Rural Views : Schooling in Small Rural/Remote Communities

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on data collected for a large project that investigated social literacies and various aspects of the literacy culture of members of three rural communities in Queensland. This study draws on ideas from current critical literacy theory and research and post-structural writings. It reports a distinctive set of observations which aim to contribute to social and educational knowledge in respect of centre-margin relationships, literacy-empowerment relationships, the changing socio-economic and political landscape in rural Australia, and the need for a new conceptual landscape to define the foundations of a 'postprogressive pedagogy'.

This study delineates some of the distinctive features of rural communities, and investigates the connections that people construct between schooling and economic change and the future, and between literacy and schooling and various aspects of the culture of the community. It interprets how schooling and literacy are socially constructed by members of the rural communities studied. One hundred and fifty-eight residents of three rural/remote communities were interviewed and their responses recorded and analysed. The residents represented the full range of ages and occupations. A selection of data from these interviews is taken for this study, based on themes and issues emerging from the data.

A theoretical and empirical framework for the study is provided by reviewing current literature on rurality and rural living, on communities and schooling and cultural practices; literature on qualitative research methodology, specifically ethnomethodology, methods of interview analysis and the application of these methods, is also reviewed.
Ethnomethodology is used for this study and the specific analytic procedures of Membership Categorisation Analysis. This specific type of qualitative research methodology is chosen because of its power to take the everyday conversations of community members and, through analytical procedures, to make explicit in those

members accounts the interaction of their experiences with the organisational and social forces (the social realities) which permeate their relationships with one another and with the context of the community where they live, work and recreate. This study makes use of recent systematic procedures developed for interrogating interview data. It adds to the research literature on ideologies of family and community literacies and social practices in Australian rural communities.

The study provides information relevant to rural development planners, and education policy developers and curriculum writers, for the purpose of enhancing schooling for rural students and better understanding of rural lifestyles. This study's focus on rural communities has highlighted the complexities and diversities of the rural communities that are studied. The different approaches and debates about 'defining rural' must continue, and researchers must avoid promoting a unidimensional category of 'rural'. The changing and developing nature of the rural communities has also been prominent in this study. The implications of these complexities and changes are that rural communities should be studied regularly so that the effects of the changes can be traced and documented.

There is a varied set of understandings among rural dwellers about education. For some, education is bringing knowledge and skills to life in the rural location and enabling residents to avail themselves of the urban offerings that may enhance their occupations and leisure activities thus utilising the benefits of two cultures to their best advantage. For others, there are the expectations that education will enable them to move away from the rural areas, to go to the city, to take up other careers, to lead a different lifestyle.

Hypotheses and generalisations that express negative approaches to rural cultures and to rural education must be reduced and the positive aspects promoted. Any centre-margin discourse must be scrutinised for its relevance and the feasibility of the assumptions on

which it is based. Education policy developers, social researchers and rural policy planners need to re-evaluate the philosophical premises on which the current concept of success is based: success for the individual school student, success for education and schooling, and success in adult life.

A number of recommendations are developed in an attempt to make a vision of excellence in rural education a central part of rural agenda. Curriculum in rural schools needs to be matched to rural resources and rural occupations and lifestyles, and to encourage enterprise. While education remains a centralised provision, it needs to provide a context for training in the communication skills that shape rural people's views of their communities. Rural secondary students may be disadvantaged by not having access to a wide range of curriculum offerings, and at tertiary level by inequities (mostly financial) of access, but technology could be used to assist in broadening the range of offerings at secondary level, and library resources across the country could be better utilised.

Social and education research could benefit from further studies using this methodology, for example, studies in mining communities, rural ethnic communities, rural tourist communities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work for this thesis is grounded in research data that was collected for a project on Literacy in Small Australian Rural Communities which was funded by the Australian Research Council in 1993-4. The project team leaders were Professor Peter Freebody (Faculty of Education, Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus, Brisbane), Professor Allan Luke (then in the Faculty of Education at James Cook University, Townsville Campus, North Queensland), Associate Professor Michele Anstey and Associate Professor Geoff Bull (both in the Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba). I worked on this project as a full-time research assistant based at the University of Southern Queensland, Faculty of Education. Other research assistants who made contributions to the work of the project were Ms. Penny Young (Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland), Mr. Sandy Muspratt and Ms. Judy Rose (Faculty of Education, Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus), and Mr. Martin Nakata (Faculty of Education, James Cook University).

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I dedicate this work to John Davison, who has waited a long time for its completion.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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: .....

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY : BEGINNINGS IN LITERACY

> *Literacy practices are neither neutral nor simply a matter of educational concern : They are varied and contentious and imbued with ideology.*
> (Street & Street, 1991: *143*)

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study began with an interest in literacy education and its provision in remote rural communities in Australia. But it did not end there. As the study, and the large program of research on which it is based, developed it became clear that a more detailed documentation and appreciation of the nature of the rural experience was needed before finer points about the provision of literacy education and its significance in these communities could be made.

For some time educators have thought of literacy in functional terms of reading and writing, and focussed on the cognitive consequences of acquiring or not acquiring literacy. In recent years, researchers have developed and documented new understandings of literacy within the complexities of contemporary society, and developed the notion of literacy as social practice, for example, Street (1993 and 1999), Street and Street (1991), Lankshear (1997), Luke (1994), Gilbert (1991), Gee (1990 and 1997), Freebody (1994 and 1995), and Barton and Hamilton (1999).

Street (1993: *1*) expresses this orientation from a cross-cultural perspective.

> *Within this framework an important shift has been the rejection by many writers of the dominant view of literacy as a 'neutral' technical skill, and the conceptualisation of literacy instead as an ideological practice, implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices.*

Cairney (1995) made several points about the lack of information available on language, literacy and culture of the communities in which our schools operate. He asked questions

concerning the nature of the matches and mismatches between the literacy practices of a community and the literacy practices of the school within that community, and the consequences of existing mismatches (Cairney 1995:*2*), Luke and Freebody (1997:*2*) have also expressed concerns about the discontinuities between community practices and school curricula:

> *.... there appears to be a disconnection of both traditional and progressive curricula from the educational needs and problems of significant groups of students, particularly those in historically 'at risk' groups of lower socioeconomic, cultural minority, and indigenous communities .....*

These observations point to the proposition that in order to recognise the mismatches and to begin to understand the consequences of discontinuities, there is a need to increase research knowledge of community social practices and interactions with community literacies. Detailed study of literacies and social practices in rural communities in Australia has not been undertaken to any great extent. Breen, Louden, Barratt-Pugh, Rivilland, Rohl, Rhydwen, LLoyd and Carr (1994) have documented literacy practices in some Western Australian communities, but the ideologies of family and community literacies and social practices have not been well documented.

Viewing literacy as social practice and investigating ideologies leads to inquiry about empowerment and power relations, which as Street pointed out (1993: *1*), and as Lankshear has documented (1997:*11-40*), are embedded in the local cultural meanings and practices within complex cultural processes. If a wider state or national view is considered, literacy-empowerment relationships have often been seen as closely following the pattern of the centre-margin relationships. Politically and economically, and educationally, centre-margin relationships have usually been dominated by the centre - the state capital or seat of political and economic power, or the national capital or seat of federal political and economic power - to the margins or regional areas of the country. Services and systems of delivery of services have also followed this centre-margin pattern. Currently developments in global communications, and global economics are

forcing changes in centre-margin patterns. As the socio-economic and political landscape changes, it will become an urgent matter for academics to frame a new conceptual landscape that will define the foundations of a 'postprogressive pedagogy':

> .... *one that will rewrite, in multiple ways, some of the distinctions between the margins and the center that we have heretofore drawn in the struggle to establish the distinction and dignity of multiple language and literacy practices against the hegemony of 'essayist' literacy.* (Gee 1997: *274*)

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to contribute to social and educational knowledge in these respects, and is based on data collected for a large research project which investigated social literacies and various aspects of the literacy culture of members of three rural communities in Queensland. The large project aimed to give prominence to features in the contexts of the members of each of these communities that create a distinctive and adaptive set of practices that together constitute a literacy culture (Luke, Freebody, Bull, Anstey, 1992: Submission to Australian Research Council). The large project drew on ideas taken from the work of Heath (1983) and Gee (1990), and the influential sociologist Bourdieu (1984; 1986: *241-258*); this study uses the same basis but draws as well on ideas from Halfacree (1993), Sher and Sher (1994) and the recent work of Muspratt, Luke and Freebody (1997).

The objectives of the large project were :

- to document the diverse socio-cultural expressions of literacy within a sample of rural communities;
- to specify literacy practices directly related to differences in the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic identities of the communities studied;
- to interpret how literacy is socially constructed by members of the community;

- to interpret the power of literacy in the community, and the connections people construct between literacy and economic change and the future, between literacy and the economic wellbeing of the community.

The objectives of the present study are:

- to delineate some of the distinctive features of rural communities,
- to interpret how schooling and literacy are socially constructed by members of the rural communities studied;
- to interpret the power of literacy in these communities, and the connections people construct between literacy and economic change and the future, and between literacy and various aspects of the culture of the community.

This study draws from the data pool of the large project but it is not a derivative of the large project. This work reports a distinctive set of observations about data selectively drawn from the large project's data pool for the purposes specified for this study. This study thus makes its own distinctive contribution to research knowledge.

1.3 THE STUDY

The project sites were three rural communities in Queensland that were experiencing economic change. Data from the three sites has been used for both this study and the large project. The next section will introduce the sites.

1.3.1 Study sites / project sites

The three communities where data was collected are situated in different parts of the state of Queensland - one is in northern Queensland, one is in southern Queensland, and one is further west in the southern third of the state. Each community has a distinctive economic base. The facilities available to the community are different in each case and the character of the communities' cultures are also different. The State School in each community was receiving funding, at the time of the data collection, under the

disadvantaged schools program in Queensland (Special Program Schools Scheme - SPSS). The indicators used to decide the allocation of SPSS funding showed socio-economic disadvantage based on an index measuring occupation, unemployment, education, income, crowding, and accommodation. More details of the study sites are given in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1 .

1.3.2 Stages of the large project

The large research project was conducted in six major stages: planning, data collection, preliminary data analysis, recording and writing, research team closure, individual projects. These six stages were not clearly defined by any temporal sequence, but they provide a general framework for documenting the development of the many strands that were followed during the course of the project. In more detail they were:

(a) Planning. The research team, composed of the four research team leaders and two research assistants, met on three occasions at the beginning of the project to clarify project directions, to plan schedules, methods of data collection and recording, data storage and accessibility, and project operation. Ongoing operational matters received attention through teleconferencing and email contact whenever needed, and through the further team meetings which took place after team visits to each research site.

(b) Data Collection. The collection of the research data was done by all the team leaders and by the research assistants. The chief method chosen for the data collection was semi-structured interview for which an eighty-eight item questionnaire was prepared. The methods for collection and recording had been decided and materials (e.g., questionnaires, recording sheets, files, coding system, interview schedules, press releases) prepared prior to the collection phase.

(c) Preliminary Data Analysis. During the data collection phase, researchers were alert to the emergence of themes and issues that appeared consistently in the data, and recorded field notes and audio log notes on these. At the conclusion of each site visit the research team met to collate information and review progress and procedures. Emergent themes and issues were identified, discussed and recorded for future analysis .

(d) Recording and Writing. After each team meeting summaries of the themes and issues from the site were recorded on computer and printed copies circulated among the research team for further consideration. Minutes of all team meetings were recorded and circulated among team members also. Some of the research team leaders wrote preliminary reports and drafts of papers at this stage.

(e) Research Team Closure. When data collection had been finalised, complete copies of data files (in hard copy and on computer disk) were prepared and made available to each team member. Audio tapes, audio logs, and hard copies of questionnaire response sheets were filed in one place, at one research base, and available to all team members on request, some duplicate copies of single audiotapes were given to team members who needed them for detailed analysis. The research team allocated certain tasks to individual members (e.g., summarising specific sections of data or minutes of meetings, transcribing selected audiotapes).

(f) Individual Projects. Individual team members then worked on their own papers, reports, analyses, and theses based on the research data. This thesis is one of these individual works.

1.3.3 Questions for this study

The objectives of this study were stated in Section 1.2. The questions, based on these objectives, that lead into the study are :

- What is understood by 'rural'? What are the distinctive features of rural communities?
- What values and connections do rural dwellers place on education and various kinds of work (e.g., head-work and hands-work)?
- What do rural residents think about schooling? How do they view schooling and education? How important is schooling to them? Why is rural schooling (curriculum) the same as urban schooling (curriculum)?
- Do community members describe a division of labour related to gender? If so, what is the role of women/men in a rural community, including their roles in education?

These questions are reframed in Chapter 3 Section 3.5.1 to align them with the methodology for the study.

1.3.4 Stages of this study

The stages of development of this study can be described broadly as (i) reading and reviewing current literature, (ii) sampling and sifting the data, identifying emerging themes, (iii) making firm decisions on research objectives and questions, (iv) selecting specific sections of the data for analysis, (v) analysing data, (vi) drafting, revising, and writing the thesis. As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, the ethnomethodological approach to research does not postulate significant variables *a priori*, the themes emerge as the research process takes place. The research outcomes are not obvious until the data makes them obvious.

1.4 OUTLINE OF FOLLOWING CHAPTERS

This chapter has provided the background to this study and the study's objectives, and placed these within the context of the large project that was conducted in 1993-1994.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical and empirical framework for the study by reviewing current literature on rurality and rural living, and on communities and schooling and cultural practices. Literature pertaining to methodology for qualitative research, specifically on ethnomethodology, and methods of interview analysis and the application of these methods is also reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 explains the methods that have been used for conducting the research and for the analysis of the data used in this study. It describes the study sites and participants, the operational procedures used for the large project and for this study, the instruments for data collection, the selection of data for analysis, and the methods of interview analysis for this study.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of interview analysis based on a selection of themes, and provide discussion of these themes and the issues raised. Chapter 4 reports results of interview analysis on the themes of community living and lifestyle choice, and the culture of rural communities. It gives some insights into the views of rural residents on their choice of lifestyle and rural living, and their views on the importance of cultural identity. Chapter 5 reports results of interview analysis on the themes of schooling in rural communities, rural residents' views of the relationships between various kinds of work and education, the community's culture and schooling, and gendered roles in rural communities.

Chapter 6 summarises the research findings, draws conclusions from those findings, and indicates some of the implications of the findings. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this field are considered.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To develop the theoretical and empirical background on which to base this study, and to show the reasons for the approach taken in conducting the study, this chapter reviews current literature in the broad areas of: 1. Theorising Rural Communities, 2. Communities, Cultural Practices and Schooling, and 3. Ethnomethodological Approaches to Social Settings.

The main questions for the study are recalled :

- What is understood by rural ? What are the distinctive features of rural communities ?
- What values and connections do rural dwellers place on education and various kinds of work (e.g., head-work and hands-work)?
- What do rural residents think about schooling ? How do they view schooling and education ? How important is schooling to them ? Why is rural schooling (curriculum) the same as urban schooling (curriculum) ?
- Do community members describe a division of labour related to gender? If so, what is the role of women/men in a rural community, including their roles in education ?

Rural communities in the Australian context provided the setting for the study. In order to understand the social and cultural nature of these communities relevant literature has been summarised under the headings of: the perceptions of disadvantage frequently promulgated about rural education, how 'rural' has been defined in the literature, the diversity of rural communities and diversity within rural communities themselves, and the social representation of these rural communities. To examine in detail the rural communities, literature on schooling and cultural practices has been reviewed focusing on schooling and cultural identity, the rural school-community relationship, social and cultural aspects of women's activities, and the views held by rural community members of the connection between education and various kinds of work .

Ethnomethodology is the theoretical approach deemed most suitable for gathering and analysing the research data for this study of the rural communities, so the third section of this literature review considers what ethnomethodology is, ways of documenting social practices, how and why interviews and accounts are used for documenting social practices, and the methods used to analyse the interview data collected for the study.

2.1. THEORISING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural communities in the Australian context form a significant part of the social and geographical landscape of the nation. To explore the social and cultural nature of these communities the following topics are now addressed :

- the perceptions of disadvantage frequently promulgated about rural education,
- how 'rural' has been defined in the literature,
- the diversity of rural communities and diversity within rural communities themselves,
- and the social representation of these rural communities.

2.1.1 Rural education: perceptions of disadvantage

It has often been the case that researchers and theoreticians have presented a profile of rural education as a form of disadvantage. Several official and/or Australian Commonwealth Government reports reflect this characterisation:

> *Two major reports identified rural education in Australia as an area of disadvantage almost two decades ago: the Schools Commission Report (1975) and the Report on Poverty and Education (1976) .... The reports pointed out that students from rural Australia did not enter Universities in numbers proportionate to their urban counterparts, they had less curriculum choices and they were unsettled by a widespread belief that education in remote communities was inferior to that provided in urban areas.*
> (Stevens and Mason 1992: *57*)

In 1989, Dawkins and Kerin (then Commonwealth ministers for education and primary industries respectively) echoed these statements from previous reports in their strategy document for rural education and training. They referred to the low levels of participation in secondary education and the difficulties of accessing education and training for rural youth, especially those in isolated locations (Dawkins & Kerin 1989:*1*). There is also some evidence from other countries of rural youth having educational aspirations that do not match those of non-rural youth (e.g., Haller and Virkler 1993). Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999: *155*) also note "a general wisdom" of rurality constituting disadvantage to students.

Policy and research reports are often based on the assumption that students in urban and metropolitan areas and students in rural areas have the same educational needs, should follow the same curricula, and should aspire to follow the same range of occupations. For example, in making statements about or measuring disadvantage for rural youth, one of the criteria used is rate of participation in secondary and post-secondary education. While the focus on participation rates has highlighted the difficulties of many rural students in accessing programs, it also raises the issue of equalising urban and rural when this may not be appropriate, especially in matters of educational needs and curricula.

Writings on education in other countries have reflected similar views. Haller and Virkler (1993), cited above, gave some evidence from America of rural youth having educational aspirations that do not match those of non-rural youth. In his book *Schooling in Rural Societies* , based on work in Britain, Nash (1980 :*36*) argued that it has often been alleged that children from rural communities are inferior in educational achievement and intellect to their urban counterparts. He noted that the explanations given when such questionable claims are made are usually factors such as inferior intelligence, unstimulating environments or poor quality schooling. Early studies in rural sociology have been the source of support for these propositions. Nash argued that these claims cannot be supported because they do not consider social class. He also put these ideas in historical perspective :

> *The dominant theory of educational disadvantage arose as an explanation of the poor educational attainments of children in the inner city areas. The theory is American in origin ....* Nash (1980:*40*)

To enhance his argument Nash cited an example of grammar school provision in six poor counties in Wales, in the 1970's, where these Welsh students gained the highest educational attainments in Britain at that time.

Similarly, Bell and Sigsworth (1987:*75-81*) have discussed the dominance of the urban culture in Britain which has contributed to the application of urban models of school organisation to all schools whether they be urban or rural, and the belief that urban problems and rural problems are the same. Bell and Sigsworth have argued against the closure of rural schools which has resulted from this urban bias in policies and organisation.

The question that arises in the course of this study is: Is participation in secondary and post-secondary education a suitable criterion for measuring disadvantage for rural youth?
The issues which arise from the context and content of the reports reviewed are : the lack of evidence that training needs of students in rural Australia are similar to the training needs of students in urban Australia; the lack of studies on the educational needs of the rural students, the equalising of education provision for rural and urban students, and adequate understanding of the needs of rural students.

In order to pursue these issues it is necessary to understand more fully the rural communities, so there is a need to theorise rurality as a set of cultural and practical preferences, and to explore the place of education within those preferences. First the question 'What is rural?' will be considered.

2.1.2 Defining 'rural'

There have been arguments about the definition of 'rural' for more than 70 years (Gilbert 1982). Various terminology has been used for the concept: 'rural' or 'rurality' or

'ruralness'. Some writers (e.g., Nichol 1990) distinguish between 'rural' and 'remote' and others put them together, or consider that 'remoteness' is a sub-category of 'rurality'. Luloff , Miller and Beaulieu (1986) defined 'rurality' in the following way :

> *Generally, rurality is construed to have three broad components: ecological, occupational and cultural (Bealer , Willits, & Kuvlesky 1965). More specifically, "rural" designates lots of space, few people, small towns and reduced social differentiation; work forces slanted towards agriculture or other occupations putting workers in direct contact with the physical environment; and the less changeful, more conservative modes of thinking and acting of people.*

Another American study (Spears, Combs, & Bailey 1990:*1*) highlights the cultural and social aspects of the rural environment, an environment which values individuals and where informal and frequent social interactions and communications occur. Smith and Zopf (1970) discussed eight differences between rural and urban societies:

- high quality physical environment in rural areas,
- rural community size is smaller,
- rural population is less dense,
- narrower range of occupations,
- rural social organisation and/or differentiation is not as complex as urban social organisation,
- social strata are not clearly defined,
- opportunities for social mobility are less, the rural social world is smaller,
- rural society has a greater measure of solidarity.

While cultural and social aspects are an important dimension of rurality, for Australian contexts, geographical references are important too - location, proximity, climate, physical environment. The uneven spread of the population of the country is significant. There is population concentration in urban and nearby coastal areas then a scattering to small rural settlements, with very little in between these extremes; a different mapping from the United

Kingdom, for example (See Section 2.1.3). Even though modern communication systems have a noticeable impact on life in many rural places, the physical environment, distance and accessibility are still factors in isolating some places, and creating differences among communities. It is also worth noting the intermixing of socio-cultural and economic-geographic elements and questioning what appears to be the general belief that rural dwellers are economically disadvantaged. Nash (1980: *15*) has challenged such beliefs, arguing that a wide range of economic and social types can be found in rural areas, from the 'aristo-gentry landowner' to the poor and unemployed who live in simple dwellings.

In order to understand definitions of rurality and to contextualise the discussion which follows, Halfacree's work on approaches to rurality is drawn upon. Halfacree (1993) summarised and analysed several lines of research and theory, concluding that three broad approaches have been used in defining 'rural' - descriptive functions, socio-cultural characteristics, and rural as a locality. The following points were highlighted.

Descriptive definitions are based on socio-spatial characteristics. Usually they are written to articulate specific aspects of the rural that were the focus of research, and used productively for academic and planning purposes. Descriptive definitions come from measures of observable variables such as employment, land use, population, distance from the city, and often result in the production of a statistical index or functional descriptions of delineated regions. One example of a descriptive definition is used in a report from the Queensland Minister for Health 1991 :

> *It is estimated that in 1989, 19.6 per cent of the Queensland population lived in rural areas, where rural is defined as all of Queensland except for the south-east corner and coastal provincial cities.*
> (Q'land Health Council 1991: *5*)

Socio-cultural definitions highlight the socio-cultural characteristics of rural residents and the variations of those characteristics that are associated with types of rural environments. These definitions assume that there is a relationship between people's

attitudes and behaviours and the physical environment and/or the population density of their communities. For example:

> *more frequent and intense social interactions, informal patterns of communication, and the value placed on generalists rather than specialists. Another is respect for local context.* (Spears, Combs, & Bailey 1990: *1*)

This is one form of the influence of geographical determinism on social science, the *too ready association of place of living with style of living* (Nash 1980: *16*). Ruralism was characterised by 'stability, integration and rigid stratification', and individuals in contact with the same people in various situations. It is through studies of this type that the idea of the urban-rural continuum, for descriptive purposes, came into being: it became obvious that there was no clear dichotomy between urban and rural. The characteristics given by Smith and Zopf (1970) and cited earlier in this section illustrate the continuum.

Nominating 'rural' as locality identifies localities with clearly specified causal forces, for example, the link between the rural and agricultural pursuits, or the restructuring of industry and movement of industry worksites to so-called rural sites. In some instances, this movement is perceived as an economic facet associated with industry costs and labour costs; in other instances it is perceived as a geographic feature associated with population density. Some writers have commented on the urban-to-rural drift as a reflection of the infilling of urban space (e.g., Thrift 1987: *77*). Halfacree presented arguments critical of the concept of 'space' associated with rurality. He has argued that geographical spaces are attached to 'a myriad of structural levels in society'. In activities and circumstances such as recreation and shopping, any created space, urban or rural, is absorbed within a transcendental space beyond the urban-rural; this occurs because the 'spatial dimension' of the processes (e.g., of shopping and recreation) transcend the distinction between urban and rural. Many circumstances take place within the 'created absolute space of the nation state'. (Halfacree 1993: *28*)

Halfacree has noted that some researchers (e.g., Hoggart 1988, 1990) have criticised the first two of these definitions of rurality (i.e., descriptive, socio-cultural) as not sufficient on

the grounds that they are not generalisable and so obstruct the advancement of social theory (Hoggart 1990:*245*). Halfacree conceded that the society-space debate allowed for further considerations, as it exhibits more rigour that the first two definitions. But, as discussed later, he proposed an alternative way of defining rural - as social representation.

