Matt uses the participant ‘stage of life’ and the process ‘become more like…’ to indicate a ‘coming of age’ discourse where frivolous paralanguage cues such as exclamation marks are less likely to appeal. Lexically, the process ‘telling you what you should do’ is linked with ‘teenagers’, whilst ‘what you are doing’ assumes a level of respect for the choices made by older people. When asked who they admire, both Paul and Matt indicated that they admire their parents (perhaps a collusionary move in this discursive event to gain approval from the researcher). Interestingly both had parents who bucked the system, dropped out of school early, and then went back to university later to gain qualifications in their fields – exactly the type of behaviour that is unthinkable for either participant. Different rules perhaps apply for adults.

They will inform parents, carers, family members, teachers and all in the general community who are concerned about the wellbeing of young people (Mission Australia, 2005). This statement in the youth survey draws clear distinctions between adults in the community and the youth that they need to help, through the placement of all adult groups as subject of the process ‘are concerned’, and ‘young people’ as the object.
Paul’s earlier circumstances for example in Text 2, ‘at the moment’ when referring to his sexual behaviour, and ‘at the age of sixteen’ in Text 7, referring to a female peer’s sexual behaviour, suggest a definite binary between adult and youth behaviour. He also claims that he is able to use his multiliterate knowledge and skills as a young person to manipulate his parents, who don’t have such knowledge or skills. For example, ‘…my Dad bought a video camera around then… my Dad… I can manipulate… I mean it sounds mean when I say it like that… but I can persuade him to buy electronic things, so when he doesn’t know how to use ‘em, I can use ‘em. That’s how I make up for not having any money’ (l.c., 02, P.H). Paul’s use of the cohesive tie ‘so’, followed by the adverb ‘when’, suggest that it is completely expected that his Dad won’t know how to use the technology, and that one of the benefits of being a teenager is this skill of manipulation based on technical knowledge, which outweighs the teenage problem of not ‘having any money’ – another textual clue to distinguish adult from youth.

7.2 Intentional Discourses of Schooling

For this section, I identified nodes or strands of talk which illustrated intentional discourses of schooling as legitimated in the accounts of the Year Eleven youth participants. From this, I grouped together particular instances of talk about mind/body subject dualism; intellectualisation, including use of metalanguage, deep knowledge and critical analysis; resistance; school issues including levels at school, individualisation and social life; school performance of self including self-regulation and textual collusion; and school performance of others including teachers and students. My initial scans of the data indicated that these were favoured topics for the participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes). I have used the same common themes from section 7.1 to organise my
analysis (as explained in the introduction to this chapter) as these were traceable through various threads of the data, across different texts and from each of the three participants. In this section these themes will relate more specifically to schooling, rather than the focus on youth life-worlds as was the case in the previous section.

7.2.1 Youth positioned through bodily practices and performative statements

There is a definite thread in the Year Eleven data to indicate subject dualisms between those that explicitly involve physicality such as Physical Education and Sport, Drama, Manual Arts and Music; and those that focus more on the use of the mind in favour of the body, for example Science, History, and English. These participants account for such subjects in terms of level of importance from their own perspectives.

**Text 14**

MR: So do you think it's a bit kind of controlling?
MC: Yeah maybe... I don't think you should be made to do subjects that you don't want to do. Like maybe Science, they should make you do it, cause it's like... you should know a bit of science really... but things like, I don't know... woodwork and graphics and stuff like that... it's not that important, well in my mind...
MR: So do you consider Science to be more important than Manual Arts?
MC: Well sorta, you should... it gives you a general knowledge I spose, up to yr 10, but I don't really know... *(l.c., 02, M.C)*

Matt seems to be positioning himself as buying into hegemonic notions of what counts as real knowledge, where science is

Education Queensland’s 2010 document indicates that ‘a foundation for lifelong learning’ includes ‘The pursuit of aesthetic, artistic, scientific and social discovery’ *(Education Queensland, 2000c p. 12)*. The language here is not working to favour ‘mind’ disciplines over ‘body’ disciplines, in fact later in the document it indicates that cross-government coordination is partly based on ‘recognition that good health and education achievement are closely linked’ *(Education Queensland, 2000c p. 27)*. The passive structure of ‘recognition’ as the nominalised participant however, takes the body out of the equation by effectively removing any material or behavioural process - a textual technique that is common in policy documents such as these.
considered to be the ‘real’ measure of knowledge, as opposed to knowledge gained through manual work. He argues that no-one should be forced to do particular subjects, yet this apparently doesn’t apply to Science, which is given value at least up until Year Ten. He considers that students should be forced into the ‘mind’ subjects (possibly because they won’t do them otherwise)... ‘Like maybe Science, they should make you do it...’ His use of ‘they’ as the participant suggests someone outside the text who has authority – presumably teachers, should offer such guidance. There is no sense that manual work includes aspects of scientific reasoning or method, or indeed that science itself involves the physical work of conducting experiments or trials. The mind and body seem to be separated through subject dualisms. Matt is however, displaying uncertainty about which subjects are more valuable through his low modal adverbs such as ‘maybe’, ‘sorta’, mental processes such as ‘spose’, and mood adjuncts such as ‘not that important’ and ‘don’t really know’. He knows what is valued by school, and he knows what he has to do to achieve success, yet he is still unsure if he agrees with such institutional values. In Text 15, from the focus group interview, he suggests that it can’t be any other way, thereby subscribing to the hegemonic values he knows are at play, through his use of the attribute ‘ideological’ to describe the abstract concept of school subject value, and his strong modality and cause and effect structure of ‘...you’re not gunna get a good OP if you don’t do...’. His use of simile to strengthen his argument in his last turn illustrates his doubt that such values will change.

Text 15

MC: It’s like... you’re not gunna get a good OP if you don’t do the Science/Maths type subjects. It’s just like... ideological towards that...
PH: Not really... all the teachers have different...
MC: Oh, whatever, but it is still...
PH: Some teachers tell you that you will get a better OP if you do certain subjects.
EP: It’s not impossible to get a good OP if you do Arts subjects.
MC: It’s possible, but not... like saying you might be famous if you never do anything. (f.g.,05, 11)

In comparison, Paul and Ellen seem to be trying to convince themselves as much as anybody else, that the Arts subjects that they do, can still lead to a good Overall Position score (the Year 12 exit measure in Queensland). Their uncertainty is reflected in low modals such as ‘not really’ and ‘not impossible’. Similarly, in an
earlier interview (see Text 16), Ellen concedes that Drama is not ‘the accepted thing’, whilst lexically, English and Maths are ‘the accepted thing’ as ‘core subjects’ and are held in ‘higher esteem’, yet she again seems unsure of such values, with the mental process ‘guess’, and modal adverbs such as ‘might’, ‘a bit’ and ‘maybe’. These students show evidence of facing a complex dilemma, whereby they want to display ‘plaisir’ (Kenway & Bullen, 2001) performances by doing the ‘right’ thing as far as hegemonic values are concerned in the school setting. At the same time they wish to engage in, and value, those embodied subjects from which they derive pleasure and experience success, yet which don’t hold the same power in this institutional setting.

Text 16

MR: Do you think the school values particular knowledges over others?
EP: Um...
MR: Or even just... not this school, like education as a whole? In terms of your experience with it, do you think education, you know for example... you’re very aware, like you were talking about last time, of OP scores and so forth, so, do you think the school, and education in general, values particular knowledges over others?
EP: I guess it would, yeah. Um, people might see some things as not necessary, and even if you do achieve more in that field, it comes to nothing because it's not the um, accepted thing, so yeah... I guess that would mean that like the core subjects like English and Maths are held a bit in higher esteem than maybe Drama... (int., 04, E.P)

It seems to be accepted by these participants that contradictory power relations are at play in this school context. Certain subjects, for example Arts, are afforded value at this school, as evidenced according to Matt, by the ‘absolutely brilliant’ facilities that are provided for such activities, however he also concedes that such resources and encouragement are almost lame in the face of the power afforded to those subjects such as Science which will almost ensure a good OP score. Matt’s use of ellipsis as a cohesive element, as in ‘…In terms of actual…’, where the real value is left unsaid, highlights the important and obvious fact that when it comes to the ‘actual business’ of school, it is not enough to dally with experiential subjects, but that the focus for high achieving students needs to be on the mind and on particular forms of knowledge that have been endorsed.
Text 17
MR: You talked about the importance of a good OP score. Do you think some kids who aren't good at those subjects that we talked about, that you need for the OP score, like Science and Maths and so on, do you think that kids who aren't good at those sorts of subjects, are disadvantaged because you think the school doesn't meet their needs?
MC: Um, oh, I think the school meets the needs in the subjects, like with Arts subjects and stuff... have you seen our new building? Right up there, the lecture theatre and stuff, it's absolutely brilliant, the facilities they've got for the Arts people. And then, History people... I don't know, what would you give them? There's just a classroom I guess, but... In terms of actual... they give you a pretty good opportunity of doing the best in your subjects, it's just that the best in that subject is never gunna be as high as the best in Science, sort of thing. (int., 04, M.C)

Matt has positioned the school here in Text 17 almost as being another pawn caught up in this whole system, where even though the school meets the needs of everyone as best it can, no-one can change the fact that even ‘the best’ in such subjects ‘is never gunna be as high...’. He draws the good intentions of the school and teachers (they) into his argument, and places them in the agential subject position of ‘giving you a pretty good opportunity...’ It is then taken out of their hands, because presumably the OP system favours particular subjects over others. He uses strong modality with ‘never’ to indicate that this is not something that can be changed. Matt again calls attention to Science as something that sits above everything else in Text 18. Lexically he links the ‘sciencey people’ with attributes such as ‘pretty smart’, processes like ‘just breeze through’, and the participant ‘the Dux’, which indicates the power that such people have in the academic world of school.

Text 18
MR: Do you think maybe they're smart in Science, but maybe they're not smart in other things?
MC: Yeah, so I think it's a bit unfair...
MR: So again, it's valuing something...
MC: People who are smart at Science, they can do really well at Science and just breeze through and stuff, whereas people who are good at History and all that sort of... they can still do really well, but they're never gunna be quite up there with the Science people. Like when you hear and read about, like they read out the Dux and stuff, it's always gunna be Science people. I can't imagine it being any other way.
MR: Do you think that's right? Do you agree with that?
MC: Not really. I mean, because I'm not a sciencey person, I can appreciate that they're... must be pretty smart... I could never do it, but at the same time, I don't know... Our society in general, celebrates people who can write and play music and stuff, more over those people, so in real life, I don't know, science isn't appreciated in the same way, d'you know what I mean? (int.,04, M.C)

He is aware of the hegemonic discourses at play in this school setting, particularly related to that which is unattainable for him... ‘I could never do it…’, yet he questions such discourses in relation to broader social discourses of power within the media. He uses probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) to draw in textual interlocuters such as ‘sciencey people’, ‘people who are good at History’ and ‘society in general’ and makes judgements using mental processes such as ‘I can appreciate’, ‘I think’ and ‘I can’t imagine’, based on his own experience and his knowledge of media discourses.

Peers, in the accounts of these participants, are positioned in terms of physical or mental capabilities, often with dualist notions of such capabilities.

“... contributes to the shaping of personal, group and national identities... reflect on knowledge, values and practices... To function as active and informed citizens we need to understand how texts shape and are shaped by knowledge, values and practices” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a p. 2). The English syllabus document advocates the analysis of textual and broader discourses through strong modals such as ‘need’ and declarative statements of how we must function. The use of generic ‘we’ in syllabus documents such as this, serves to ascribe the same values to those making such statements, as it does to those reading them – a ‘we are all in this together for the good of the nation’ philosophy, so it can’t possibly be argued against.

Paul has effectively discounted
‘people who do sport’ as serious academic contenders, whilst positioning himself in this comparison/contrast structure, as the point of comparison. His use of the attribute ‘bored’ to describe both himself and also sports people, though related to different subject disciplines, serves to highlight his almost dismissive and ‘matter-of-fact’ binary categorisations (Davies, 1994; Fuss, 1991) of mind/body subject areas. Similarly in Text 20, he draws comparisons between both mental (‘feel superior’) and behavioural (‘are rude’) processes and makes judgements based on his own ‘right’ behaviour. He also attributes physical qualities of ‘big and strong’ to people who play sport, which seems to be synonymous with ‘not smart’.

Text 20
MR: What about those kids who do well at say, sport?
PH: Well depends on, those people I… I kind of only respect them if they’re not jerks, like I know some people who do do well at sport, and they’re total, not nice people, and um...
MR: As in, in what way?
PH: Ah, they’re just rude... they feel superior, and they’re rude to everyone else, whereas I might… I don’t know whether I do feel superior, but I could maybe... but um, I don’t think I’m rude to everyone… like yeah, just cause if someone’s not big and strong, then they’re gunna be rude to them. If someone’s not smart, I’m still gunna... not be rude to them. (int.,04, P.H)

Matt also accounts for his peers in this dualist way… ‘I mean I guess people who don't like school as much would do a lot more sport’ (int.,04, M.C). His use of the adverb ‘as much’ gives the impression that he, like Paul is using himself as a point of comparison. Both of these participants position themselves in the context of this interview with an adult, as making the ‘right’ choices when it comes to mind versus body in relation to sport, yet elsewhere both Matt and Paul indicate deep investments in playing music and performing drama respectively; bodily pursuits that seem to be higher on the slippery scale of acceptable bodily practices.

7.2.2 Youth as negotiating slippery roles and scales of expectation
Despite the critical social justice agenda at this school as evidenced through the school English Program (see section 6.2.1) and syllabus documents, these students are
getting a definite message at school that high grades, individual achievement and entry into university are the things that count.

**Text 21**

MR: So do you think... does everybody have to do English and Maths?

EP: Yeah.

MR: Do you think that's an issue that people don't have to do stuff about civics or society or...

EP: Um, well I guess that is an issue, but then again um, some people aren't going to be interested in that, and it's not going to um, put them in a position where they can get the degree they want...

MR: But do you think...?

EP: It would be good to say that all people should be aware of all of these things, but um...

MR: Do you think that's a way we could get some social action happening, if we had a subject like that at school, which talked about ways we could make a difference and the sorts of things we could be involved in? Do you think maybe that's as important as having a good career?

EP: I guess, yeah... that's a hard thing to say because um, people at schools at the moment, already have a third of their subjects they have to do... um... at private schools it's a half... (int.,04, E.P)

Ellen’s use of the vague participant ‘some people’ and the finite modal ‘going to be...’ indicates that she can confidently comment that this is the way it is, without directly implicating herself.

She intimates that it is the school’s role to prepare people for university with ‘...put them in a position...', yet she is conflicted about whether this is more important than social good. Her uncertainty shows through her use of the conversation filler ‘um’, and her speculation using the finite modals ‘would be good’ and ‘should be aware’ to show me as researcher, that her values are intact. My critical agenda in this research prompts me to create an argument structure whereby I use Donnelly (2006) denigrates ‘clichés’ associated with education, for example that teachers should ‘work for social justice’ and are ‘agents for social change’, and that students must ‘juggle multiple perspectives’, in favour of ‘rote learning and mastering the basics’.

The climate in education is contradictory and complex, with syllabus and policy documents being severely criticized by mass media texts that purport to express the ‘common view’.
conjunctions such as ‘but’, and I draw her into my argument through my use of second person ‘we’, and strengthen my point using comparison/contrast structure ‘as important as...’. Ellen finds herself using a counter-argument in this situation, where she intensifies her point through the adverb ‘already’ to indicate that there is too much to consider at senior level, so if it doesn’t lead to a good OP score or prepare you specifically for your degree, then it may just have to go.

These participants see senior (Year Eleven and Twelve) as bringing with it new and higher expectations, whereby they have more homework, they do extra-curricula activities at night and on the weekends, and the pressure is exerted by teachers (they) to go to university.

**Text 22**

**MR:** Do you think it *(school)* should connect more to kids' needs and interests and lives?

**MC:** Yeah, probably, but also I think it's changed a lot now. I think back then, that was an accepted way to get into uni, but now we're sorta... they see it as... you have to do well at school and you're not gunna get to uni unless you do well at school, so...

**MR:** And yet we have quite a lot of people who go back to uni when they're mature age, don't they? And actually don't need an OP score to get in. It's interesting... it's very highly valued isn't it?

**MC:** Yeah, yeah. I think they put a lot of value on... you have to go to uni. There's a message there that you have to go to uni, like I just... it may be a propaganda thing, but I... my brain has been trained to think that I have to go to uni... I can't not go to uni, cause... *(int., 04, M.C)*

The relational processes ‘have to’ do well, ‘not gunna get to uni unless...’ and ‘have to go to uni’ indicate the acceptance of the direct relationship of doing well at school and going to university, and the unspoken relationship between going to university and life success.

**Text 23**

**MR:** Ok. Do you feel that you are self-controlled and self-regulated, so that you conform to what school wants, to a certain degree?

**MC:** Yep, yeah. Um, in terms of assignments, I think I might have said this last time, but I'll do it in a way that I'll try and get a good mark, as opposed to do something that I'd like to try and do, and just that sort of stuff... And you act on what a teacher
says, even if you don't like their way, you just do it... and stuff like that. (int., 04, M.C)

Part of successfully colluding in discourses of school is negotiating the role of ‘good’ student, so even though they might be asked to make decisions, think for themselves, be independent and critical (in this and many school programs), they must do so within the boundaries of ‘acceptable’ behaviour and ‘acceptable’ criteria, where what is acceptable is decided by others (teachers).

Such collusion is evident in the discussion with Paul about the advertisement (see Figure 12) and marketing campaign that he constructed as part of his class work at school (level 1 data). Paul explicitly and purposefully drew from other texts and contexts to successfully construct a text in order to achieve an A grade, even though the content of the advertisement was not, by his own account, what he himself believed, nor even wanted to include, so his textualised persona in this instance is purely for the benefit of the audience (his teacher).

Figure 12  Paul's text

Text 24

MR: I notice your ad is about parties and that sort of thing, because of the type of product it is, um... are you into that sort of thing... Music or dancing or parties?

PH: No, I did that because what happened was, I had an idea and my teacher didn’t really like it, so I decided to go with just a stereotypical brand thing that I knew I could write an ad on, and get an A.

MR: Right, so can you tell me what your original idea was?

PH: Um, I can’t remember now, it’s... Have you seen the ad?

MR: Yeah

PH: Well it was going to be this globe thing that you could put a DVD in, and convert it to VCR or put a CD in and convert it to audio disc, just 'cause it’s so hard to convert from one to the other, like DVD to video or... well DVD to video’s not hard, but anything else is, so I wanted to do this machine that would just do it all.

MR: And why don’t you think your teacher liked that idea?

PH: Ah, too complicated for the ad really, so I just dumbed it down a bit.

MR: So you felt you had to dumb it down for the assignment?
PH: Oh that’s because um, it’s kind of hard to say all that in an ad whilst still attracting attention and all that.

MR: And do you think it was very much geared towards what your teacher would think so you’d get a good mark for it?

PH: Um, well she kind of said, ‘I like this THETA idea, it is kind of unusual’, it was just a symbol that I got out of my Maths C book, and um, so she said just make this into a kind of party machine, so I said ‘Yeah ok’, then later on… it didn’t have lights on it, and her husband read the ad ‘cause I know her husband through drama at the Uni, this is my old teacher… I’ve got a new one now. So he suggested that, so I wrote that in too. (int., 03, P.H)

Paul successfully (as indicated by his grade of A) deconstructed his advertisement for this assignment, including analysis of how the visual effects, language and design would manipulate a stereotypical teenage audience. His well-developed collusionary tactics mean that he used sophisticated meta-language to impress his teacher, and he showed evidence of recognising and moving around inside the relations of power (Fuller & Lee, 1997) in this setting by drawing appropriately on ‘own-ness’ through his knowledge of multiliterate designs of meaning; knowledge of teacher expectations; and by embracing traditional discourses of schooling, along with ‘other-
ness’ by directly quoting from other texts and contexts, such as his Maths C textbook, his teacher and another adult in a different context.

Whilst Paul is successfully colluding in the discourse of schooling that is steeped in critical pedagogy, it is important to note that later in the interview he suggests that he is unable to deconstruct or critically analyse a multimodal text without looking back at his school notes (int., 03, P.H). Paul seems to be so adept at successfully colluding within school texts and contexts, that unless he sees himself as being able to produce a criterion-perfect text, then he positions himself as unable to do it. This, despite his later explanations about how he did an analysis of the bible to determine the source of Christian attitudes about homosexuality (being an evil on par with murder), where he deconstructs the use of words such as homosexuals and homosexuality and analyses their use in terms of the time in which the document was produced and the meanings that have been constructed from it (see Text 5). It seems that one of the expectations of these students in the school setting is that they will regulate their behaviour to collude with hegemonic school values and ways of operating.

7.2.3 Youth as individual agents with expectations of agency
Choosing to get a part-time job, which extra-curricula activities to become involved in, which subjects will ensure the best final OP (overall performance) exit measure and which social issues to care about, are all discussed with different degrees of modality and probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) by these participants. There seems to be an acknowledgement from each of these participants however, that it is up to the individual to make the right choices and that if you are marginalised, you only have yourself to blame.

Text 25
MR: Have you ever thought about how sometimes those kids who aren’t doing as well, maybe they don’t have access to the internet, or maybe they don’t have access to the sorts of things that you have access to?
PH: Well, the only people I know who don’t do well, it’s either cause they don’t try, or... don’t try slash don’t care...
MR: Or maybe don’t care about what’s being offered?
PH: Yeah, so I don’t know anyone who’s been marginalized by all that.
MR: Do you think there might be people though?
PH: There could be, but I’ve no way of... getting into contact with them, ’cause yeah...
MR: Do you ever think about that, that maybe kids don’t do well because of other reasons, not just because they just don’t care?
PH: No not really, ’cause I’m just of the belief that you can do well if you try. (int., 04, P.H)

Paul uses a definite cause/effect structure, where the blame for lack of success at school is placed squarely on the student. He distances himself from those that ‘could be’ in that situation (low modality) through this relational process and the physical notion of having no contact with such students and no conceivable way of communicating with them. Through this linguistic manoeuvre, he cleverly places himself in the group that takes pleasure from trying and making the right choices (plaisir), with no tolerance or understanding of those who may take pleasure in rebelling against such values (jouissance) or those that are unable to compete. It seems that sliding scales in this instance are not acceptable – either you take control and achieve success or you don’t, and suffer the consequences. Ellen also expresses the view that some kids ‘just don’t… do work at all’ and that ‘a person like that would probably say it was all the school’s fault…’ (int., 04, E.P). She is making a value judgement of people ‘like that’ which excludes her from such a group, and makes assumptions with the low modal ‘probably’ about the character of such people based on the connection between not working and blaming the school. It seems that she doesn’t blame the school for not catering to some students’ needs, but rather that it is their own fault for not working hard.

"A balanced approach to competing values is assured so that democratic and collaborative education is not dominated by the pressures to conform to market values" (Education Queensland, 2000c p. 13). The 2010 document insists that the participant ‘A balanced approach to competing values’ will be ‘assured’, however the data from the youth participants in this study suggest that ‘pressures to conform to market values’ are winning this competition of values.

Text 26

MR: Why do you think you have that value... that hard work is important? What do you think has made you think that way?
PH: I don’t know... it seems kind of logical.

MR: Do you think it’s logical? Do you think it’s an accepted value?

MC: Yeah. It’s a true value... it’s a proven value... Throughout history people who try hard... achieve success.

PH: It’s necessary for society...

MC: That and the combination of luck...

MR: What do you mean by hard work? Do you mean hard, physical labour?

PH: No... putting the effort in.

MC: Putting the effort into whatever you’re trying to do...

MR: What about people who seem to achieve success with little effort?

PH: It’s not as rewarding if you don’t work hard to achieve it. (f.g., 05, 11)

These students make it patently clear in **Text 26** that they conform to hegemonic school values of: Hard work and individual success equals life success. Lexical links such as ‘true’, ‘proven’, ‘logical’ and ‘necessary’ are used as descriptors of such values, and the comparison made with the alternative option (not working hard) indicates that ‘It’s not as rewarding’. It is difficult to subvert such a process, as investment and familiarity run deep, indeed even critical dialogue can be assimilated into their cultural maps (S. Hall, Chas Critcher, T. Jefferson, John Clark, & Brian Roberts, 1978), so oppositional positions or ideologies can be used to strengthen the dominant discourse. The youth in this study are constrained and organised by this school context, as they write, rewrite and improvise performances of self (Threadgold, 1997) in the formation of the ‘successful student’ subject (Kamler, 1997b).

Ellen suggests in **Text 27** that it is easier to conform to what the school wants than to do things her way…

“As a powerful social instrument, language helps people to: Negotiate their places in social groups; understand, participate in, and reform aspects of society” (Department of Education Queensland, 1994 p. 8). Reforming society, as suggested in the English syllabus seems to be a process that is buried under the pressure to conform and succeed as individuals for these participants.
MR: Ok. Do you feel that you're self-controlled and self-regulated um, so that you conform to what the school wants? Do you think you regulate yourself so that you conform to what the school wants?

EF: Um... Yeah I guess... Do things the school's way, sorta to get... and be ‘in-synch’ with what the school's doing and yeah...

MR: So you feel like you... even tailor activities that you do um... according to what you know is going to be important for school?

EF: Um, yep. I work with the way the school does it, and of course I can do things my way another time, but if it's going to be easier to change the way I do something so that it works... (int., 03, E.P)

The concept of conformity and self-regulation is introduced by me as researcher, and Ellen’s uncertain response ‘Yeah I guess’ (low modality) suggests that she hasn’t thought about it in that way before. Her use of ‘…of course…’ (strong modality) however, may be her way of positioning herself to me, not as someone who blindly does what she is told, but as someone who actively chooses to conform in order to get a desired result. Conforming to school values involves a commitment to individual success, even in those explicitly embodied aspects of school life such as sport. This is indicated by Matt, who says that ‘…our school is very sporty… but it’s mainly celebrated in terms of individual success…’ (int., 04, M.C). His use of the behavioural process ‘celebrated’ highlights that fact that you can participate in sport, yet the kudos goes to those who excel individually.

“The traditional academic curriculum, competition and a belief in merit and ability are attacked as socially unjust and instrumental in maintaining the power of dominant groups in society. In addition to providing a left-wing view of education, of equal concern …” (Donnelly, 2006). Donnelly’s common view argument in the media rails against curriculum and policy which promotes a social-critical perspective, as evidenced by his intensifier ‘of equal concern’. He places his champions, for example ‘the traditional academic curriculum, competition’ and so on, in the theme position, and posits them as the innocent, logical and obviously right participants that are being attacked.
### 7.2.4 Youth described through good vs. bad discourse

Youth as students in these accounts are described in terms of dualist notions of good or bad. Table 6 shows various language descriptors from the data that indicate ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ at school, along with my description of the language forms. The Year Eleven participants in this study position themselves as ‘good’, whilst ‘other’ is ‘bad’. There is an important juxtaposition in these accounts, whereby such dualist descriptors of good or bad are reinforced through comparison/contrast cohesive structure, using conjunctions such as ‘whereas’ and ‘but’ to compare behaviours (material processes and performance), relational processes of having particular attributes and strong modality to indicate definite values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Good’ Descriptors</th>
<th>‘Bad’ Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptor</td>
<td>Language form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try hard</td>
<td>Material process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get A grades</td>
<td>Relational process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have individual agency</td>
<td>Realized through material processes and adverbs of manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain approval</td>
<td>Realized through high modality for good characteristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Good vs. bad descriptors of youth at school

Doing well at school by trying hard, getting good grades and not antagonizing teachers, seems to be highly valued by these students who buy into such discourses, and with this comes a certain power of which Matt is quite aware … ‘there’s a subtle message that people… me and my group and stuff are probably appreciated possibly more, I don’t know. Like it’s not ah… it’s just very subtle, just like… stick around sort of thing’ (int., 04, M.C). Matt is using low modality in this interview situation to discuss a phenomenon that he has obviously felt, but that isn’t explicitly acknowledged by the school. He also may not want me to think he is praising himself, contextualized in Australian society where the ‘tall poppy’ syndrome, whereby we need to knock people back down if they get too far above themselves, is a
familiar social discourse. In the focus group interview (Text 28); these students also discuss the power to which they have access as the ‘good’ students at this school.

Text 28
MR: Talking about power, Matt said before, that you probably get away with more… and that the teachers don’t want to get rid of you out of the school…
PH: It’s not that…
MC: We got there in the first place by not being completely radical, like…
MR: You don’t rebel too much, and you…
PH: Yeah I’m cheeky to teachers, but they don’t care…
MR: That’s not too much of a rebellion? So you wouldn’t tell one of them to fuck off for example, or use that sort of language?
EP: I have actually…
MR: You’ve done that before?
EP: Yeah… but… the teacher liked me… and I was just in a really bad mood… and she said ‘Oh I wasn’t expecting that from you… and um’
MR: So do you think you got away with it because…
EP: Yeah I got away with it, but I felt really guilty.
PH: I had a drama assessment, so I was in a Hawaiian shirt and jeans, and I went to my next class, but because it was me, the teacher said it was OK. Like it wasn’t the ‘smoking, throwing rocks at teachers’ kind of kids. (f.g., 05, 11)

Donnelly sets up a binary between good and bad education through a comparison/contrast structure, where good is constructed as ‘providing a ladder of opportunity or dealing with what Matthew Arnold termed the best that has been thought and said’, along with ‘old-fashioned ideas about right and wrong answers and teaching the three R’s’ and ‘rote learning and mastering the basics’. Bad is constructed through processes such as ‘developing self-awareness, problem-solving and intercultural skills’ so that learners ‘are equipped with multiple strategies for tackling a task’, as well as attributes such as ‘a flexible solutions-orientation to knowledge’ and ‘the process of liberation’ (Donnelly, 2006).
adventurous, rather than as boring conformists.

Achievement in school is considered a ‘good’ characteristic, and each of these students seems quite able to intellectualise their practices and texts (see Text 24 for an example of this from Paul). Ellen uses metalanguage and deep knowledge in Text 29 to explain her techniques of persuasion in her advertisement for level 1 data collection (see Figure 13).

**Text 29**

EP: The title says what's in the box. It's got a picture of a box and my ad graphics, I tried to make a fading on the page behind the box, but it came out as a whole heap of grey squares, with the box in the centre, with the symbol that I just made up, just to look mysterious, and make the person really ask, what's in this box. I've got no body copy, which suggests a heap of ideas... ideas in the audience's head and um, then there's the line, look for the box with the question mark, and that's urging the person to action. It's not really a very informative ad... I've seen a lot of curiosity ads like that work before, there's an ad for NEW, which is a brand of sanitary products for ladies, which uses the same thing, and it's a really popular product. Yeah, people basically get curious, so it was something I wanted to feed off of... (int., 03, E.P)

Ellen successfully uses manifest dialogia (Fuller & Lee, 1997) as she uses an example of another advertisement text ‘NEW’ woven in as a justification for her choice of technique. She understands how her language use is working in this context to ‘urge the person to action’, and to stimulate curiosity. She uses metalanguage such as ‘graphics’, ‘fading’, and ‘body copy’ to analyse her text.
‘Bad’ students on the other hand, are positioned as ‘dumb’; they ‘don’t try’ and they ‘antagonize the teacher’.

Text 30

MR: So would you consider that those, so then those popular ones, are the dumb ones as well?

PH: Well it depends on whether they just don’t try, as in they just sit there and don’t do anything, or they don’t try as in they antagonize the teacher and they, like for example one guy was standing outside once for mucking up in class, and he’d like, pop up at the window and he’d make faces and distract the whole class so nobody’d learn anything, and he was popular, so in that sense, people who don’t try, were popular, but there were also people who didn’t... I didn’t try particularly hard, oh I did try at PE actually, cause I wanted to pass it even though I didn’t like it, but like some of my smart friends probably didn’t try in PE, but they wouldn’t not try in PE, in a way that would distract the entire class and stop them from learning, so there are two levels of not trying, and the ones who were popular, were the ones who didn’t try and you know, were amusing, and yeah the other ones... so that’s what I meant. (int., 04, P.H)

Paul’s use of the relational process ‘depends on’ sets up ‘not trying’ as a relative concept, whereby in some instances it is worse than others. He interpolates his own actions from PE lessons into the account, to use as a measure of ‘good’ regulated behaviour, so even though he doesn’t like PE, he ‘actually’ still tried. His ‘smart friends’ aren’t quite as ‘good’ as he is because they didn’t try, however they are not ‘bad’ because they didn’t ‘distract the entire class’. The smart people are classified as ‘friends’, which means he positions himself as part of the ‘smart’ group. He again sets up the binary between being smart and body physicality, where presumably those who are lexically linked through descriptors such as ‘popular’, and behaviours such as ‘antagonize the teacher’, distract the whole class’, ‘mucking up’, ‘were amusing’ and ‘don’t try’ are performing such behaviours in the classes that he considers to be worthwhile.

7.2.5 Youth positioned as distinct from adults

Teachers are positioned in these accounts as quite distinct from students. Paul almost uses a patronising tone as he discusses their lack of knowledge about aspects of teenage culture, for example ‘I made up two DJ’s – DJ Snowdog and DJ Hot-Ice, just
’cause I knew the teacher wouldn’t know’ (int., 03, P.H). His cause/effect top level structure, and the mood adjunct ‘just’ suggest that he made these names up simply because he knew he could get away with it. He admits however, that he himself doesn’t know any DJ names, but his collusionary tactic of drawing on stereotypical teenage culture won’t be questioned because the teacher is ignorant of such things. He also suggests that compared with him, teachers have much lower knowledge levels about technology, whereby in a year of technology lessons at school, ‘I only learnt one thing… and that wasn’t even from the teacher…’ (int., 04, P.H). The mood adjunct ‘even’ is working here to indicate that teachers should know more, yet Paul’s accounts in these instances position him as superior to his teachers. He may well have been using such a linguistic tactic in this interview, to give me as female, adult, university lecturer and researcher, a certain impression of him at school.

These students do not see their teachers as mutual learners. They consider that teachers have to know more than they do, or else why are they there?

Teachers are positioned as mutual learners and managers of learning, rather than the direct source of wisdom, in the Education Queensland 2010 document. “In schools, learning will be transformed. Teachers will no longer be the gatekeepers of knowledge in a teacher-centred classroom. Teachers need mastery of and access to information technology to manage the learning of their students” (Education Queensland, 2000c p.). Information technology is given importance both in terms of skills and access, through the strong declarative of ‘Teachers need…’. Schools and teachers however, are placed in the theme position in several clauses, which suggests that even though the focus is supposedly off the teacher, the focus is definitely still on the teacher in terms of how they will be accountable.

**Text 31**

MR: So do you think the teacher... so you still see a teacher as someone who has the authority and knowledge...
EP: Definitely the knowledge.
PH: Yeah...
MC: And the age also...
MR: Do you ever think about the idea of co-constructed knowledge, like the teacher as a learner?
EP: I don’t find that as effective, no...
PH: Yeah if you have to teach the teacher things, then... no...
EP: I think it’s much better if they know... so they can give you the answer... *(f.g., 05, 11)*
It seems particularly salient in senior schooling, that these students will get what they need from their teachers in order to do well at school and achieve a good OP score. They recognise, and seem to take pleasure in the fact that in some areas the teachers may not know as much as they do, for example about youth culture and technology, however in terms of traditional ‘school’ knowledge and working towards OP scores, these participants are adamant as evidenced through strong modality and probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) in words such as ‘definitely’, ‘much better’ and ‘no’, that these ‘expert’ adults must be in control. The judgement that co-constructed knowledge is not ‘as effective’ adroitly negates such an approach because the comparative language suggests that it has been tried and is not as good.

Gaining teacher approval through appropriate collusionary techniques seems to be tied up with such notions of power and hegemony in this school. These students take pleasure in doing well and supporting their teachers, because they don’t see that there is any other way.

**Text 32**

**MR:** Do you think everything is geared towards the criteria sheet?

**MC:** Yeah, it’s not open to interpretation, like they’re looking for the answer and you have to give it to ‘em…

**MR:** I find it interesting in a school where the teachers are teaching you to be critical and enquiring and to question knowledge… do you agree with that?

**MC:** Yeah

**MR:** and um… and yet at the same time, are saying to you… this is how you have to do it and this is what you have to follow, and I’m right and you have to listen to me. Do you think that’s incongruous?

**PH:** Well… they might say this is the rule, then give you a chance to find it, but it has to be this rule, so it’s a bit of both…

**MR:** Do you say things in assignments that you don’t really believe?

**All:** Oh yeah…

**MR:** So do you think you are very much shaped by this context?

**MC:** What are you gunna prove by not doing that? You’re just gunna get a worse mark. Like no-one cares if you take a stand… *(f.g., 05, 11)*

The argument structure that I utilise in my interview questions is an attempt to prompt different ways of thinking about school knowledge and power, and Paul takes on the
challenge of attempting to defend his teachers by giving an example to illustrate that teachers foster enquiring minds as well as using their authority to determine which knowledge is afforded most power. His example uses low modality ‘they might’, and his pauses also indicate a low degree of probabilisation (Fuller & Lee, 1997). On the other hand, these participants indicate a high degree of probabilisation about their actions in colluding with hegemonic notions of power and control, as evidenced by Matt’s final comment where he uses oppositional positions to strengthen the dominant discourse (Hall, 1997b).

The power sits firmly with the school and the teachers, and the investment in such institutional discourses by these students runs deep. Paul suggest that ‘I know how lucky we are in Australia to have all this… free education, better teachers… so I really appreciate teaching… so I work at it…’ (f.g., 05, 11). Paul’s comment serves not only to affirm such power relations, but also to position him as ‘good’ student, so that my expected admiration as adult and educator in this context can bring him pleasure (Kenway & Bullen, 2001).