Attempting to define the rural is fraught with complexities and seems to depend largely on the purpose of definition and the theoretical background on which it is based. The descriptive definitions, the socio-cultural definitions, and the locality definitions are all comprehensible in the contexts of their use. But as new theories are advanced and further dimensions developed, new definitions need to be framed.

Halfacree also recognised that there is diversity within the rural. One rural location can be markedly different from another, and some rural areas have features that are also found in urban locations. In order to gain another perspective on the concept of rural - especially rural Australia, it is useful to explore aspects of diversity.

2.1.3 Diversity in rural communities

Sher and Sher (1994), in a comprehensive view of rural Australia, discussed the lack of documentation on the realities and range of rural Australia, and set the purpose of their paper as producing "a solid context and a useful framework" for the advancement and writing of a national rural development policy.

These authors emphasised the value of the rural sector to the rest of Australia - Australia is dependent on its rural sector, and within that sector there is "great diversity" among "people, communities and economies." Australia is both one of the world's most urbanised and sparsely populated countries. Elsewhere in the world these terms are mutually exclusive, but in Australia the population is not evenly distributed across the country (cf., Section 2.1.2). The view from the centre is a 'strong core, weak periphery' mental map of the country, and the majority of government initiatives, especially in the areas of social and education policy, are 'predicated on a deficit model of Australian

rurality' (Sher and Sher 1994: *8*) as illustrated by the Government reports, and others' comments, mentioned earlier.

Sher and Sher (1994) sought to dispel some commonly held myths about rural Australia. One myth is that rural Australia is the weak periphery. Rural Australia and rural Australians are essential to the nation's wellbeing and continued standards of living. The country is self-sufficient in food and most raw materials and resources. Australia's exports from its rural sector are two-thirds of the country's trade earnings internationally. If the rural dwellers moved en masse to urban areas the dysfunctions of the cities would be increased, including overcrowding and unemployment. When urban Australians need a viable option for those who are discontent or unemployed or disenfranchised or who seek somewhere better than an urban environment to live and raise a family, rural Australia is available and mostly affordable. Recreation for many people is obtained in rural settings (Sher and Sher 1994: *7-9*).

Overall the population in rural Australia has increased in recent years. Agricultural pursuits generate a great number of jobs. Most of the jobs that are generated by agriculture but are non-farm (e.g., the transport, processing, marketing, research, export jobs) are carried out by metropolitan workers. All these jobs are part of the rural economy and again illustrate the dependence on the rural sector, and relationship between urban and rural. There is a 'powerful multiplier effect ' (Sher and Sher 1994:*14*) here for the national economy, based on rural pursuits. "Value adding" and "niche marketing" are beginning to be encouraged in the rural sector and these have assisted the further diversification of the rural.

Another myth is that *rural* and *agricultural* are synonymous (Sher and Sher 1994:*11*). Farms and farmers do not make up the total rural area and population. The rural picture is more diverse. Less than twenty percent of rural Australians are farmers. The mining industry has expanded in the past three decades, and the range of horticultural and pastoral pursuits has grown. As national parks become established and more popular as holiday and weekend venues, they become another rural 'industry'.

Farming policy is not rural policy though it becomes a de facto rural policy because a comprehensive rural development policy does not exist. This conflation of the categories 'rural' and 'agricultural' is partly historic, dating from the early days of the wool industry, when wool sales were such a large part of the economy. Sher and Sher (1994:*16)* note that much power is centred on the narrowly defined agricultural industry:

> *the agricultural industry is organised, politically powerful, and coherent in its demands to a degree light years beyond that of the diverse, idiosyncratic 'silent majority' of rural Australians.*

It can be seen that the rural sector contributes much to the country's lifestyle and economy, but the 'strong core - weak periphery ' mental map of the country on which many policy makers seem to act does not take account of the rural sector's contribution (Sher and Sher 1994:*7*). In order to begin a process that is directed at exploring the 'strong core - weak periphery' discourse, Sher and Sher (1994:*17*) posed some 'big picture' questions : What are the visions of the country's rural economy and rural communities for the twenty-first century? Who can bring, and how can they bring, positive visions of rural Australia to their realisation? How can Australians take some control over future developments?

To work towards a national rural development policy and prepare for the future, Sher and Sher proposed four areas on which to focus: education, empowerment, environment and entrepreneurship . They see education as "both the primary enabling strategy " and a "necessary pre-condition" for the other areas of focus.

> *In short, the prospects for rural development, and , thus, the prospects for a better future for Australia's rural people and places, are remarkably dependent upon a broad range of appropriate educational options and activities. Schools, in fact, can be a powerful starting point for the kind of rural reconstruction needed in so many areas of the country.* (Sher and Sher 1994:*37)*

This theme is developed in Section 2.2.2 of this chapter.

Detailed features of diversity in rural communities have been documented. For example by Dempsey (1990), who studied a rural town and community in north western Victoria. He investigated the social cohesion and the social inequality evident in the one community. Similarly, Poiner (1990) studied a southern New South Wales community in which she focussed on the power relationships. She also explained the situation of hobby farmers and the spirit of community welfare evident in fighting a bushfire in the district. The varied papers collated in the book edited by James (1989) on topics such as immigrant women and aboriginal women, and the comparisons that James makes between two New South Wales towns in her own paper in the same book, provide examples of the differences that exist between and within rural communities. In the first chapter of the Schools Commission Report of 1988, *Schooling in Rural Australia*, the diverse features of rural Australia are considered at length: geographic differences, diversity in land use and in local industries, different employment opportunities in different locations, various social compositions, and varied responses to economic upturns and downturns. Thus, again, diversity within the category is emphasised.

In the late twentieth century societies are moving into a highly technological environment, which shrinks time and space because of the availability of advanced global communication technology and fast transportation. Muspratt, Freebody and Luke have summed up the effects in this way:

> *these shifts in work, technology, and space have destabilised and repunctuated many communities' senses of their cultural identity, their practices of work and everyday life.* (Muspratt, Freebody, & Luke 1999:*154*)

So the social settings of rural communities are changing. Contemporary rural dwellers can access urban facilities and society more readily than previous generations; they can access information from global sources as easily as their urban counterparts through use of international telephones, facsimile machines and internet, and worldwide radio and television networks. The possibilities for global communication and access to it are there but in reality, in some rural areas, the technological infrastructure is not always in place,

and the technological jargon can be frightening and isolating for those who do not have easy access to either the technology or the tutors and technicians who can assist (Lambert 1997: *3*).

One of the characteristics of the values of rural dwellers is conservatism (e.g., Luloff, Miller & Beaulieu 1986). Rural dwellers have been described as slow to accept new methodologies and technologies, and slow to change their ways of thinking. Possible explanations of these characteristics are because they are physically distant from the scene where the debates are taking place and the implications are less obvious to them, or because they need to be convinced of the benefits of changes or of technologies. Schooling plays a critical role in introducing people to technologies and current developments, but it is a centralised provision emanating from urban centres.

Any commitment to providing quality education and education resources through local schools in rural Australia is struggling against budget constraints and economic rationalist approaches. Many rural schools are being closed or being threatened by closure, expenses are being cut - all of which have demoralising effects. Such steps display little consideration for rural development. Rural schools usually have fewer resources to draw on than their urban counterparts, but they have a 'more complex mission'. Rural educators know that they must prepare their students to succeed in urban contexts/environments, because many of them will go to the city to live and work either temporarily or permanently. Yet they must also prepare these students to be successful in their local rural context. (Sher and Sher 1994: *38, 39*)

> *There is an expectation that rural schools prepare their students to function well biculturally.* (Sher and Sher 1994: *39*)

Both urban and rural communities consider the focus of schooling to be on the development of basic academic skills, but rural communities seem to accept that schooling should go beyond academic competencies to the community itself - "the rural tendency to see and value the interconnectedness of all components of their local community." There

needs to be, within a rural development policy, "a compelling vision of what an excellent rural education should encompass ". (Sher & Sher 1994: *39*)

Such an agenda, Sher and Sher argued, should include :

> *a concerted effort to make the rural community the foundation and focal point of the curriculum (rather than remaining incidental to it). An important step would be to complement classroom instruction by routinely using the local area as a real-world laboratory and local people as learning resources.* (Sher & Sher 1994: *39*)

So there is diversity among rural communities and diversity within rural communities, and the social settings of rural communities are changing. Ways of using the rich and varied community resources and potentials need to be explored so that they can be introduced into the schools curricula for mutual benefit of students and communities.

2.1.4 Rural as social representation

Because each of the approaches outlined in Section 2.1.2 express a specific viewpoint developed for a distinctly formulated research purpose, the approaches are not generally applicable. Halfacree presents an alternative way of defining rural/rurality through discourse and the theory of social representations, which

> *requires us to investigate the status of the rural in discourse since rural is just a symbolic shorthand by which we mean to encapsulate something.*
> (Halfacree 1993: *29*)

The theory of social representations has been developed principally in the work of Moscovici (1984). This theory delineates how people comprehend, explain and express the complex patterns of stimuli and experiences, flowing from the social and physical environment in which they are engaged. It proposes that people employ 'social representations' to deal with the complexities of the social world. Moscovici (1984) defined the social representations as:

> *organisational mental constructs which guide us towards what is visible and must be responded to, relate appearance and reality, and even define reality itself. The world is organised, understood, and mediated through these basic cognitive units.* (Moscovici 1984)

Interview studies such as the present work are well suited to documenting those salient processes of comprehending and explaining complex data available in the discourse. Halfacree observed that people use social representations in two ways: to facilitate the conventionalising of persons, events and objects as they are met, and to monitor, direct and organise ensuing responses and behaviours. Social representations are both referential and anticipatory. (Halfacree 1994: *29* in reference to Shields 1991). Ordinary people in the living of their everyday lives can, through social representations, be not only reactive but also creative.

In summary, the Theorising of Rural Communities has discussed perceptions of rural residency as constituting disadvantage. An attempt was made to foreground the concept that rural living and rural needs differ from urban living and urban needs. A variety of definitions of rurality found in research literature were explored - descriptive (socio-spatial), socio-cultural, rural as locality. The conclusion was reached that these types of definitions, while useful for specific purposes, have limitations, and for late twentieth century planning and research purposes a different definition is necessary to expose the complexities of rural living. Rural as social representation may provide that breadth and depth of definition. The diversity that flourishes within and among rural communities and the importance of the rural activities to the economic, social and cultural life of the nation have been delineated. Education is taken to play a key role in the development of rural communities, but the education systems are not always seen to recognise and embody rural diversity and rural needs.

Having looked from a theoretical perspective at 'rural' and what is 'rural', it is now appropriate to look in more detail into rural communities and consider their cultural and social practices, including rural dwellers' views of schooling.

2.2. COMMUNITIES, CULTURAL PRACTICES, AND SCHOOLING

From the previous section, it can be seen that ruralness or rural communities have been characterised by identifiable socio-cultural practices as well as some geophysical features. It has also been shown that education has been taken to be an important aspect of rural communities, but that education systems do not always take into account the distinctiveness of the rural, or even recognise the urban-rural continuum. This next section will review selected literature on schooling, cultural identity, rural communities and their schools, gender patterns in rural communities, and the education-work relationship.

2.2.1 Schooling and cultural identity

Education, in its broadest sense, and schooling, as education offered to youth in institutionalised settings, play an important role in developing and maintaining cultural identity. Schooling can be described as a cultural export system regulated largely by urban-based designers. It has the powers of an enculturation device which can produce cultural practices, and thus it has the potential to change rurality. Herein lies a paradox for rural dwellers: schooling belongs to a system that aims to enculturate students into its own cultural milieu and metiers and this is often at odds with rural culture. Schooling also has its own representational preferences generated from the institutional structures of the formal education system in which schools function. The New London Group (1996:*74*) have described the mix as a range of discourses:

> *Schools are particularly crucial sites in which a set or order of discourses relate to each other - disciplinary discourses, the discourses of being a teacher (teacher culture) the discourse of being a student of a certain sort, community discourses,*

ethnic discourses, class discourses, and public sphere discourses involving business and government.

Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999: *153-4*) cited the work of Innis and McLuhan and other communications theorists who recognised that communications media redefined the relationships (especially economic and cultural relationships) between centres and margins, urban and rural spaces. These theorists defined 'space, distance and formation of the national identity' as the distinctive preoccupations of post-colonial, resource-based nations. Muspratt, Freebody and Luke described a link between 'space, distance and identity' and the history of literacy and schooling, and note their recurrence as issues in the history of literacy. Written texts are portable and permanent and through these qualities are able to bridge time and space; they play a constitutive role in identity formation through their attributes that code cultural histories and meanings.

Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999:*175*) considered that there are many ways to view the functions of schooling in the current critical cultural and economic times. The examples they give are : contact with the centre, a means of access and participation, enhancing the local culture, skilling for the local environment, and improving the prospect of 'getting out'.

Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999) further analysed conversations with several residents of three rural sites and noted that their perceptions of schooling , the difficulties confronting schools and schooling, and the ways in which these difficulties might be overcome, can be heard partly as a documentation of changes in access to and participation in exchanges of information and interpretive practices. They found that speakers nominated schooling as a means of engaging in information exchange. For a range of reasons however, schooling is seen as not being responsive to the social and economic changes occurring in the communities. Some speakers actually nominated schooling practices as being responsible in part for undesirable economic and social conditions. As a result, the changing conditions are described as producing a lack of confidence in schooling. The speakers also saw

schooling as a means of 'getting out' of the unwanted economic and social conditions, and some individuals looked to schooling as giving them assistance to leave the community to relocate elsewhere. Regardless of whether schooling is used in a physical, cultural or metaphorical sense, it is described by the participants in the Muspratt, Freebody and Luke study as having a responsibility to be responsive to the changing conditions and resultant employment opportunities, social relationships and cultural environments.

> *The place of these communities on the moral discursive map is under constant pressures for definition from the activities of public institutions and corporations. Within the new economic and moral imperatives, the terms of their 'differences' can be redefined as obstructionist, outmoded and marginal, at the same moment as the roads get better, the telecommunications get quicker and more complete, and their responsive access to deregulated international markets more immediate. These features combine, in the talk of many of these communities' members, to emphasise the centrality of the centre, and to add to the inevitability of its magnetism.*
>
> (Muspratt, Freebody and Luke 1999: *186-7*)

So schooling is part of a system where formal contact with non-rural practices occurs. Schooling has its own representational preferences through which the institutional and enculturational processes are achieved. Many of the practices of schooling are blind to rural-urban cultural patterns, and the complementarities and dispositions of rural and urban life.

2.2.2 Rural school-community nexus

In order to explore the rural community further there is a need to develop a broader view of the school-community relationship within the framework of institutional sites in rural settings. Sher and Sher pointed out that schools are "vital community-wide rural institutions" and that there is a dearth of other institutions fulfilling a community-wide role in rural areas. This places schools in a unique and influential position in these communities, and they become an obvious vehicle for the empowerment of rural people to maintain and

enhance rurality. Darnell (1981:*46*) emphasised the importance of rural education reflecting the interests, norms and values of rural residents, and noted that *those responsible for providing education in rural areas have first to discover what these interests, norms and values are.*

Sher and Sher (1994) suggested reform in all levels of education in rural areas, from child care through every level, to tertiary, adult and community education. The aim of this reform, they argued, should be to assist rural educators and rural dwellers to play positive roles in the wider process of rural development. Examples of this given by Sher and Sher are:

(a) environment : Everyone, from politicians and government officials to business personnel, to urban citizens, to rural dwellers, and to farmers, needs to be reeducated to understand the diversity of rural ecosystems and the employment and economic benefits of ecologically sustainable development. This is a significant educational challenge. The first stage is for the rural dwellers to become better informed about and attuned to managing the ecological developments themselves.

(b) entrepreneurship : As a strategy for rural development, there is a need for education (and research) to "identify, research and plan viable enterprises" (Sher and Sher 1994:*37*); to target, provide for and satisfy customers in an effective way; to establish, finance, operate and sustain a worthwhile business. Sher and Sher maintained that the educational aspects of entrepreneurship are trivialised and under-developed.

Sher and Sher also noted that Australia has a good basis on which to develop these strategies, in that the quality of both teachers and schools is high, compared with rural education provision elsewhere in the world. They argued that this basis of quality must be maintained and built on, the good that has been done for rural education must be recognised. For example, Australia has made large investments in provisions such as Schools of the Air and arrangements for accommodation and travel for rural students. So ideas for the ways in which rural communities can build on this strong basis are needed.

Sher and Sher's view is that a rural development policy must include a clear vision of excellence in rural education and ways to make that a central part of the rural agenda. They recommend that the vision should incorporate:

1. Steps to design curriculum so that the rural community is the foundation and focus of that curriculum.
2. Activities that will develop positive attitudes to the rural and information emphasising the values of rural life, so that youth can be proud of their rurality.
3. Strengthening, with more resources and planned development, adult and community education in rural areas.
4. Expanding and deepening the education offerings that encourage and foster rural entrepreneurship.

(The intention in these recommendations is not to diminish or denigrate information, aspirations and attitudes that relate to urban living, but rather to accompany these, and complement them.)

It has been established that schooling has an important role in the development of community and cultural identity, and that rural schools have a unique and influential position in their communities. From the views of researchers and commentators there appears to be a need for a review of the goals of rural schooling and consequently for the development of curriculum to meet the revised goals. Along with the goals there need to be determinations to inter-connect rural schools with rural communities.

2.2.3 Gender patterns in rural communities

A number of researchers have studied gender patterns in rural settings (Poiner 1990, James 1989, Elix and Lambert 1998, Dempsey 1990). Poiner (1990) explored power relationships and gender divisions in her study of a rural community in southern New South Wales. She found that men were the culturally dominant group, but she also acknowledged the contributions that women made, and noted their secondary status :

> *Social-class advantages certainly expand women's opportunities in all manner of directions and ways, but they remain subordinate to men in the*

same social category. Strangely, rural ideology, in its practice so dependent on the very real and positive contributions of women, requires them to have no separate and autonomous position and to be represented as secondary.
(Poiner 1990: *184*)

Poiner saw the strength of gender divisions in power relationships through their intransigence in cutting across all other social dimensions.

Dempsey (1990) also reported men's dominance, with women influenced by family responsibilities and incorporation into their husbands' work. Dempsey in his book *Smalltown*, a study of a rural community in north western Victoria, discussed aspects of the subordinate and exploitative nature of facets of women's relationships with men. He identified some impediments to women obtaining some of the males' advantages :

- commitment to child-rearing and home-making;
- the stability of the present system;
- the fact that the women accept the system and their subordinate role;
- social, demographic and geographic features that tend to isolate women; and
- lack of employment opportunities for professional women. (Dempsey 1990:*274*).

Women of all classes are generally in a subordinate position to men in this community. They are excluded from a wide range of men's activities and when they are included it is commonly to help men achieve their goals rather than as equals engaged in a common enterprise (Dempsey 1990: *274*).

A nationwide survey conducted by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and reported in 1998 concluded that women contribute twenty-eight percent of total farm output and earn eighty percent of off-farm wage income (Elix and Lambert 1998: *11*). This survey also explored barriers for women to gain status in the rural sector and reported similar barriers to those identified by Dempsey as described above. The greatest barriers to women in leadership in agriculture were described as:

- organisational culture (attitudes and communication channels);
- family unfriendly workplaces (lack of flexibility); and

- self perceptions among women that their skills and abilities are not adequate for the task (Elix and Lambert 1998: *3*).

In her introduction to "Women in Rural Australia", James (1989) developed a profile of rural communities which assumes that males are the superior beings, but even so these communities depend on the contributions made by women in the rural industries. Women make up one third of the country's agricultural workforce. Women are usually expected to do the housework and provide the meals for everyone (sometimes including paid farm workers), but as well, the country women do 'outside' physical farm work. They also do more driving to collect children, mail, spare parts, and supplies, and often take on bookkeeping and recording duties and write much of the farm business correspondence. She (James 1989: *83*) saw women as a major source of men's power, but for the community this power stemmed from the belief that men are superior leaders and decision-makers, and also from women's economic dependence. James summed up the general attitude as a patriarchal ideology: 'the men shall inherit the land'. Men's power and the privilege it entails is demonstrated in all major spheres of rural public life.

Women play a major role in rural life in the economic and social senses, yet the possibilities for them to take up leadership roles or to gain equal professional status to the men, or to gain social status within their communities, by the recognition of their own contributions, are limited. Women in rural areas are usually educated to a higher level than the men. Census figures show that more women than men have completed a tertiary education course (see Table 3.5 in Chapter 3). The role of the women in rural communities does not appear to reflect their educational standard or their contribution to their communities (Redpath 1999).

The next section moves into the relationship between education and work (e.g., head-work and hands-work), a relationship which becomes obvious in rural areas where hands-work is in demand in primary industry operations.

2.2.4 Relationship between work and education

Dempsey (1990: *247*) noted that two-thirds of the children in Smalltown had aspired to an upper-middle-class job but less than forty percent of them achieved such a job. The proportion who were engaged in working-class jobs (34 per cent) was much greater than the number who wished to be (26 per cent). These people worked in trades or as truck drivers or in domestic or similar jobs. Dempsey also reflected on the gap between expectations and occupational achievements. Half of his total sample realistically expected to achieve an upper-middle-class position but only 39 percent did. Children of professionals and farmers did not do as well as they expected; petit-bourgeois and lower-middle and upper-working-class children did as well as they expected, upper-working class achieved marginally better than they expected (Dempsey 1990: *248*).

> *Some of the differences between aspirations and outcomes highlight the impact of the local petit-bourgeois structure and culture on the careers of Smalltown children* (Dempsey 1990: *248*).

Dempsey observed that children from petit-bourgeois families who may aspire to entering a profession ultimately enter the 'family firm', having rejected the only other alternative in Smalltown, a working class job. Often, advanced education qualifications are not needed. These children gain their positions (often management positions) in the 'family firm' by birthright and enjoy the accompanying status and relatively high income. Working class children have limited choice of jobs in Smalltown, because a limited range is offering, so they usually take a working class job. Such situations lead to perceptions that there is little to be gained by having a 'good' education, and any relationship between education and various kinds of work is seldom acknowledged.

Some of the attitudes that are exhibited in relation to 'higher education' (e.g., 'why study ?', the 'cissy types') are a reflection of the occupational and professional situation in small towns. It is attitudes of this type that have influenced the valuing of hands-work (manual labour) more than head-work (academic work). Achieving high levels academically, and/or spending years being educated are often not seen to advance a person's opportunities in terms of employment or social status in the rural community.

Dempsey (1990: *256*) noted the *significance of ascriptive as opposed to achievement factors in allocating valued positions in the occupational structure.* However, Dempsey identified some lessening of the pattern of petit-bourgeois children continuing the 'family firm' and some decline in the petit-bourgeois dominance (Dempsey 1990: *256-7*).

Dempsey also pointed out that the predisposition of farming and rural business families to favour sons over daughters in terms of property inheritance and job placements is only part of the explanation for girls not doing as well as boys. He hinted at a cluster of factors that affect all women in western society. (Refer back to Section 2.2.3).

So the relationship between education and work is complex and not well understood, and the values placed on this relationship are influenced by strong social factors. While the petit-bourgeois influence may be lessening, it is still accountable for some employment patterns.

2.2.5 Summary

Section 2.2 has surveyed literature on rural schools and their communities, schooling and cultural identity, the education-work relationship, and some of the gender patterns in rural communities. The influence of schooling on cultural practices, as a major factor in developing cultural identity, and as a crucial force in rural development, has been explored. The rural view of education leading to (or not leading to) satisfactory work has been reported, and the barriers to women gaining professional and community status have been documented. The educational standards achieved by girls and women, and their contributions to the social and economic facets of rural life seem to be devalued by the organisational culture of the present structures and the limited employment opportunities for professional women. The powers of schooling have been recognised but they are not always attuned to rural life. There is a documented need for policy development that encompasses the vision of excellence in rural education, curriculum to enhance knowledge and attitudes in the values of the rural, and expanded educational offerings at all levels,

including gender equity programs. Such policy developments will impact on attitudes to the education-work relationship.

In order to investigate the presence or absence of the factors in rural communities that are prominent in the literature review, a methodology that will allow close observation of aspects of community life, of schooling and the community, and of social representation is required. The next section summarises such an approach as it is used in this study.

2.3. ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SETTINGS

In Section 2.1.4 it was shown that social representation is concerned with the 'socially and situationally specific actor's view of the world'. (Halfacree 1993:*29*). To capture this 'actor's view' there is a need to study the everyday situations of rural dwellers. The present study is an investigation into the social construction of schooling and other aspects of life in rural communities through the talk and interaction that occurred during interviews that were arranged for the study. Ethnomethodological approaches to interview analyses are used partly because they offer a clear and comprehensive basis for analysing and understanding talk in a variety of settings. Section 2.3 will review the literature that explains the documenting of social practices through ethnomethodological techniques and will focus on the use and value of interview accounts. Analysis of data gathered through interviews will also be an important feature of this review of recent literature.

2.3.1 What is ethnomethodology ?

Ethnomethodology is the study of the interactions of group members in naturalistic settings, especially through their language. Ethnomethodological procedures focus on the understanding of social order and social structure. Ethnomethodology is a research method that has been used increasingly since the 1960s (Hester and Eglin 1997:*2*). Garfinkel (1974) is recognised as the founder of Ethnomethodology (Heritage 1984:*1* and Dwyer 1997: *Chapter 2*), and was one of the early writers to document this methodology and to

critique the ways in which the traditional sociological studies accounted for social order. He explained:

> *It is an organisational study of a member's knowledge of his ordinary affairs; of his own organised enterprises, where that knowledge is treated by us as part of the same setting that it also makes orderable.* (Garfinkel 1974:*15*)

In contrast to traditional sociology, which regards the nature of social relationships and social interactions as effects of culture, roles, conventions, social and institutional structures, ethnomethodology seeks to examine talk within interactions and social contexts in order to show the orderliness and organisational features of those interactions and collaborations. Ethnomethodology postulates societal members' knowledge of the current interaction as well as members' knowledge of the usual, regular social organisation (Dwyer 1997: *Chapter 2*). Dwyer has examined in depth the characteristics of Garfinkel's work on Ethnomethodology. Her framework for this examination was : The nature of action, the nature of intersubjectivity, and the nature of the social constitution of knowledge. Dwyer explained Garfinkel's argument thus : Individuals speak and act in discernible ways because they appraise and select a specific and reasoned set of actions / activities for the specific circumstances of the current context.

> *participants, in their actions and interactions, create the scene for 'what it is'.*
>
> (Dwyer 1997: *Chapter 2 Section 2.2.1.1*)

Freebody, Ludwig and Gunn (1995: *190*) used ethnomethodological procedures in their study of urban communities and everyday literacy practices, and they have explained their approach in this way :

> *An Ethnomethodological approach draws attention to the ways in which speakers show their ongoing analyses of one another's talk, and thereby show procedurally how they account for their actions in the here-and-now. This is what is taken to count as data and evidence, rather than reference to a priori , theoretically generated constructs or abstractions about people or actions.*

Lee (1991) identified those specifications that he considered inadequate in linguists' models of the language-culture relationship. Discourse analysis apportions formulated classifications to the analysts' findings in the language functioning (eg directing, informing), but Sacks (1974) urged the discarding of such classifications and the use of natural language for describing what is happening in that natural language. Sacks maintained that

> *It is not possible to know what naturally organised structure is like until it has been located and examined in situ , and formally described.* (Lee 1991: *224*)

Lee (1991:*224, 225*) has outlined five axioms that characterise the way that an ethnomethodological approach gives a new orientation to the study of social life and social activity. This orientation departs markedly from traditional linguistic and sociological studies. The axioms are:

1. Suspending general questions (e.g., about class, socioeconomic status, cultural differences) until those characteristics of people and activities have occurred as activity or interaction that can be understood and observed by participants in (members of) the culture or language of the community.
2. Treating social activities, such as talk (e.g., conversation, social interaction, interviews), as jointly constructed social events that are observable, rather than as the result of cognitive or linguistic choices or cultural attributions.
3. Translating the conceptually unanalysed notion of 'language forms' into an exploration (scrutiny) of how people organise their activities in and through talk and local routines of that talk without pre-empting notions of what these structures look like.
4. Accepting that the ways in which people co-ordinate their activities in and through talk will show the orderliness of their culture and how that is achieved, day by day, in ordinary activities.
5. Regarding culture as implanted in and built by the courses of everyday actions, because that is how members of a culture experience it, not as something 'external' to and 'constraining on language'. Culture is present in ordinary activities, in knowledge and skills used and available in talk and action. (Lee 1991: *224, 225*)

In summary, ethnomethodology, as expounded by Garfinkel and Sacks, is a recognised research methodology that seeks to examine the talk that occurs in interactions within social contexts so as to expose the orderliness and the organisational features of those interactions and contexts. Within the ethnomethodological approach, it is necessary to outline in detail the methods of documentation used for the interactions and social contexts.

2.3.2 Documenting social practices

Ethnomethodologists reason that it is necessary for the analyst who wishes to give an explanation of everyday interactive behaviour to study the details of those interactions (e.g., phone conversations, financial discussions/consultations, medical consultations, interviews, commercial events) and the ways in which those collaborative activities "talk into being" social realities. Talk has a predominant position in ethnomethodological studies (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995: *186*). *...talk is a vehicle for social action* (Drew & Heritage 1992:*16*).

Garfinkel (1967) detailed characteristics of everyday activities and their underlying organisation: 'rational connections', 'accountable events', 'shared agreement' (Garfinkel 1967: *34 & 40*). In ordinary everyday activities there are organisational phenomena that are meaningful and consistent. These are available to actors (members of the society) and become the "managed accomplishment of organised settings of practical actions" (Garfinkel 1967: *32*). The rational properties that underlie members/actors choices and decisions ('rational connections'), and the social events that are planful and reproducible ('accountable events'), which enable members/actors to enact those choices and decisions, are phenomena that the sociologist/researcher must examine explicitly. Garfinkel used an everyday illustration of these phenomena (Garfinkel 1967: *38-9*) :

CONVERSATION	THIS COLUMN INDICATES WHAT THE PARTIES UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT
HUSBAND: Dana succeeded in putting a penny in a parking meter today without being picked up.	This afternoon I was bringing Dana, our four-year-old son, home from the nursery school, he succeeded in reaching high enough to put a penny in a parking meter when we parked in a meter parking zone, whereas before he has always had to be picked up to reach that high.

WIFE: Did you take him to the record store?	Since he put a penny in a meter that means that you stopped while he was with you. I know that you stopped at the record store either on the way to get him or on the way back. Was it on the way back, so that he was with you or did you stop there on the way to get him and somewhere else on the way back?

This conversation reveals some common understandings of events and certain shared agreements between the 'actors'. Some matters were not spoken of, yet the husband and wife understood what was said and what was left unsaid (rational properties, accountable events). A temporal sequence also plays its part in the conversation. The recognition of these characteristics is important to cognisance of ethnomethodological procedures.

> *The underlying pattern was not only derived from a course of individual documentary evidences but the documentary evidences in their turn were interpreted on the basis of 'what was known' and anticipatorily knowable about the underlying patterns.* (Garfinkel 1967: *40*).

So the data collected can be analysed so that it exposes informal logic and cultural properties of activities and the character of those activities for the members. The result is systematic revelation of the range of cultural conventions that assist practical actions and sense to occur, and inform the organisation of the practices in and of social life, and of social relations. Members' commonsense understandings become transformed into phenomena from which is derived *a phenomenal map of the social world which is then to be analysed in detail for its organisation, features, production and intelligibility* (Jayyusi 1984: *9*).

Ethnomethodology, then, uses everyday interactions, where and as they occur, *in situ*, as data. Everything systematically recordable that occurs in a specific interactional situation becomes data for analysis. It is the raw material of action or interaction. (Dwyer 1997: *Section 2.3.1*.). The data can be gathered in written form, taken down as it happens, in audiotape form, in videotape form. The most productive method of data collection is that done by recording (audio with notes taken during the event, or video) which relieves researchers of the task of having to recall details subsequent to the collection phase. All the

data can be captured on tape (especially videotape) and this permits repeated analysis and availability for other researchers.

The ethnomethodological researcher has an obligation to show from the data that the features of the interactions, and the participants, and/or the context, that s/he judges to be significant to the social action are actually the features that are significant to the participants and that they are observable in the participants' talk. The researcher/analyst must ignore any pre-emptive common-sense relevance or meaning-making that s/he experienced as a member of the culture, and demonstrate those features that were significant for the participants in the interaction. (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995:*188*)

2.3.3 Interviews and accounts

The interview technique has wide use for generating information. The interview has been, and is, commonly used as a research tool (Warwick and Lininger 1975:*182* ; Waitzkin 1991; Silverman 1997). The types of interviews that are conducted range from the highly structured, quantitative surveys to free-flowing exchanges of information. In much social science research the emphasis in using the interview has been on the data collection. Much attention has been given to aspects such as: the best procedures, the best types of questions; avoiding bias, and avoiding seeing interviewees as passive vessels holding answers. It is only relatively recently that the major focus has moved from data collection to data analysis. This in no way denies the importance of the data collection phase of any research, but it highlights neglected aspects of the richness of interview data, richness that can be probed and explained by the conscientious analyst.

The accounts that result from interactions during interviewing vary from uncomplicated forced-choice answers on survey questions to elaborate life-histories. But there is a commonality. This common element is that all are constructed *in situ,* and result from talk between interview participants. Holstein and Gubrium (1997) urged researchers to become more aware of the 'interactional ingredients' of interviews, and to acknowledge and make use of interviewers' and respondents' "constitutive contributions to the production of

interview data". Interviewer and interviewee both have important roles to play in the interactional situation. In an interview situation, impartiality and receptiveness assume importance on the part of the interviewer, as do building rapport and trust and confidentiality. But the ethnomethodological view holds that meaning is 'socially constituted'. When an interview is treated as a social encounter during which knowledge is jointly constructed then it is possible that the interview is a "site of and occasion for producing reportable knowledge itself".

> *Meaning.... is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. ... ... Respondents are ... constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers* . (Holstein and Gubrium 1997: *114*) .

The ethnomethodological approach to research, in the early stages of its development, used conversation in naturally occurring forms (i.e., everyday conversations), consequently the approach became known as Conversation Analysis (or CA). CA studies have documented the features of the talk and the sequential procedures used by participants to achieve courses of action (Dwyer 1997: Chapter 2 Section 2.3.3.1). More recent ethnomethodological investigations, such as those of Drew and Heritage (1992) have turned to 'institutional talk' or the talk that occurs naturally in institutional settings, for example, law courts, medical clinics, schools. These studies have broadened the field of ethnomethodological analyses and have resulted in the use of the term Talk-In-Interaction (or TII). Drew and Heritage referred to TII as the principal means for lay persons to pursue their utilitarian goals, and the central channel for the conduct of daily work-related activities of many professional persons and institutional representatives (Drew and Heritage 1992:*3*). Interviews fit neatly into this category of TII.

Ethnomethodologists insist that researchers consider the interview carefully, both the process and the product, to strike a balance between process aspects and content aspects so that they are much more sensitive to the social construction of knowledge. This means paying more attention to the ways knowledge is assembled. Holstein and Gubrium (1997: *121-122*) and Baker (1997) detailed the HOWS and the WHATS of the interview :

The HOWS of the interview refer to information being offered from a specific standpoint (e.g., 'as a farmer I believe...' , 'as a friend of many aborigines I think that.....') . Such standpoints are developed as the interaction proceeds. This approach nurtures the expression of alternative viewpoints and draws on deep funds of knowledge.

> *HOWS - the interactional, narrative procedures of knowledge production* (Holstein & Gubrium 1997: *115*).

Clayman (1992) took up the concept of 'footings' which was first used by Goffman (1974). Footings are more detailed forms of the 'HOWS' of an interview. Speakers can differentiate between 'animator', 'author' and 'principal' of what is spoken. A speaker can be an 'animator' -when s/he utters a sequence of words (not necessarily his/her own words); the speaker can also be 'author' - the originator of the beliefs and sentiments, and may also compose the words for expressing them; or the speaker can be a 'principal', the one whose views are being conveyed. The speaker may assume all three of these identities at the same time. The use of footings occurs frequently in media interviews and can assist an interviewer to take an impartial stance, by quoting another's words (animator) but not expressing his/her own opinions or beliefs.

The 'WHATS' of the interview: The subject or theme can be developed during the interview, as the knowledge of the interviewee is explored. The interviewee provides data which can be developed further during the interview; s/he can be asked for further interpretation by the interviewer and encouraged to elaborate on information given. The questions set out in any questionnaire or survey are guidelines for the content, the baseline or starting points for interaction. The respondent's knowledge is the richest source of information available to the interviewer and it draws on moral assumptions and cultural identities which are embedded in that knowledge.

> *WHATS - issues guiding the interview, content of questions, and substantive information communicated by the respondent* (Holstein & Gubrium 1997:*115*).

Miller and Glassner (1997) postulated that it is possible to gather information about social worlds through in-depth interviewing. They documented two forms of interview narratives: Cultural stories and Collective stories. Cultural stories - "stories about social phenomena

that are typically told from the point of view of the ruling interests and normative order" (Miller & Glassner 1997:*104*). For example, Miller in interviewing female gang members collected some interview material which described gangs according the cultural view of 'the bad gang':

> *Some of 'em are like me, don't have, don't really have a basic home or steady home to go to, you know, and they don't have as much love and respect in the home so they want to get it elsewhere .* (Miller & Glassner 1997: *104*).

Collective stories - these take the point of view of the interviewee, and give "voice to those who are silenced or marginalised in the cultural story." The interviewees revisit and revise the cultural stories. Miller's girls from the gang reframed their relationships with the gang members, and the girls' views of the relationships do not support the general view of gang membership as always tough.

> *I mean we show respect towards one another. She helps me out when I'm down. I mean, cause, even though we may have that title as a gang, I mean, we're still there for one another. I mean we still have feelings .* (Miller & Glassner 1997:*104*) .

With respect to unbiased interviewing and analysis, the concept of bias can have meaning only where the topic has been pre-empted and can thus be reconfigured through an interview process. When the topics are perceived as developing during the interpretive process they will not be pre-empted - their deployment is explicated. In the traditional view, interviewees were seen as passive vessels holding answers; in the view explored here interviewers must set up an interview situation and pose questions that will encourage 'open and undistorted communication'. The process of interviewing is 'non-directional and unbiased'. When researchers take the position that interviewing is an active endeavour, there is constant development during the research process, the research purposes are broad, there is flexibility in the interview processes, and the themes emerge during (as part of) the development of the processes, they are not decided at the outset of the project.

The purpose of an interview should be broadly stated so that interviewees can speak about the broad topics or issues being researched. The usual pattern for the interview is that of the interviewer asking questions and probing at times when s/he seeks more information often as a result of the initial response of the interviewee. The interviewee provides information by talking on/around the topic, answering the questions and elaborating on the answers. An interviewee usually talks much more than the interviewer. By taking the interview transcripts, examining the membership categories used and the other aspects the interviewee draws upon, the 'cultural particulars' produced for the interviewer, and by noticing how the interviewer hears the categories and 'picks them up', the analyst can probe an interview/interaction toward more detail. The data can be analysed so that the dynamics and the interrelatedness of the WHATS and HOWS are shown, the focus is on both the assembly process and the assembled data.

> *It [this approach] sets up the interviewer and the respondent as ordinary competent members of the culture, and the analyst as POST HOC ethnomethodologist, looking for the social-organisational work being done by the interviewer and respondent.* (Baker 1997: *131*).

Heritage (1984: *136-7*) explained that ordinary people, during their everyday lives, talk to one another giving "descriptive accounts of states of affairs". They discuss the weather, the world around them, what they are doing, and many commonplace things. Their talk is done earnestly, "as a feature of real practical tasks", and has meaningful outcomes for the participants. Yet how is it done? Before Garfinkel asked this important question, only anthropology had attempted a similar (though narrow) version in the context of "folk" taxonomies. So Garfinkel used his observations as the rudiments of a research program that aimed to explore *how* social activities can be described and thus made 'account-able'. (Heritage 1984: *136*)

> *By analysing how people talk to one another, one is directly gaining access to a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions. Such a position is intrinsic to Garfinkel's (1967) argument that accounts are part of the world they describe.*
>
> (Silverman 1993: *108*) .

It has been established that interviews and accounts are valuable forms of data that enable researchers to gain access to cultural worlds, and the flexibility of interview processes permits themes to emerge during the interview processes.

Once the interview data has been collected and recorded, the next stage is analysis. Section 2.3.4 will consider current literature on the analytic processes used in ethnomethodology and will specify some recently developed methods used for the analysis of interview data.

2.3.4 Analysing data

Sacks (1985), one of the most prolific sources of ideas on ethnomethodology, has detailed methods of analysis of language (especially conversations) which have become the basis for many studies. CA, in the analytic stage, has focussed on the positioning and sequential features of units of speech and their relationship to one another. Another analytic method based on Sacks' work and used for analysis of the accounts provided by members of a community or culture is MEMBERSHIP CATEGORISATION ANALYSIS. In giving accounts of their everyday activities members/people use knowledge not necessarily made explicit in that instance. This knowledge can be uncovered (made explicit) through membership categorisation analysis. Jayyusi reported Sacks noticing that in giving accounts

> *...there are conventional preferences for linking up a range of activities with a range of membership categories which members of the culture actually orient to (and they display their orientation).* (Jayyusi 1984: *212*).

MCA - Membership Categorisation Analysis- was introduced by Sacks (1974), and later developed by Jayyusi (1984) and Baker (1997). Membership Categorisation Devices

(MCDs), the analytic devices used in the process of Membership Categorisation Analysis, are based on the tenets outlined in the previous Section 2.3.3. Hester and Eglin (1997: *3*) expressed the aim of membership categorisation analysis as taking the ordinary sense of people's talk, problematizing it so that categories and rational organisation are shown, then describing in a formal way the ordering and the procedures that the speakers have used. The analytic tool that opens up 'member's knowledge' (Garfinkel 1974) and reveals speaker's 'ongoing analysis' (Gunn, Forrest, & Freebody 1995) is the Membership Categorisation Device.

Interviewing is an interactional process in which members use cultural knowledge to answer or discuss the questions. The questions can assist in shaping how, and as a member of which categories, interviewees will speak. Responses are treated as accounts and interviews are treated as data generation rather than data collection. The accounting is the focus for analysis. The analyst extracts, from the interview data, the ways in which the interviewer and interviewee used membership categorisations, how interviewer and interviewee generated versions of social reality built around categories and activities, and what moral assumptions were contained in this culture, this specific social reality.

MCDs display the categories and category bound activities, and the category relations around which an account is built. Even a few words can expose a lot of cultural knowledge through their position and placement in the talk, and through their references. Every piece of information adds to or elaborates on the initial topic or description. During the course of the talking the categories and the content are woven into the fabric of a pattern of relationships which includes evaluative comments, justifications, and beliefs and values.

MCA identifies the categories used by the interviewee and interviewer, the attributes given to the categories, and the ways in which these lead into courses of social action.

To illustrate this approach the following example was given by Silverman (1993 : *85*). It is a newspaper headline which reads : *Father and Daughter in Snow Ordeal*. The MCD used in this instance is 'family', so the daughter is from the same family as the father, she is the daughter of this father. Activities are heard as being bound to certain categories,

category-bound activities. 'Snow Ordeal' is not heard as being bound to the category of 'family' and this is the reason for this headline being newsworthy. 'Father and Daughter', family members, are assumed to be linked together through caring and support, so what has happened to create a snow ordeal ?

The membership categorisation device (MCD) Sacks defined as :

> *.....any collection of membership categories, containing at least a category, which may be applied to some population containing at least a member, so as to provide, by the use of some rules of application, for the pairing of at least a population member and a categorisation device member. A device is then a collection plus rules of application.* (Jayyusi 1984: *218*).

Jayyusi (1984) detailed how category knowledge is a naturally occurring phenomenon in descriptions of social activities. Categories are shown to belong to a Membership Categorisation Device (e.g., the categories teacher, student, principal belong to the MCD 'school'; nurse, accountant, agronomist belong to the MCD 'occupations'). Jayyusi also detailed the basic rules that Sacks proposed in applying categories to a population (e.g., population-member exhaustibility, standardised relational pairs, category-bound activities). In order to understand fully the Membership Categorisation Device, the analyst must be aware of many analytic complexities. Is the category appropriate in the context ? Why is it used by the speaker, and what is it designed to achieve ? Is it linked to other categories in the discourse ? What are the implications of this category as opposed to the use of a different category ? The structure provided by the MCD allows a detailed analysis of the concepts and the assumptions being used by the speaker, where that speaker is positioning him/her self, and how s/he is ordering the social environment.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined important aspects of rural communities through reviewing relevant literature:

- the perceptions of the disadvantaged rural that have been promulgated in official reports;
- ways of defining rural and the strength/validity of such definitions;
- the diverse range of economic, social and cultural activities that are part of rural life and their importance to the economic and social welfare of Australia;
- and the rural as social representation.

It then examined the rural communities and their cultural practices and the multi-faceted relationships between these communities and the institutionalised practices of schooling:

- the influence of schooling on cultural identity,
- the relevance of schooling for future development of rural communities.

Then two facets of rural community life were selected and probed the literature for more detail on these:

- the role of gender in the social and economic life of rural communities,
- and the work and education relationship.

In order to move to the present study, it was necessary to explain ethnomethodology, an approach to research that lends itself readily to social representation and to members views about their communities, schooling, gendered roles, and the relationship between work and education. Current literature on ethnomethodology has been summarised.

The literature review contained in this chapter leads to a reformulation of the research questions :

1. How do residents of rural communities construct rurality and rural living?
2. Is there evidence, in accounts of rural dwellers, of the relation to urban communities and urban living, of a 'centre-margin' discourse informing these constructions?
3. How do rural dwellers construct the relationship between education and various kinds of work (eg head-work and hands-work)?
4. Do they value schooling highly?

5. Do rural dwellers describe themselves and their children as needing the same schooling or the same curriculum as urban dwellers?

6. Do gender patterns relate to the division of labour? (e.g., Do women in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour? Do men in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour?)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the communities in which the large project was conducted. It introduces the participants who took part in the project, the larger group from which this study's participants were drawn. It also explains the organisation that was operative and the research methodology that was used for conducting the large project, the phases in the process of selecting the data from the large corpus for the work reported in this thesis, and the methods of data analysis employed for this thesis.

3.1. STUDY SITES and PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the large project were adult members of three communities in rural Queensland. In total they numbered one hundred and fifty eight. The three communities will be described and then details of the participants will be recounted.

3.1.1 Three communities

The three communities for the project were chosen on the basis of their rural settings, their differences from one another, indicators of disadvantage, recent experience of major economic change, and their accessibility to the research team. All three communities are geographically distant from metropolitan areas and have populations of less than two thousand. All three communities have a history of reliance on rural primary industries for their economic base. While each community has distinctive social and cultural features, all three communities and their schools had characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage at the time of the data collection phase of the study. The disadvantage had been recognised at national level and the schools were receiving monetary support for programs to alleviate the disadvantages of their low socio-economic status. Descriptions of each of the three communities follow.

Veratown is a rural town and community of approximately one thousand eight hundred people. It is situated in a forestry area, on a tableland, hundreds of kilometres from the capital city, two hours' drive from a major centre, and approximately one hour's drive from a large town. The highway on which it is built leads to some smaller inland centres, mostly agricultural and mining. The railway no longer services the area, but is being developed as an attraction for tourists. The town has a range of shops to provide the daily necessities for residents: food, clothing, newspapers, building materials, motor services, banks, bakery, butcher, a small library, and a small range of craft and tourist shops. Some everyday items, such as the state or national newspapers, cost more in Veratown than in centres closer to the capital city, because they are airfreighted. Those who live and work on dairy and cropping farms in the surrounds use the town as their service centre. Aboriginals comprise approximately twelve per cent of the population, and hold titles to some of the Reserve land close to the town. Conservation areas and National Heritage areas are near the town also. Because of the proximity of these areas to Veratown, environmental and conservation issues often feature prominently in the socio-political activities. 'Alternative lifestylers' also reside on land close to the town. Some of these are professional people who have 'dropped out' of mainstream life. The area has experienced the ups and downs of economic cycles, many of these have been associated with government decision making, and have brought population and lifestyle changes.