7.3 Discourses of Society

For this section, I identified nodes or strands of talk which illustrated discourses of society as legitimated in the accounts of the Year Eleven youth participants. From this I grouped together particular instances of talk about teenagers, sexuality, race,
gender, religion, society, language and power, social life, counter-hegemony and resistance. My initial scans of the data indicated that these were favoured topics for the participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes). I have used the same common themes from sections 7.1 and 7.2 to organise my analysis (as explained in the introduction to this chapter) as these were traceable through various threads of the data, across different texts and from each of the three participants. In this section, these themes relate more specifically to social issues, rather than the foci on youth life-worlds or schooling as were the cases in the previous sections.

7.3.1 Youth positioned through bodily practices and performative statements

The data from the Year Eleven participants suggest contradictory accounts about raced, gendered and classed bodies which have been ‘impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, and femininity’ (Kohli, 1998 p. 519). These students are well aware of ‘political correctness’ in society and they seem to draw upon the knowledge learnt at school which focuses on social justice and equality to assure me as educator and researcher that they believe in such ideals. For example when discussing Matt’s text (level 1 data) I pose a question to elicit a resistant reading of his text:

Text 33

MR: Do you think you could have represented other cultural groups?
MC: Well, I mean I’m not racist... (int., 03, M.C)

Matt immediately responds defensively with the use of strong modality as though such a question calls his moral character into question. Ellen also seems to be trying to position herself as unprejudiced in Text 34 whilst at the same time she is trying not to criticize the school.

Text 34

MR: Do you think, for example Aboriginal Dreaming stories should be studied?
EP: Yeah, they're just as interesting... ah... I don't know as much about them... but I've done... I know some background knowledge, but I'm not an expert... but um...

MR: Do you think they're given as much importance as for example the 'classics' that we were talking about before?

EP: That's a good point... um... mmm... I'm not sure if they're given less importance... um, they possibly aren't covered as much... like...

MR: So do you think that gives them less importance?

EP: Oh, well I guess, yeah... um, when we've done things about, subjects about Indigenous Australians or um, their culture, um... it's still talked about with respect or um... (int., 03, E.P)

Her low modality as evidenced through adverbs such as ‘possibly’ and mental processes such as ‘I guess’ and ‘I’m not sure’, along with several pauses and conversation fillers such as ‘um’ and ‘mmm’, indicate her struggle with being seen to be politically correct with the mood adjunct ‘just’ intensifying the comparative in ‘just as interesting’ and being a good student who doesn’t criticize the school with an emphasis on usualness with ‘still’ in ‘still talked about with respect’, particularly to outsiders who are going to write about it. Paul is quite able to detect stereotypical images of gender in X-box games and other popular culture texts, and he suggests that marginalised groups may ‘have to have a bit more talent to be equal, than other groups do’ (int., 04, P.H). He knows the language of critical analysis and he uses it in this interview situation to ensure that I have a good impression of him as a ‘good’ boy who believes in the ‘right’ things, for example ‘I believe in equality for everyone, pretty

“The rise and fall of One Nation and the emergence of so-called dog-whistle politics around asylum seekers and boatpeople have revealed, so the story goes, a nation stricken with racism in its very heart. All it takes is the provocations of a few shock jocks, and the national unconscious is unleashed, like a baying wolfhound” (Burchell, 2006). In this article, Burchell uses emotive language and metaphor to describe one viewpoint that arose from the Cronulla riots. His ‘so the story goes’ as a modifier for ‘have revealed’ places him outside of such a viewpoint, yet his prose which magnifies the notion of a ‘racist core’ in Australia is much more sensational and effective for publicity in a newspaper article, than a dry report which discounts such a view.
much’ (int., 02, P.H). The adverbial ‘pretty much’ resonates here, as later it becomes apparent that these beliefs are very much a sliding scale.

Alongside such unprejudicial claims in these accounts, there are contradictory instances where these participants dismiss racial, gender, class and sexuality issues as overblown and not worth the amount of attention they get in society. One of the ways of disengaging with such issues is by pleading ignorance, as in, this doesn’t affect me, therefore I don’t know much about it.

Text 35

MR: So do you think that whole sense of black people being marginalised... have you ever thought about that before?
MC: Um, no... well I’m not in the middle of... I don't know that many black people or anything, so I wouldn't be as aware of the situations that they come across. Because I'm sure if I looked at stuff, yeah there are a lot of times when they are marginalised, but I just don't look at it from their perspective as much. (int., 03, M.C)

Matt uses cause and effect here to justify his ignorance of racial issues. He doesn’t know many black people ‘so’ he’s not as aware. He concedes that ‘if I looked at stuff’, which doesn’t suggest that he will ever look at such ‘stuff”; he would find instances of marginalisation. He seems to suggest that if racial issues don’t affect him directly then they don’t need to be addressed. In the focus group interview, these participants seem to use the support of their peers to vocalise their views about race, gender and at other times, sexuality.

Text 36

MR: So do you think you are shaped by race issues in broader society?
MC: Well there’s this kid I know, and his whole thing... like his whole world is shaped by being black... and...
MR: Well that’s...
MC: Yeah but he plays on it...
PH: Yeah he plays on being black... I have this theory that black people can get money just by complaining about things, so they’ll have a hundred percent tolerance as long as they can keep on getting money for complaining, for example um... I can’t think of an example right now. And like the women’s lib thing, it’s still going... the ridiculous claims... ‘cause they know they can make financial gain easier, so...
MR: How are they making financial gain?
PH: They sue companies...
MR: So you don’t think those things are important?
MC: I do
The persuasive power of the media is used as an ally in politics; whereby it is claimed in this article that racial attacks will ensure votes. “Sheik Hilali, head of Lakemba mosque in Sydney’s southwest, said Mr Howard did not know what he was talking about...He accused Mr Howard of playing politics with Muslim Australians. ‘The easiest way to claim public votes these days is to attack Islam and Muslims,’ the Mufti said. ‘By making such statements about Muslims, he is telling the Australian public that Muslims are different, not human beings’” (Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006).

Such a claim suggests that racism is a vote-spinner, which indicates a racist sector in Australia. Emotive quotes such as these serve to fuel debates about racism in Australia, which in turn sells more newspapers, and indeed may cause members of the public to become defensive about their own views.

So now it seems that despite criticizing ‘bad’ youth for discriminating against gays (see section 7.3.4), it is acceptable for ‘good’ students to dismiss race and gender issues as money-spinners, a reductionist account (Young, 1990) that is shaped by institutions such as the family and the school (Blackman, 1998).

Matt interjects to state that he cares about such issues (politically correct), yet his language indicates he is still positioning women as a homogenous group (they) who want and need to be accepted but won’t ever gain such acceptance. In an earlier interview (int., 04, M.C) he suggests that ‘I still think that man is a more neutral word for both sides’, and ‘we can still use those terms without any of the intention behind it’. He doesn’t want to offend, yet he normalises gender terms without interrogation. Here he also refers to
money. This may be his way of rationalizing support for certain groups over others, as they (other people) are all looking for money, so we (society? those of us who don’t complain?) can only support some – again a sliding scale. Paul seems to accept some women (the ones who don’t complain), yet not those who are outspoken about ‘ridiculous’ claims. Ellen dutifully plays the game when asked to comment, by not offending anyone, not complaining, and identifying with the boys through her behavioural process ‘feel like’ (one of the guys). Ellen’s response is consistent with findings from other research studies which suggest that a belief in individual agency means that the impact of gender is downplayed in her life (see Dwyer & Wyn, 2001; Roberts & Sachdev, 1996; Willis, 1998).

The power of the media in constructing particular groups in society is discussed by these young people, and such portrayals are often dismissed as incorrect and/or inappropriate stereotypes, however their descriptions of gay people are still shaped by broader society and media portrayals. For example, they attribute ‘tight clothes’, body awareness and effeminate gestures (these attributes were physically gestured during the focus group) to gay men; and ‘butch’ appearance and ‘ranting about the evils of men’ to gay women (f.g., 05, 11).

Text 37

MR: So if you rant about the evils of men, then... that signifies that you are gay?
PH: Well, you don’t... like men, which means that you’re either asexual or gay...
MR: Or perhaps a heterosexual who’s been badly treated by men?
PH: ... (f.g., 05, 11)

Paul has a narrow view about gay women as ‘man-haters’ as he uses a weak if that, then this... cause and effect structure in ‘which means’, to posit his argument as obvious; yet he is supposedly a ‘champion’ for the homosexual cause as evidenced previously in Text 12.

7.3.2 Youth as negotiating slippery roles and scales of expectation
It seems to be acknowledged that there are different levels of acceptability when it comes to language use related to social issues such as gender, sexuality and race.
Matt shows uncertainty about the impact of his language choices through low modals such as ‘not really’ and ‘probably’ as he struggles with being politically correct on the one hand, which he may consider to be appropriate in this interview situation; and drawing on his own cultural resources or artefacts (Rossi-Landi, 1977) to justify his language, on the other. He shows evidence of interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) by drawing on textual interlocutors such as one of his favourite rock bands, and making judgements about their easy acceptance of the term ‘chick’ as an indicator that it must be okay. He also draws upon his knowledge of the French language to mount the convenient argument about what the word ‘chick’ or ‘chic’ means. He emphasises his point through cause and effect by indicating that ‘if chicks don’t appear to be caring about it, then…” He uses the word ‘chick’ in his argument, thereby inscribing it into the discourse as common and normal, and he uses a mental perception process ‘don’t appear’ which places him in the powerful position of recognizing whether women care or don’t care about such language use. Paul uses language in Text 39 to test the boundaries in the
“As the half-baked reaction of many on the left towards the One Nation phenomenon showed, if you tell disgruntled ordinary people often enough that you think they’re a bunch of racist rednecks, you push them further out on their limb. Feeling that their side of the story isn’t being told…” (Burchell, 2006). It is intimated in this article that ‘ordinary people’ who support racist causes aren’t really racist, they are just reacting to being labelled and silenced, however such marginalisation is an ongoing reality for many minority groups. Confronting racist beliefs seems to be too difficult and/or provocative in broader society.
PH: It could be offensive, but anything really could be offensive... (int., 04, P.H)

Paul interpolates an unnamed ‘they’ who are responsible for wanting to change the name of the memorial (it was in fact a member of the local Indigenous community in that area) and judges such motivations as ‘ridiculous’ then gives reasons for his argument; that it is only a ‘nickname’ which is deemed acceptable practice in Australian culture through the media and community groups such as sporting clubs; and that the person whose nickname it was, wasn’t offended by it (It should be noted that this person was in fact white). Paul trivialises his argument as he goes on to use an example of another name that someone may be offended by - ‘Sydney’ (which is also the name of a major city in Australia), to illustrate the ridiculous nature of such claims. He doesn’t seem to understand the socio-historical or socio-political contexts of racism or language use. He makes his arguments about racial issues with seemingly little understanding of global human rights movements for example, the United Nations has deemed the word ‘nigger’ to be offensive and that it should be removed from all public spaces, yet the Australian Government has not abided by this decision in this particular case so the memorial that Paul refers to, is the only remaining example of this offensive racial term ‘nigger’ as endorsed public signage (Hagan, 2005). It seems that his deep knowledge or critical analysis does not extend to certain issues.

Within the data, there are also different levels of acceptable behaviour such as ‘caring’. Paul says that he sits with the people ‘who care the most about school’ (he positions himself with the authority to speak and judge as a ‘good’ student who gets A grades), which assumes that others might care, but not as much as he and his friends care. Juxtapose this against his accounts about levels of caring in terms of social issues such as class or poverty.

Text 40
MR: How about in Australia, like homeless people in Australia?
PH: Um, I don’t have much experience with homeless people in Australia really, just...
MR: Do you ever think about it, that maybe you know... what they do or don’t have access to or...?
PH: No, not really.
MR: Do you think you should?
“AWAs offer an employer and employees the opportunity to make an agreement that best suits the specific needs of individual employees” (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations). New Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) focus on ‘specific needs of individual employees’. The comparative descriptor ‘best’ suggests that individual ‘needs’ are more important than collective rights, and it takes on an everyone for themselves discourse in society.

Here, Paul suggests that caring less is acceptable because other people care more. He indicates that if there was an ‘easy’ way he might do something, and his use of the behavioural process ‘would rather dedicate’, with the finite comparative ‘rather’ justifies his attitude because he will choose another equally important ‘something’ to do with his life. Caring more in individualist settings such as schools, where by caring, you improve your own chances, is more highly valued than caring more for social good.

7.3.3 Youth as individual agents with expectations of agency
These Year Eleven participants suggest that individuals should be able to discern ‘truth’ statements or unsubstantiated claims in mass media or popular culture. Ellen talks about ‘not taking advertising at face value, looking through it and finding the empty statements’ (int., 03, E.P). She positions the consumer as active and in control of media power through material processes ‘looking’ and ‘finding’, which suggest that it is obvious in such texts that there will be lies, but it is up to the individual to detect them. Paul similarly suggests that ‘if you go onto the internet ready to believe everything, then you’re a bit naïve and… I think it’s your own fault pretty much…” (int., 04, P.H). Individual agency is given importance as he describes a scenario where passive acceptance is described as ‘a bit naïve’, and his use of ellipsis, where ‘if you are taken advantage of’ is left unsaid, but assumed to be ‘your own fault’,
indicates that it is well-known and accepted that this might happen, so if you let it happen you only have yourself to blame.

“Sheik Hilali said Mr Howard should take a crash course in Islam ‘because if a prime minister does not understand the true meaning of jihad, then how can we blame the general public for not understanding it?’” (Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006). This quote suggests that the ‘general public’ is not to blame if they are ignorant of particular religious or cultural beliefs. The use of interrogative mood as a rhetorical indicates that the superfluous response is that of course we can’t blame them. The collective term ‘general public’ is the passive object which supposedly needs to be told everything by an ‘official’ authority such as a prime minister, which is a political manoeuvre in the press that effectively lays the blame for ignorance and/or racism at the foot of the government, rather than on general Australians.

There is recognition from each of these participants that taking some sort of action against prejudice or injustice is the ‘right’ thing to do. This could be attributed to the influence of their school program which is based on social justice tenets, or even their desire to be viewed positively by me as critical researcher in the interview context. There seems however to be conflict about what constitutes an ‘actionable’ issue in their worlds. Ellen suggests that in the case of verbal offence, ‘you’d have to know what the offended person felt first… if
everybody knows it’s light-hearted, then it’s fine…’ (int., 04, E.P). Presumably, the feelings of an individual are the most important, rather than broader social causes such as sexism or racism, and if such comments are delivered in a ‘light-hearted’ tone, which the collective ‘everybody’ could recognize, thereby authenticating it, it shouldn’t call for any action.

There seems to be reluctance from these students to disrupt perceived harmony or the status quo, ‘I’m not about to start initiating a protest outside McDonalds’ (int., 04, E.P); which in the institutional setting of the school; where they are encouraged to buy into hegemonic discourses, regulate their behaviour and generally emulate the values of the teachers and/or school in order to be successful; is understandable. These individuals take up such discourses as their own (Davies, 2003; Whitson, 1995), often not realising that such discourses should or could be challenged.

Paul’s account of his willingness to enact the critical agenda also seems to fall within the parameters of school-endorsed social justice. He claims to be passionate about gay rights which is a focus area in the school program, and is of course in the broader social construction in the media; for example through high rating lifestyle shows and sitcoms that romanticise a gay lifestyle; a sexy and trendy issue for teenagers to be passionate about. He seems to take pleasure in taking up discourses of social justice that he has studied at school, yet he says that he is not interested in other causes for social conscience.

**Text 41**

| MR: | Ok um... now... are you interested in the corporate activity of particular companies, like for example, you said you like McDonalds food... are you aware of some of their corporate practices? |
| PH: | No |
| MR: | Like for example, their happy meal toys, you know, like children in Asian countries make those for like 5c an hour, and that sort of thing... |
| PH: | No, not... |
| MR: | Not aware of any of that? |
| PH: | That ties into what we were saying before about homeless people... Who is compassionate? I’m compassionate, but not specifically compassionate enough to care about it... it sounds cold-hearted probably but... |
| MR: | So you don’t think that that’s an issue that we as a society should take up? |
| PH: | I think we as a society should, just not we as a... me. |
| MR: | So if everyone had your attitude, what would happen? |
PH: Umm... that’s a good point, yeah. Um... well everyone doesn’t, so that’s invalid to begin with... but if everyone did... if everyone had my attitude I think eventually something would happen, because... well it wouldn’t function... society would not function if everyone had my attitude.

MR: So you’re kind of saying, it’s not my problem? Someone else can deal with it?

PH: Yes, but in saying that, I mean I’m going to be dealing with other problems instead. I can’t deal with every single problem, but I am planning on dealing with problems eventually. For example, homosexual rights, as you may have noticed, I’m an activist in that sense... well not an activist, but... (int., 04, P.H)

Paul’s strong modality with his definitive ‘no’s and his agreement that ‘we as a society should’, suggest he is very comfortable that he is doing what he can. He doesn’t need to apologise for not knowing about or taking action on every cause, because his values are still in the right place. It seems that Giddens’ (1991) notion of life politics whereby youth of this generation make choices about social activism according to their lifestyles, is pertinent for Paul. He chooses those causes which are endorsed by his school learning, and which impact on him through his affiliation with gay friends, and he justifies his argument using attributes such as ‘every single’ to emphasise what he could realistically be expected to deal with. He also uses the youth/adult dualism to suggest that ‘eventually’ he will deal with problems. His use of the attribute ‘activist’ to describe himself, positions him as action-oriented, which supports his claim that he is doing his part.

There seems to be no interrogation within the critical pedagogies of this school, of why Paul, Ellen and Matt would make such choices, how they have come to think in these ways, and what legitimate alternatives there are for them. Whilst they take on different and conflicting positions throughout the discussions, the humanist discourses of fixed identity at play mean that they don’t account for why this might be so. For example MacNaughton (1998) suggests that at any point in time ‘contradictory discourses about what is normal, right and best circulate and compete with each other’ (p. 160), so it is not so much about what is ‘true’ or ‘right’, rather which is dominant at a particular time. These students do not interrogate their subjectification to understand why they subscribe to and/or enact different and conflicting positions.
Various job advertisements indicate ‘good’ attributes such as ‘team player’, ‘positive’, ‘enthusiastic’ and with ‘good communication skills’ which are highly valued across different fields, at different levels, and in different locations (“Career One: Positions Vacant,”). These interpersonal skills seem to be valued in most positions, yet ‘team player’ is a concept that is a little uncertain in the lives of these young people, as they push the individualist agenda to perform well at school, whilst maintaining the ‘team’ values of the school regarding social justice, equity and active citizenship in society.