The 1991 census figures, which give a Basic Community Profile, are based on local government areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993). The figures from which information has been drawn for Veratown are taken from a larger area than this study or the large project includes, but it is reasonable to assume that they are good indicators for the patterns of population for Veratown. These census figures show that 19.8% of the population was employed in agriculture-forestry-fishing-hunting, 19.3% in community services, 14.3% in wholesale and retail trade, 8.8% in construction, 6.5% in manufacturing, 5.2% in recreation, personal and other services.

Maneta is a geographically isolated town of approximately 600 residents. The surrounding area is sparsely populated. There has never been a railway and the traffic route is not a highway. The route was first used by Cobb and Co., so it has historical significance in south western Queensland. It is an hour's drive to a larger centre and approximately 600 kilometres to the capital city. The countryside is extensive plain, and the town is built on the southern bank of a river which provides long term water supply for the residents. Maneta is the centre of a shire where the major industries are wool growing and grazing cattle. For decades these have been prosperous industries but recent downturns in wool prices and commodity markets have had a marked effect on the current economic outlook of the community. While it is not far from oil and gas fields, it has failed to attract any economic benefit from these sources. There are four major institutional features to this area : the grazing properties, the shire council, the hospital, and the school.

As indicated by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data 1993, Maneta has a normal employment profile for the present conditions in Australia. There is not full employment, but neither is there a large number of unemployed in the area. Sixty percent of the population are engaged in agricultural, forestry and associated industries. The town has one or two shops, a newsagent, an hotel, a butcher, one bank, a plant nursery, and a hairdresser operating two days per week. These businesses are all family owned and run. Other businesses are associated with the agricultural or grazing industries: a stock and station agency, a trucking company and an earthmoving company, again the last two are family owned. The two major employer groups are the shire council and the property-owners. There is no managerial type employment and the only professionals are bankers (one bank), police officers, teachers, nurses, paramedics and the doctor. (ABS 1993 data indicates that ten percent of the population are providing community services.) In the current economic climate graziers can no longer afford to employ people to manage or work on their properties, the council is downsizing, therefore the population is dwindling and there are few newcomers to the community (Bull & Anstey 1995: *6-7*). At the time of data collection, the town was also facing the prospect of closure of its school's secondary department (providing for the first three years of secondary schooling) and the requirement to transport older students to the next town for all of their secondary schooling.

Littleton is situated on the Western slopes of the Great Dividing Range at an elevation of 700 - 1000 metres. It is in a rainfall belt receiving 50 to 100 mm per annum (20-40 inches). Extremes of temperature are often experienced. Littleton is about three hours drive from the capital city and is on a highway that leads to major centres in New South Wales as well as to places in southern and western Queensland. It is a small district within a Shire (a local government region in Queensland) that is serviced by a town of about 5000 people. This town is 12 kilometres away from Littleton. The total population of the Shire is 9500 (ABS 1993). It is difficult to get exact figures for the population of the district of Littleton, including its village, but it is estimated to be 250 to 300 people. It is a distinguishable community because it is an identifiable area, and has a post office, which was to be downgraded later in the year of the research project, and, previously, a railway station.

Littleton district is a rural, agricultural, and horticultural area. There are also sawmilling, some grazing, and some tourist attractions. Two National Parks are close to this district. The countryside is hilly and rocky. The village has the sawmill, a packing and merchandise shed (fruit industry), the school, the service station which is adjacent to the highway, a few houses, and three or four buildings that were once occupied by storekeepers and a butcher. A river (small in size) runs through the village. The railway line passes through the village and there is an unmanned railway siding at Littleton. In the years 1990 to 1995 some changes have occurred in this district due to economic circumstances both locally and nationally. Some of the changes are also due to the effects of advances in technology on agricultural and horticultural industries. One farmer/orchardist described the changes this way: "The economic situation for farmers has caused changes. Farms have been cut up into small blocks and sold, so farmers could get some money. Instead of the known, settled population being the major population, there are those who've opted out, those who choose to live in the country, etc." Another resident explained it in land use terms: "[Littleton] was once a rural development area, it is

now rural residential. There are probably more people living in [Littleton] now than 20-30 years ago, but the commercial exchange is less."

The majority of the population are of Anglosaxon ethnic origin (91% from ABS 1993 statistics) but a number of Italian families have lived in the district for decades, and there is a sprinkling of other nationalities, for example, Dutch, German, Aboriginal. So this community has a multicultural population that has been sustained for forty to fifty years. The local community has always been actively interested in the provision of facilities at the school. The school's history, compiled at the time of the School Centenary in 1987, documents many meetings and representations to government and education department on matters related to school buildings and equipment.

The population of Littleton could be described under three broad headings : long-term residents, new residents, and transients. The long-term residents are those whose families have been in the district for more than 25 years, this group includes many of the anglosaxons and many of the Italians. These people are land holders and operators who believe in hard work, earning a comfortable living, and the pursuit of quality in production. The new residents are a more diverse group. In this group there are those who've come to this district because they are seeking a better quality of life. They have brought with them a vitality and pursuit of excellence that blends with the values of the long-term residents. There are others who have come because the houses and land are cheaper, but who have little idea of what living in the country involves. This group live mostly on smaller blocks, and are known locally as 'hobby farmers' or 'blockies'. "They don't have a really good work ethic. They don't understand good farming practices." (quote from a resident). Then there are the more transient types: the seasonal pickers, the unemployed, and the 'ferals'.

It was from these communities that participants for the large project were drawn.

3.1.2 Interviewees - the whole corpus

This section describes the participants, residents of the communities described above, who were interviewed for the large project.

Table 3.1 Gender balance. Table showing numbers of interviewees in the three communities

Community	male	female
Veratown	29	27
Littleton	23	25
Maneta	12	42
TOTALS	64	94
158 PARTICIPANTS		

The researchers were conscious of attaining a gender balance in the interview corpus. In two communities this was achieved : Veratown and Littleton - see Table 3.1 above. In the third community, Maneta, this was difficult. The liaison officer (see Section 3.2.1 for description of role of the community liaison officer) in Maneta asked many males to take part in an interview but they were unwilling for one or both of the following reasons : (a) they were working out of town (and not home day or night) when the research team was in Maneta; (b) they regarded reading and writing as 'women's work' and were reluctant to be involved. The research team made an extra effort to interview more males by approaching one of the overseers of the council workers to ask if he would allow workers to be interviewed during working hours. He was cooperative, and organised for those who were willing to take part to finish on the appointed day at four o'clock and to be transported to the interview venue. The overseer himself presented for an interview too. In this way the number of males interviewed was increased from 5 to 12.

Table 3.2 Age range Table showing age range of participants in all three communities

AGE	under 20	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 +
Littleton	1	9	15	14	7	2	0
Veratown	5	1	18	23	3	3	3
Maneta	0	8	15	10	13	3	3
TOTALS	6	18	48	47	23	8	6

156 participants stated age 2 participants preferred not to state age

The project participants from all three communities were drawn from across the range of ages: teenagers to the 'over seventies' - see Table 3.2 above. In Maneta no teenagers were interviewed, but eight participants were in their twenties. The Maneta teenagers were either (1) away from the area receiving their education (e.g., Gatton Campus of University of Queensland, or University of New England, where agricultural and rural industry courses are available, Pastoral Colleges at Longreach or Dalby, or Technical And Further Education Colleges, TAFE, in Roma or Toowoomba or Brisbane); or (2) had secured a job away from home. In Littleton we did not interview anyone from the 70+ age bracket. The older people in this area usually move to the nearby town when they retire.

A wide range of occupations was represented, and people from a wide range of economic circumstances were interviewed, from the unemployed on an income of less than $10000 per year to wealthy pastoralists who earn about half a million dollars per year. It is notable that no tradesmen were in the Maneta sample. ABS 1993 data for Maneta area indicates no electricity-gas-water workers and 2% of the population in construction. The Littleton sample contained a few people working in education, but not at the local school. They were usually long term residents of Littleton and had secured jobs in the nearby town at one of the four schools or with TAFE. The multicultural aspects of Littleton were reflected in the sample of participants.

The project participants from Veratown community were drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and ages, from teenagers to those over 70 years, from the unemployed to successful dairy farmers. A number of Aboriginals were included too. Fifty-six adults were interviewed. Of these, twenty-nine were male and twenty-seven were female. There were ten aboriginals, six unemployed people, seven who owned and operated their own businesses, seven housewives, four teacher aides and four shop assistants. Three were farmers, three were managers, and three others were government employees, two groundsmen, two retired persons, one single mother, one mill worker and one mechanic. (See Appendix 2 for further details of participants.)

3.1.2.1 Qualifications and gender

Figures taken from the 1991 census profiles, Basic Community Profile (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993), for the local government areas where the study sites are found show gender differences in educational/professional qualifications held by adults. More males than females hold qualifications in engineering, building, agricultural and related fields in each of the local government areas. (See Table 3.3). More females than males hold qualifications in health, education, social and related fields, in each of the local government areas. (See Table 3.4).

Table 3.3 Qualifications and gender: Engineering, building, agriculture, and related fields

Table showing educational/professional qualifications held by adults

Shire	Males	Females	Proportion(approx)
H.Shire (Veratown)	316	8	100 : 2.5
S.Shire (Littleton)	532	36	100 : 6.6
W.Shire (Maneta)	67	0	

Table 3.4 Qualifications and gender: Health, education, social and related fields

Table showing educational/professional qualifications held by adults

Shire	Males	Females	Proportion(approx)
H.Shire (Veratown)	54	204	1 : 4
S.Shire (Littleton)	148	416	1 : 3
W.Shire (Maneta)	16	71	1 : 4

When the level of qualification is considered, in H. local government area more females than males hold at least one bachelor's degree, a proportion of approximately 2:1. In S. local government area the numbers of females and males holding at least one bachelor's degree are not markedly different (116 females, 135 males). In W. local government area the proportion of females to males holding at least one bachelor's degree is 3 : 1. (See Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Qualifications and gender : Bachelor's degree

Table showing educational/professional qualifications held by adults

Shire	Degrees	Females	Males	Proportion (approx)
H.Shire(Veratown)	1 degree or more	86	39	2:1
S.Shire(Littleton)	1 degree or more	116	135	1:1
W.Shire(Maneta)	1 degree or more	21	7	3:1

Overall the study sample was a representative group of the adult population, covering a wide range of occupations, ages and educational levels, and presenting an interesting variety of opinions on matters contained in the questionnaire. The one hundred and fifty-eight participants provided the research team with a huge quantity of data.

The context for the data collection and the organisational procedures that operated are explained in the next section.

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES AND CONTEXT OF DATA COLLECTION

This section describes the procedures that were set in place for conducting the large research project and facilitating the data collection. Community liaison officers were contact persons for on-site operations. All interviews were done on site by members of the research team.

3.2.1 Community liaison officers and organisational procedures

The timetables and venues for the interviews at each site were arranged by a community liaison officer appointed by the project team. This officer was a prominent person within the community, for example, the editor of the local newsletter, a school-community liaison officer, and/or a public personality who had lots of contacts in the community and was also involved in the school's activities.

The advantage of a person already known in the community was his or her contacts and credibility with local community members. He or she publicised the research project and negotiated the times and details for interviews. The liaison officer made sure that the sample was drawn from most sections of the community to include a wide range of occupations and the unemployed, and the range of ages. Material was supplied to the liaison officer for publication in local school newsletters, the local newspapers, and any other medium that was deemed appropriate. (See Appendix 3). The liaison officer raised local interest, explained the purposes of the research, and encouraged people to take part. On some sites, there were more willing interviewees than the research team needed, resulting from the efforts of the liaison officer. The final selection of interviewees related to dates and times of availability of both the interviewees and the research team.

The community liaison officer also selected a small number of suitable interviewees to take part in unstructured interviews and observations. These interviewees were of two kinds :

1. long term residents who had both an historical view and a developmental view of the community;

2. residents, such as professional people with their overviews and sociological, socio-economic or socio-political views, whose experiences put them in a position to be able to make useful contributions to our data collection. As a general approach to the unstructured interviews the project team used the issues involved with changes and developments that have occurred in the community: economic, social, and educational changes and developments. The second group of interviewees was able to relate these issues to the wider national context. Observations and unstructured interviews usually took place over a period of eight to twelve hours when one of the research team spent time with a family and/or in a work situation. During this time field notes and logs were taken on activities and observations, and some conversations were recorded on audio tape.

3.2.2 Conducting the interviews : when, where and how

The project team members made several visits to each of the study sites. The first visit to each site was a reconnaissance visit to meet with the liaison officer and discuss with him

or her the purposes of the project, of the interviews, the range of people needed for the interviews, the arrangement of interview schedules and venues. Possible interview venues were inspected for suitability. During this visit further information about each community was gathered, maps and factual information, economic and geographical, were collected, and samples of any print material that was easily accessible to the public were gathered and catalogued. When the liaison officer had arranged the interview schedule and notified the team of the arrangements, the team put together the materials required (questionnaires, log sheets, notepads, tape recording equipment, files) and set out on second and subsequent visits to conduct the interviews. Further visits took place as needed and/or arranged.

The interviews were conducted during the second half of 1993. The dates selected had to suit members of the research team and the interviewees , and to match the availability of the venues at each site. The interview timetables were organised by the liaison officers at each site, and interviews took place during a three to four day visit to the site by the research team in the first instance, and during further follow-up visits. The majority of interviews were conducted during the day, and the longer in depth family observations were usually all day events. Only a small number of interviews were conducted at night where willing interviewees were available only for night time appointments. Interviews took about one hour each, so a timetable of six interviews per day for each researcher was the usual pattern. If there was time between interviews it was taken for making notes, filing the information in the manner agreed upon by the research team, and preparing for the next interview.

The interviews took place on site, in the towns where residents of the community were the subjects of the research. Venues needed to be central so that interviewees could attend with ease, and suitable for the activity, multiple rooms with interview areas with tables and chairs available. Venues that were familiar to many of the interviewees were selected, for example, the local hall, a community meeting house, Queensland Country Women's Association meeting rooms, the local school during a holiday period. The benefits of

conducting interviews in these physical surroundings meant that interviewees felt comfortable in familiar local surroundings, and the researchers had a reference point for starting conversation and establishing rapport. The researchers could, where appropriate, use the topic of local facilities, and local events associated with the venue, as an introduction. This also assisted in making it more obvious to the interviewees that the researchers were willing to learn about their community.

A questionnaire schedule had been developed by the research team in preparation for the interviews (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire). The plan was to conduct semi-structured interviews, using the questionnaire, but taking any opportunity that presented itself to gather information that the interviewees were keen to give at any stage during the interview. So while the questionnaire was used in its entirety at each interview, many divergences occurred and added valuable data. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a one-to-one situation. The written form of the questionnaire was used by the researcher 'talking his/her way through the questions' with the interviewee. Written answers were recorded on the form as the interview progressed. Any interviewee was free to ask to write his or her own answers on the questionnaire or to complete the questionnaire alone, but no requests were forthcoming for this format. Interviewees were willing to listen and look at the questions and give oral answers that were recorded on the spot by the researcher.

Most interviews were audiotaped for the purpose of later transcription of selected segments. Permission was sought from each interviewee for audiotaping the session. A small number of respondents preferred that no audiotaping take place and this preference was respected. At the end of each interview an audio log was completed to accompany the audio tape of the interview. Here the researcher noted aspects of the interview details that would be useful for later reference and for relating to themes, issues and topics of the research and noted the section of the tape from which they could be transcribed.

Advice to researchers on project preparation includes consideration of participants, as explained by Lofland and Lofland (1995 :*39*).

It is well worth your while to expend time and effort developing a careful explanation or account of the proposed research. Whether you are using the method of intensive interviewing or of participant observation, you are asking people to grant access to their lives, their minds, their emotions. They have every reason for wanting to know why they should allow such an intrusion. Judging from the testimony of veteran fieldworkers, the best accounts are brief, relatively straight forward and appropriate to their audience.

In preparing for the interviews the research team developed a one-page written statement of the purposes of the research. These had been given to the liaison officers for circulation when interview schedules were being arranged. This statement was shown again to each interviewee at the beginning of his/her interview and s/he was asked to sign an agreement form to take part in the research (Appendices 3 and 4). Confidentiality of the source of statements (i.e., no person's names used) was assured. Any questions from the interviewees were answered on the spot, and every attempt made to ensure that interviewees were comfortable to be providing information for the project. Some participants expressed pleasure at the prospect of researchers having interest in looking seriously at rural areas, and education topics and difficulties in rural areas.

The details of the questionnaires and the interactive nature of the interviews will be given in the next section. Aspects of reporting on the responses will also be discussed.

3.3. INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In this section the structure and content of the questionnaires are outlined, and the ways in which the decisions were made about reporting on the large project and this study. The interactive nature of the interviews and the resulting responses will also be specified.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

In the three sites in which the project was conducted, general information about the communities and the culture of these places was gathered by members of the research team over a one-and-a-half to two year period before the interviews with community members were arranged. More specific community information, and community literature was gathered during the project reconnaissance visit (refer Section 3.2.2 first paragraph).

A questionnaire of eighty-eight items was compiled so that a standard set of data could be gathered by the team of researchers (See Appendix 1). The use of the questionnaire determined that the interviews had some structure. However several interviews were expanded in an informal way when conversations with interviewees developed from points made during the completion of the questionnaire.

The questions that were asked on the questionnaire could be divided into five groups. Each group of questions addressed specific areas of interest about the sociocultural and literacy aspects of life in these three communities. The five groups of questions were:

- 1. The literacy culture of the interviewee, of the place, of the group of people, of the community. They were questions about the literacy events that happen on this site, and when they occur.
- 2. The reading and writing capabilities of members of these communities. How and why do they read and write? What do they read and write?
- 3. More details about the printed texts in the environment, and the texts produced by technology (e.g., computers, television, fax machines).
- 4. Focus on oral communication especially use of the telephone and radio.
- 5. The values placed on literacy and schooling, and the powers of schooling and literacy in these communities.

In a little more detail, the content of the questionnaires that were used for the semi - structured interviews was :

* biographical information: to check against the ABS information for the area, to keep a check on the representativeness of the sample, to note language backgrounds of

participants, to capture any intergenerational aspects of great interest, to document any factors related to disadvantage, and other socio-economic information;

* questions on what people read and what people write: to capture patterns of reading and writing habits, types of material read and written, material that is work-related, material that is recreational, material that is religious, material that is procedural / civil;

* questions on TV and video viewing: viewing habits, types of programs viewed;

* questions on radio listening: which 'oral only' programs are of interest and why, for comparison with the use of the print media;

* questions on telephone use: a means of communication other than written;

* questions on education: aspirations for children, education provisions, values and education, status of education and literacy, liaison with school personnel, use of libraries, reading to children, discussing what you read with others;

* questions on lifestyle: socio-economic conditions, entertainment, country/rural aspects.

The format of the questions was mixed: some were open-ended questions to encourage free responses, some simply needed a 'yes' or 'no' answer, some required rankings. The rankings and the 'yes/no' answers were included so that some sections of the questionnaire were available for statistical analyses.

It is important to put the questionnaire in perspective within the research process. A questionnaire is an instrument which assisted the collection of data. In an ethnomethodological study the instrument remains a second order of interest to the interactions of Interviewee (henceforth I-ee) and the Interviewer (henceforth I-er). The Interviewee (I-ee) is, by definition and by enactment, the object of curiosity. The I-ee's interactive rights and responsibilities are to give opinions, talk the most, give descriptions, accounts, appear coherent and knowledgeable. The I-er's rights and responsibilities are to be relatively neutral, ask questions and talk less. In these respects, the interview represents a co-ordination of these rights and responsibilities if it is to be effective. Even if I-er and I-ee knew one another very well (i.e., even if I-er actually knew the answers to all the interview questions, and both knew that), the I-ee would nonetheless need to

behave as if the answers were not known and assume the interactive features of the object of curiosity (Freebody 1998). It is the talk of the I-ee and the interactions between I-ee and I-er that are of paramount interest to the research analyst.

3.3.2 Structure for reporting

For the large project, the research project on which this work is based, an extensive amount of qualitative data was gathered. How best to report on this volume of data becomes a serious problem for the researchers. Decisions must be made about whether major themes occurring across the talk are taken up or whether the views of each participant are reported. Reporting or writing to major themes draws out common concerns and perceptions, but may affect the integrity of some individual accounts. Alternatively, drawing out the views expressed by each participant may not focus on common issues and concerns. It was decided to document views that occur consistently "either as common dispositions or as points of contrast or contest", across the range of participants (Gunn, Forrest, & Freebody 1995: *89-90*). So this report of findings is organised around thematic headings, rather than reporting a range of individual views, as individual views.

It is necessary to explain how and why the themes were chosen. Selecting some themes and not others requires decisions by the researchers. It is preferable, productive, useful, and manageable, to select a small number of themes available from the corpus, and to record those in detail. To select the themes for this work some judgments were made by the author. Rural education is an important topic and rural schools are experiencing the effects of changing conditions, but there is not a lot of up-to-date information published on rural schooling and rural communities. For example, a recent Australian research report (Elix & Lambert 1998) which examined the role of women in the economic and social activities of rural communities did not include any considerations of education and schooling . So the themes chosen for this thesis were selected on the basis that they were prominent among the many themes in the whole corpus, and also for their relevance to

current issues about rural education and schooling. The next section will focus on the analysis of these themes.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Some of the background to the selection of themes for this work has been explained in Section 3.3.2. This section details the phases of development in the analysis of the data, the themes selected, the transcripts chosen for detailed analysis, and the use of Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA).

3.4.1 Phases of reading and interpretation, themes to selection

This section details the process of selection of major themes through to the recording of the research outcomes, in sequential order. Since many lengthy interviews were done and transcribed for the large research project and since interview and conversation analyses involve quite detailed examination of talk, it was necessary to be selective about the data used for this work. Selection from the whole corpus of data proceeded along the following lines:

Phase 1 - PLOUGH: Turn over the "soil" (data), see what is there, get a feel for the "soil" (data), what type of "soil" (data), how can it be used, what is its relevance?

Following the data collection phase on each site, a research team meeting (large project) was held to discuss the main features of the talk, to listen to segments of audio tapes and identify themes that were emerging and to select audio tapes for the first run of transcriptions. At the completion of the third meeting the research team had an overview of all the data and was able to discern some outstanding features of the talk. The major themes that emerged were education provision (in its broadest sense), schooling and literacy in rural areas, economic and social change linked to education, some gender issues, rurality and isolation, and technologies of inclusion (Muspratt, Freebody & Luke 1999). The passages/segments for transcription were selected on the basis of what would

provide more detail for the development of the themes. They were a mix of long stretches of talk and short statements on the part of Interviewees, the segments exemplified issues or related directly to one or more aspects of the themes. So at the end of the "ploughing" the researchers had some major themes to study in more depth and audiotaped segments marked for transcription.

Phase 2 - SCARIFY: Break up the "clods", look more carefully at the selected chunks of data, "dig a little deeper", get more refined samples.

Individual research team members were then able to select from the major issues chosen during the "ploughing" and analyse selected interviews in more depth. They read transcripts carefully, they checked whether the features first noticed still corresponded with the initial sense of the themes. When a theme was being adequately developed further audiotaped segments were selected for transcription, to add to the richness and character of the specific theme. From the second phase of analysis other themes emerged: the gendered distinctions of labour, construction of women's role, education and the varieties of labour (or hands-work and head-work.). At the end of the "scarifying" individual researchers had clarified several of the major themes, gathered together groups of transcripts to support the themes, and were ready to begin the process of analysing the transcripts in detail.

Phase 3 - RAKE : Refine the "soil" (data) for better production, even out, balance, recheck; taking the refined data, ordering it, going over it again to make sure the interpretation reflects the recorded speech, and how well it supports the theme.

At this stage, thesis procedures were now settled. From the themes of the whole corpus, a few themes were chosen for the purposes of the work for this thesis, themes which were relevant to current issues about rurality, rural education and schooling, and pertinent to the research questions (see Section 2.4 of Chapter 2). These chosen themes were: distinctive features of rural communities, education and manual labour relationship, values on schooling and education, gendered distinctions of labour. All major contributions from

the talk of the participants on these themes were included. The first Membership Categorisation Analysis was done on each of these chosen themes. These analyses explicated the detail of the talk and illustrated the themes in more detail. Checking was done again to ensure that integrity of interviewees' meaning was maintained.

Phase 4 - SIEVE: Sifting the data ("soil") to the finest detail, selecting small sections and putting them through rigorous analysis.

During this phase further checking was carried out to ensure that the integrity of the themes was being maintained and that the best transcripts had been chosen. (That is, those transcripts that related to the themes and gave the most explication and/or contrast.) The final selection was made of transcripts to be used for this work. MCA was redone at this stage to revise the first interpretations and add any additional details that now presented themselves.

This study draws data from the data pool of the large research project, as indicated in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1. It reports a distinctive set of observations about data drawn from the large project's data pool for the purposes specified for this study. It uses some new methodology that was first developed by Gunn, Forrest and Freebody (1995) as explained in the next section.

3.4.2 Category attributes and analyses

Membership Categorisation Analysis (hereafter referred to as MCA) with the analytic devices Membership Categorisation Devices (hereafter referred to as MCDs) is an analytic procedure devised by Harvey Sacks about, or before, 1972. Sacks saw an urgent need for an analytic tool or apparatus for investigating sociological data. Jayyusi (1984 and 1991) studied Sacks MCDs and recorded in detail their use as analytic tools (Refer to Chapter 2 Section 2.3.4).

Gunn, Forrest and Freebody (1995:*93-95*) adapted the methods of Jayyusi (1984, 1991) and developed a four-stage process for systematically interrogating interview data. The process they devised, which is shown in Appendix 6 , is encapsulated in the sequence that follows:

- What categories of people are named, are embedded, are hearable, are implied in and through this talk or conversation? What "standard relational pairs" are relevant (e.g., opposite, extending, complementary). Are they implied or available in the talk?
- What process of attribution can be identified in the talk or conversation? Again, what "standard relational pairs" are relevant?
- What cause-effects accounts are disclosed through/by the aforesaid category-attribute relationships? How is social activity explained or unmasked through the category-attribution process?
- What procedures are used by the speaker to substantiate or authenticate the aforesaid category-attribute-account relationships? -"shared understandings", anecdotal evidence, official discourses, personal or professional experience drawn upon to support a generalisation, the reporting of affect.

To explain this process an example will be used. Here is an excerpt from a transcript of an interview taken for the large project.

Transcript	MCA
Interviewer: *The unemployment situation in town, how do you see that, as a business in town?* Respondent: *I believe it's a problem and I have been quite vocal on unemployment lately. When you have all this violence in the home and mothers bashing children, I really believe if men had work and they went to work every morning and they came back in the afternoon, we would cut that violence by about eighty per cent. I think it all comes to idleness, and if a man, a father, you know there is so many defacto relationships, the man of the house is sitting around home all day, it creates problems. ((CONTINUES))*	Categories named: home (family is implied or hearable in the noun) mothers and children : this relational pair introduces a category-bound relationship of mothers caring for their children. Therefore 'bashing' is not the expected action, so is notable or suggests a problem exists. men going to work: this is the expected extension of the family relationship (category-bound relationship) and also brings forward the father-breadwinner relational pair also belonging to the category of family. The above category attributes are authenticated by adding further information - the regular working day (to work in the morning and home in the afternoon). The respondent then introduces the moral attributable to idleness, and assumes shared knowledge with the interviewer about idleness (e.g., the traditional idea that the devil finds something for idle hands to do).

While the question asks for the perspective of the "business" that the speaker runs, his answer nonetheless turns immediately to categories drawn from the MCD "household" or "in the home". These categories are taken to be a problem that the speaker needs to solve as he speaks: the categories begin with *mothers* and *children*, but the SRP here starts

with *man*, then turns to *father*, but then the speaker corrects this and justifies the correction, settling on *man of the house* as the final category from the MCD. With these in place, the account can continue. Note as well the substantiation procedure with which the turn opens "I have been quite vocal …". This is a move to establish both the credibility and thoughtfulness of the speaker, to add substance to what follows.

Gunn, Forrest and Freebody (1995: *93-95*) stressed that this analytic procedure has limitations such as : (a) the sequence is not typically used by speakers or interviewees as they give their accounts; (b) all steps detailed in the procedure are not always evident in an account, much has to be assumed; (c) there is no guarantee that all content of all talk which may be of interest to speaker or reader will be documented. However, these authors argued that the benefits of the procedure are that: (a) these analytic moves can reveal what makes the talk intelligible conceptually; (b) it offers to the reader a principled basis on which to contest an interpretation; (c) it is intended to provide clear answers to the questions guiding the investigation in a suitable and available discourse.

This thesis does not make any claims about the fruitfulness of the views expressed in interview material. Readers may encounter points of consensus or contention. The accounts that have been documented are, in all probability, a justifiable cross-section of the views of community adults at the time they were recorded. In this respect they provide a relevant background to the study of these adults' community interactions. The analyses in this work can explore the views expressed and the procedures used by the adults to talk about education in rural areas, schooling and literacy, economic and social change linked to education, gender, isolation, and inclusion, as well as the consequences of holding those views and the utilisation of these procedures.

During the course of the analyses some terms are used in specialised ways: An *account* is a description and explanation of an event or proposition. An account is not taken to be a "window onto the truth" of the speaker's beliefs but rather as providing in part a view of the speaker's reading of the local interview context, a response to the here-and-now

interview question. As such, responses to the interviews are situated accounts or stories of that time and place accessing the personal, institutional, and communal resources people have in relation to the questions they were asked. The response is evidence of the participants cultural resources for making sense of the phenomena presented in the question. An account is *commonsensical* in that its substance consists of categories and typifications that are shared by members of a culture and which serve the practical purposes of their interactions. For instance:

> Q. from I-er *What are the main changes you have noticed living in this community ?*
>
> I-ee: *I have noticed a big difference out here, we used to have a real family situation and all of a sudden the families are going away and we actually have got very few situations where, like next door we have a fellow who is trying to start up a wood carving business in town but he is not a farmer, he is just using the house etc, and his children go into [name] and I think there is a farm manager down the end, there used to be a lovely family next door but it is rented out to alternate lifestyle people.*

The MCD "real family situation" is elaborated in terms of negative instances, its Standard Relational Pairs (SRPs): self-employed craftsman, manager, alternate lifestyle. These, by SRP implication, give documentation to the MCD's positive categories. What is left to characterise "real family situation" is : not self-employed, not manager, not alternate lifestyle.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the design of the large project and the selection of segments for this work. The participants who took part in the study, and the communities where those participants lived, have been described. The procedures established for community contact and the data collection, and the instruments used for that data collection have been explained. The analytical methods employed to probe the data for this study have been detailed. Chapters 4 and 5 will record the results of the study and discuss those results.

3.5.1 Research questions reformulated

As a result of the considerations in the literature review (Chapter 2) and the methodological approach to this research explained in this chapter, the research questions are now reformulated in the following terms:

1. How do residents of rural communities construct rurality and rural living?

2. Is there evidence in accounts of the relation between rural and urban living, of a 'centre-margin' discourse informing these constructions?

3. How do rural dwellers construct the relationship between education and various kinds of work (e.g., head-work and hands-work)?

4. Do they value schooling highly?

5. Do rural dwellers describe themselves and their children as needing the same schooling or the same curriculum as urban dwellers?

6. Do women/men in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour?

Chapters 4 and 5 will explain in detail the results of the data analysis of selected interviews and will discuss those results in relation to themes which emerged from the interviews.

Note : Any given names used for interviewees in the following chapters are pseudonyms. Real names have not been retained so as to preserve confidentiality.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.

RURAL COMMUNITIES: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Australia has become a nation built on a rural base (refer to Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3, and Sher and Sher 1994). The family farm and the small rural community continue to play a major role in rural production, and its associated economic activity in this country (Elix and Lambert 1998: *2*). Yet it is only in recent years that serious research attention has been paid to the features of Australian rural life and the communities that form that rural society. At best, the documentation is still piecemeal, but each 'piece' helps to build up a more comprehensive picture of Australia's rural life. Rural society is changing, affected by advances in technology and by various economic and lifestyle influences (e.g., better roads and transport, industry reorganisation, and communications technology), and the global market's influences on rural economies. So it is important that the structure of late twentieth century rural society be documented. This study aims to document some aspects of rural society in the three rural communities described in Chapter 3.

This and the next chapter outline the results of this study. Chapter 4 provides some discussion of the first two of the research questions that were reformulated at the end of Chapter 3. These research questions are :

1. How do residents of rural communities construct rurality and rural living?
2. Is there evidence in these accounts of the relation between rural and urban living, of a 'centre-margin' discourse informing these constructions?

This chapter explores distinctive features of rural communities as made evident in interviews, the analysis of which is explained in Chapter 2 Sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 and Chapter 3 Section 3.4.2. The varying and developing economic, cultural and social dispositions are directly expressed in and mutually constructed by changing textual practices, reflected in everyday conversations, social interactions and residents' accounts.

From the interviews recorded for this study, a selection is made in which residents oriented to social conditions and community living, to the physical surroundings and physical space, and to community culture (including ethnic culture and primary industries culture) . Each of these themes is considered in this chapter through detailed analysis of the selected interview material.

4.1 SOCIAL CONDITIONS, COMMUNITY LIVING, LIFESTYLE CHOICE

This section considers statements made about living in a rural community, how people construct rural living, the social conditions that concern them, and the choices they have made about their lifestyles.

The following words from a clergyman in Maneta (Speaker A) serve to introduce several features of rural life and to advance an appreciation of differences between rural and urban living, especially 'living off the land', in contrast to earning a living as a professional person in an urban environment.

> A: *Country people will talk for hours about the weather. If you listen to them it tells you their hopes for the future . City people, they'll talk about the weather , but it's just social.*

This evocative statement was made as the interview began. Speaker A was told that one objective of the study was to document ways in which rural people talk about rural living. He set up the relational pair of country people and city people and the ways in which each discusses the topic of 'weather'. That the country people will *talk for hours* is taken to emphasise its importance to them. Country people depend on the weather, the rains and seasonal cycles, for their economic successes or failures. Their *hopes for the future* may lie in the prospect of average rains falling next summer, or late frosts being light, so that their crops will bring a bountiful harvest, or their animals will have nutritious fodder to put them into top condition for sale. There is a fragility here and a dependence on the vicissitudes of the elements. The farmers do not have control over

their financial security and consequently do not have control over their style of living. For city people, life and income continue whatever the weather, and the topic of weather is mostly used as a conversation starter, there are no significant implications attached. The city dwellers have control over their living, and urban management systems put in place various security measures to enhance control. One major point of the contrast is the relative powerlessness of country people in determining their future welfare. What is 'just social' for city people is actually pregnant with speculation for country people. It is important to appreciate at the outset how deeply the differences run, differences that pertain to the nature of their relationship to their environment.

4.1.1 Social conditions.

In Chapter 2 some social aspects of rural communities were reviewed, especially the diversity within and between rural communities (Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3). Some participants in this study discussed the social conditions of living in rural locations. One example (Speaker B) was a doctor in his thirties, who had come to the town five years before and had recently decided to move away to a larger centre. The Interviewer (I-er) had asked a listed question (Question 21 on the Questionnaire - See Appendix 1) concerning owning or renting his present home. The Interviewee (I-ee) - doctor (Speaker B) - answered that his house "went with the job", and continued:

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
B: I *would stay here if there was another doctor in town. I spend probably rostered three hours a day at the hospital and the rest of the time, probably eight, nine hours a day in the clinic, and then there is all the after hours stuff which is split fairly evenly between the two, so you have very long days. Social isolation is one thing that is driving us away and education for the kids is the next thing that will drive us away and the after hours work load. So if you had another doctor where you could split work and I'll disappear this weekend and you cover, and I'll cover next weekend, you could probably handle it for a lot longer. Which is why doctors in little towns last about two to three years.*	Categories named in the talk: doctor - patients (SRP) doctor-hospital-clinic (category bound relationship) MCD : rural doctors Cultural story : rural doctor shortage, inability of rural towns to have doctors stay for more than 2 years. Collective story : Supports the cultural story - gives 3 reasons for moving, then suggests a solution. Authentication through personal experience. Cause-effect : social isolation + work load -> burnout (causing the move away) (MCA continued on next page)

TALK (cont.) I-er: *What do you mean by social isolation ?* B: *Either through background or education status, I mean even the teachers are too young, they are half my age, they may sort of have a similar sort of educational back ground ,we just have different life experiences. There is no one really that you can talk to, and most of the people that I do get on well with are sixty plus. It is a really strange set up. You will find that in town, I have seen with the patients, that there is a big chunk of people below the age of fifteen, a big chunk sixty and above, a smaller chunk that are twenty-five to forty-five, and a tiny little that are twenty to thirty. I have noticed that between twenty and forty they are virtually not in town. There is a handful of people and that is it.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES (cont.) Second section - MCD : social groups Categories named in the talk: - those with education status, - those with similar life experiences. - generations - age groups [groups all relevant to social relationships] Authentication through examples teachers -from different age group so not socially compatible sixty-plus people -also different age group so not socially compatible (though he can relate to them in some ways) THEME: social and professional relationships

This account is in two sections linked by the theme of social and professional relationships. The MCD for the first section is 'rural doctors' and the categories named are the standard relational pairs of doctor-patients, and doctor-hospital and doctor-clinic. The doctor (Speaker B) identifies the cultural story that is often heard in rural Australia: the rural doctor shortage, doctors unwilling to go to the small country towns and those who go do not stay more than two to three years. Speaker B tells his own collective story (personal experience) which supports the cultural story. He clearly identifies three reasons for

deciding to move to an urban area: social isolation, suitable education for his children, and heavy workload. His account is organised thus : he identifies the problem of the rural doctor shortage and describes the amount of work that he has in the town, then he lists three reasons for his decision to move. He puts these reasons into a priority order, by his use of the word *next.* Social isolation is named as a problem for the doctor and his family.

The interviewer picks up the topic of social isolation and asks the speaker to elaborate. The MCD for this second section of the account is social groups. The categories named are: people with education status, people with similar life experiences, and generations or age groups. The speaker then relates his personal experiences again relating them to the categories he has named. There are virtually no educated people of his age who are his consociates. Professional people, such as this doctor, experience minimal collegial interaction because they have limited contacts with professional colleagues. The doctor was the only one in the town. Similarly the school principal and the bank manager were named, elsewhere, as the only ones of their professional level in the town, and they are people of high visibility in a small population.

The doctor's perception is that there are a lot of people under 15 in the town and a lot of people over 60, but few people between the ages of 20-40. It is relevant to note that he says: *I have seen with the patients.....* This is the perception he has gained from his client group (category-bound activity). The population statistics (ABS data 1993) do not totally support the doctor's perception: the largest sections of shire population were 18.8% of the population aged between 20 and 29, 17.3% aged between 30 and 39; 0-9 years with 17.2% was the next biggest group, so his perception of there being a lot of people under 15 years was supported by statistics; 11.7% of the population was aged between 60 and 89, all other age groups had lesser percentages. The 20-40 group may be the out-of-town group who are working the pastoral/farming properties, they may be healthy and not have much need for a doctor's advice so the resident doctor may not meet them as his patients. The doctor's social circle, away from his practice, evidently does not include this group, the 20-40 age group are not his consociates. The explanation he offers for this is that even

those who are educated, like the teachers, are very young and have different life experiences, so that even though there may be similarities in educational and cultural backgrounds he feels their experiences are significantly different from his own and therefore a social barrier exists. As a result *you burn out here* - a comment on the workload together with the lack of consociates and paucity of opportunities that he finds relaxing and/or recreational.

The doctor's account supports the cultural story of the rural doctor shortage, and the experience of social and collegial isolation in rural communities.

Other people's perceptions which coincide with those of the doctor about the over-sixties people were stated thus:

> BA: *We're becoming a community of old people, there are a lot of widows in the town. All the houses are occupied in the town but a lot of them are occupied by widows.*

and

> BB *There is a very active Community Centre run by 20 volunteers which has been going for a year aimed at the older people in the community who felt that they weren't getting out much and didn't have much to do. Activities that they do - picnics, word games, cards, visit to RSL for morning tea once a week. About 15 regular participants but it varies.*

(Note that the number of volunteer workers quoted exceeds the number of regular participants.) These speakers express the view that one section of the community is abnormally large in proportion, the aging widows, and that a lot of community energy is directed to those people.

These perceptions lead to an important feature of rural communities: community concern and support for sections of the community who need assistance, social welfare at the 'grassroots' level (cf., Poiner's bushfire experience: Poiner 1990: *168, 179*). In this rural community of Maneta a number of the senior citizens have decided to remain in the town in

their retirement. The community, through the HACC program (Home and Community Care - 'to look for and look after the needs of the elderly') has seen the need to organise activities for these senior citizens and some government funding can be accessed. Community priority has been given to this group and volunteers (possibly from the 20-40 age group) have come forward to carry out the activities. Because the number of personnel is limited by the size of the population, the demand on the volunteers is great and may be limiting their time for doing things other than their own occupational work, consequently social and relaxation activities for themselves will be curtailed.

An example of the noticeable lack of a range of offerings relating to career opportunities and life experiences was given by a female (C) who lived out of town.

C:*There's not very many opportunities in this community for people who really want to get on and do things with their life. I feel that a lot of people in this community only know this community.*

This person (Speaker C) indicates that people who are reared in the community, and who continue to live and work here, can cut themselves off from the range of opportunities, both social and occupational, that are available in larger or other communities but are not available in this community. She refers to those people who are goal-setters or who seek other experiences -*people who really want to get on and do things with their life.* This is an example of the social and occupational marginalisation that can be felt in areas that are distant from the centre.

Other interviewees suggested that there are ways of overcoming the social and cultural isolation/marginalisation. They developed some *'cultural banking'* by participating in many of the things not available in the rural community when they travel away, particularly on holiday (e.g., live entertainment, galleries, films, restaurants, shopping).

D: *You do the things you can't do here.*

Speakers C and D may have a perception that involvement in activities of 'the centre' in addition to experiences in the local environment will lead to a better life. They have acknowledged a centre-margin connection and difference, but seem to be finding ways to gain personal and social benefits from both. Social conditions in a rural community have

risks for professional people, risks of social and professional isolation or marginalisation. Some residents compensate for these risks by spending holiday time in pursuits available in urban environments. Strengths of the rural communities are exhibited in community spirit and cohesion in times of need or crisis.

4.1.2 Community living

A lifestyle relatively free from the pressures of crowds and heavy traffic, and the relaxing atmosphere that unencumbered physical space and lack of noise create, were features which appealed to residents of rural communities. Some residents nominated benefits of the smaller community, the easy accessibility of recreational and sporting facilities is an attractive feature to residents of rural communities. Speaker E was a shopkeeper/businessman in Veratown who had continued to operate his business through times of economic downturn.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
E: *A lot more people, in the [name] area anyway, are walking for exercise and getting away from just sitting at home and watching TV, more sport seems to be coming into people again. Like the tennis club are looking at putting another court in. We have shifted our golf club from where it is to a new area and it's a bigger and better club and they have got more members coming in. The bowling club have got new members. The pony club probably got twice as many people in it now as it did five or six years ago, and a lot of that is coming with more people coming to the area. They are coming from the coast and enjoying our slower pace of life and they find that they want to get their children involved in things like that because it is nice and handy. We have friends in [capital city] and when their children were younger they had to drive them for hours, you know to a game of football and then they would have to wait or go and pick them up whereas here everything can be done in a very concentrated area.*	Categories named in the talk: -people walking for exercise -people in sport [sporting clubs} -people with children coming to Veratown Category-bound activities: parents get children involved in activities - parents taking/transporting children Cause-effect: the slower pace of life and easily accessible recreational facilities attract people to move from the coast (more populous area) to the rural towns MCD : people in small towns Theme : growth and development SRPs : children-parents clubs-members rural town - capital city

The speaker uses the MCD of people in small towns. The categories he names in his talk are : people walking for exercise, people active in sports, and people with children. Three standard relational pairs are named : parents and children, clubs and members, rural town and capital city. The category bound activities used here are the expected ones of parents doing things for and with their children. This speaker (E) has lived through the economic downturns in Veratown and is now witnessing positive changes. He focuses on growth and development, and his perception seems to be one of hope and a positive view of the future. He begins by making a statement about people generally: they are becoming more active, exercising more, playing more sport. Then he focuses on Veratown and cites some local examples. He listed a number of recreational facilities, all with expanding memberships and many with improved facilities, to emphasise his points about more participation in outdoor pursuits as well as the increase in movement from the Coast, and the growth occurring in local population and recreational participation. He sets up, in his talk, the contrastive relational pair of the country town and the State capital city and puts them in opposition. He presents the stance that the country town has the advantage of easy accessibility (not having to travel far) to sporting and recreational facilities, that parents can provide for their children with ease in this environment, and that the slower-paced and less pressured lifestyle is attractive. Here, the speaker seems to be saying that the margins have advantages over the centre.

Another interviewee (EA) focused on operating a business in a rural area and highlighted the ease of communication. He had been asked to respond to the list of technological items and indicate his use of each (Q.22 on Questionnaire. See Appendix 1). He commented on the fact that facsimile machines were not on the list. Then he said :

> EA: *So many of my friends who are in business have fax machines. From the point of view of what you're talking about - literacy - if you've got a fax machine, a telephone and a word processor, I could be living in [the State capital] and doing the same job.*

This speaker sees the location of his business as irrelevant to the literacy or communication demands. For him, modern communication technology - fax, telephone, and computer or

word-processor - can all be used effectively from any location. For him, being in a rural area is not a disadvantage. He is suggesting that modern communication technology brings equality/equity. Whether he is living in the State capital or living in the rural community, he is able to do the same job. Any centre-margin disadvantages, related to communication, have been minimised.

During the interviews people were asked to respond to questions about their homes, specifically the aspects which appealed to them. Plenty of space, both in the house and around it, recurred as a feature for both the rural in-town and rural out-of-town dwellers. Out-of-town dwellers often referred to the isolation or being out of town as an aspect that they liked.

FA: *It's big and open and airy.*

FB: *So big, large, plenty of room.*

FC: *The large block, space, comfortable house.*

FD: *It's in the bush, got no neighbours.*

These speakers are saying, by implication, that in urban areas you have many neighbours, smaller areas, less space. Those who focus on the 'bigness, openness, plenty of room', are implying that they like to have physical space around them. They like to create a domestic space which reflects the outside space. These comments illustrate some aspects of the definition of rurality quoted in Section 2.1.2. The speakers orient to 'lots of space' and 'few people' as defined. Their social interaction is with nonfamilials, with contemporaries rather than with consociates.

4.1.3 Lifestyle choice

The lifestyles of rural residents can be distinguished from the lifestyles of urban residents. This section will explore some of the distinguishing features. The next two speakers focus on lifestyle, and making a deliberate choice about their own lifestyle.

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TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: *What is it that you like best about your house ?* Bill: *A house is a machine for living in. I like it to be tidy and neat. I like it to be efficient in my terms. I want to have a place to read, a place to work, a place to eat with company. And I need a quiet place. I have a large library, 2000 volumes, I've got to be able to sit down and read them. You'll find a few people around this district with a lot o' books. In your average triple-bedroom brick veneer, I would go insane. I'd rather live in a tent. The noise, the intrusion, so on, I just couldn't live in a suburb. You've gotto choose your lifestyle.*	MCD : my lifestyle / my house OPPOSITIONS: urban - rural noise - quiet insane - [sane] intrusion - [peace] place to read , library [recreation] place to work [workplace] place to eat with company [entertain] quiet place [relaxation] His place of living has to meet all his lifestyle needs.

Bill begins with the specifics suggested by the question, his house, but he then moves to the more general topic of rural versus urban lifestyle. In his talk he sets up the binary oppositions of rural and urban, and then the characteristics of these: quiet-noise, sane-insane, peace-intrusion. Bill specifies noise and intrusion present in densely populated areas, implying that the quietness and relative isolation (social openness as opposed to social density) of rural living are the bases of his choice. His decision to live a rural lifestyle is supported by strong feelings : *I just couldn't live in a suburb* and *I'd go insane*. He also describes his house as having to meet all has lifestyle requirements -workplace, domestic, and recreational (cf., Section 4.2.3, this chapter).