### Table 7  Good vs. bad descriptors of youth related to social issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Good’ Descriptors</th>
<th>Language form</th>
<th>‘Bad’ Descriptors</th>
<th>Language form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are open-minded</td>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>Are close-minded</td>
<td>Attribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are caring</td>
<td>Attribute, related to performativity and performance</td>
<td>Are too involved/ Can’t take a joke</td>
<td>Attribute, behavioural process, related to performativity and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are politically correct</td>
<td>Realized through low modality when describing other</td>
<td>Discriminate against gays</td>
<td>Realized through verbal and material processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These descriptors tend to be used in these accounts to position these participants as the ‘good’ measure by which others will be judged. This is perhaps an appropriate collusory measure in an interview with an outside researcher, whereby their accounts are being told, with no corroboration or dispute from peers, and it shows them in a positive way. Each of these participants positions themselves as ‘open-minded’ and politically correct as evidenced earlier in Text 5 and section 7.3.1, and the opposite of this, that is, being ‘close-minded’ or unwilling to see other perspectives or tolerate other values, is ascribed to some of their peers. For example:
Ellen uses a strong modal ‘definitely’, and mood adjunct ‘very’, to describe the lack of tolerance of some of her peers as ‘uncomfortable talking about…’. However when she herself tries to express alternative practices or beliefs, she hesitates and shows uncertainty with the modal ‘maybe’ and the attribute ‘some’ as a generic descriptor of such practices, rather than voicing specific examples. Ellen seems uncomfortable to discuss alternative practices, yet she wants to be seen as ‘open-minded’. Her cultural map (Hall, 1992) runs deep as she deals with the expectations of a critical agenda in her life-world.

These participants have also indicated that it is ‘right’ or ‘good’ to care (see Text 40), yet if you ‘make a mountain out of a molehill’ or become ‘radical’ (f.g., 05, 11) in your level of care about an issue, then such ‘over-kill’ is considered ‘bad’ or unnecessary. This type of magnified behaviour is linked with ‘hyper-Christians’ (Text 1) who supposedly discriminate against gays and are close-minded in their beliefs.

7.3.5 Youth positioned as distinct from adults

These youth participants are not part of the group in school or within youth culture who want to resist dominant forms of behaviour and values, and reclaim power both as individuals and as members of particular alternative groups (Blackman, 1998). They have bought into a system where they have found that by generally complying with influential adults in their lives, they can derive pleasure (plaisir) (Kenway & Bullen, 2001), and not only do they simply comply with hegemonic values in society and in school, they actively support such systems and don’t see that there is, or needs to be, any other way. Adults are generally positioned in positive ways or at least as obligatory gate-keepers of order.
Negotiation is being promoted as a key strategy in the new AWA information, where “as a group and individually, more employees and employers have been sitting down together, talking and working out their own workplace arrangements. As a result, both employees and employers have benefited. There have also been more job opportunities created for women and school leavers” (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations). The body is inscribed into this discourse with ‘sitting down’ and ‘talking’, which gives this Government document a more personal tone and suggests that real people have used this strategy. A cause and effect structure has been adopted to point out the benefits of such a strategy, particularly calling attention to employee benefits in first position – a politically savvy move in terms of the criticism from unions about the impact of the AWAs (National Tertiary Education Union). The final statement seems to be purely political as ‘there have also been’, (which doesn’t specifically say that this strategy has been responsible) ‘more job opportunities created for women and school-leavers’, which targets two groups in society for which no-one would argue the importance of job opportunities – a popular rhetoric in politics.

Paul’s responses in this instance (Text 43) are not strong in modality with ‘not really’; which may be attributed to his collusion in the interview, where I have asked the question, therefore I must think that all teenagers want to create a separate space; so his response doesn’t entirely discount such a possibility. This is a common linguistic technique in a one-on-one conversation or interview. He then directly draws a literary interlocutor into his response to support his view that adults are important – at least to keep some sort of order, and gives an example of
how ‘we’, so it is in everyone’s interests and therefore the logical and common-sense view, would ‘degenerate’ if there were no adults ergo no rules.

These young people are well-aware of parental expectations, for example not being a burden on the teachers (l.c., 02, P.H), and how their parents get some credence from their school success ‘They like to boast about high grades’ (l.c., 02, P.H). According to their accounts, it’s all about negotiation with adults – knowing the boundaries, and then working within them – they see it as fair, and that it requires self-regulation.

**Text 44**

MR: So part of it is... you almost feel an obligation to your family to do the right thing ...?
EP: Yeah I think they’d just like me to turn out well...
MR: What do you think is the measure of a ‘good’ teenager? What sorts of things might you do or be or...?
PH: Like every night I wash up, I clear the table, that kind of thing... It’s just expected.
MR: So, household chores?
MC: And not doing anything bad like being on drugs and...
PH: Yeah so if I don’t come home ‘til five, they don’t worry cause...
MC: They have trust...
EP: Respect and trust...
PH: Yeah ‘cause they can see that I know that taking drugs or going out every night getting drunk and stuff is stupid... (f.g., 05, 11)

These accounts suggest that respect and trust is earned. They use interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) whereby they talk about what their parents think and they judge their own actions from their parents’ perspectives. Being ‘good’ is certainly working to achieve their goals at this time in their lives, and the power they are afforded as ‘responsible’ teenagers is seen as just reward for doing the right things.

A salient feature of the adult/youth dualism in the accounts of these young people is admiration for their parents. Both Matt and Paul discuss their parents’ success, and more particularly their fathers’ career paths and life choices as not ‘fitting the mould’ (l.c., 02, P.H), and as not attributable to school (int., 04, M.C) which seems to contradict both their parents’ expectations of them, and their investment in the institutional values at school. There seems to be a generational argument here, where acceptable practice in one generation is not acceptable in the next - a common discourse in society, whereby youth who do not conform, need to be monitored and
guided. Johnson (1993) makes a clear link between the construction of youth as a problem, and the setting up of institutional processes for monitoring and providing surveillance of young people in society.

This chapter has outlined the five major themes that were located in the Year Eleven data. These were:

- Youth positioned through bodily practices and performative statements
- Youth as negotiating slippery roles and scales of expectation
- Youth as individual agents with expectations of agency
- Youth described through good vs. bad discourse
- Youth positioned as distinct from adults

The salient priorities for these participants seem to be focused on an individualist agenda, whereby they see the need to regulate self in order to achieve success at school which will ultimately lead to university entrance and therefore life success. They are prepared at this stage in their lives to accept direction from adults who are largely deemed to possess the authority to guide them in their choices. They are quite adept at intellectualising texts and to some extent, contexts, however they do not purport to engage in any real transformative social action, and they choose certain ‘trendy’ social causes to ‘support’ at least in theory. They do not seem inclined to problematise their own practices or investments, nor do they show evidence of understanding the subjectification processes which have led them to their current beliefs, actions and values.

Chapter Eight explores the accounts of the Year Nine participants and the intersecting micro and macro discourses which influence their accounts.
Chapter Eight

Year Nine Discourses

The discourses that are (re)presented in this chapter are described under the same three main headings that are in Chapter Seven, as explained in the introduction to Part D. They are: ‘Discourses of youth’, ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’ and ‘Discourses of society’. Again, whilst it is difficult to separate such overlapping and intersecting discourses, I have done so for the purposes of organisation in this chapter, yet I acknowledge that overlaps still occur in my analysis. To re-iterate, I have grouped the topics related to the life-worlds of youth, such as: practices they choose to engage in; issues they choose to comment on; and ways that they choose to shape their own behaviour; as part of ‘Discourses of youth’. The topics related to schooling, such as: subject hierarchy or dualism; curriculum issues including intellectualisation; school performance and expectations; positioning of teachers and students; and collusionary behaviour; are grouped under ‘Intentional discourses of schooling’. The topics related to broader society, such as: multiliterate practices; social issues; positioning of and by parents; and societal expectations of teenage behaviour and characteristics; are placed under the heading ‘Discourses of society’. Again, I acknowledge that overlaps occur across these discourse headings, as they intersect to a large degree.

The Year Nine data are not as extensive nor do they deal with some of the more complex issues that are evident in the Year Eleven data, for example contradictory positioning of self, teachers and peers. Hence, this chapter is necessarily briefer than the previous one, and three main discourses are discussed under each heading, as opposed to five in the previous chapter.

8.1 Discourses of Youth

I scanned the Year Nine coded data initially to locate nodes or strands of talk which I felt illustrated particular discourses of youth as legitimated in their accounts. From this, I identified and grouped together particular instances of talk about teenagers, bodily performance, technology, social life, students, self-regulation and resistance, as my initial scans of the data indicated that these were favoured topics for these younger
participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes). I then identified a number of common themes in my detailed analysis that seemed to be traceable through various threads of the data, across different texts and from each of the four participants. These included:

- Youth represented through bodily practices
- Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour
- Youth described as insular and frivolous

Again I provide examples of and discuss each of these themes in turn (although they intersect and overlap), including a pastiche of snippets from the data transcripts and my analysis of them, along with the macro texts as outlined in the Introduction to Part D, and my analysis of them.

8.1.1 Youth represented through bodily practices

The Year Nine youth in this study often represent themselves in terms of bodily practices, particularly sport. In Figures 14, 15 and 16, Jane, Kirsty and Rachel respectively chose to represent self through sporting artefacts such as a basketball shoe, a sports achievement certificate and medal, and a photo with friends at a sports day. Jenna also chose to represent sport as important for teenage girls in her magazine text (level 1 data) in Figure 17. The broader discourse in society that represents teenagers in binary categories of either playing sport or as physically lazy and techno-mad, does not ring true for these participants, which is consistent with the findings of Wright, Macdonald, Wyn and Kriflik (2005). They each report regular mobile phone use, and use of computers for school assignments, downloading music and email, however this technology seems to
be represented as only one possibility in their repertoire of choices available in their everyday lives. They don’t seem to be defined or driven by such technologies, in fact when I asked Jenna whether she would prefer to read a book or go on the computer, she answered ‘read a book’ with strong modality and certainty (l.c., 02, J.A). Similarly, both Rachel and Kirsty suggest that they like to do craft activity such as ‘press flowers’, ‘make necklaces and cards’, ‘knit’ (l.c., 02, R.F), and ‘help Mum make bears and stuff’ (l.c., 02, K.S), and Jane indicated that she liked to cook (l.c., 02, J.O). These young people use a variety of material processes to describe their life-worlds, which is consistent with research findings (Wright et al., 2005) whereby many youth invest in a wide variety of practices including but not limited to technology use; have wide friendship networks; and include physical activity as part of their everyday lives.

Image seems to be a focus for this group of participants, as they position themselves and their peers as very much aware of the role that image plays in defining self in their youth worlds. They variously suggest that the body is an indicator of sexuality, of popularity and of personality, and whilst they each indicate that unfair assessments are made based on the body as image, their accounts show how their influential cultural maps (Hall et al, 1978) shape their subjectivities and their opinions. For example in Text 45 Rachel gives contradictory explanations about the effect of the body on her judgements of her peers.
MR: Do you think also, body image is a big issue for teenagers?

RF: Yeah, everybody wants to be like, really, really skinny, and people turn anorexic or whatever and I think that's just, like... I don't think I could ever put myself through that, 'cause I think it's kind of stupid how people are so concerned about what they look like all the time. And like, you don't have to be a skinny supermodel to look good in clothes and everything. But bigger people, I think, have to be more careful about what they wear... because I know some big people, and they like wear little tops and everything. It kind of looks... it doesn't look as good as they could... so you just... I think they have to be... bigger people have to be more careful about what they wear, and what they eat and everything, but like my best friend in primary school was like, three times my size, so... and I didn't judge her because of that, she was like, the nicest person. Like, the really skinny people they weren't very nice. They were too worried about themselves to worry about anybody else, so I don't judge people on what they look like. I wouldn't care what they look like, but I just think it's really sad how people are so worried about what they look like and they have to be really skinny so guys will notice them or something, but...

(l.c., 02, R.F)

The question to Rachel about body image prompts her to show that she is au fait with the popular discourses about teenage body image in the media, with attributes such as 'anorexic' and 'skinny', and the participant 'supermodel' being used almost in an off-hand way. She seeks to gain my approval as researcher and adult in this interactive situation by indicating her views about extreme enactment of desired body image with 'I don't think I could ever put myself through that'. The mood adjunct 'ever' intensifies her steadfast beliefs, and she draws upon a physical metaphor 'put myself through' to highlight the unnecessary agony such activity would bring. She then goes on to comment on 'big' people wearing inappropriate clothes. She lexically contrasts 'big people' with 'little tops' to create the image of 'it doesn't look as good as...', and she again colludes in this interaction by making judgements about these textual interlocutors (big people) with relational intensifiers such as being 'more careful'. Her comments link being 'big' with watching what you eat and wear, which suggests
that ‘others’ such as ‘skinny’ people need not concern themselves with such matters. Tinning (1985) and more recently Tinning and Glasby (2002) point out that being thin is often incorrectly equated in popular discourse with being healthy. Rachel explicitly indicates that ‘I didn’t judge her’, which again seeks my adult approval of her admirable morals whilst her descriptive judgement of ‘really sad’ places her above such nonsense. She then lexically links ‘skinny’ people with the relational intensive process ‘weren’t very nice’ and ‘were too worried about themselves’, which in this case she is using to reinforce her conviction about not judging ‘big’ people as they are ‘nice’. She manages instead to contradictorily judge ‘skinny’ people on their bodies as she equates body shape with personality. Kirsty also makes judgements based on image of the body in Text 46.

**Text 46**

| MR: | Do you think the way women dress should be a point of criticism, or should be an indicator of your values? |
| KS: | Um… yeah… some people dress weird… um yeah… I don't like the way people dress sometimes, like the girls and their bodies… like the guys can wear really anything though… but if they wear like tight shirts and tight pants, sometimes they're called gay, but… |
| MR: | Do you think that that's right, that they get called gay? |
| KS: | No, it's just really their choice of what they want to wear. (int., 04, K.S) |

She alludes to appropriateness of dress for particular body shapes with ‘like the girls and their bodies’, and uses the attribute ‘weird’ to indicate her disapproval of ‘inappropriate’ clothing choices. It is assumed that what is ‘appropriate’ is understood, as she does not explain this term. She relies on intertextual links to media texts and popular culture to provide meaning about expectations for girls in relation to their bodies. She links image with sexuality as she describes ‘tight’ clothes as indicative of ‘gayness’ in her youth discourse world. I as researcher call for her judgement about the ‘rightness’ of such an assessment, which then prompts her to agree with my obvious disapproval of such a generalised and stereotypical assessment – an expected response in such a

Bodily practices are fore-grounded in the Optus brochure with sample text messages such as ‘In2 kickboxing’ and ‘I’m mad 4 sports 2’ (Optus, undated) yet the expectation of secrecy about what you really look like, suggests negative body image.
situation where I am ascribed power as an ‘authority’ on youth and critical analysis. Within the focus group interview, these participants also variously describe the attributes or relational intensives of popular girls as ‘pretty’, ‘blonde’, ‘slim’, ‘not fat’, ‘have dyed hair’, and ‘have bigger breasts’ (f.g., 05, 9). The body seems to be a crucial indicator of status, personality and even values for these young people.

8.1.2 Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour

The accounts of these participants clearly indicate that they are aware of the expectations of their peers, of adults and even of society that they will exhibit the ‘right’ behaviour. It seems clear to these young people that teenage-hood invites the gaze and judgement of others, as though this is the time to prove whether you can ‘cut it’ in various spheres, or whether you will be written off as unworthy or troublesome or even uncool. It is not only their minds that are shaped, but their bodies, their physicality, and their desires (Kohli, 1998). ‘Right’ as a concept however, changes in the different discourse groups of which they are a part. Within the discourses of youth, there are expectations such as listening to the right music, which Jane refers to in discussion about her magazine text (level 1 data). She includes a competition to meet Sean Paul (see Figure 18), who she describes as ‘a rapper-dude cool person’ that ‘lots of girls probably like’ (l.c., 02, J.O). The image of such artists is just as important as their music, which is evidenced in popular culture shows such as ‘Rage’ on the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) channel on free-to-air television, where the video-clips for many songs are the main feature as visual, audio, gestural and linguistic (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004) feasts for the desirous senses. Kirsty comments on the right image in terms of clothing in Text 47, where free-dress day at school can become a scene of fierce competition for the coolest, most up-to-date image.

Figure 18 Jane's magazine

Text 47

MR: So that's kind of a big thing then, the image you portray is a big thing...?
KS: Yeah if you're not wearing the coolest clothes for free dress day. Like people outdo themselves, like
Kirsty’s use of comparative terms such as ‘coolest’, ‘latest’ and ‘outdo’ indicate the level of importance placed on self in comparison to and influenced by peers and media images, rather than self as individual agent. These students do not however, always invest in such right behaviours. For example Kirsty suggests that she hates free-dress days as she is ‘not into fashion’, but ‘would rather play sport’ (int., 04, K.S), and both Jane and Rachel indicate resistance to having or buying the latest fashion, for example, ‘I’m not a very good shopping person’ and ‘I look pretty daggy’ (l.c., 02, J.O), and ‘I would rather buy something for my little brother or sister’ (l.c., 02, R.F). Jenna shows that at this time in her life she is more influenced by her parents and religious beliefs, with ‘I’ve always been brought up to be like, really modest and wear clothes that cover you up’ (l.c., 02, J.A), at least in terms of the clothes she wears.

Language is another aspect of right behaviour for these young people. They know and use various terms that they indicate to be part of a teenage code of language. For example Jenna explains ‘Like mad to describe good stuff…and cool and you say get over it and as if you would and stuff like that’ (l.c., 02, J.A). Jane explains the use of such language as a strategy to fit in with peers ‘I think that like babe and all that, it’s kind of in our vocabulary today, yeah, and just to emphasise it’s cool and stuff like that, because sometimes that’s what people worry about…being cool, or you know… fitting in and stuff like that’ (l.c., 02, J.O). She knows the expectations and her declarative tone and use of second person ‘our’ along with the general participant ‘people’ seem to indicate that she accepts such expectations as the way it is and that she is part of the discourse.
Mobile phones are of much greater importance to the younger group in this study in terms of image and connection to peers. Rachel suggests in Text 48 that they are an essential item for teenagers.

**Text 48**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MR:</th>
<th>And in your competition you've got mobile phones as well. Do you think teenagers are right into mobile phones?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RF:</td>
<td>Yeah, they love their phones, like most of them wouldn't be able to live without them and... yeah. You kind of don't want to go anywhere without it, and freak out if you've lost it or something... so I take mine everywhere... I don't use it all the time, but it's just something to have with you... it's weird if you don't have it, 'cause you're so used to having it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(int., 03, R.F)

Rachel shows evidence of collusion in this interview, where she answers the question first with an indication of her authority to speak by almost stepping outside to make an impartial judgement through her use of ‘they’, ‘their’ and ‘them’, then it becomes more personal to indicate her inclusion in the group with ‘you’, and finally she gives a direct personal example using ‘I’. Major importance is placed on having a mobile phone as evidenced by the behavioural process ‘freak out’ and the attribute ‘weird’ as she describes a scenario without one.