The next speaker votes rural living as the best, but hints at the economic and other difficulties for land holders. He was asked a question about his children working on the land, and he does not answer that question specifically, but makes a generalised statement about rural lifestyle:

> I-er: *Would you like your children, when they have completed their schooling, to work on the land ?*
>
> G.: *To live on the land is the best lifestyle, working it is something else.*

The last phrase, *working it is something else,* has a multiplicity of meanings. It may hint at the economic difficulties and insecurities experienced by farmers (cf., Section 4.1, and 4.2.3), it may also hint at the heavy physical work and the long hours that farmers labour.

Rural communities have attributes that distinguish them from urban communities. Rural residents recognise these features as social openness, easy access to recreational facilities, ease of communication using modern technology, and a less pressured way of life. For some professional people there is social isolation and a degree of social and occupational marginalisation, yet the communities exhibit qualities of community spirit and community cohesion. Some described the impact of marginalisation in a centre-margin relationship, but are prepared to take an opportunity to use benefits gained from visiting the centre for their living on the margins. A rural lifestyle appeals to many, and the distinctive features noted here are the reasons they have made a lifestyle choice to be in these communities.

4.2 CULTURE

The previous section considered some of the social conditions and aspects of community living relating to rural communities. There are many factors that influence the culture of these communities. This section will record residents' views on the value of cultural identity, ethnic and aboriginal influences, and primary industries culture in the communities studied.

4.2.1 Cultural identity

Errol was one of a number of speakers who had views on the importance of cultural identity

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er. Did *you do some of those paintings yourself ?*	
Errol: *I helped with them. I got an artist in to do them. I try and maintain my cultural identity as much as I am able to.*	Theme : cultural identity MCD : community Categories named in the talk: kids - teachers family/community - 'canned' entertainment
I-er: *Is that what you meant when you were talking about the philosophy , not just aboriginality, but that and the community life, when you were saying they give kids a different kind of philosophy that you partly tried to counteract ?*	Attributes: family and community provide support for kids (implying- they provide culturally embedded activities) 'canned' entertainment (implying -not providing cultural identity, or culturally relevant activities)
Errol: *I think so. From a cultural point of view of mine, I see less emphasis on videos , discos, and that type of thing, and more on family orientated and community orientated things. I think you must have a solid family background and support especially in the early years, well I suppose in all years, especially when they get to university, but even from day 1 you must be interested in what your kids are doing, and the family has to be supportive. The teachers are not embedded in the community they lose the cultural identity of the community, and they start just teaching facts, figures , and that's it.*	Teachers 'lose cultural identity of community' implies that families maintain cultural identity.

This speaker uses the MCD of community and names the categories of 'kids' and 'teachers'. He also specifies the relationship of kids to family and to community. He sets family and community activities in opposition to 'canned' entertainment. The implications readable from this opposition in the talk are : family and community provide support for kids, and family and community activities are culturally embedded. 'Canned' entertainment does not provide cultural identity, or culturally relevant activities for the children and youth. So the cause-effect relationship can be read as: family support and family/community activities will provide cultural identity for children (the next generation).

The interviewer leads into the topic of cultural identity by asking the interviewee about paintings on the wall of the room in the interviewee's home, where this interview takes place. The interviewer is wanting further explanation of a remark that was made earlier, so makes a link between the impact of these paintings and philosophy of current education. The interviewee acknowledges the link with cultural identity in his direct response *I think so.* He then continues with his *cultural point of view of mine* noting its potential idiosyncrasy but also to be taken in light of his distinctive experience and authority. Usually for a children-teacher relationship, the category bound activities would be that teachers teach children, and take the caring and nurturing role framed in the cultural icon of 'in loco parentis'. In this example the teachers do not teach the children about their cultural identity, but teach them facts and figures which are unrelated to cultural identity. Teachers are *not embedded in the community* . There is ambiguity or multiplicity of meaning here - teachers' own cultural identity, which is not local, but is elsewhere; the local rural community identity; the facts and figures, used in school curricula, which are decontextualised from urban and rural work cultures and have no relationship to local identity.

Speaker Errol also suggests that *videos, discos, and that type of thing,* indicators of modern popular culture, should be less used, and instead families and communities

should provide more culturally relevant activities for their children. This suggestion puts a great deal of weight on families and the family identity.
[Schooling and culture will be taken up in Chapter 5.]

Another interviewee (H) expressed her feelings about her allegiance and her children's allegiance to their childhood home. In answering a question about whether she would like her children to stay in the community she said:

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
H: *Well, yes and no. I wouldn't like them to not be here, I think that this small community has a lot to offer, especially in a country area, but I wouldn't want them to stay here if they couldn't further their career. My feelings are : I have grown up here, okay I went away for a while and I worked in the big cities and that and played sport and came back. I wouldn't like them to ever lose their background and become city slickers.*	MCD : children Categories named in the talk: country area - small community big cities Theme : cultural identity

Speaker H employs the MCD of children and names the categories of country areas and big cities. She takes up the theme of cultural identity and discusses her own experience as a girl belonging to a country area, and her wishes for her children. She mentions the issue referred to earlier in Section 4.1.1 that to pursue different careers it is necessary to move to urban environments. Her last sentence is the key to her thinking: she wants her children to retain their cultural identity, their country character (usually portrayed as openness, ease), and not develop the glossy and less predictable character of a 'city slicker'. Like Speakers C and D (in Section 4.1.1 of this chapter) Speaker H may have the perception that

involvement in the activities of the centre in addition to the experiences in the local environment will lead to a better life without re-shaping the individual's identity.

4.2.2 Ethnic and aboriginal communities.

Some rural communities have single or multiple ethnic populations, while other rural communities have a prominent aboriginal population. Ethnic and aboriginal populations are not always seen as integral parts of those rural communities.

Errol, an aboriginal, raised some issues about aboriginal culture in the community. He responds to a question from the interviewer about Italian culture, which is relevant to the specific geographic area, but he turned to aboriginal culture because he knows much more about it.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: *Do the schools here take much note of the Italian culture?* Errol: *I don't think so, I think they see it as a problem. And I think that if there were lots of aboriginal students here as well then they just couldn't cope with it. Because historically in most country towns I mean aboriginal people were frowned on as , and I mean that's still something that attitudes have to change. I believe it is changing, you know, because of the younger parents of today, young mothers and fathers are saying we want people to learn about aboriginal culture, we want to see paintings, we want to buy clothes with designs. Now historically, I mean they wouldn't have been seen dead in anything that was aboriginal years ago. And they probably would have been ridiculed out of the town. But those attitudes are changing, because of the younger.*	Categories named in talk: aboriginal students aboriginal people younger parents younger mothers and fathers SRPs: aboriginal students - school personnel -non aboriginal students aboriginal people - non aboriginal people - younger parents - older parents - younger mothers and fathers - older mothers and fathers / [parents - children : therefore influence attitudes] (category bound activity) MCD: Generations of people in country towns or Ethnic peoples THEME: Inter-ethnic [and intergenerational] relations of many western country towns

The interviewer introduces the topic of ethnic cultures by asking: *Do the schools here take much note of the Italian culture?* The interviewee answers the question directly, and identifies Italian culture as a problem for the schools. He then turns it into multiculturalism (Italians and aboriginals as well) being a problem, not just something that is ignored or not dealt with, but 'a problem' with which they have to contend. The interviewee moves from Italian culture to aboriginal culture by first acknowledging aboriginal students, keeping the school link introduced by the interviewer: students

belong in schools (category bound activity). He then moves from the school to the community and goes into an explanation of the root of the problem by bringing forth the importance of attitudes to aboriginal [and ethnic, by implication] people, especially family and intergenerational attitudes on the part of non-aboriginals. He sees the older generation and generations past as having been harsh to aboriginals, looked down on them, ridiculed them, devalued them (cultural story). His use of the word *historically* suggests that he is putting the attitudes of the older generation into the wider context of societal thinking (culturally embedded story). He believes more attitudinal change is necessary to bring about integration and valuing of other cultures. He sees some change happening in the young families of the present time. His specifics of the *younger parents of today*, imply that these different and changed attitudes will be passed on to the children in these families, the next generation. This is achieved by the SRP structure (category bound activity) in the parent - child relationship: the parental role is to teach their children.

Errol lived in a small community with an established Italian population, already referred to above. During his interview he raised issues about the non-recognition, except in very superficial ways, of that culture as part of the community.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er:*A lot of the migrant groups in the city are saying it's important that migrant literature is available to schools , and things like that. Books written by Australian-Italian, or Australian-Greeks or that sort of thing, and that would be , would that be part of what you'd see as this regional component of the thing ?* I-ee: *Yeah. Yeah. Very , very important, I think. Say looking at just this area, historically I mean, the Anglo-saxons come in and - I don't want you to think I'm talking broadly, I'm not sort of - but the Anglo-saxons come in and they have the businesses . They're all on the shire. I mean they think that they run the actual town and they make the town something, but what they don't realise is that the area was started by the Italian people ...(inaudible)... when there was no town and get things goin' and their culture is very important, but they bought in.*	MCD: Contributors to the community Categories named in the talk: Anglo-saxons [non Italians] - businessmen, councillors, [promoters] Italians [non Anglo-saxons] - start the area (pioneers), get things going Cause-effect: historical contributors (Italian race) are not recognised, not given status. Current contributors (Anglo-saxon race) are given status. Current/recent contribution -> social status

Errol answers the interviewer's question about Australian-Italian literature directly: *yes*, emphasising its importance - *very, very important.* He then outlines the history of this area in a straightforward way. He does this by setting up in his historical account, two categories of contributors to the local community - the Anglo-saxons and the Italians [categories along racial lines]. Errol is an Aboriginal and the interviewer is an Anglo-

saxon. Errol considers the contributions made to local community development by both groups of people: Italians and Anglo-saxons. He questions the values placed on their contributions, suggesting that there are discriminating judgments along racial lines. He attributes community positions of power/authority, businessmen and shire councillors, to the Anglo-saxons, and historically based positions to the Italians - *the area was started by the Italian people* (pioneer farmers), and *get things goin'* (initiators). He attributes community status to the Anglo-saxons: *they think that they run the actual town and they make the town something.* The discrimination suggested lies in the unequal community recognition of the valuable contributions made by each group, the historically based contributions of the Italians tend to be forgotten. Errol thinks that stories of the area written by Italian -Australians (and possibly also Italian-language literature) made prominent in the community would assist in redressing the imbalance in valuing contributions made by each section of the community.

Other members of the same community also referred to the ethnic community.
In an interview which is impossible to transcribe because of intrusive noise in the environment, but during which the interviewer took extensive notes, Speaker K relayed information about the Italians having a difficult time in the early days of their settlement in the district. They were known as 'wogs', a term of disparagement among the local Anglo-saxon population, and did not mix socially with the locals. She referred to the period following the Second World War when both Italians and Germans were treated harshly because of the part their countries had played during the war. The Italians would not allow their sons and daughters to intermarry but rather arranged marriages to Italians for them. She cited examples of Italian girls who were her schoolmates who were in these situations. Speaker K pointed out that Italian parents of today have adopted a different philosophy towards marriage. So the Italians have changed in some ways, what of the Anglo-saxons ?

In relation to aboriginal presence in rural communities, these rural dwellers think that attitudes are changing, and people are becoming more interested in learning about the

differences and understanding the values of each other. For the ethnic communities, there is no available evidence in these communities to suggest that much has changed. An ethnic community is physically located within the community but is not socially well integrated into the community activities.

4.2.3 Primary industries culture

Relevant to community culture is the fact that in farming communities the phenomenon exists of the work site and the domestic site being in the one/same physical space. (See Figure 5.1 in Section 5.3.1). Businesses in rural towns are often located next door to the owner's/operator's residence. This is different from urban areas where work sites are income earning sites and domestic sites are generally residential only sites, and where people usually travel some distance from the domestic site to the work site. So farms/properties and many rural town businesses and offices are like homes, but they are also like factories. In rural situations there is a blurring of the distinctions between work and home, work relationships and social relationships. In the rural situation failure of business can be failure of home as well: both business and home premises may have to be sold, and may be of little monetary value. In an urban context the failure of a business venture will have no necessary impact on the domiciliary even though it may have serious ramifications on the lives of those affected. The commercial value of the urban home has no relationship to the value of the business, but is a financial/property investment in its own right.

Primary industries culture in the 1990s exhibits features of economic and social instability, and change occurring on several fronts. It is notable that the recent (1998) collapse of the global commodity market is directly connected to the rural sector. Several interviewees echoed fears about the economic viability and the future for rural workers. The following responses were given by individuals in answer to the question: *Would you like your children, when they have finished their schooling, to work on the land ?*

LA: *Work on the land ? Not in these economic times.*

LB: *Work on the land ? Definitely not. No money in it.*

LC: *To work on the land ? I think it's a very hard life and I don't think I would wish it on my children.*

LD: *I don't know that there's gonna be that many people left on the land before long.*

These speakers (LA, LB, LC, LD) introduce the topic of difficult economic times for rural industries and the lack of incentives for people to stay on properties.

The comments below give more details of the effect of economic pressures.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: *Last week how much time on average did you spend listening to the radio per day?* Merv: *Well, I have the radio going all night because I don't sleep very heavy and I wake up and I used to wake up and just lay there and sometimes I would get up to read a book or read the paper and that annoys the wife so I just listen to the radio. We are under extreme pressure, every waking thought is how you are going to survive, you are in survival mode, you have got so much investment and you have a lot of money tied up and you have worked your whole life to get there and you can't go down without putting [in] every single effort. If we could get a break in the weather, it would make it a bit easier. But we have got this far and we have done pretty well. We have got to change. You know I am very good with sheep and I have got to go away [from them] . I am doing two men's work and there is not much sense in that.*	MCD: changing times 3 sections : • his actions which are symptoms of a concerned or agitated person, • the pressures of borrowing money and being in survival mode to pay back the banks, • change : change in the weather, but also change in himself (move to other types of farming) Anecdotal evidence from Merv Cause-effect: borrowing money + variable income -> insecurity, survival mode

This is a response to a question about using the radio, and Merv turns it into an expression of the urgency of his concerns. Merv emphasises the uncertain aspects of running a large

grazing property. He highlights the financial investment in property and stock and the constant pressure of bank loan repayments when your income from property and stock is variable. For Merv this property represents his whole life. He has always worked towards having and keeping this property as a successful business operation. He realises that there is need for him to change in order to cope with the prevailing economic and market circumstances. Wool prices have been low in recent years and the market is not likely to rebuild now. Note that Merv turns the request for information into a complaint, demonstrating the inferred 'troubled' state of persons in this category.

This need to change is noted by another interviewee, in response to the question about children's work after completing schooling.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: Would *you like your children, when they have finished their schooling, to work on the land ?*	
Bill: *Work on the land ? In the high tech. things, yes. Not as a grazier. I think that's where the country's gone wrong. We should be into the highly technical things on the land. One o' my neighbours down the road is growing persimmons. They're the sort o' things we've gotta be into, and growing wine.*	MCD : new times Categories named in the talk: high tech. industries grazing industries

This speaker, Bill, uses the MCD of new times and immediately names the categories of grazing industries and high-technical industries, setting them in opposition to one another by his use of the word 'not'. He then explains that the high-technical industries are the industries where there are benefits, while the grazing industries (the traditional rural

industries) no longer have benefits. He seems to be referring to the economic downturn [cultural story], *where the country's gone wrong*, then he refers to a local story (collective story): his neighbours who are growing persimmons and the wine industry which is thriving in the local area. He is suggesting that through maximising the use and availability of modern technology and moving into niche markets and speciality products there may be a way out of the depressed economic situation for the people who work the land. He sees the traditional markets of wool and beef as no longer being viable.

Change and developments in technology and communications are entwined with rural economics. One small farmer, Reg, who lived in a fruit and vegetable growing area, was asked about the effect of new technologies. He described it in this way:

TALK	MCA ATTRIBUTES AND CATEGORIES
(name) rely on computers. Some strawberry growers down here, [name], they do hydroponic stuff, Rs written a computer program for hydroponic stuff. Sounds easy, but it's not easy, hydroponics, it's very complex. Needs monitoring and you can't possibly work that all out in your head. I think all the more successful farmers use computers. The neighbour next door who doesn't have a computer is broke, and I think that says it all. A person that wasn't able to pick up the new technologies and run with them. When you compare him with (name) on the corner there // I don't know anything about his computers but his farm's brilliant. It's because he just grasped the new technologies. //	MCD : Farmers Categories : Farmers then, farmers now Farmers before technology, farmers with technology The attributes of the 'farmers before technology' are : they use the head, they do everything by gut feeling, can't pick up the new technologies, so they go broke. Who are they? - neighbour next door, old farmers. (MCA continued on next page)

TALK (continued)	MCA ATTRIBUTES AND CATEGORIES (continued)
// There's the accounting side of any business which computers lend themselves to, but I think that, but I think record keeping of everything that's going on would be absolutely vital. It's not just fruit growing, I mean anything really. It's amazing how many of the old farmers do everything by gut feeling. You'll find the advisers do things, formulae, I suppose, to find out how much protein there is in a food and how much it costs per kilo of protein. // The more modern farmers use all those sorts of mechanisms, and they win, they always win, dairy farmers, sheep farmers, cattle farmers , wheat farmers.	The attributes of the 'farmers now' are : they use computers and technology, they have grasped the new technologies, they have accounting details on the computer, they monitor operations (complex operations), they use DPI advisers formulae, they win, they are successful. Who are they ? - neighbours, strawberry growers, hydroponics, advisers. Cause-effect: computers+technology - > success in modern farming

This transcript is part of a larger transcript of an account given by a local small farmer asked to explain the impact of technology on farming practices in this area. He extended his views beyond the local area, which is largely horticultural, and applied them to a wide range of farming practices *dairy farmers, sheep farmers, cattle farmers , wheat farmers.*

In current rural economics there has developed the cultural image of downturn, falling markets, and falling global commodity prices. Reg provides a collective story which has links with the cultural image: those farmers who have 'gone broke'. He paints the stark picture of the neighbour who has grasped the technology, used it to advantage and 'won' or successfully sold his product, in contrast to the next door neighbour who has not used

the technology and has 'gone broke'. Reg sees technology as essential for farmers if they are to survive - the importance of using the technology in the best ways to assist production and collect information.

Reg explains the use of computer technology in the commercial world of the fruit and vegetable growers, and then explains the links with the advisers from the centre - in this instance the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Reg sees the new technologies being of great advantage to producers, to assist production and collect information. He nominates some of the complexities of modern farming for which the computer technology is of value - hydroponics, monitoring of operations, analysis of input and output, accounting.

Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999 in press:*174*) described this situation as "redefinition of the farmer's wisdoms in changed economic times". The farm has been redelineated economically and socio-culturally by the different attitudes and demands that are part of the new communicative systems for relating to and beyond a centre. This means new centre-margin relationships.

4.3 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

Chapter 4 has attempted to draw a picture of rural life, social conditions, lifestyle choice, and culture, through the eyes and minds of rural residents. These rural residents have viewed rurality and rural living as continuing the centre-margin relationship but in some instances emphasising the strengths of the margins. For some residents the social conditions are not ideal, for others the benefits outweigh any disadvantages. For professional people there may be times of social and professional isolation, but some residents seem to find ways to gain personal and social benefits from both rural and urban contexts. Rural communities show strengths of community spirit in times of crisis. The features of social openness, a way of life that is relatively free of pressures of crowding, and ease of access to recreational facilities and to modern communication technology, are

appealing to many rural dwellers. The culture of primary industries is undergoing change within the global movements in economics and communications, and these changes bring insecurities and reformations. Rural producers are facing the demands of this situation that require new understandings of socio-cultural developments and centre-margin relationships. Primary industries culture and the social conditions of rural towns have risks and strengths, but the character of those risks and strengths is different from the risks and strengths faced by urban communities. The value of community culture is important to rural dwellers, as is an awareness that a community supports a number of diverse cultures.

An important aspect of this study is a community's awareness of its own culture. Within the community culture the school plays an important part and the school curriculum can be contextualised in that culture or alternatively it can be decontextualised from that culture. Chapter 5 examines the relationships of schooling to the community.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.

SCHOOLING : RURAL VIEWS

This chapter provides discussion and conclusions on the remaining four of the research questions which were reformulated at the end of Chapter 3 :

3. How do rural dwellers construct the relationship between education and various kinds of work (e.g., head-work and hands-work)?

4. Do they value schooling highly?

5. Do rural dwellers describe themselves and their children as needing the same schooling or the same curriculum as urban dwellers?

6. Do women/men in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour?

5.1 HEAD-WORK AND HANDS-WORK : THE EDUCATION AND LABOUR RELATIONSHIP

The topic of technology in primary industries culture, raised in Section 4.2.3, leads to a discussion of the relationship between education and various kinds of work, intellectual labour (head-work) and manual labour (hands-work), and how this dichotomy is established and described by rural workers. The topic of technology provides this link because the introduction of technology into primary industries requires a new level of understanding, a different cognitive approach, for those doing manual work to use the technology effectively in the belief that it will produce better outcomes. This next section will explore a range of views on the head-work and hands-work relationship.

5.1.1 Attitudes to work and effects of education

Some respondents saw a clear division between manual labour, requiring little or no literacy or schooling, and work which requires a higher level of achievement in education. This approach was taken by Leo, a successful fruit and vegetable grower.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: Would *you like your children, when they've completed their schooling, to attend TAFE ?* Leo : *That TAFE as far as I'm concerned is only for the bludgers. It's like me, I gotta go and do this course. There was a heap o' people there that live at the [name] Caravan Park. They don't work for me, they work for nearly every other farmer in the district. They've all had the sack because, the simple fact is, they're good for nothing, most o' them this is, not all, they've been on the dole for so long because the Government tells them they gotta go and do this course. By giving them this course it's not gonna improve them because they're still under the willow tree at the caravan park. You either study when you're young , you get something, you get a job or whatever it is, then you carry on. A lot o' this TAFE thing it's just for people that are in a holiday place. To some I think there would be some benefit, but to most I don't think there would be.*	MCD : farm workers Categories used in the talk: **bludgers**, **workers** bludgers: those in a holiday place, on the dole, doing TAFE courses. Binary oppositions: bludgers - workers getting the sack - working on the dole - working MCD: farm workers

(MCA continued on the next page)

TALK (cont.) *I'd even like my son to be a farmer and they could well, but the way the farming is these days if you don't work from daylight till dark, I can see my fathers (0.4) OK maybe he had it very hard as a young kid, see my mother came from the cane industry that was pretty hard them days too. You either work hard or you don't survive. Now I'll go home and until dark I don't go in the house. Then after tea I might go out 'n spray . That's how we've survived until now. You get someone who's highly educated, he won't do that. There's been a lot o' farms been sold around the area to people that say "Oooh there's good returns !" But in a couple o' years they've gone broke, the banks have sold them up. You've gotta work. .....* I-er: *Do you think that increasing the literacy levels of workers makes for improved productivity ?* Leo : *The only thing I feel, like I said before, it's not the diplomas that you get at the end of schooling will make you money, it's your hands. Like I've seen people with lots of diplomas can't run a farm. And I can name you quite a few people round here that's had no diplomas and they're quite successful the whole lot o' them.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES continued Binary oppositions continued: going broke - making money getting diplomas - working with hands don't survive - work hard highly educated - those who work hard *farmers/workers 'on one side of the fence' -being successful, making lots of money *bludgers, those who study or are educated 'on the other side of the fence' - not successful farmers Authentication: his own experience as a successful farmer Cause-effect: success = making lots of money; hard physical work, not diplomas, leads to success.

Leo used the MCD of farm workers. The categories he named in this interview transcript were "bludgers" and "workers". He set up binary oppositions of: getting the sack and working hard, receiving the dole and working, going broke and making money, getting diplomas and working with your hands, not surviving and working hard, being highly educated and working hard. Leo has a clear picture of successful farming - long hours of manual labour and making a lot of money. For him there are two categories of people - the workers and the bludgers. The workers are successful because they make a lot of money, the bludgers are on the dole and therefore don't have much money and don't do any work. Leo applies two more descriptors to his two categories - the workers are uneducated, the bludgers are educated, or at least trained as adults.

The cultural understanding here is that post-secondary education (e.g., Technical And Further Education -TAFE- courses, agricultural college courses, university courses) better equips people for work by giving them appropriate work-related knowledge and qualifications. In other words, that diplomas lead to success. Leo's immediate response to the question "Would you like your children, when they've completed their schooling, to attend TAFE?", is to link TAFE with 'bludgers' - those not willing to work. Then he gives his collective story of having to do a compulsory TAFE course (possibly in relation to chemicals used in sprays in the fruit and vegetable industry) where he met a number of people - to him a large number *a heap o' people* whom he regards as *good for nothing.* Leo illustrates the importance of hard work by talking about himself and his family: working from daylight till dark (the farmer's clock), and his hardworking parents, then gives his principle which is *You either work hard or you don't survive.* He denies that diplomas lead to success: in his view it's hard work with hands that will bring success. For him success equates with making a lot of money.

As Muspratt, Freebody and Luke (1999: *182*) pointed out, head-work (intellectual labour, education) and hands-work (manual labour) are regarded as incompatible, and head-work (education) works to the detriment of hands-work (manual labour) which, for Leo, is the key to the success or survival of the farmer.

The next interviewee (Peter) articulates a different view of the relationship between education and work. Peter had been asked, *What do you think the schools should be doing more of in literacy training ?* . He was also asked to rank these things. Peter first made some comments about discipline and about mathematics, then he said:

TALK Peter: *There's too much emphasis on Americanism. [laugh]* I-er: *Too much Americanism ?* Peter: *Well, I think there's too much psychoanalysing the kids instead a teachin' em the basics o' what they need ta know. They seem to have shifted the basics to the back burner and say it's not important. We live in a great academic world where by machines, we got machines, we need high intellect and so on. But they forget that not everybody can be employed in that; and you still have to come back to basics for some people. When (0.5) when government cause bad management or countries go downhill, people are put in stressful economic times, they haf to go back to basics.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES MCD - members of the workforce Categories : 1. not qualified / un [or less] educated *and* qualified/educated 2. basics - [non-basics] 3. jobs [employment] - unemployment

(MCA continued on next page)

TALK continued *I wandered around the world with a mate. Or this side o' the world anyway [inaudible] with a mate who would not work below his dignity. Here we were starving in 1966. We had one can o' baked beans left, the last o' the week, and we're both laying on the bed conserving energy, before going out to hunt for a job. We're relying on this baked bean tin and we set ourselves 3 baked beans a day [laughs] until we get another can o' baked beans, and I got a job. He (0.3) there was jobs going, and he wouldn't work below his station. He was an educated man, and he said : 'I didn't get qualifications to go down in the world, I got qualifications to go up'. But you do what you haf to do. God didn't make the world to owe anybody a living. You make your own. It's fortunate for us in this country that we have something to back us up and help us when times get tough, but in lots o' places in the world they don't have that. In Vietnam if your rice crop fails you watch your kids starve to death or you do what you have to do to get by. And then you cry for ten minutes and you get out and plant the next one .*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES continued Moral aspect : God, or the world, doesn't owe anybody a living; you make your own living - you earn money to pay your way. A responsible adult works for a living. You have to go back to the basics in times of economic stress (personal economic stress or national economic stress). Substantiation: anecdotal evidence, his own collective story, his reference to God and implied moral principles

The MCD used by Peter was members of the workforce. Peter used the categories of the unqualified (or less educated) and the qualified (or educated). He gave an example from his own experience, of the unqualified getting a job and the educated being unemployed. He introduced the moral aspect that each person has to make (earn) his living and emphasises this by explaining that several countries in other parts of the world do not have social security benefits for those who are out of the workforce.

This view is based on the cultural story, and the moral principle, that everyone has a job and supports himself. Peter uses anecdotal evidence as a substantiation procedure. He tells his collective story about himself and his mate, an educated man. His mate preferred not to work in a job for which he would be over qualified, thus exhibiting an elitist view of the education-work relationship. Peter goes to the basics of living - surviving, having food to eat - and he indicates that in some countries you will starve if you are not prepared to work because there is no social service system to provide for you. Peter thinks that the unqualified will get a job, any kind of job . They will do whatever they have to do to earn a living. Peter introduces the moral aspect that the world doesn't owe anyone a living, this links to a moral obligation to support oneself and contribute to the community through work and use of skills and talents. His view seems to be that the unqualified are more aware of the moral responsibilities of getting a job and financially supporting oneself to provide for basic needs. He believes that learning/knowing the basics leads to employment even in adverse economic times. He seems to be assuming that there is a negative effect of post-secondary education - the educated think they are 'a cut above the rest', that the moral obligations do not apply to them, and they can avoid the basics. Yet it is not made clear, in this transcript, why education is only needed by head-workers, those doing other work than manual labour.

Another view that has similarities to Peter's view was voiced by Errol:

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: *Do you think that people who have better literacy skills have more status in the community ?*	
Errol: *I think Australia has still got to deal with the tall poppy syndrome. And maybe it's not always the case of the people that've got the education, it's the people that don't have the education feeling a bit inferior . I mean that's psychology , I suppose, but I think something's gotta be done to impress on the Australian community that everyone's got the opportunity to do whatever they wish. That if they wish to dig ditches that does not make it any less important than the person that's teaching at school, or whatever.*	MCDs - there are 2 MCDs here: (1) community members (2) school students Substantiation: references to official discourse: psychology, communism, Australian community (MCA continued on next page)

TALK I-er: *Do you think that increasing the general literacy levels of workers makes for improved productivity ?* Errol : *I don't think so. Personally my idea is that it may seem communistic, but you have to have ditch-diggers, you have to have engineers, scientists, and whatever else, and I think if you improve everyone's literacy and things you'll start having a person digging ditches, that feels that he should be doing something better so therefore you don't get the best productivity out of him. Sometimes I think it could be counterproductive.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES Categories named in the talk: (1) those who wish to be manual (e.g., ditch diggers) those who wish to be white-collar (e.g., teachers, engineers, scientists) (2) students who do well students who don't do well Cause-effect: more literacy -> less productivity Success = achieving what you are capable of, and being happy

The membership categorisation analysis for this transcript shows two MCDs - school students and community members. The categories of students named in the talk by the speaker are : students who do well and students who don't do well. The categories of community members named in the talk by the speaker are : those who wish to be white-collar workers (e.g., teachers, engineers, scientists) and those who wish to be manual workers (e.g., ditch diggers).

Errol takes a cue from the interviewer's use of the phrase 'status in the community', but moves away from the question. He refers to the Australian cultural story that is commonly known as the 'tall poppy syndrome', which means that anyone who achieves in an outstanding way (especially in the fields of business, academia, or politics and government, that is in the more intellectual/managerial arenas as opposed to the manual, physical and sporting arenas) is 'cut down' by the others (the average and the majority). These others engage in anti-success activity. Errol seems to be saying that 'tall poppies'

should not be a problem for anyone and manual work should not be a problem for anyone, that the idea of any status should be discouraged and the concept promoted of people achieving what is appropriate for them, and such achievement being recognised as success. That is, success means achieving what you are capable of achieving and being pleased with your work. In applying this in the school situation, school is understood as the place of literate things. Literacy is good, more literacy is better. It is a white-collar high-school system where the norm is white-collar work (head-work), and a system which creates success and failure based on the achievement of high standards of head-work (academic work). This leads to the devaluation of manual labour (hands-work). The students who do well gain ideas of striving for higher achievements, and a concept of 'above their station' develops. The students who are not successful in the academic areas become unhappy, resentful, and unproductive. Errol substantiates his account through the use of official discourse, with his references to psychology, communism, and the Australian community.

In rural areas where schools usually have smaller classes, and face to face communication among community members is relatively easy, there is a readily available opportunity for schools to enhance the skills needed in rural living, and to develop the philosophy and the reality of valuing each individual's contributions to the community, both the local community and the school community, and to develop community appreciation of each individual's contributions. Value can be placed on the task being well done and not on the type of task so that manual labour is valued as highly as white collar work.

The next view also expressed by Errol, again emphasises the importance of recognition for all workers.

I-er : *A last question for you which is, you mentioned the school being very bookish and abstract, or whatever, thinking about the people that want to stay - and I don't want to put words in your mouth - do you think that in some rural communities , many of which are declining in population and economic base, that the schools are, by their not*

paying much attention to trade work, work with the hands, you know - I don't mean the hands NOT the head - but that sort of work . (0.8). Is it possible that schools are contributing to kids', kids' going to school in Littleton , but the schooling system and what they get good at, if they're good, makes them orient to city life more or not . To put it bluntly, does going to school in Littleton prepare you to live and want to live in Littleton?

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
Errol: *No. I think schooling is aimed at top professional jobs. And the teacher believes, in my opinion, that if he can get some one out of his grade that goes on to college and ends up being a scientist, he's done his job. Where I believe that if they get a job, and they're good at it , whether it be digging ditches or whatever else; and I mean the guy that's a scientist really he's not gonna go down and dig ditches, it's the reverse thing I was saying earlier about the guy with all this education digging ditches, he's not gonna do it properly, and he's not going to be there for long. You know, and it's a similar thing if you try and put someone that doesn't have the expertise at maybe suitable for digging ditches , up to trying to be a scientist. He's not going to stay long.*	THEME: Aims/purposes of schooling Match jobs [skills] with students Success = more education (cultural icon) Substantiation: personal and professional experience

(MCA continued on next page)

TALK continued	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES continued
The whole system of Australia's schooling needs to deal with what is success. Is success being the brainiest person in the world ? I think some of the brainiest people in the world have gone mad. And I think that's why a lot of people now are feeling better for just digging ditches and working with the land, no matter what type of education they've got. That's why we're seeing a lot of dropouts, so maybe the stress that teachers are putting on younger students and young adults about achieving this high goal, which is unrealistic, you know we can't all be scientists. We can't all be that. They've also got to give some self-esteem to the student that they probably have problems with , to go down and say, you know, Joe Brown up the front he's off doin' his thing and he knows all about it. But you're just as important as him in your schooling.	The whole system of Australia's schooling needs to deal with what is success. SRPs: Teacher beliefs - My beliefs ditch diggers - scientists success - being brainy Cause-effect: Success = high self-esteem

The theme of this response is the aims or purposes of schooling. The speaker, Errol, names three sets of relational pairs: teachers' beliefs and his own beliefs, ditch-diggers and scientists, and success and brainy people.

The interviewer introduces this topic by asking whether rural schools were preparing students to live and work in these rural areas or whether schooling was oriented to city living and working. The interviewee immediately picks up this theme and states his opinion that 'schooling is aimed at the top professional jobs' - meaning those that require high level thinking and therefore a lot of academic tuition and application (i.e., a lot of head-work). The interviewee considers what the teachers believe about educating students and what he (Errol) believes about educating students. These beliefs incorporate understandings of what is success for teachers and what is success for students. Errol expresses his opinion that teachers believe it is their job to produce professionals with high goals and high academic qualifications. Errol also believes that teachers put much stress on students related to these goals. Errol's own belief is that teachers should aim to produce students who have high self-esteem, and who are good at their jobs, whatever those jobs may be. This moves into the arena of matching skills and interests of students to suitable jobs, but it also means that society needs to eliminate jobs rating scales, concepts of socio-economic status, or any hierarchical ordering of work and work skills. Errol believes that any job, when it is well done, deserves recognition, and that success means having high self-esteem.

Three different views of the education and work relationship have been explored. The first was the view that hard physical work (manual labour, hands-work), not education (head-work), leads to success, head-work and hands-work were regarded as incompatible. The second view was an elitist view of education (head-work) - the educated are a 'cut above the rest' and they can avoid the basics, including doing manual labour to earn a living. The third view challenged the concept of success that is promoted by a white-collar system of schooling and suggested that success should be realising one's potential and gaining satisfaction from that achievement.

5.1.2 Technology, education and work

The growth and development of the use of modern, mostly computerised, technology has influenced all industries. Rural industries are no exception. Reg has been asked to

talk about the use of computers and modern technology in the fruit growing industry. The following transcript is an excerpt from his narrative.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
Reg: *It used to be in the farmer's head, and they could go out and stand on the verandah and say 'It looks like it might be black spot or it might be (0.5) . You can't do that any more, you've got to use technology. You'll use the DPI, which will, there's certain models they use to predict what's going to happen and what are diseases and pests. Also I think you've gotto use computers to find out whether you've made any profit from a particular line. You all get gut feelings and say 'Oh the Wilson plums were good this year.' How much did you spend on them and how much do you actually see? How much in wages went on them, and that kind of thing. I think that's the computer, or you're not going to work that out. I can't see how you'd get on without them. It's just a data base really, I'm not impressed by computers. They just record data, they don't make any decisions for you, they're just going to tell you what's going on.*	THEME: change in knowledge needed by the farmer Categories used in the talk: 1. 'old' farmers - 'new' farmers 2. farmers knowledge (knowledge in the head) - data and models using technology 3. farmer's intuition - analysed data MCD: farmers' knowledge Substantiation: anecdotal evidence

The theme of Reg's talk is the change in knowledge needed by the farmer. Reg used the categories of 'old' farmers (i.e., old style) and 'new' farmers (i.e., modern). Old style farmers kept the knowledge in their heads and used their intuition, modern farmers use analytic methods and gather the data which is processed by means of computer programs. Reg explains the value of technology for data collection, and the importance of the 'hard' data for the farmer in making decisions about his production and profits. In earlier times profit margins were not so important because the market competition was much less and the farmer was always assured of making a living. Today that is not always the case, because of the capital outlay and other investments that have gone into the business, as well as the competitive markets and the increased supply and demand, the economic efficiencies are complex.

The DPI (Department of Primary Industries) advisers, who understand the computer technology and who write the formulae to assist the growers with production, demonstrate how the data given by the hands-worker (the farmer) can be used in combination with a large body of knowledge to produce a theory, which can then produce a formula which in turn can be used by the farmer, with his specific data, to improve his production. The farmer has to do the hands-work, and do it well, and give feedback to the advisers. He has to appreciate the value of the more analytic approaches. Each contribution is important and the relationship is complementary and contributory. Some primary producers recognise this link, but others do not understand its value.

A range of views about the relationship between education and various kinds of work has been explored (refer to last paragraph of Section 5.1.1), from views which see education and manual labour in opposition to one another to views which exhibit understanding of the role of each and the contribution each can make to the production process in which there is a cooperative and contributing relationship. There is also a censorial view of education - that it produces elitist thinking which is not always practical and related to the world of work. The speakers have each viewed education critically suggesting that current

education is based on inappropriate premises concerning the real world and community living, work, achievements, success and happiness.

Bell and Sigsworth (1987: *251*) expressed their view which seems to agree with the speakers above:

> *.....so long as schools serving rural populations are thought of as simply smaller versions of large urban schools, and are expected to function in the same way, they will continue to appear educationally deficient.*

As stated earlier, in discussing Errol's first narrative, rural schools have a position of advantage in having the opportunity to gain knowledge of the local community and integrate relevant findings into the school curriculum, so rurality is made highly relevant to schooling. This provides a definite advantage in developing quality schooling.

5.2 SCHOOLING

Section 5.1 raised a number of issues about the relationship between education and labour. This next section will look more closely at schooling. Research questions 4 and 5 were: Do rural dwellers value schooling highly ? Do rural dwellers describe themselves and their children as needing the same schooling or the same curriculum as urban dwellers? The rural residents who took part in this research project valued schooling highly. In answer to the direct question: *What value do you place on schooling for today's children?* one hundred and fifty-two of one hundred and fifty-five respondents answered *'important'* or *'essential'* . (This question required a forced-choice answer.) This section will use interview analysis to consider in some detail the ways in which they value schooling, aspects of curriculum, culture, and literacy.

5.2.1 Curriculum.

From Commonwealth reports and other writings (Refer to Section 2.1.1), there is a general perception that there are anti-rural sentiments relating to rural students'

achievements, that to be a rural student is to be disadvantaged. The line of reasoning taken is: rural family, therefore lower income, therefore disadvantaged, and rural student, therefore less post-school options. Such perceptions arise from statistics relating to course participation and observations generated by the compilation of reports, usually from economic or academic achievement perspectives. These usually relate to late secondary and/or post-school offerings. It is not always the way that rural dwellers see the situation themselves. The interviews used in Section 4.2.1 have already considered some aspects related to rural schooling, especially rural community living and the culture of primary industries. The focus in the following interview segments will be directly on the construction of schooling.

TALK I-er: *What are the main problems that rural kids have? ....? Is one of the problems that teachers are city people looking to get back or (0.07) ?* Bill:*[The teachers] are quite content with their lot unless they have ambitions to be. As far as the children are concerned, I think that their education is a bit narrow, and I think we could use modern technology to sort of broaden that to a great extent. As I said my grandchildren were taken from [name] to [State capital] for educational reasons.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES Theme: curriculum MCD : students Categories named: rural - urban primary - secondary

(MCA continued on the next page)

TALK continued *I think at primary level we've no problem at all. May be they're better off at primary level in a small community, they get better skills at getting on with other kids and this sort o' thing , I think. But once it reaches secondary level, there's a limit in the range of courses you can do, if you've got particular ambitions or particular skills. If you wish to be a technical person in this area then you've got a very limited range of options open to you and if you want to enter some of the professions, or do something way out, I mean one o' my grand daughters is [keen] on ballet and she's pretty good at it. Now how can you learn ballet in [name]? Or even (nearby town) ?*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES continued A quadrangle can be drawn with the 4 quarters: rural primary, urban primary; rural secondary, urban secondary * the rural primary students are better off , better social skill development * the secondary urban students have an advantage because they can learn a wider range of technical and professional skills Substantiation: anecdotal evidence, personal experience

The categories used in this talk are : rural and urban - introduced by the interviewer. The interviewee, Bill, discusses the levels of schooling, so that analysis of the talk produces a quadrangle for which there are four categories : rural primary, urban primary, rural secondary, urban secondary. The rural-primary quarter shows that, in Bill's opinion, rural primary students are better off than urban primary students, especially in social skill development. The secondary-urban quarter shows secondary urban students have the advantage of access to a wider range of technical and professional skills, in contrast to the provision for secondary rural students.

The I-er attempts to focus the discussion by asking a question about the teachers - teachers as city people - but Bill dismisses any discussion about teachers and focuses on a problem in the curriculum. He refers to the range of curriculum offerings but immediately offers a possible solution to the narrowness which indicates that he does not consider this an insurmountable problem. He discusses the curriculum offerings at both primary and secondary levels. He holds the view that primary education in a rural community is of better quality than primary education in urban communities, and specifies outcomes in children's social development. He then refers to secondary education and continues his earlier theme of 'narrow' education which he now defines as *a limit on the range of courses you can do.* He then illustrates with a specific example - *technical person* - and finally gives another example, this one from his own experience: *I mean one o' my granddaughters is [keen] on ballet and she's pretty good at it. Now how can you learn ballet in [name]?* Bill then offers a possible solution to some aspects of this curriculum problem - technology (presumably computer technology and internet, as well as video) could be used to widen the range of rural curriculum offerings. Obviously not all the practical aspects could be covered by using technological access to information, but it could have a wide ranging effect on secondary curriculum in rural schools, requiring different approaches to program planning and adaptable teaching strategies.

Bill continued his account of the problems that rural kids have :

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I think for the brilliant child, and I think there is insufficient of this in the school as well, but the brilliant child has even less of a go in a small area. Even at (nearby town) High there's little scope for that brilliant child to be given a fair range. Against that there's access to (nearby town) Library's a marvellous library , and if I want any book in Australia I can get it, and so can those children. Perhaps they need more lessons on, I'm talking high school children, perhaps they need more skills in asking for what they want , and understanding the library system. All in all, I see nothing bad about that. I just feel that the scope for them is limited. I think it could be widened. You could have a school that had classes that were attached to a city class, which is happening at tertiary level.	MCD: high school students SRPs: rural - urban school - community Quadrangle with the quarters: rural school, urban school, rural community, urban community access to education : -literate, -scope have access to [urban] literate culture, do they use it ?

This speaker used the MCD high school students and SRPs urban/city - rural/country, and school - community. A quadrangle could be drawn with the quarters being rural school, urban school, rural community, urban community. The rural school has less provision for the brilliant/gifted student than the urban school. The urban school has little provision for the brilliant/gifted student. A rural school could have classes attached to classes in urban

schools (note that a two-way exchange is not suggested). Both rural communities and urban communities have access to libraries and thus to literate culture, and all children may need more skills in using the library system.

The speaker moves through the levels of schooling - primary, secondary, tertiary. He makes reference to the brilliant child, but then expresses the general view that brilliant children are not well catered for anywhere in the school system, but are further disadvantaged in a rural area. He then swings to a positive aspect of provision, the library service, though it is not part of the schooling provision, but part of wider community education resources. He appears to speak from personal experience relating positive aspects of the library service: *and if I want any book in Australia I can get it.* He then suggests that students should improve their skills in using the Australia wide library system, and specifies the high/secondary students. He seems to see this as a positive for rural students, but he expressed it in a non-negative way. *All in all, I see nothing bad about that.*

So to add to the possible solution that technology could give he has now added better knowledge of library and research skills, use of the public library system, and attachment to city classes. He has suggested these are ways of improving provision for rural students. To incorporate these suggestions would require new approaches to curriculum, different teaching strategies and varied methods of delivery of education.

Bill sees one major problem in the area of tertiary education, equity of access.

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
If we get to tertiary level, country people have a fundamental disadvantage. It also costs them a lot o' money to get their child educated. I don't think that the way supporting funds are allocated are equitable. My next door neighbour, over the hill, their son is studying at University of Central Q'land. Now that's a huge cost to them. No matter what government does, I think children once they reach that point, simply because the average income of rural people is lower than the average income of city people, and is much more variable. I mean even major graziers can't send their kids to school at the moment, then those children do suffer as compared with city children. But at primary level I think maybe they're better off.	MCD : rural families Theme: tertiary education Categories : country families - city families Oppositions: country people - city people average income lower and variable - average income higher and predictable Authentication: anecdotal evidence : example of next-door neighbour Cultural story: children of wealthy graziers attend boarding schools in the city. (current drought and market situation for graziers) Repeats an earlier observation.

Bill began with a clear statement: *If we get to tertiary level, country people have a fundamental disadvantage.* He is speaking on the theme of tertiary education which he introduces in the first phrase. He uses the MCD of rural families, and implicit in his first clear statement are the categories of country-city and disadvantaged-advantaged. He seems to be expressing the view, later in the narrative, that the fundamental disadvantage for rural families is that their average income is lower and more variable than the average income of urban families. He claims that tertiary students from rural areas are disadvantaged, but not in any educational or curriculum sense. They or their families are economically disadvantaged, because of the variability and lower average level of rural incomes and the inequitable way in which financial assistance is given to students. Urban students do not

have the same level of costs in order to access tertiary education, particularly in relation to travel and accommodation. So the issue in tertiary education is equity of access, as stated above. Bill authenticates his statements about disadvantage by using anecdotal evidence: the example of his next door neighbours who have a son studying at a distant university. In the talk, *I mean even major graziers can't send their kids to school at the moment,* Bill refers to the cultural story that the wealthy graziers send their children to boarding school in the city, but he then introduces comment on the current situation *at the moment* where even the wealthy are being affected economically by the drought conditions and the global market influences. He concludes this narrative by referring back to a previous observation (see the first of transcripts of Bill in this Section 5.2.1) where he had expressed the view that primary students in rural schools have better education than urban primary students.

In summary then, primary education for rural students was viewed as being of a high standard, secondary education for rural students has not been criticised in the content of what it currently offers, but the range of offerings needs extending and different approaches taken to delivering the education. Suitable, challenging education for gifted students remains poorly provided in both urban and rural areas and access to tertiary education is difficult for rural students because of monetary constraints.