The Optus brochure taps into the discourses of youth that rely on connections with peers and a need to be up-to-date with its focus on chatting. It suggests ‘Hot chat rooms’ such as “Chillin – A place to hang out and chat; Love – Find your Valentine; Rated – What’s hot and what’s definitely not; Wassup? – The word from the streets...some urban chatter” (Optus, undated).

There is also evidence in these accounts that particular teenage issues are the right ones to go through, for example in Text 49 Kirsty explains her letters to the editor (see example in Figure 20) in her magazine text (level 1 data).
MR: Can you tell me why you've got these particular letters to the editor? ...So I notice you've got things about drinking and depression or don't have money or... Why did you choose those?

KS: I think it's just what teenagers go through, you know like, um, like asking for more pictures of Ashton Kutcher, everyone looks for pictures of some kind of person... but weight problems... some people have weight problems and they need help, and they don't want to ask other people, so they ask the magazine, like no-one knows who they are, so it's good. Um... homework... everyone has trouble with homework...

MR: So does interaction with your friends give you a sense of what teenagers are coping with as well?

KS: Yeah

MR: And the whole... problems with friends, and being in love and all of that, is that a teenage thing?

KS: Yeah, everyone goes through those things I think (int., 03, K.S)

Kirsty positions such issues as normal in her youth discourse world through her use of the mood adjunct ‘just’ in ‘just what teenagers go through’, and her repeated use of the participant ‘everyone’. She colludes in the interview through interpolation (Fuller & Lee, 1997) by drawing textual interlocutors (those with problems) into the discourse, and making judgements about their needs and actions, so that she can be seen to be part of the discourse and therefore able to comment with authority.

8.1.3 Youth described as insular and frivolous

Youth are described in these accounts as being almost insulated from ‘real world’ issues, and focused upon frivolous forms of entertainment. It is clear that issues such as social justice causes and success at school are not salient for these young people at this point in their lives, as suggested by Wright et al (2005), ‘what young people do
changes over time in keeping with changing priorities in their lives. These priorities are structured in relation to their personal desires and social and institutional expectations’ (p. 19). For these participants, emancipation is not an issue in their lives, and their performances of self (Threadgold, 1997) have been shaped and legitimised by the dominant discourses at play in this institutional environment whereby the ‘important’ business of school starts in Year Eleven (see also section 7.2.2 for Year Eleven perspective on this issue). Kirsty describes teenagers as ‘self-centred’ when it comes to having what they want (int., 04, K.S), and Rachel refuses to accept that anyone would be excluded because of what they do or don’t have (int., 04, R.F). It seems that their youth discourse worlds are insulated from those issues or viewpoints that do not directly affect them.

Each of these Year Nine participants describes their investment in popular culture that is positive, light-hearted, feel-good and often well-removed from real life.

**Text 50**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MR:</th>
<th>What other sort of movies do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JO:</td>
<td>I like sort of Walt Disney movies like Pocahontas and the Lion King - that's my favourite movie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR:</td>
<td>Really?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO:</td>
<td>Yep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR:</td>
<td>Why's that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO:</td>
<td>I don't know... It's interesting... I don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR:</td>
<td>You don't know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO:</td>
<td>It's nice, it's a good movie, so that no matter how bad things are, you can like get over them, you can get over them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR:</td>
<td>So you like the positive theme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO:</td>
<td>Yeah (int., 03, J.O)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jane suggests that she prefers animated movies with positive themes. She does not allude to social issues that are also pertinent to such films, for example racial characterisations, but rather focuses on ‘nice’ themes. Similarly, Jenna says that she likes ‘Sweet Valley High’ books (l.c., 02, J.A) which are teenage romance books that...
always have a neat, seemingly positive ending. Rachel indicates a preference for television shows such as ‘Home and Away’, ‘Neighbours’, ‘Newlyweds’ and ‘reality TV’ (l.c., 02, R.F), which are all dramatic, soap opera style shows that are far removed from reality; and Kirsty says that she likes to read ‘Dolly’ magazine because ‘you don’t have to concentrate and read it all at once’, and that she admires song artists such as ‘Britney Spears’ because of ‘what she wears’ (l.c., 02, K.S).

Rachel indicates in Text 51 that it is not only girls who have frivolous investments.

Text 51

MR: Do you think there's more pressure on girls about body image than there is for guys?
RF: I think guys are more concerned about their hair and everything. Like my cousin, he has to bleach his hair, and he's got this big thing, he has to go to the hairdresser and get it cut and everything and... they're really into caps and everything, yeah like they never take their caps off, but I don't think they're really concerned about what they look like. I think they think the girls should worry about what they look like and they should like them for who they are. Because they can wear... like they wear big baggy pants as it is, so they don't really have to worry about what they look like, so I think it's more a girl thing. (int., 03, R.F)

She suggests through her language that guys are ‘more concerned’ about their hair and headwear than presumably about their clothes or bodies. She gives an example of personal knowledge of a young male cousin, to maintain her authority to speak, even though she is not a boy. Her statement ‘but I don’t think they’re really concerned about what they look like’ then contradicts the beginning of her answer, which argues primarily that boys are concerned about image. Her use of the mood adjunct ‘really’ suggests that the concerns of boys are not related to body image, and she draws on popular media discourse that boys have it easy because they don’t ‘really’ have to worry about how they look, unlike girls who are pressured to live up to unrealistic media images so that boys will ‘like them’.

8.2 Intentional Discourses of Schooling

For this section, I identified and grouped together particular instances of talk about teenagers, bodily performance, technology, social life, students, individualisation,
levels, textual collusion, teachers, intellectualisation, mind-body subject dualism, self-regulation and resistance, as my initial scans of the data indicated that these were favoured topics for these younger participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes), and these topics related to the intentional discourses of schooling. This section, similar to section 8.1, is organised around the three main themes from the Year Nine data. These are: Youth represented through bodily practices; Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour; and Youth described as insular and frivolous. In this section, they focus more on how these themes are related to the school setting.

### 8.2.1 Youth represented through bodily practices

The youth in this study draw the body into the discourse of schooling in a number of ways. Kirsty indicates that the key values promoted at the school are ‘learning’, and control of the way students dress ‘they like you to dress good, and you’re not allowed to wear certain jewellery and stuff’ (int., 04, K.S). By ascribing equal importance to these values, she suggests that control of the body is just as much a function of schooling as control of the mind. Kamler (1997b) and Threadgold (1997) argue that the discursive practices of school life are accomplished not only through language, but through bodies and bodily discipline. Jenna comments on power and control of bodies by peers when she introduces the concept of ‘bullying’ in her account, and then she justifies its place in the discourse of schooling with ‘I think it’s always around in schools. Everybody has some contact with it’ (int., 03, J.A).

The use of technology at this school is described in these accounts almost as a sphere of control by teachers. Such control is in contrast to notions of critical pedagogy that utilise technology, whereby critical dialogues are used to decentre notions of power, recognize difference, redefine the self, and challenge the use of technology as a means of control (Weaver & Grindall, 1998). These students talk about ‘getting permission’ to go to the library to use the internet (int., 04, K.S), and the novelty of assignments that mean they are ‘allowed to use technology’ (int., 04, R.F), however they seem to accept such control over the type and amount of technology devices that they are allowed to access, as Rachel states ‘it’d be good if we had more of that kind of stuff, but I think it depends really on whether it’s going to help us with our schoolwork, so I don’t think it’s really whether we want to do it or not, it’s whether it’s going to help
us’ (int., 04, R.F). Rachel has invested in plaisir (Kenway & Bullen, 2001) discourses of schooling as she supports the notion of schools as knowing what is best. Jane also suggests that she is happy with the amount of technology that they use at school, which is mostly in English (int., 04, J.O). Juxtapose this acceptance of control over technology use, with the way that students utilise technology at home for both personal use and for assignment research, where the physical control of facilities by teachers or knowledge of internet copyright by parents are not a hindrance. They indicate that it is quite normal to illegally download music and plagiarize visual images with no acknowledgement because ‘everybody does it’ (int., 04, J.O). ‘Cyberspace offers a new space…without undue interference from adults: it is adult-free, unknown and unsupervised (Walkerdine, 1999 p.6).’ Perhaps this is a contradictory space where both control and disruption of control are accepted into the discourse in different contexts.

Whilst each of these Year Nine participants profess an interest in playing sport, they talk about school Health and Physical Education (HPE) as something they don’t necessarily enjoy, but as ‘compulsory’ to take part in at school (int., 03, J.A); (int., 04, J.O). School sites of physical activity do not often problematise the contributions that these normalised western practices make to the (re)production of expressions of femininity which may lead to reticence to participate (Wright, 1991). Kirsty indicates that gender is certainly an issue in school sport in her experience: ‘I play soccer and we have a bit of trouble there, ’cause the guys kind of go… oh the girls can’t play,
they’ll just get hurt… and all this kind of stuff” (int., 04, K.S). Gendered, regulated bodies are shaped at this institutional site, and the hegemonic power of such deep and historical investments mean that these discourses of schooling are perpetuated.

8.2.2 Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour

These students readily ascribe authority and power to teachers, and as such, they shape their behaviour and their school-work as ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault, 1977) to fit with institutional expectations, because they have found this to be the road of least resistance. Kirsty indicates her willingness to ‘do as she’s told’ in Text 52.

Text 52

MR: Would you ever question the teachers and ask, you know… question them about why we need to do this?
KS: I’ve asked the Maths teacher that, and he told me to just be quiet and do the work, so no… I’m not really into questioning teachers; I’ll just do what they tell me to, so yeah… (l.c., 02, K.S).

Kirsty shows in this instance that she draws on inter(con)textual links of past experience to shape her behaviour in new contexts. She justifies her judgement by drawing the Maths teacher in as textual interlocutor who intensifies his direction with the mood adjunct ‘just’. Her use of ‘just’ again to explain her reaction intensifies her obligation to do as she is told. She later gives another example of why she is willing to fit with expected values at the school: ‘Yeah, you kind of have to value it… I don’t even know what I want to be when I grow up, so yeah… I don’t really know what to study or…’ (int., 04, K.S). She takes on the role of passive follower, which is rewarded in institutional settings such as this school because she doesn’t disrupt the hegemonic discourses at play. She is seen as a ‘good’ girl, and therefore is able to blend in and not call undue attention on herself from her peers. These students seem to fit many of the characteristics of Lesko’s (2001) ‘In-betweens’, whereby they share values with both the school and with sometimes resistant peers, and consequently adapt to a divided social order. For the Year Nine group in this study, fitting in with the peer group seems to be the focus of their lives at school. By contrast, the Year Eleven group indicates that they are more particular about choosing peer associates based on similar values at school. Both groups strongly suggest that they complete tasks at school to ‘meet the criteria’ rather than to assert their opinions or to resist.
particular viewpoints (forms of textual collusion to ensure success at school). However the Year Eleven students cite the importance of their OP score as their motivating force to ensure future life success, whilst the Year Nine students suggest reasons that fit more with their immediate context, such as keeping teachers happy (int., 04, J.A), not getting into trouble (int., 04, K.S) and not standing out too much in front of their peers (int., 04, J.O).

Certain behaviours are described as necessary to ensure a smooth experience at school. Jane indicates that one measure of success at school is good behaviour which includes ‘listening, paying attention, doing work, putting up your hand and having a go’ (int., 04, J.O). Each of these participants suggest similar types of behaviour in the focus group interview, for example ‘good’ students must ‘be quiet’, and ‘girls must be ladylike’ and ‘need to sit in certain ways’ (f.g., 05, 9). These are all states of body that are inscribed into school discourse from a young age (Kamler, 1997b), and many are gendered performances that are normalised in this setting. Rachel explains in Text 53 that behaviour must be controlled and regulated so as not to compromise one’s moral integrity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text 53</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MR: Do you think you have the same sorts of values as the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF: Yeah I think so… I like to get the most out of things, like I don’t just… if I’ve got homework I don’t just copy out of the back of the book, ’cause it’s not gunna help me, so that’s what they always say… if you copy out of the back of the book you’re only cheating yourself… (int., 04, K.S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She, more than the other Year Nine participants slips easily and readily into the favoured school discourse of self-regulation (Kohli, 1998) for one’s own good.

Expectations of curriculum documents are compatible with the notion of intellectualisation explored in this study. The Year Nine participants

| English syllabus and school program requirements that call for evidence of critical analysis, challenging of perspectives, development of deep knowledge and understanding, and complex thinking (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a), are examples of some of the right behaviours expected of these students. |
show some evidence of intellectualisation in their discussions about the magazine texts they created for English (level 1 data). For example deep knowledge and understanding about how particular aspects of texts can influence and contribute to the meanings made from texts, is evident in the accounts of these young people.

Text 54

MR: So, you've got certain things in for example, bold type.
JO: Yeah
MR: What do you think that might say to the reader?
JO: Um, like it might be more important than other stuff, like it emphasises something, like cause they're capitals, like it's true or something like that.
MR: Ok, um, and do you think you've used particular punctuation or grammar?
JO: Um, for the different ones, different things I used different things, like over here, smaller, laid-back, so I just used plain font.
MR: So you think the editorial is more casual.
JO: Yeah, and in the drugs one, it's probably more serious because it's a serious issue. And everybody needs to know that it's not a muck-around thing... It's serious and you need to be careful with what you do.
MR: Right. So you decided that you'd be more careful about your language and show that it was a serious issue through the language you're using?
JO: Yeah (int., 03, J.O)

Jane shows that she understands how surface features of language, for example bold type and capitalisation can signify particular meanings such as importance or truth. She is also cognizant of the power of interpersonal functions of language on the message being portrayed as she suggests that a ‘laid-back’ or informal tenor can indicate more lightweight or frivolous meanings, whilst a ‘serious’ tenor indicates serious or important issues under discussion. Kirsty similarly shows understanding of how the layout of popular culture texts is purposefully designed with the characteristics of particular audiences in mind. She suggests that material aimed at
teenagers needs to include a variety of modes and fonts, a mixture of light and serious material and should be visually stimulating because teenagers ‘get bored easily’, and such features will ensure that they ‘keep flipping through’ (int., 03, K.S). Rachel and Jenna show evidence of critical analysis, for example Rachel asserts that the beliefs of an author mean that they exclude certain information or perspectives: ‘It depends on what the belief of the person is, writing the book. If they believe in certain elements, then they’ll leave bits out… like I think history is really what they want you to know’ (int., 03, R.F). Jenna analyses her magazine text in a way that shows her deep understanding of how persuasive advertising texts work to manipulate audiences.

**Text 55**

**MR:** So just explain to me then, where you've got the visuals from, and why you've chosen these particular visuals?

**JA:** Oh, well I chose like the picture to be bright and fresh and everything.

**MR:** So this is the ad for the skin cleanser, is there a reason why you thought that should be bright and fresh?

**JA:** Yeah, cause like, it's supposed to make your skin bright and fresh and clean...

**MR:** So you wanted the ad to reflect that?

**JA:** Yeah

**MR:** What about in the Surfer Chick ad... why did you choose those particular visuals?

**JA:** Um, like the picture there, to be on the beach... I kind of made the boy stand out a bit, which I don't think is good, but... and they're happy.

**MR:** Why do you think the boy stands out more?

**JA:** 'Cause he's the one standing up there in the middle, and he's bigger, and he's the one with the surfboard.

**MR:** So you think he stands out more, but you didn't really intend to do that?

**JA:** No

**MR:** The way that those people in there are drawn... Do you think that says something in particular about people who might be into surfing?

**JA:** Yeah, like they're fit, athletic, and their bodies are like... a bit more muscle and slimmer or whatever.

**MR:** So what message do you think that might convey to people?

**JA:** Probably a bit of a negative, like... stereotype one... like only people who are really skinny and that,
should be doing surfing and on the beach and everything.

MR: Is that your view?
JA: No, cause I don't like stereotypes like that, but you can't really help what other people think.
MR: So why do you think you put the ad in like that then?
JA: Like most girls are really into what they look like, and want really nice clothes... yeah
MR: So do you think for example, that if you put a person who looked like they were inactive and maybe overweight and so on, do you think that would have made a good ad?
JA: Not really. If I'd been like, good politically... or whatever you call it...?
MR: Politically correct
JA: Yeah... but um...
MR: In reality...
JA: In reality people should be allowed to wear whatever they want, but a lot of people would see that and go, yuck, I don't want to wear stuff like that.
MR: So in an ad like that, you think that's why... and you've put in people that look like that... and do you think in advertising generally, that's what they do?
JA: Yeah, they put in what people want to see. (int., 03, J.A)

Jenna evidently understands the power of visual text in terms of how the colours and space can signify meanings such as ‘bright and fresh and clean’ to emulate the results of using the advertised product on your skin. Aspects of size, ratio and position of the elements within the visual text are explained in terms of how they position the importance of the characters. She also indicates the stereotypical portrayal of teenagers on the beach, and touches on gender issues as she argues that the creator of an advertisement is not necessarily depicting their own values, but rather is playing to the market, and tapping into the desires of the consumer. Jenna shows the most sophisticated analytical skills of the Year Nine group as she describes the shaping of her own multimodal text.

In juxtaposition, to these examples of intellectualisation, there is also evidence that little thought has gone into the impact of particular visuals or hyperlinks in multimodal texts. Rachel indicates that she simply ‘cut a page out of Dolly magazine and stuck it on’ (int., 03, R.F) for her visuals in one section, with no regard for particular meanings or different perspectives. She also suggests that ‘you get better marks if you have pictures’, and ‘I haven’t really thought about why the hyperlinks are there’ which indicates that she sees little value in the impact of visual text, apart from the aesthetic impact on the teacher. She seems to
Donnelly denigrates the views of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association for viewing “education as a ‘social and historical construction’ that ‘typically serves the interests of particular social groups at the expense of others’”. Based on the work of French leftist Pierre Bourdieu, the association argues that teachers must acknowledge the ‘role of education in the reproduction and transformation of society’” (Donnelly, 2006). He suggests that such a view of education undermines its true value, which is mastery of facts, right answers and basic skills. Teachers are increasingly under attack by those such as Donnelly for teaching in ways that encourage social transformation and problematising of viewpoints.

Similarly, Jane and Kirsty show little willingness to engage in critical analysis or resistant readings of texts or contexts, by simply agreeing with any suggestions that I make to prompt resistant readings. For example, when I suggest that some of their work could be produced in a different way or that their values have been shaped by socio-historical contexts, they agree, however neglect to elaborate or make further comment. Their agreement in these instances seems to be simply a collusionary move in the interview, where my authority prevails over their ignorance. The expectations from syllabus documents and school programs seems to only extend so far, for example these Year Nine students are able to produce texts which display certain features that they have learned in class, such as the impact of surface features, however they do not show consistent evidence of being able to critically analyse their own work in relation to broader social discourses, and no evidence of problematising their own practices outside of school.

8.2.3 Youth described as insular and frivolous

Youth are described in these accounts as concerned about social aspects of school rather than achievement, as well as finding ways to reduce work and avoid engaging with serious issues at school. When each of the Year Nine participants was asked what they thought was the best thing about school, or how they would describe
According to Donnelly, “the traditional academic curriculum has been jettisoned for ideology” (Donnelly, 2006). It is important to note the reluctance of these Year Nine students to engage with ideological issues. It seems that neither the academic curriculum nor ideology is being favoured in the school discourse worlds of these students.

school, their answers focused upon social aspects. For example, Jane initially says, ‘I don’t know… I should say education…’, however when prompted to speak freely, she suggests that ‘socialising with people’ and ‘having fun being with your friends’ (l.c., 02, J.O) are the aspects of school that she prefers. Similarly, Jenna cites ‘getting to see my friends’ (l.c., 02, J.A) as her favoured aspect of school, Kirsty maintains that ‘it’s fun, you can meet your friends and hang out with other people’ (l.c., 02, K.S), and Rachel says ‘it’s not my favourite place to be, but I like to come here and spend time with my friends’ (l.c., 02, R.F). The lexical link between each of these responses is the participant ‘friends’, and even though these students know what ‘good’ students should say about school, as evidenced by Jane’s modal ‘should’ to me as adult educator in this learning conversation, their focus at this point in their school lives is on performances of self within the social discourses of peer groups.

It seems apparent that one of the valued discourses of the peer group for these Year Nine participants, is finding ways to reduce or avoid work, whilst still maintaining a reasonable student record so as not to be perceived as ‘trouble’ at school. Rachel explains that ‘a lot of kids don’t want to do LOTE (Languages Other Than English). They only do it because they don’t want to have to do much work, and because they don’t get much homework or things like that, they just like think it’s a bludge subject, so everybody chooses that’ (int., 04, R.F). Rachel appropriately distances herself in this interview with me from such a ‘work avoidance’ discourse, through her use of the pronoun ‘they’, however it is positioned as a normal and accepted discourse in her school world with her use of ‘everybody’. Kirsty alludes to a similar discourse as she explains how some students take short-cuts in assignment work: ‘If you get an assignment and you have to read a book for it, I’ve found they just watch the movie, which is smart…’ (int., 04, K.S). She positions herself as someone who likes to read books, and as such in a similar manner to Rachel, she distances herself from this discourse with her pronoun ‘they’, however
The English syllabus states that in demonstrating outcomes in the cultural strand “students know about and use their knowledge of how texts are influenced by the cultures and times within which they are interpreted and constructed. Students demonstrate understandings of the ways in which people shape texts according to cultural purposes” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a). Whilst there may be some understanding from these students about cultural influence on text, there seems to be little interrogation of the ways in which schools endorse particular cultural versions of knowledge or pedagogy or achievement. The ‘school way’ is the accepted way, and for these students there is no real need to disrupt this status quo.

It seems that these students try to please teachers without introducing undue complications. Some of the interview questions focused upon looking at different perspectives in relation to cultural or racial issues. Kirsty was asked whether she tries to include different perspectives, for example of accounts of war in history, when she completes assignments, she says: ‘It would be interesting… I’ve thought about it a couple of times, but I don’t think I ended up doing it…’ (int., 04, K.S). Jane also answers in almost a non-committal way when asked about Australian Indigenous culture and history: ‘I don’t know much about Aboriginals (sic). I know we came… Europeans came and settled and they were fighting, but that’s about all I know’ (int., 04, J.O). There doesn’t seem to be an emphasis in either of these instances on critical engagement with issues, and by the accounts of these students, they are able to progress satisfactorily at school without such engagement. Both of
these answers suggest that as these students are part of a favoured, white Western society, they don’t need to problematise or question issues or accounts of history, as they are empowered by such accounts. Jane earlier showed evidence of understanding that history is written from a particular perspective; however it doesn’t seem crucial to these students that they investigate this concept or try to understand which conflicting interests may contribute to readings of history, or why particular versions are endorsed in certain contexts.

8.3 Discourses of Society

For this section, I identified nodes or strands of talk which illustrated discourses of society as legitimated in the accounts of the Year Nine youth participants. From this I grouped together particular instances of talk about teenagers, sexuality, race, gender, religion, society, language and power, social life, parents, self-regulation, counter-hegemony and resistance. These were favoured topics for the participants in their talk (see section 6.5.2 for an outline of these topics within the coding nodes), and they relate specifically to issues in society. I have used the same common themes from sections 8.1 and 8.2 to organise my analysis (as explained in the introduction to this chapter) as these were traceable through various threads of the data, across different texts and from each of the three participants. In this section, these themes relate more specifically to social issues, rather than the foci on youth life-worlds or schooling as were the cases in the previous sections.

8.3.1 Youth represented through bodily practices

Gender is conspicuous by its absence in advertised employment positions such as those in newspapers and on websites ("Career One: Positions Vacant,"), as gendered language, by law, is no longer permitted to be used. It is interesting to note that the Year Nine girls in this study do not see the opportunities for women as equal to those of men, yet official offers of employment must be seen to be advocating equality for gender.

The Year Nine participants are aware of themselves and others as gendered and cultured bodies, and although they are able to position themselves as politically correct, they show evidence of deep investment in their own
Government publications such as those on the Workchoices website about AWAs indicate that there have been ‘more job opportunities created for women’ (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations). There is obviously still a need, according to such documents, to create opportunities for women, even though the abolition of gendered employment positions was enacted decades ago.

At the same time, these participants indicate that pink and candy are appropriate for girls (l.c., 02, K.S); that they all want to be mums one day (f.g., 05, 9); that women are better at cleaning than men (int., 04, R.F); and that the word ‘lady’ is interchangeable with the word ‘woman’ (int., 03, J.A). They also position women as compliant and needy in Text 56.

Text 56

MR: Do you think some women want to work for themselves, as in; they want a role or an identity that is outside being a mother or a wife?
RF: I think women need to feel needed, so for some, when their kids start growing up and don’t need them as much, they want to work so they feel needed by somebody...
MR: Do you think women are seen as needy but men are not seen as needy…?
JO: I think women want to help out, like they always ask if something needs to be done… but men don’t… they just think oh she’s doing ok so they don’t bother asking. (f.g., 05, 9)
Women are spoken into the roles of nurturer and carer as Rachel and Jane interpolate or make judgements about how ‘women’ as a collective generalised participant feel and act in society. Such a reductionist view of gender fails to recognise the complexities of subjectification and positioning (Davies, 2003; Weedon, 1997), so even though women are a discursively constituted group, they are not all the same, nor does each individual have a single, static identity. These participants are drawing on their deeply inscribed experiences of gender to explain the way particular (female or male) bodies behave and feel.

Culture and religion are salient issues for these participants, as they describe practices that are important in their lives. Jenna explains how her behaviour must conform to her religion’s expectations, for example she can’t take up too much time watching television or movies (l.c., 02, J.A), and both Kirsty and Rachel indicate that there are expectations from family and/or the Christian community with regard to attending religious services (l.c., 02, R.F) and or taking part in religious activities such as Sunday School (l.c., 02, K.S). Such expectations are not described as onerous or unreasonable, but rather as the way things are. This aspect of the participants’ lived experiences is one that invites contradiction. Whilst Christian ethos involves tolerance and acceptance of others’ beliefs and practices, there is also a definite sense that Christianity is true and right, and is the measure by which others will be judged. For example Rachel suggests that ignorance might be a reason that people criticize other religions, and she advocates learning about other religions or cultures to promote tolerance, however her reasoning about other religions, indicates that ‘it’s probably not all bad…’ (int., 04, R.F). Her use of low modality with ‘probably’, and the intensifier ‘all’ for the attribute ‘bad’ suggest that she herself is not sure about such different beliefs, and that at least some of those beliefs must be bad, even if they are not ‘all’ bad. Similarly, Jane disapproves of stereotypes with regard to particular cultures or religions in Text 57.

**Text 57**

**MR:** Why do you think some people talk about people in other cultures or other countries, in disparaging ways? You know, like say negative stuff about them…

**JO:** Because they don't understand their culture, they don't understand their religion, and they think, oh these Muslims are gunna blow everybody up, but it's not, it's just certain people who have taken the Bible
Sheik Hilali is quoted in the Australian as criticizing Prime Minister Howard’s comments about extremist views “His comments will only magnify the wave of antagonism and hate towards Muslims” (Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006). His use of the material process ‘magnify’ suggests that there is already a ‘wave of antagonism and hate towards Muslims’ in Australia. In many ways, such antagonism is caused by partial perspectives and emotive reports in the media.

Whilst Jane rejects such stereotypical racist views, she still posits the Christian Bible as the true citation of religious beliefs, which has been ‘switched… around’ by other groups. She also suggests that Muslim beliefs are acceptable and she feels ‘comfortable’ with them now because she has found out that they are very similar to beliefs in Christianity. She uses cause and effect to suggest that the reason we should accept Muslims is that they can be compared favourably with Christians.

It is difficult to de-rail or problematise ingrained hegemonic values, and as MacNaughton (1998) suggests, at any point in time ‘contradictory discourses about what is normal, right and best circulate and compete with each other (p. 160), so it is not so much about what is ‘true’ or ‘right’, rather which is dominant at a particular time. For these Year Nine participants at this time, they are happy to accept and participate in particular bodily practices and beliefs that are established by their parents and influential community groups, and to judge others according to their investments in such practices and beliefs.

8.3.2 Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour

Alongside the expectations from peers and teachers, these participants are cognizant of particular expectations that are placed on them by their parents and by broader
society. The teenage subject is one that invites comment and judgement since ‘youth’ as a category is commonly used for institutional and policy purposes (Wyn & White, 1997) and popular culture texts carry ideological overtones which are often implicit, contradictory and manipulative in their construction of youth and youth behaviour (Giroux, 1996; Kanpol, 1997). These young people are explicitly aware of media images and the positioning of them as a group, however as these particular youth do not consider that they display many of the characteristics of such media portrayals, they find them unfair and unjustified. For example Jenna comments on what she sees as the negative portrayal of teenagers in the media in **Text 58**.

**Text 58**

MR: Why did you choose that topic, about teen curfew?
JA: Um, because it would affect a lot of people, and if it did come in, I'd be pretty …
MR: Disadvantaged?
JA: Not really, but... it... I know that it would affect a lot of people and it'd make a lot of people unhappy.
MR: Do you think it's an example of trying to control teenagers?
JA: Yeah, like the Government and adults have a negative opinion of teenagers, like in the newspapers and everything... they always have articles about... teenagers doing bad stuff...
MR: So you think in the media, teenagers are very often portrayed negatively?
JA: Yeah
MR: And what do you feel about that?
JA: It's pretty unfair, and they kind of pick on a few people who are... the negative image... and they imply... they make it that everybody is like that.
MR: So they try and normalise that sort of behaviour as if all teenagers are like that. And generally people that you mix with... do you find that they're like that?
JA: No, not my friends, but you see a few people around the school. (int., 03, J.A)

Jenna establishes a number of distinct categories in this text. She draws a definite binary between adults and teenagers, where control and regulation is on the adult side. She lexically links ‘Government’, ‘adults’ and ‘negative opinion’ in response to my interview question, which explores the notion of control that she introduced through a letter to the editor about a teen curfew in her magazine text (level 1 data). She then goes on to draw a dualism between ‘good’ teenagers who display the right behaviour, and ‘bad’ teenagers who display the type of behaviour that draws criticism and negative media and adult attention. She places herself in the ‘good’ group by her description of such portrayals as ‘unfair”; her explanation that such portrayals do not
The Burchell (2006) article about the Cronulla riots in the Australian newspaper reports that “Religious leaders, prominent local surfers and sports stars, and even some among the troublemakers, were painstakingly posing hand in hand for media photos”. Media images are powerful and prolific, and this quote suggests through the use of the circumstance ‘painstakingly’ to intensify the behavioural process ‘were posing’, that even if something is not ‘true’ which in this case is racial harmony, it can be set up to look that way.

Jenna does not seem to recognise the complexity of subjectification where teenagers are not necessarily ‘bad’ or ‘good’, but that at different times, and with different motivations, they display behaviours that are considered by some groups for example adults or Christian groups or other teenagers, to be inappropriate, but by other groups, such as peers or adult friends, to be quite appropriate and even necessary. The difficulty of negotiating these different expectations can mean that the difference between success and failure in particular discourse worlds of these young people is not predictable, nor is it simply a case of right and wrong behaviour.

The expectations of parents and broader society that these young people draw into the discourse tend to focus on their bodies, as though teenagers can not be trusted to take care of themselves. There is the issue of body image which relates to highly publicized accounts of teenage eating disorders. Rachel is aware of such public rhetoric, and she ensures that as a ‘good’ teenager she makes her views known about this and other issues. She says ‘I don’t diet or anything. It’s kind of like a waste of time, ’cause we’re still growing, so like you could grow higher and be really skinny, so I think people shouldn’t worry about their weight while they’re teenagers. It’s important that we eat stuff, like eat well, because if we don’t, then we’re gunna… like, not grow how we’re supposed to and everything’ (int., 03, R.F). She specifically draws ‘teenagers’ as a group into the discourse about eating and body image, and uses a cause and effect structure to support her statements with health related claims. The idea of ‘teenage-hood’ as a
time of transition is introduced here by Rachel as she says ‘we’re still growing’ and ‘while they’re teenagers’, as though this is a rite of passage and if you don’t take care of yourself properly and be patient, you either won’t make it to adulthood, or you at least won’t make it in the desired or appropriate way. Her linguistic tactic of switching from ‘we’ where she is included in the group known as ‘teenagers’ to ‘they’, where she then excludes herself from the sub-group of teenagers who worry about their weight and don’t eat properly, positions her as knowing what the ‘right’ behaviour is, and being able to reject the negative indictments aimed at teenagers in the media.

Kirsty suggests that teenagers are particularly susceptible to drugs as she explains why she has included information about drugs in her magazine text (level 1 data). She indicates that it may be more of a boy problem because ‘girls look after themselves better than boys, but they both get into drugs’ (int., 03, K.S). The familiar gendered discourse of girls being well-groomed and more meticulous with their appearance and care of their bodies is evident here in Kirsty’s talk. Jane also suggests that drug use is common for teenagers and she says ‘I think they should have a serious think about it before they do it, instead of just caving in. I know it would be hard, but you’ve gotta be strong and say no’ (int., 03, J.O). Jane uses first person to make judgements about the unnamed teenage textual interlocutors who take drugs. She excludes herself from any such activity by using ‘they’, and she offers understanding through her use of the finite element in ‘would be hard’ to describe the problem of resisting peer pressure. Her solution in this problem/solution cohesive structure is to ‘be strong and say no’, which is the health message given to teenagers through schools, media campaigns and drug education courses. She knows what the ‘right’ expectations are, and at this time in her life she seems happy to comply.

8.3.3 Youth described as insular and frivolous

Social issues are not described with a high level of importance for the Year Nine participants in this study. They are not in need of emancipation as such, and issues such as racism, corporate activity and political debate or action do not seem to affect them in their everyday lives. Their priorities appear to change (Wright et al., 2005) quite regularly as evidenced by comments about their magazine texts (level 1 data) which they had produced a month or two prior to my face-to-face contact with them,
where comments such as ‘that was so five minutes ago’ and ‘I’m so over that’ were common. Salient issues at this time in their lives do not include social causes or prompts to social action. Consequently, the talk around such issues largely indicates a sense of disinterest, ignorance and apathy. For example both Kirsty and Rachel indicate a lack of knowledge about moral or political issues such as treatment of refugees or government action or policy, and they suggest that ‘it doesn’t really worry me at the moment’ (int., 04, K.S) and ‘I don’t really follow that kind of thing’ (int., 04, R.F). When Kirsty was asked about whether different versions of History or culture such as Indigenous or Asian should be included in the school curriculum, she says ‘Well I spose if you’re interested you should, but if you’re not, then I don’t think it really matters…’ (int., 04, K.S). Each of these comments shows low modality and interest with mood adjuncts such as ‘really’ and the mental process ‘suppose’. They also indicate that when it comes time to vote ‘I’ll just ask my parents’ (int., 04, K.S) and ‘My Dad’s always voted Labour, so I’ll just vote Labour too’ (int., 04, R.F). There seems to be a level of ignorance about social issues, which Jane attributes to being insulated by the media.

Text 59

MR: Do you think you'd ever take a stand, like maybe not go and eat at McDonalds or not buy certain sorts of shoes, because of that?

JO: Um, maybe... it depends on how bad the situation is, I guess.

MR: Do you think that just doesn't occur to most people?

JO: Yeah, it didn't really occur to me until you said it just then, because I don't think... I've been kept away from that, kind of... by the media and stuff. (int., 04, J.O)

Jane also displays low modality with mental processes such as ‘I guess’ and ‘I don’t think’, and the modal adverb ‘maybe’. She isn’t directly affected by these issues, and they are not necessarily high profile in the media that she is exposed to or invests in, therefore they can be happily excluded from her discourse worlds. Kirsty shows little understanding of cultural or religious difference with regards to women in Text 60. Her focus is on states of dress, rather than any other significant issues in the lives of women.

Text 60

MR: Do you think women are marginalised in our society?
Sheik Hilali criticizes Prime Minister Howard’s comments about Islam “His views on both jihad and the treatment of women in Islam are reflective of a primary school student’s views” (Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006).

According to this article, there is a view from the Islamic community in Australia that ignorance of their customs and beliefs is the main reason for public hatred towards them.

KS: I think we're pretty good in Australia, but like in other countries... like in Iraq and those kinds of places where they have to wear those things over their faces, that's just stupid. (int., 04, K.S)

She shows little understanding of the significance of the hijab or headscarf (Abdel-Fattah, 2005) that is worn by many Muslim women, nor of other forms of cultural or religious dress which require women to cover their faces and bodies. She dismisses such customs as ‘just stupid’ with seemingly no desire to learn about why some women are required to, or choose to wear such dress, and how this relates to their status in society, their moral character or their treatment by patriarchal males. Not only do these Year Nine students lack knowledge and interest about social issues, they tend to be apathetic about them, with largely no real desire to become involved in discussion or action about any particular issue.

Text 61

MR: So you don't think you'd ever take a stand about something?
JA: Not really, I'm just a like... personal person, like if I think something I like... keep it to myself.
MR: If you don't agree with those sorts of things, how do you think that they can change... if you don't say anything?
JA: I don't know... actually, that's the question, like... that's just the way I am, and my parents are... just don't do stuff like that.
MR: Do you think there'd be any other way you could disagree or take a stand without being right out in public or vocal about it?
JA: I don't know, not really... I spose there is... but, I can't think of any. (int., 04, J.A)

Jenna indicates in Text 61 that she doesn’t have the personality to take a stand about an issue ‘that’s just the way I am’ as though she has a fixed, unchangeable identity; and that she follows her parents’ example by keeping things to herself, which authenticates her behaviour as appropriate. She indicates little desire to find out if
there is a way to take action without public display, through her low modality and uncertainty with ‘I don’t know… actually’ and ‘not really’. Jane similarly suggests that some issues such as ‘the refugee situation’ are ‘just too confusing… I don’t think I’d get involved in that… I’d definitely rather stay out of it…’ (int., 04, J.O). She shows uncertainty about what to believe from the media in terms of genuine refugees compared with illegal immigrants, so instead of finding out more about such issues, she would ‘definitely rather stay out of it’. Despite this viewpoint from Jane, she shows more than the other Year Nine participants, some indication that she is willing to take a stand on an issue that she feels strongly about. She included a letter to the editor in her magazine text (level 1 data) about the Iraq war, and she suggests that she saw it on the news, so she ‘went and typed it up and more points kept coming up, so I just kept writing’ (int., 03, J.O). She says that ‘the hostages and killing people were bad’, so she ‘felt pretty strongly about it’. Jane’s response to emotive portrayals on television news and current affairs shows about treatment of hostages is fairly typical. Such graphic images appeal to the emotions, and effectively drag such issues into public consciousness in order to increase ratings and newspaper sales. Jane wasn’t prepared to write a letter to the editor of a real newspaper or magazine; however she expressed her views for her teacher in this assignment, which positions her as someone who cares about social justice, and is therefore enacting some of the desired outcomes of curriculum documents.

In summary, there were three main themes located in the Year Nine data, which were:

- Youth represented through bodily practices
- Youth positioned through expectations of the right behaviour
- Youth described as insular and frivolous

These participants accounted for quite different priorities to their Year Eleven counterparts. They were most concerned with maintaining the status quo, by behaving in ways that were neither too ‘good’ nor too ‘bad’, so as to keep a relatively low profile. They indicated that their main interest in school at this stage in their lives was the social aspect of meeting and interacting with friends, and they showed no real desire to engage with any issues of a serious or important nature either at school or in society.
8.4 Reflections on Part D

Part D of this thesis has conveyed the story of the research through a pastiche of (re)presentation, which included cross-sections of data with analysis, interwoven with other texts to illustrate some of the macro-discourses at play within and around the study. In constructing this pastiche, I was conscious of the powerful intertextual links that shape and are shaped by any text and context. I have endeavoured to capture the kaleidoscopic nature of both this study and the lives of the participants within it. I found that the post-structural lens offered me a way to (re)present the possibilities for multiple interpretations.

The notion of intertextuality was useful as it linked my theoretical framework of critical post-structuralism and to my analytical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This compelled me to consider the local data texts (transcripts of learning conversations and interviews) as well as the global texts (popular and/or ‘official’ texts) that I have woven through; in terms of: micro textual elements, the discursive contexts, and the macro discourses surrounding the texts. In this way I was able to capture the notions of intersection and overlap within and between each text, and at every level of analysis.

Within the discourse areas of youth, schooling and society for each group, I used examples from the data to illustrate my analysis. I was conscious that I needed to include enough examples to provide the reader with a sense of trustworthiness, yet too many examples would have increased the wordiness of the thesis. To this end, I have attempted to include examples that point to significant ‘instances’ (Freebody, 2003) within the data, that enable the reader to acknowledge my (necessarily partial) interpretations, whilst at the same time inviting diverse interpretations.

The multimodal presentation helped me in some ways to reflect the multiliterate environments of the youth participants, as I considered the visual, spatial and linguistic impact of these chapters. My investment in these different designs of meaning compelled me to consider the ways in which I could disrupt the linear trajectory for the reader so that they too could experience the sense of intersection,
contradiction and multiplicity of choice that comprises the worlds of these young people.

I found that the division of Part D into two separate chapters highlighted the differences that I found between the two data sets. For example, a focus for the Year Eleven group on individual school success and the negotiation of slippery roles and sliding scales of expectation as they played out their bodily performances of individual agency. On the other hand, there was a much greater emphasis for the Year Nine group on social aspects of their life-worlds and school-worlds as they engaged in more frivolous and insular performances of self. This division of the analysis of the data sets, more easily enabled me to draw out the comparisons and contrasts that I elaborate on in Part E of this thesis.
Part E

Discussion and Implications

Understanding the Kaleidoscope
The major thrust of this thesis has been to explore the enactment of the tenets of critical pedagogy in the lives of youth who are growing up in a globalised, multiliterate world, and for whom emancipation is not a key issue in their personal lives. The visual metaphor of the kaleidoscope has been utilised as a way of explaining my understandings and (re)presentations of the study. The kaleidoscope signifies multiplicity and complexity within the lives of the youth participants as their priorities shift and change. I found the metaphor useful to reconcile the notion that whilst these young people are all different individuals with different priorities, cultural artefacts, lived experiences and processes of subjectification, there were also discernible patterns in the ways that they interact within the discourse worlds that they inhabit. The capacity of the kaleidoscope to create a completely new and different pattern with only a slight shift of the optical device helped me to clarify my understandings about how any (small) difference in the subjectivities of these young people, such as a different experience, a different belief, a different sexual orientation, a different gender, a different class and so on, could shift their perspective on life, their beliefs and values, and their approach to any task. This was important for the study’s theorising of ‘youth’ as multi-faceted, rather than unitary and homogenous.

The kaleidoscope metaphor was also useful as I attempted to find a way to (re)present the study within contradictory academic discourses. I was cognisant of the ‘textual collusion’ (Fuller & Lee, 1997) that the conduct of this study necessitated for me as a doctoral student, as the academic world requires me to structure my thesis in a recognisable pattern so that it can be examined according to university regulations. However, my poststructural theorising suggests difference and multiplicity as starting points, and encourages me to disrupt and problematise the ‘normal’. In this way, the
kaleidoscope metaphor allowed me to reconcile such tensions as I considered that the more traditional structure of chapters in the thesis denoted the patterns in the kaleidoscope. Intersecting such patterns, the complexity and difference utilised to disrupt the ‘normal’ was achieved through: the multi-linear (re)presentations of the data in Part D, including the weaving of ‘macro’ texts through the analysis; the oscillation between a ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ (Miller & Fox, 2004) approach to the data analysis using Nvivo software to organise and retrieve ‘nodes’ within the data (outlined in Part C); the participatory nature (Smith, 2005) of my role as reflexive researcher in the (re)presentation (explained in Parts A and C); and the use of ‘arts-based inquiry’ (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b) elements as I endeavoured to understand the study using a visual metaphor (Parts A and E).

The theoretical perspective of (critical) poststructuralism has been integral as it enabled me to see how a ‘complimentary thesis’ (Peters, 2003) could be utilised to make visible the ‘other’ and to problematise the ‘normal’; yet at the same time to see the potential for transformation and the possibility of generative effects. These young people have shown me that their lives are complicated and slippery, and that any attempt to foster an emancipatory attitude would necessitate an investigation of their often contradictory processes of subjectification.

The use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) both as an analytical tool and as a guiding methodology have informed the overall organisation of this thesis into the three discourse areas of youth, schooling and society that emerged from the data as the patterns which connect these young people. My focus on both the micro and macro elements of the local and global data texts, enabled me to situate my findings within broader institutional and societal discourses, while remaining confident that such findings were supported by my detailed linguistic analyses (Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, 2004).

Chapter Nine addresses the research questions by reiterating significant findings from the study. This includes highlighting comparisons and contrasts between the Year Eleven data and the Year Nine data, as understood through reference to the literature which has informed the study. This chapter also offers some concluding thoughts and recommendations for educators, education authorities and researchers.
Chapter Nine

Concluding Thoughts, Implications and Reflections

Part D of this thesis includes extensive analysis and discussion of the data and the macro influences on the study. Rather than a repetitive explanation of the data, I use this chapter to draw together the major findings related to the guiding research questions. I then focus upon the implications for relevant interlocuters in the study.

9.1 Embodied Multiliterate Practices

The practices that the youth participants in this study account for are numerous and changeable. They can not be homogenously labelled as ‘cyber-kids’ at the expense of other embodied practices (Facer & Furlong, 2001). They invest in technology; however it is posited as only one resource or cultural artefact (Rossi-Landi, 1977) in their repertoire of artefacts. They variously place just as much importance on other practices such as: drama, music, paid work (Year Eleven), craft, horse-riding, helping Mum (Year Nine), sport and religious practices (Years Nine and Eleven). These depend upon salient needs, interests and priorities at any one time (Wright et al., 2005).

When information and communication technologies are drawn into the accounts of the discourse worlds of these young people, there is an acceptance of both control and disruption of control regarding their practices. This notion of control in relation to such technologies is evident in accounts that cite school control of time and resources (Year Nine and Eleven); consistent with the work of Selwyn (2003) and Blackman (1998) who position schools as sites of control. It is also evident in accounts by Jane (Year Nine) and Paul (Year Eleven) who respectively discuss the control of technology by males. In Jane’s account, an adult male (her father) is afforded control of computer hardware, which limits her access to such devices and therefore to the internet. In Paul’s account he is positioned as ‘in control’ of hardware devices (Paul has two computers in his bedroom, which means his sister must access them under his supervision). He freely and often covertly accesses particular internet sites and he goes to X-Box parties where the boys play HALO (Bungie.net) and other games; and sometimes a girl (Ellen) goes along to watch. This resonates with McNamee’s (1998)
findings, whereby computer games are used as objects of power and control by boys as they erode the time available for girls to access the hardware. The disruptions of control, on the other hand, are evident in accounts of both groups as they explain their uses of technology for illegal downloading of popular culture; for unacknowledged use of material in assignments; and for online activities of which their parents are unaware (see Paul’s accounts). Walkerdine’s (1999) notion of unsupervised spaces is useful to understand these practices, as is the work of Kenway and Bullen (2001), along with Kellner (2002) and Butcher and Thomas (2003) who suggest that cyberspace is a sphere in which adult control can be excluded. It seems that depending upon the context and the participants, control becomes a relative term within the discourses of information and communication technologies.

Multiliteracies are not simply related to ‘new technologies’, but rather to different designs or modes through which meaning is constructed (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004; The New London Group, 2000). For these young people, gestural (or bodily) designs are a particular focus. Both the Year Nine and Year Eleven students draw the body into the discourse as a marker of personality, of moral values, of popularity, of ‘good’-ness or ‘bad’-ness and of discrimination. This is consistent with popular culture texts (for example, Optus, undated) which foreground the body in relation to youth culture and popularity. Central to such constructions is the strong emphasis on regulation and control of the body (Foucault, 1977; Kohli, 1998) as a crucial aim or expectation. These young people invest heavily in neo-liberal notions of self-actualisation, self-regulation and individual decision-making (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Côté, 2002a; Phoenix, 2003; Singh et al., 2005) in order to reap the rewards of individual success and legitimised compliance.

9.2 Intellectualisation of Youth Culture and Practices

The Year Eleven youth in this study show strong capabilities with regards to intellectualisation of texts. They display deep knowledge, use of metalanguage and critical analysis of issues embedded in popular culture texts. The Year Nines showed significantly less propensity for deep analysis or the use of metalanguage, focusing more on surface features of text as a way of explaining their potential to manipulate or persuade the reader’s or viewer’s emotions or investments. This more superficial
level of intellectualisation from the Year Nines, compared with deeper levels of intellectualisation from the Year Elevens, seems to be consistent with the way students are positioned in schools and by policy documents. The middle years of schooling (including Year Nine) are constructed as important socially (see for example, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000), and as ‘transition’ years for senior (Education Queensland, 2003; Soares, 2000), where the ‘real business’ of schooling begins. This view is also explicit in the Year Eleven accounts and implicit in the Year Nine accounts. These students are aware of the focus on social development in the middle years, and on academic success in senior schooling, and their behaviours are consistent with such expectations.

This superficial level of intellectualisation is also evident in the Year Nine data related to social issues and practices. While they make some attempt to intellectualise texts, they make very little attempt to intellectualise social issues and practices. Instead they show evidence in their accounts of frivolous and insular views that tend to indicate a sense of disinterest, apathy or ignorance. These levels of intellectualisation can be understood in relation to the Queensland English syllabus (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005a) which portrays contradictory discourses relating to the intellectualisation of texts as core business, versus notions of active civic participation. In this sense, it is understandable that teachers and students take intellectualisation and critical analysis only to the text level, rather than problematising macro discourses and individual levels of investment. Social causes and political positions have no salience for this younger group, who tends to trivialise such issues or regurgitate stereotypical and popular media viewpoints.

The Year Eleven group also show fewer propensities to intellectualise social issues or practices (as opposed to texts). However, rather than disengaging in such issues as evidenced by the Year Nines, they tend to display evidence of more varied and contradictory responses. For example, they claim ‘political correctness’, ‘anti-discrimination’ and social justice ideals as important values on the one hand (as endorsed at school), which is consistent with Turner’s (2004) findings. At the same time they engage in a version of Singh’s (2005) notion of a ‘politics of resentment’ whereby they dismiss racial (and gender) issues as money-spinners or as unnecessary
whingeing on the part of those ‘othered’ groups to whom they attribute blame for wanting to cause trouble or disrupt the harmony of society (see also Burchell, 2006; Kerbaj & Megalogenis, 2006 for more on underlying racism in Australia).

9.3 Shaping of Subjectivities
Both the Year Eleven and the Year Nine groups show evidence of self-regulation in their accounts. They seem to accept that schools and teachers exert control and have power over their minds and bodies as they shape students to engage in and value: particular academic pursuits, physical pursuits and legitimised ways of looking and behaving. These students know what is considered acceptable or ‘good’, and what is not acceptable or deemed ‘bad’; and they suggest that it is up to them as individual agents to ‘do the right thing’. Donnelly (2004; 2006) also draws binary constructions into the current Australian educational debates as he touts the ‘good’ practices of: the traditional curriculum, ‘the basics’ and teacher dominance. He contrasts these with ‘bad’ practices that he describes as: social justice agendas, political correctness and the study of ideology.

There are differences in the perceived benefits of ‘doing the right thing’ and self-regulation for the different groups. The Year Eleven group is primarily focused upon school achievement and their Overall Position (OP) score (exit measure for Year Twelve). They invest heavily in the neo-liberal discourses of schooling which favour individual achievement and educational success as the responsibility of individuals (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Phoenix, 2003; Singh et al., 2005) as they make themselves marketable in the new work order. Therefore their constructions of ‘bad’ or ‘good’ are relative to such discourses. These discourses are also evident in the new Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) which emphasise individual contracts at the expense of group negotiations for working conditions. Similarly, such discourses are evident in policy documents related to ‘senior schooling’ (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005b), which describe these years as transition years for entering university, technical college or paid work. These young people position themselves in transition for adulthood as they construct definite binaries between youth and adult, and advocate the latter as wiser and as ‘knowing what’s best’. For these Year Eleven youth, the focus on achievement has also affected their peer groups as they showed
definite choice in their associations with like-minded peers so their values would not be called into question nor would they be ‘pressured’ to engage in ‘bad’ behaviours. There are competing and contradictory discourses operating in schools and curriculum and policy documents which promote the ideals of social justice, ‘common good’, and active participation for social change on the one hand; whilst actively engaging in individualist, neo-liberal discourses of the market economy on the other. Complexity is again evident in the subjectivities of these Year Eleven students as they seem torn between signifying their ‘social justice ideals’, yet in practice their priorities must be in line with the achievement priorities of the school if they are to achieve educational and therefore life success.

By contrast, the Year Nine group were more concerned with ‘doing the right thing’ for more immediate gains such as: keeping teachers happy, keeping grades at a satisfactory level and ‘fitting in’ with peers so that they didn’t ‘stand out’ or disrupt the status quo. Their aims of ‘having fun’ at school and dealing with ‘acceptable’ teenage issues is consistent with the way they are positioned by popular media (for example mobile telephone media-hype (Optus, undated) and Dolly magazine) and by policy documents (Carrington, 2002; Education Queensland, 2003) which describe them as ‘in transition’ with social development as an important focus. These aims are in opposition to the goals in such policies related to intellectual stimulation in the middle years. The social and transition discourses of such media texts and policy documents related to students in the middle years (as enacted in schools), seem to be stronger and more influential for these students than those related to intellectualisation.

9.4 Resistance and Enactment

These young people, by and large, prefer harmony to rebellion. They are strong proponents for maintaining hegemonic discourses through compliance and self-regulation (Blackman, 1998; Foucault, 1977; Gramsci, 1971; Kohli, 1998), as they see their own interests being served by such agendas (Singh et al., 2005). They show some evidence of resistance to cultural ‘norms’ for teenagers; for example, none of them adhere to dedicated ‘branding’ (Klein, 2000; Langer, 2004) in consumer culture. The Year Eleven group indicates little or waning interest in mobile phone telephony
except as a functional tool. These young people position themselves in ways that suggest they have agency regarding their investments in consumer culture, however they merely choose other forms of consumer culture to indulge their desires and to achieve self-fulfilment. For example, Paul rejects the hype and cultural capital that mobile telephony can bring. Instead he favours Microsoft X-Box games, increasingly sophisticated computer hardware and digital video-recorders, which he manipulates his father to buy for him. Phoenix (2003) suggests that merely having an array of consumer choices is a dubious description of agency.

Resistance for these young people seems to fall within the parameters of legitimated resistance. They critique and purport to resist stereotypical portrayals of, for example, youth and homosexuals in the media, which is endorsed and legitimised by their school program. However, their resistance does not extend to the hegemonic neo-liberal discourses that underpin the enactment of such school programs and educational policies. They collude with such discourses as they have realised the power that is afforded to them in institutional settings such as school and family if they invest in plaisir (Kenway & Bullen, 2001) performances of self.

Enactment of the critical agenda seems to be ‘in theory’ rather than in practice for the young participants in this study. They meet criteria in assignments which position them as cognizant and supportive of social justice ideals, and therefore as enacting some of the outcomes of syllabus documents; yet they are reluctant to become involved in real emancipatory issues or explore ways of enacting social change. This resonates with the findings of Ellis (2004) who suggests that although youth may support human rights and social justice ideals ‘in principle’, they tend not to actually engage in any real social action to promote change. She indicates that their reported reasons for non-engagement include: it doesn’t affect them and therefore it is not their problem; it is not seen as their responsibility as people in the community are paid to do such work, or governments are responsible; and they foster feelings of helplessness in terms of effecting change. The youth in the current study display evidence of all three of Ellis’ reasons for non-engagement, as they insulate themselves from issues which don’t concern or affect them (Year Nine and Year Eleven accounts). They see that others should take on such responsibilities (Paul’s accounts) and they don’t see that they can make a difference (Ellen’s and Matt’s accounts). It is
understandable that these young people distance themselves from the enactment of emancipatory goals. White and Wyn (2004) point out one of the ironies of youth participation: that is, youth are encouraged to ‘actively participate’ in society through government-legitimated youth forums and so on, however they are labelled as trouble-makers if they mobilise politically.

9.5 Implications

These findings have implications for different spheres of education, including: the classroom teacher working with individuals and groups of students; school structures and hegemonic discourses; education authorities who authorise policy and curriculum documents; and researchers who seek to explain or understand particular phenomena. I offer some suggestions within each of these areas which highlight the implications of this study.

9.5.1 Classrooms

The findings from this study indicate that these young people show evidence of achieving curriculum outcomes related to the critical agenda which are embedded in their school programs and pedagogies. However, their accounts show little evidence of transforming such outcomes into everyday practices or performances of emancipatory politics. Part of this lack of true transformative action may be attributed to their changing priorities. At different times in their lives they have more salient needs, desires and practices; particularly as they try to negotiate conflicting and contradictory discourse worlds. These students seem to disconnect ‘self’ from issues of social justice, equity and emancipation as they are not directly affected by such issues and don’t necessarily see the relevance of them in their lives. To this end, I suggest that critical pedagogy needs to refocus on multi-faceted subjectivities and subjectification processes of individuals; and emphasise ‘self’ in the intellectualisation of texts and contexts. This approach is supported by a number of scholars who argue that we must begin with the lived experiences and subjectivities of the students and the teacher (for example Brodhagen & Apple, 2004; Green & Bigum, 2003; Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Oliver & Lalik, 2000; Sadowski, 2003). It is not enough to merely analyse texts. As the youth in this study illustrate, they are mostly quite adept at such
forms of analysis, yet do not transform it into active civic participation for social change that the Queensland English syllabus advocates.

There are a number of strategies that I describe as possibilities to draw the ‘self’ into the discourses of analysis and critical pedagogy, one of which I used in level five of my data collection for this study. Collective memory work (Haug, 1987) was utilised whereupon the students brought a collection of personal artefacts to the focus group interviews which they felt represented them in some way. They shared and discussed these artefacts during these sessions (see Part C). To some extent, this was a testing of a method to prompt resistant readings of self. I found that such a method was successful in that it prompted the students to interact with one another and add more to the discussion than they did in the individual sessions. They picked up lines of discussion, comparison or contradiction from their peers; sometimes contesting, sometimes assenting with the accounts of others where their experiences intersected. For example Ellen’s accounts of gender were contested by Paul who had previously had extensive conversations with her about gender issues in the performing arts. The shortcomings of this approach were that, due to time constraints and my limited knowledge of the participants, I was unable to explore their subjectivities to the extent that they were prepared to problematise their own accounts and practices. Such a method requires ongoing exploration of subjectification processes, which I would argue is possible in classroom situations, and worth exploring.

Many scholars have called for the use of cyber-space to disrupt and contest normalised practices and boundaries of education, and as a space where transformative practices can take place; for example, via activist websites (for example Kellner, 2002; Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Lankshear et al., 1996). The use of information and communication technologies makes sense for many youth who immerse themselves in such technologies and are prepared to utilise them for emancipatory purposes. Some youth may be reluctant to wield a tool that they consider to be ‘adult free’ and beyond the bounds of control, for the purposes suggested by adults. The same could be said for the previous strategy of collective memory work, where cultural artefacts could be seen as ‘out of bounds’ for adults to discuss or analyse. Klein (2000) and Kenway and Bullen (2001) suggest that if students are encouraged to discover how they have been manipulated by hegemonic
discourses or corporate consumer society, they may well be prepared to become involved in active emancipatory action. Some youth, on the other hand, as evidenced in this study, may have little interest in the plethora of information and communication technologies (Facer & Furlong, 2001), and strategies which harness such technologies may be unwarrantable.

Another possible strategy which I have utilised as researcher in this study, is the use of arts-based inquiry (Denzin, 2003; Diamond & Mullen, 1999a). Scholars have argued for the use of such approaches in research (Denzin, 2003; Diamond & Mullen, 1999a; Jipson & Paley, 1997) and in teacher development (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b) in order to explore how people enact cultural meanings in their lives. Such approaches move beyond representational to presentational (Denzin, 2003), so that the sole authority of the author/presenter is disrupted, and the audience, along with the performer, can collaboratively rewrite hegemonic discourses. I suggest that such an approach could also be utilised in classrooms. Students could be encouraged to use aspects of metaphor, reflexive narrative and visual and performing arts to (re)present their subjectivities; and to explore their choices, actions and priorities with regards to an emancipatory agenda. I have described my use of a visual metaphor in Part A and Part E of this thesis; however there are endless possibilities for the use of arts-based inquiry in classrooms with youth. For example, Johnson (2002) explored the construction of visual narratives with pre-service teachers, and such a strategy could also be utilised with students in the classroom.

The final strategy that I posit here is closely related to the previous strategy. Performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003) or autoethnography (Clough, 2000) is a method in which an individual (re)presents self particularly in relation to: aspects of gender, race, sexuality, family, politics, technology and other pertinent issues. They show evidence of embodied subjectivities and changing positionalities as they engage in some way with the audience. Such (re)presentations may include a montage or pastiche which may invite various interpretations or multi-linear pathways for the reader/audience. This approach is not dissimilar to the pastiches I created in Part D of this thesis; however, whilst ‘self’ was drawn into my pastiches, it wasn’t the main focus. These (re)presentations may take the form of linguistic, visual, gestural, audio, spatial or multimodal designs of meaning, including: collage, three-dimensional
models, song, poetry, role-play or hyper-linked text, among many others. Such an approach enables social criticism and engenders resistance as it imagines new forms of human transformation and emancipation (Denzin, 2003).

This thesis has a strong focus on the multi-faceted and ambiguous subjectivities of youth; hence I do not suggest that any one of the above strategies is ‘the answer’ to promote emancipatory participation. I propose this repertoire of strategies as a starting point. I suggest that whilst one strategy may be effective for some, it may not be effective for others. Teachers must be cognizant of the complexity of the individuals before them, and should be encouraged to explore diverse possibilities with their students.

9.5.2 Schools and Education Authorities
Con contradic tions in the discourses of schooling have been made visible through the findings in this study. I argue that even though schools (as illustrated at the site of this study) may underpin their curriculum documents or school programs with the ideals of social justice and active participation for social change; other more potent neo-liberal discourses negate such ideals in the enactment of such programs. I suggest that schools need to fore-ground these social justice ideals by including core integrated subjects which explore the possibilities for active civic participation and social change such as those described by Oliver and Lalik (2000), Brodhagen and Apple (2004), and others (see for example Lilia, 2003; McKenna, 2003). Such integrated subjects could be project-based and should connect with the lived experiences of the students both in and outside of school. In this approach students may learn the world by doing (Kalantzis, 2006; Kalantzis & Cope, 2004) and by becoming involved in relevant community projects and issues.

Schools and policy documents should also expand their explorations of pathways for students. Transition or linear pathway trajectories for senior students should be reconceptualised so that students are positioned (already) as vital, involved and diverse citizens. Students should have opportunities for: volunteering, paid work, community projects, group membership, and further study. These opportunities should be seen as a way of expanding their life portfolios or perspectives, rather than merely as a means to a (sometimes dubious employment) end. Many students already
engage in such pursuits while at school and therefore shouldn’t be positioned as ‘in transition’ to the more important phases of their lives. The pursuit of an OP score to exit Year Twelve should not be constructed as the only (privileged) way forward to life success. Rather, those students who prefer different and multi-linear pathways of community involvement and other pursuits should be afforded as much power in the school setting as those who achieve forms of academic excellence (as defined by traditional curriculum requirements and hegemonic community and corporate discourses).

Those students in particular ‘phases’ of schooling such as the middle years or senior, can not be described as homogenous groups or as forever in transition. Every person is always ‘becoming’ through shifting priorities and subjectivities, so it seems pointless to describe youth as ‘in transition’. It begs the questions: In transition for what? More transition? This is not to suggest that particular groups of students can not become a focus for particular educational ‘ideals’. The productive pedagogies (Education Queensland, 2000b) as outlined in Chapter Three which form key foci in the middle years in Queensland are useful. They recognise that students in those approximate age brackets are often becoming more self-aware and perceptive of the world around them as they experience intense emotions and experiences (Raby, 2005). Hence connectivity, intellectualisation, recognition of difference and supportive environments are relevant and appropriate foci for these students. I would argue that such foci must be conscious of the changing subjectivities of students. In those years, the processes which influence informed and intellectual choices should be explored; including those experiences and aspects of identity which inform such choices.

9.5.3 Researchers

The findings from this study have shown marked differences in the priorities and performative accounts between the Year Eleven group and the Year Nine group. This may be attributable to the ways in which youth at these different ages are positioned in policy documents, media texts and in school cultures. Year Nine is positioned as more focused on social development, peer relationships and preparing (including testing the boundaries of ‘right’ behaviour) for the important years of senior schooling. It may also be due to shifting priorities for these young people as they
begin to focus more on the broader global context as they get older (Year Eleven) as opposed to an emphasis on their insular worlds (Year Nine). I think that further research is warranted regarding the changing priorities of middle class youth and their enactment of the emancipatory agenda as they move from ‘middle years’ through senior and beyond. For example, the Year Eleven students in this study were more prepared to discuss, debate and support (in theory) social issues and causes than the Year Nines; however, their priorities were more focused upon achieving individualist goals that were in-synch with the values of their school. Such focus leaves little time to consider social action which may position them as disrupting the harmony of school and society and therefore disrupting their plaisir performances of self. It would be informative to explore their priorities as they leave school and expand their experiences and options. Would social causes and emancipatory actions be foregrounded as they move from within the direct influences of the discourses of schooling?

9.6 Reflective Notes

Inevitably there can be no straightforward ‘answer’ to the issues presented here regarding the enactment of a critical agenda by youth. The accounts of these young people and the macro discourses that permeate current educational debate have highlighted for me the continued importance of the critical agenda in schools. If we are to uphold the ideals of social justice, equity, liberty and active participation as proposed by our underpinning educational declarations (Australian Education Council, 1989; MCEETYA, 1999) in Australia; then narrow, self-centred, uninformed and essentialist views about education, social issues and everyday practices must be problematised and disrupted. The academic curriculum need not be ‘jettisoned for ideology’ (Donnelly, 2006); however, if ideology is written out of curriculum documents, then a free, socially just, equitable and responsible society may no longer be open for debate.
APPENDIX ONE

Information and consent form
Critical Pedagogy and Youth: Stories of Culture, Multiliteracies and Lifestyle Choices

INFORMATION SHEET

Who is conducting the research

Associate Professor Greer Johnson (supervisor)
Ms Mary Ryan (Doctoral student)
School of Cognition, Language and Special Education, Griffith University
Contact Phone: 4631 1836
Contact Email: ryanma@usq.edu.au

Why is the research being conducted?

This research is being conducted as part of a Doctor of Philosophy degree, and aims to study the literacy practices of a small group (5-8) of adolescent youth to determine the effect of particular teaching strategies on their literacy practices in their everyday lives.

What you will be asked to do

The students participating will be asked to share with me, some of the work they have been doing in English class at school (eg magazine text). The students will then participate in two individual interviews/discussions and one group interview/discussion to talk about the text they produced and their everyday literacy practices. The interviews/discussions will be conducted at school, during school hours, with Mrs Curnow nearby, and will take approximately 30-45 minutes per interview.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

The participants will be selected on a volunteer basis, from those who attended the information session.

The expected benefits of the research

The expected benefits of this project include an increased knowledge of how specific educational approaches affect students’ literacy practices, and a possibility that the participants will gain knowledge about how to use their literacy abilities for increased benefit in their everyday lives.
Risks to you

There are no risks for participants. School performance will not be affected, and there will be no consequences if participants withdraw.

Your confidentiality

Data collection will be through personal contact only. The data will be stored in a computer with password access only, and in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Pseudonyms will be used for all persons and locations involved. The data will be coded to enable re-identification until completion of the project then all data will be de-identified.

Your participation is voluntary

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time with no comment or penalty.

Questions / further information

For any further information, please contact Ms Mary Ryan, School of Language and Cultural Studies, Queensland University of Technology. Contact number to be advised.

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3875 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

All persons involved can request feedback or additional information upon request.

Privacy Statement

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone (07) 3875 5585.
CONSENT FORM

Research Team

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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include sharing some of the work I have been doing in English class at school (eg magazine text), then participating in two individual interviews/discussions and one group interview/discussion to talk about the text I produced and my everyday literacy practices.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research other than those described in the information sheet;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3875 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name

Signature

Date / / 

Parental/Guardian Consent
By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and what my daughter’s/son’s participation will involve.

I agree that my daughter/son ______________________________________, has my informed permission to participate in this research project titled “Critical Pedagogy and Youth: Stories of Culture, Multiliteracies and Lifestyle Choices”.

Name

______________________________________________________________

Signature

______________________________________________________________

Date / / 

______ ______ ______
APPENDIX TWO

Example of coding stripes – NVivo
Interview 2  Kirsty  yr 9  13.09.94  (Folder A, job no. 12)
Time 32:47

MR: Kirsty last time we talked a little bit about the way you use technology, you know, and multi-modal digital text and that sort of thing outside of school. Do you wish that you used more of that at school, like do you want to use more at school?
KS: Eh, yeah cause I reckon it'd be fun, a bit different.
MR: OK, so how much do you use it at school?
KS: Eh, well computers once a week.
MR: Do you go to the lab once a week or the library?
KS: Eh, have like a internet class sort of thing, business kind of thing, we do, we can go up to K block at lunch time and do that if we want, then there's the library.
MR: Do you look, just in your normal class time, do you ever use those sorts of technologies?
KS: Eh, if we are doing like an assignment sometimes, you can get permission to go up to the library and go onto the internet. That's it really.
MR: Alright, Eh, do you ever feel like you want to create a space that's completely separate from adults?
KS: Um, yeah, sh...how do...
MR: Do you use kind of a type of language that you don't really want them to be part of, or do you get involved in certain activities that you don't really want them to be part of, like it's your thing?
KS: Eh, yeah, like teenagers have kind of like a different...they use like words, like texting, you use like that kind of thing, and my Mum goes, no wonder teenagers are bad spellers these days, the way they spell things in text messages.
MR: Do you like the fact that there's something that they don't understand?
KS: Yeah, cause we don't understand some of their stuff, so it's a bit even...
MR: Eh, so it's nice to have your own...um...do you feel that you're self-controlled or self-regulated, so you make yourself behave in a certain way, to conform to what school wants?
KS: Yeah, I think you kind of hold back a bit, cause you get in trouble...
MR: And are there certain things that you kind of value, do you think, because the school values them?
KS: Eh...I think you're kind of made to value them, like if they value them, you have to value them as well. I think that's just the way that school is.
MR: What sort of things do you think the school values?
KS: Eh, like always learning, I think that's a real big thing, live in maths they teach us stuff you probably wouldn't even need, and that kind of stuff, and like the way you dress, they like you to dress good, and you're not allowed to wear certain jewellery and stuff.
MR: Do you think they value particular subjects over others?
KS: Eh, I think they want you to do well in Maths and English, cause you have to do them, but everything else, you can kind of do it if you want, but you don't have to.
MR: Do you think it should be, that you have to do Maths and English?
KS: Eh well, I don't, yeah...sometimes, it depends on what you want to be when you grow up, cause some jobs you don't even really need Maths, but I suppose it's good just to learn the basics anyway.
MR: What about some of the other subjects though, like you could argue that maybe it's good to learn those as well, you know, like some of the arts, or whatever, um if maths is not your thing. But there's a definite, you must do these subjects I suppose?
KS: Yeah
MR: Do I guess that's a value that comes through isn't it?
KS: Yeah
MR: Do you think you value the same things as the school? Or is it more, like you said before, you have to value it because the school values it?
KS: Eh, you kind of have to value it...I don't even know what I want to be when I grow up, so, yeah, I don't really know what to study at the moment.
MR: Do you're just kind of fitting in with things...?
KS: Yeah, just what I have to do, and you have to do some subjects a certain amount of times, like SOME you have to do it for four semesters or something like that, so if you have to do that...
MR: Do you ever think that some kids might be disadvantaged at school because the school doesn't meet their needs?
KS: Eh, I think it's pretty good at Bellaview, but there's some schools that don't like the really big schools, I think they kind of...
MR: Do you ever think, like you might have some kids who might muck around or don't you know, do much at school or whatever, so do you think it's all their own fault, or do you think maybe that they're not connected with what they learn at school?
KS: Eh, I think it's also a bit the way they were brought up, like their parents, their influence, from their parents, um but also cause they're not interested at all in that subject, or they're just not good at it, so they don't bother trying or anything, so...
MR: Do you think something should be done to try and make them interested or do you think it's just they should work harder?
KS: Both, but a bit...if they're not good try and work hard, then yeah, but they should try and work out something that they want to do and like and that stuff.
APPENDIX THREE

Example of coding report – Nvivo

Including raw analysis
112: PH: I like people who are fun to be with, like there's a girl in my English class, so I sit with her in English, but I'd say I have nothing in common with her in terms of interests and all that, but we get on great. Like, she sleeps with people, and I um don't do that.113: MR: Are you approve of that?114: PH: Well, I mean if you're careful I think it's fine, but don't go killing yourself at the age of sixteen. It's just a wasted life. Cause she doesn't have X-Box, she doesn't have a computer, she doesn't watch the same things, but we can sit there and talk for like five hours or whatever, we just get on well.115: MR: So do you think that whole thing with girls sleeping with people, do you think that's the same issue as boys sleeping with people?116: PH: Um, I don't know, like, my best friend is a girl, and she doesn't sleep with anyone, and neither do I. I don't think any of my friends that I sit with have, but some of the other people, have. It doesn't—it's just kind of different with girls I think, cause um...I'm not sure how to say this, um um...I don't really split it up into girls who have sex and boys who have sex, just people who have sex and people who don't, pretty much. I don't think of people like that, but if I ever had to split 'em up, I wouldn't say girls who do are sluts, and boys who do are heroes who can score with anyone.117: MR: So you wouldn't do that, do you think other people would?118: PH: Split 'em up like that? Um, I don't know. Nobody I talk to really does.

142: PH: Yeah it's like, with Christians, I used to be Christian, but I don't agree with their stance on homosexuality, like I'm not gay myself, but I don't um think that you should not like people because they are gay, or call 'em sinners or whatever, cause, um, anyway.143: MR: Keep going.144: PH: Not I can talk to her. Her parents, they are very popular, she is very popular.145: MR: You're sure? Um, well um, in the bible it says...I've read through the bible once or twice, and homosexuality is mentioned in about 6 places I reckon, like 5 times in the Old Testament, and 3 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, it's mentioned in Leviticus, is it Leviticus?146: MR: I think so.146: PH: Well, it goes um, in somebody's dying, kill them...not these words, but...if somebody's gay, kill them, so we apparently ignore all the bits except the ones we want to hear, well not we, you know, 'christians', and...not all, I'm sorry I'm trying not to put anyone down, but so they pick on that, and they think that's a good enough reason, they go, what about all these others that are right next to it, like about killing blind people, and they go, oh, that doesn't apply anymore, so they get to the homosexuals...and in the new testament, Jesus mentions homosexuals about once or twice in a huge list, like thou shalt not um, I don't know, but it's about adulterers, swindlers, homosexuals and all these other ones, and its mentioned about three times in a list, and people think that's good enough. Cause you don't see us going out stopping the adulterers, making it illegal, not letting 'em get married and all that, and also, I read a site once that was all about how the bible's been translated over the years, and they reckon that the homosexuality bit, actually referred to homosexuals rapists, when Jesus was talking about it, so I think that people just believe what's
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