5.2.2 Culture

In Section 4.2.1 Errol's views on some aspects of culture were analysed. Errol has other well reasoned views about the importance of culture and cultural identity. In the following transcript the interviewer was attempting to relate literacy to cultural awareness. He made the following comment to Errol:

I-er : *It seems that reading and writing have played a big part in that [cultural activities, cultural awareness] because a lot of the languages in this country that have died, you know , indigenous languages, have been languages that haven't been written down and have had no presence in the school system.*

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
Errol: *Oh, it's extremely important. Speaking as an aboriginal person, I always say that the greatest thing the white ever did us was the fact that he kept records , and wrote things down, and I mean you know that sort of thing is turning up say for instance, if you want to get political in the Mabo case, I mean that's a reason. I mean the reason for the Mabo case now is because the Westminster system and the Anglo-saxon system always wrote things down and recorded them, so (0.5) and it's extremely important because we wouldn't even know where we came from or what we'd done , you know, years ago if it wasn't for that particular system.*	THEME: Australian cultural identity MCD: written records SRP: aboriginal - white ~ aborigines used oral language [no records] ~ white people wrote things down, kept records therefore history can be traced Substantiation: Official discourse Mabo case cited - 'white' recording has benefitted the aborigines in this case. Takes on an aboriginal role. (author, animator, principal)

(MCA continued on the next page)

TALK continued:	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES continued
For any person, pretty soon (0.3) you're talking multiculturalism and that, not in our day but in another 200 years down the track we're gunna have multicoloured people here and, you know, maybe there won't be a need for multiculturalism, I don't know, but there'll always be a need to try and explain to people where they came from , what their culture was like, which gives them a sense of pride and feeling. I mean everyone's going to be an Australian because, and we also have to develop that pride as well , I think that's, I hate to say that I agree with any politician , but Keating certainly is on the right track there, I think. It's about time we become Australians in our own right and develop that sense of pride which might also say well I'm an Australian I'm gonna learn as much as I can and I'm glad to be an Australian. I think no matter what ethnic background you come from everyone says they're Australian, but if anything happens overseas you've got one group protesting about what's going on over there. I think that's their human right, and I don't think they ever forget the fact that they're Australian.	'for any person.....' he takes on a non-aboriginal role here (moves his footing) Categories: multicoloured, multicultural Cultural framework for Australia's future development Multicoloured but of one culture. All have mixed ethnic backgrounds, so can maintain ethnic links and look forward as Australians.

The theme of Errol's response is Australians' cultural identity and the MCD which Errol used was written records. He introduced the relational pair of aboriginal and white man. He then becomes author, animator and principal and speaks from an aboriginal's point of view expressing appreciation of the advantages that 'white man's' written records have provided to aboriginal cultural heritage, sighting the Mabo case as the outstanding example. The speaker then projects into the future, he moves his 'footing' speaking as any Australian, to justify his idea of setting national goals and/or answer the implicit questions: Where is Australia headed culturally? What will the national character be after two centuries more?. He then sets up the two categories of multicultural and multicoloured, the multicultural giving prominence to their cultural origins, the multicoloured giving prominence to their Australian nationality while still maintaining their ethnic links. His answer conveys that multiculturalism will become irrelevant, but Australia will have numbers of multiracial residents who identify as Australians. He sees this Australian pride and identity as being additional to people's understanding of their individual cultural heritage. He refers directly to the policy makers here, naming the current prime minister. His reference suggests that he considers that the government has a responsibility to be involved and refers back to his earlier comment about setting national goals. He explicates the government responsibility in the next section of the interview and continues to discuss the national goal setting. So he sees cultural background as important with the continuing development of Australian culture taking precedence in the future.

Another speaker introduced the idea of districts, as the organisational basis for the school system. He did not list his reasons for this idea, but he does refer to the people living and working in a district and the growth of common interests which seems to suggest that he sees commonalities which would unite people. Common interests are part of the cultural link that has been the topic discussed by the previous interviewee. The interviewer asked for this man's views on the school-community relationship and placed that topic within the theme of national culture versus local culture.

TALK I-er: *What do you think about the relationship between schools and the community, national culture versus local culture, including language and literature?* Bill: I *think the main responsibilities of schools are in the fundamentals of learning. I mean there's no point in launching a child on the world without fundamental skills in mathematics and language, in particular. That should be a uniform system throughout the world possibly. But for the rest I think localisation would be , I would prefer district administration of schools to state administration of schools. The states are artificial disparate creations that have no real meaning. I mean the northern part of N.S.W. and the southern part of Q'land, this side of the Divide, ought to be one department. And they have nothing in common, we have nothing in common with the rest of Q'land really. I would think that education based on districts, to take it to the extreme the six states are nonsense. We should have what the French call departments, logically based and have similar interests, and those departments should administer education.*	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES Categories named: districts - states districts or [Fr.] departments : logically based, similar interests states : nonsense, no real meaning, artificial disparate creations MCD : members of education communities OR school students Everyone needs maths and language. Organisation/administration of education through 'departments' would allow and encourage similar interests and the COMMON GOOD of the community. Authentication: official discourse (administration), specific example of local area Moral - school responsibility to equip students with fundamental skills in mathematics and language

This transcript takes on the theme of administration of education. Bill uses the categories of districts and states. He views the states as unsuitable for organising the administration of schools because the concept of the state has no real relevance to schools or education. He introduces the idea of French departments or districts which would correspond with community interests.

Bill immediately takes a moral stance, allocating responsibility to the schools to make sure that its community members are skilled in the basics which he nominates as *fundamental skills in mathematics and language.* Bill actually extends this responsibility beyond national boundaries to global boundaries. He then moves to the organisation of the administrative aspects of schools and would appear to be commenting on the organisation of curriculum because he refers to common interests - presuming that curriculum could them match the regional priorities in subjects other than the basic maths and language. He suggests the French idea of Departments, which are smaller and more logically [regionally] based.

In relation to culture then, attention needs to be given to future Australia, the long term future. The administration of education needs to consider how best to nurture Australian culture and Australian pride, without denying any individual his or her ethnicity. Globalisation will become relevant for basic skills - some skills will be relevant world wide, and other newer, culturally relevant, skills will take their place in the curriculum.

5.2.3 Literacy

Rural students have access to literate culture, the same literate culture which urban students access, and this was recognised by four or more interviewees.

> MA: *It would be good if we could get back to using libraries.*

and from the speaker Bill:

> MB...*[Town's name] Library's a marvellous library, and if I want any book in Australia I can get it, and so can those children.....perhaps they need*

more skills in asking for what they want, and understanding the library system.

MC: *The library's good...*

MD: *(Name) has his own library card. He has had it for about 3 years , I suppose. He gets reference books sent from the Q'land Library up to him on dinosaurs.*

Other printed material, for example, regional and national newspapers, a variety of journals, and a wide range of advertising material, are readily available to both urban and rural dwellers. A selection of audiovisual and print media is written for primary industry and rural interests. Some rural dwellers may not access newspapers and journals on the day of issue and this could be a disadvantage for marketing and financial matters, but should not be a disadvantage for education. Rural dwellers also have access to telephone, television (though not all channels reach all rural locations), radio, facsimile services, internet, and other technology. Literacy takes on new dimensions when these services are widely available, and schooling has to meet the challenge of educating children to make discriminating use of these modes of communication. It is here that the rural culture takes on some differences from the urban culture. The ecology and environment for rural residents and primary industries all provide a rural culture which is distinguishable from urban culture. Some aspects of the distinguishing features were outlined earlier (Chapter 4 Section 4.2.3). Urban residents have easier access to live theatre, musical performances, and various forms of art, than their rural counterparts. A recent publication of the Australian Education Council *A Statement on English for Australian Schools* (1994: *5*) states :

Effective teaching is based on what children already know and can do. The teaching of English will achieve most where the considerable informal language knowledge and competence of students, whatever their cultural or language backgrounds, is acknowledged, used and extended.

So the importance of culture and language is now recognised in policy, but seems to be filtered out as education becomes operational. From the analyses it appears that some major changes need to be made to curriculum and to school programs in rural areas.

Rural residents place a high value on schooling but it does not follow that school programs for rural students need to be the same as school programs for urban students. Rural students need access to a wider range of courses and also need courses which provide a basis for rural living and working. Administration and organisation of schools on district level would facilitate these developments, and would also make it easier to recognise the cultural and language backgrounds of students. Tertiary students from rural areas need more funding to make their access to tertiary education more equitable.

5.3 GENDER PATTERNS AND THE DIVISION OF LABOUR

Gender is a productive category in talk about the organisation of rural life. As was observed in Chapter 2, women appear to be a disadvantaged group who have limited possibilities to take up leadership roles in agriculture even though they make major contributions to rural social life and economic advancement. The patriarchal society from which modern society has developed, and its lingering traditions of a domestic role for women with an ideology of women's dependence on men, especially social and economic dependence (cf., Poiner 1990:*Chapter 6*) has influenced the social structures of most communities in this country. In this study of rural communities, such historical background leads to the question: Do women/men in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour?

5.3.1 Gender patterns in rural occupations

Historically a pattern has developed in many rural areas of female teachers and nurses moving into the district to work at the local schools and hospitals and then marrying local farmers. There also has been the pattern of the country girls moving away from their original rural areas in order to find work or to gain qualifications or further their education.

Some boys move from their original rural areas, but a significant number of boys do not move.

In a discussion concerning population movements in the area, especially the younger people going away to boarding schools, then gaining professional or trade qualifications, and finding work elsewhere, one of the research team asked Speaker N: *For people who do get qualifications and do come back , what sort of opportunities are open to them?*

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
N : *There is hardly anything. Oh well, that's not true. There seems to be a lot of farmers' wives who are teachers. I mean that's really handy to have because some of the farms are way out and there is a lot of distance teaching which women do with their children. In fact quite a few of the farmers' wives I've met have either been nurses or teachers. That's the women. In terms of men, the boys grow up and if they are going to be on the farm, that's it. They don't even look elsewhere.*	Categories named in the talk: farmers' wives - farmers ~ ex-teachers, ex-nurses ~ men - boys - farm Category-bound activity: * mothers (ex-teachers) assisting their children with distance education. * men - boys - farming MCD: rural residents

Speaker N used the MCD of rural residents, and the categories she named were: farmers' wives and farmers. She also introduced the category-bound activity of ex-teachers assisting their children with distance education. Speaker N, a recent arrival in the town, is in a work position to be meeting lots of the residents, and has noticed a pattern of gender distinction in occupations. She specifies the distinction: That's *the women ,* and *In terms of the men.* For women she nominates the two professions of nursing and teaching, she

has met several women who have worked in these professions (the historical pattern). Speaker N also recognises the contribution that many country women make to their children's education by teaching with the assistance of distance education programs. These women may have been country girls or they may have been city girls, but they have been to training institutions to gain qualifications. Being a farmer's wife has a specific meaning too. Farmers' wives usually do some work on the farm/property as well as the domestic work for the family (cf., Elix & Lambert 1998: *42*). Some of these women still work in their chosen occupation (teaching or nursing) as well as being farmers' wives. This speaker is pointing out that the boys grow up on the farm and domestic site doing the farm work, and if they decide that's going to be their occupation for life then they don't go away from home (domestic site), or don't contemplate any other possibilities, suggesting a limited view of life or of the range of occupations available .

Speaker O, from a different area, is echoing some of the statements made by Speaker N. Speaker O was answering a question :

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
I-er: *Would you like your children, when they have finished their schooling, to live in the community ?*	Categories named: boys - girls
O: *I'd like if it's possible for 'em to go away and get a trade, the boys . The girls, if they want to get on they'll have to go away anyway. There's very little for girls in this district.*	~ boys become tradesmen ~ girls go away to find work MCD : children

Speaker O takes the cue from the interviewer and employs the MCD children. The analysis of his talk produces the category bound pattern of children-boys-girls and also the cultural icon of the rural tradition - boys getting a trade, girls leaving the rural home to find work. From a feminist point of view this statement could be read as ignoring the girls. He notes an occupational pattern of trades for the boys. Then he recognises that the girls will move

away from the community to get work and qualifications. His use of the phrase *they'll have to go away anyway* shows that he notices that girls who do something different with their lives, other than work and marry locally, move out of the area. The last quoted sentence is ambiguous or could have multiple meanings - very little of what ? Does he mean not many jobs, does he mean not many opportunities to gain qualifications, does he mean not much to interest or occupy girls, or does he mean very few prospects for marriage, or does he mean all of these ?

The contrast between the men and the women in terms of finding an occupation/work, and movement in and out of the farm/domestic site, which has been described by the speakers can be represented diagrammatically . See Figure 5.1. There is some statistical evidence to confirm this pattern in the qualifications and gender Tables 3.4 and 3.5 in Chapter 3, but Table 3. 3 showing qualifications in the building, engineering and agricultural fields does not support the idea that only the women move out of the community to get qualifications. It is notable that these qualifications in the building, engineering and agricultural fields are very much associated with country towns and rural living.

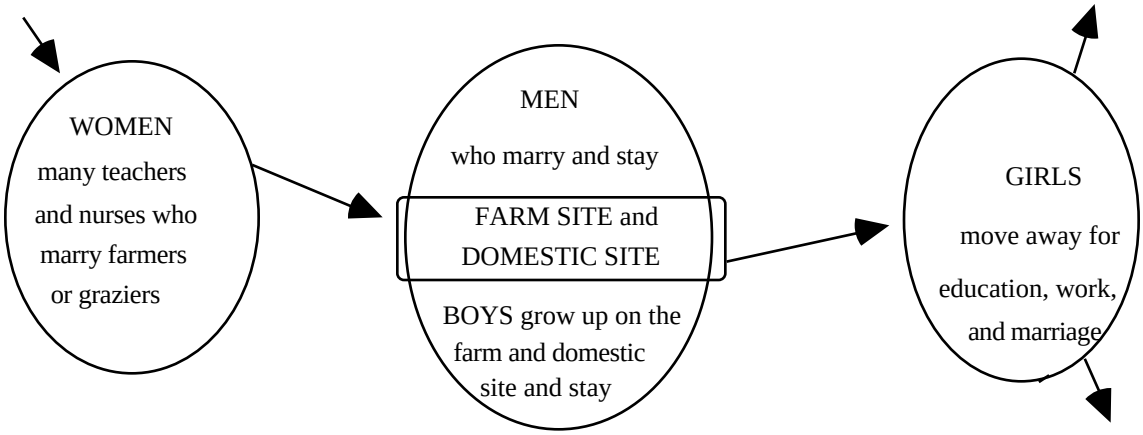

FIGURE 5.1 General pattern of movement in and out of the farm/domestic site.

In a farming context, the traditional view has been that the woman's role is to do the domestic chores, inside the house and related to the family, and that the man's role is to do heavier manual work related to the farming operations. Traditionally the man would do the heavy manual work in the garden/yard also.

Maneta is an isolated country town where many of the families who live in the town are financially supported by the men working out of town during the week and camping away from home - either on the large grazing properties or with the shire council on the roads, bridges, earthworks. There are also a number of widows resident in the town. One of these townswomen (speaker Q), herself a partner with her husband and sons in an earthmoving business which takes the menfolk away from home and the town, even to other Australian states, reported :

Q: In *this town when the lawn's been mowed and the wood's been chopped, it's the women who are doing it.*

She was pointing out the role that the women play in looking after the home situation, keeping operations running smoothly while the men are away during the week. She saw mown lawns and chopped wood as indicators that everything was under control at home. The lawn mowing and the wood chopping are both heavy manual tasks, the garden or yard tasks. They would usually be regarded as men's tasks but here the women are doing them. These women may be crossing the gender boundary, or they may be performing domestic work. A clear distinction cannot be made from this information. Or this may be in line with 1998 report on women on farms where it has been reported that women do some farm work as well as the domestic work. The work site for the men who reside in this town is physically distant from the domestic site, so it is not a 'farm' situation.

This speaker emphasised that the women are playing an important role in this town. An example of this was found when the researchers looked into the membership of an important committee established to plan for the future of the town of Maneta, it was found that two-thirds of the committee's members were women. In Maneta it was reported to the research team that there was one female who was a killer at the local abattoirs. Her male co-worker who made the report said that she was good at her job, and was easy to work with. He seemed to have some respect for her job skills.

5.3.2 Family roles in rural areas

Within the framework depicted in Figure 5.1 families form, grow, extend and re-form. It becomes obvious that the rural domestic site changes more than the rural work site. This is acknowledged by Speaker P :

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
P: I *think women's roles changed so much. Men's work goes on from year to year virtually, on the land. When you are a working mother you are more or less [part of all things] that have gone [on] round your family and your children and suddenly the children are grown up or stuck in boarding school and there is this enormous hole in your life. Whereas men, I am sure they do miss the kids, they haven't been with them all the time, they are not running [the children] off to sports, and taking them here, being involved in the everyday life.*	MCD: farming family Categories named in talk: women , men working mother Category bound relationships: family: men, women, children Category bound activity: adults looking after children women -role with family, esp. with children men -work on the land, unchanging from year to year. Authentication: personal experience

Speaker P used the MCD of farming family. This woman (P) speaks as a woman, farmer's wife and mother, and in her talk she sets up telling contrasts. She constructs women's roles as focussing on family as the children grow up (traditional and category bound concept). She indicates that family activities, especially those related to the children, occupy a great deal of the mother's time and also play a big part in emotional aspects of the woman's life :

...and suddenly the children are grown up or stuck in boarding school and there is this enormous hole in your life ...

She reports lots of time now available that was previously spent on/with her children and their activities. How does she now use this time ? The words *suddenly* and *enormous hole* convey her emotional reactions, an enormous hole is frightening and creates uncertainty. She is missing her children who are now away at school. This speaker emphasises her points about women's role by comparing it with the man's (father's) situation. In a counteractive move she states :

Whereas men, I am sure they do miss the kids, they haven't been with them all the time, they are not running off to sports, and taking them here, being involved in the everyday life.

She actually makes the comparison by detailing those activities which the men don't do but which are the woman's activities. This woman's comments reflect the evolutionary phases of a woman's life and the changes that occur in the demands on her, and the skills required to fulfil her role. Her perception of the man's role is of a static worksite role : *Men's work goes on from year to year virtually, on the land.* The telling contrasts Speaker P has used paint a clear picture of her view of the gender patterns within the family's functioning. Her views fit with the more traditional views.

5.3.3 Literacy activity and gender patterns

This section attempts to understand how gender impacts on literacy practices in rural situations and which members of a family used the power of literacy either within the family or with and for the family.

In the following interview segment the interviewee (Speaker R) is first answering the question : What do you think schools should be doing more of, in literacy training ?

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
R: *You'll find that people out on the properties send their children to school (0.5) very early.* *I-er: So they're what, more literate?* *R: A lot of people, women, that are on the land were teachers, governesses, etc. etc. So therefore they're very literate and they're passing it on to their children.* *I-er: Is it a male thing, you know, a male-female thing?* R: *It seems that way in general. The women seem to be reading and much later studying, the men just are more manually inclined, I suppose. Don't probably see the need. Whereas my grandfather, he's a great reader, he will read the newspaper from front to back every day of the week. He won't miss a bit of it. He reads books. My father the only book I've seen him pick up is a Merv Hughes, you know. He reads cricket and football books. But he wouldn't read a novel of any sort where my grandfather reads "Kings in Grass Castles" and all those Australian based. He probably wouldn't read an Agatha Christie or anything, but anything Aust-ralian or Queensland based he will read. He's got a lovely collection of books.*	MCD: people on properties Categories: women and men Speaker presents a picture of a very literate group of people. Starts out seeming to say that men are not literate, but in fact discounts that through her generation related examples.

The question, which the interviewer takes from the questionnaire and which raised the topic of literacy activities in schools, goes unanswered. After an initial response from the interviewee, the interviewer redirects the topic to the literacy of the adults who live on the properties. The speaker used the MCD of people who live on the properties, and she named the categories of men and women. Speaker R attests to the high literacy levels of people on properties. She seems to be nominating a gender pattern in referring to the women being *very literate,* and the men being manually inclined and therefore not literate, but she then modifies this view of the males through detailing a generation related pattern for the males - males of her husband's age are involved in manual work, possibly spending long hours running the property, men of her father's age do some reading that is of interest (recreational interest) to them, men of her grandfather's age do much more reading and enjoy it. Another gender pattern that is nominated by this speaker is the pattern of the women being the teachers of their children. This has already been referred to earlier in this section by Speaker N. The views of Speaker R seem to suggest that both men and women in rural areas engage in many literacy practices, but the 'women as teachers' concept suggests the women have more power in actively shaping the minds of the children and passing on skills in literacy.

One of the research team interviewed a dairy farmer (Speaker SA) who had completed Year 12 and had then attended Agricultural College where he had completed a Diploma Course. He had returned to his home district to manage the family dairy farm. Through his answers to the questions about his reading and writing activities the researcher found that this man enjoys reading a range of material, but does not read novels. He writes diary notes and lists, and occasionally writes a business letter.

When asked about writing activities, specifically writing notes to school, this male Speaker SA at first replied :

TALK	MCA CATEGORIES AND ATTRIBUTES
1.SA: *Ah, we might, once [in the last week]* 2. I-er: *Did you do it? Or did your wife do it ?* 3. SA.: *Be [wife's name] that'd do it, yeah.* 4. I-er : *OK* 5. SA: *So it wouldn't be me.* 6. I-er: *Would the same apply to family letters? Do you write those yourself?* 7. SA: *No , No //* 8. I-er: *Your wife would usually do those ?* 9. SA: *Yeah. She might do // a few. Yeah .*	WE meaning he wasn't distinguishing between himself and his wife. He seemed to find it difficult to be making this distinction. Family worked as a team. It was the interviewer who was trying to force the distinction !

It is obvious that the interviewer was trying to have the interviewee recognise a distinction between men and women in literacy practices. The interviewee's use of the collective pronoun 'we' shows that he was not making a distinction, that he was viewing writing as family activity. Some of the writing tasks that relate to family are done by the female in this family, but the male also writes, mostly business correspondence. However, the pattern of the male attending to the business correspondence and the female attending to matters relating to children and family (notes to school and family letters) would appear to be reinforcing the stereotype of the male having the power in relation to the family income and expenditure.

Interviewee SB now works as a cleaner, but he completed a fitter and turner apprenticeship after he left school at the end of Year 10. The only writing he does consists of work related

reports, and a few notes to family members. When he was asked if he wrote legal or financial documents including filling in forms, he replied:

SB: *[wife's name] does all that.*

So in this instance the female does the writing related to family finances - moving away from the stereotype of male power or dominance in relation to family finances.

Speaker SC explained the reason for his not doing the writing activities that were the subject of the questions.

SC: *I don't write well. My wife writes for me.*

He feels that he does not write well, so his wife does all the writing that is necessary for family functioning. His wife has the power of being literate in this family, but having the power does not appear to be related to social matters but more to literacy capabilities.

One librarian (Speaker T) in Maneta told the researchers that :

T: The *borrowers are mostly women - some women say that some of the books they borrow are for 'my husband' . The few men who come in to borrow are mostly from the rural properties.*

She draws on the category of gender - the borrowers are mostly women, few men borrow books. It is possible that the men from the rural properties read more than the men from the town because those from the rural properties are more likely to have received education at boarding school and then at a tertiary institution, whereas the 'town' men in Maneta were more likely to have received a secondary education at the high school in the next town. Also the men on the rural properties may be more inclined to read for recreation because their access to other activities - sport, video shop, the hotel or the RSL (Returned Servicemen's League) - is more difficult than for men resident in the town . So while a gender pattern at first seems obvious, further consideration suggests there may be environmental reasons to explain another facet of the pattern.

One family with whom one member of the research team spent a day observing literacy events were fruit and vegetable growers. In this situation there was some shifting of the

more traditional boundaries, especially in the packing shed where men and women worked together. In other tasks, the males did the field work (tractor and cultivation work), the manager's wife worked in the packing shed but she also kept the account books and farm records. It must be said that in this situation the wife was more literate in English than her husband manager who came from a non-English speaking background. While she performed the writing tasks, she and her husband manager appeared to discuss all matters related to the business operation. This is a second instance of the female having the literacy power, and again it is related to literacy capabilities rather than to any social or gendered system issues.

One experience at Maneta seemed to indicate that the males are marginalised by perceptions about literacy. As reported in Section 3.1.2 many males were asked to take part in the interviews for the large project but were unwilling. One of the verbally stated reasons for their reluctance was that they regarded reading and writing as women's work. While some residents in these rural areas are aware of gender patterns in literacy activities, it appears that patterns are not simply defined or clear-cut. Family interactions, individual abilities and motivations, and educational experiences all influence the patterns of literacy practices and events. Females may occupy more linguistic space, but the literacy practices seem to have been conducted for the purposes of benefit to the family.

5.4 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

This study has shown that a range of views exist among rural residents on the relationship between head-work and hands-work, from the view which explains them as dichotomous or in opposition to one another (putting much emphasis on the importance of doing hands-work to be successful); to an elitist view which explains head-work as superior to hands-work and not being contributory or complementary; to the view that allocates a place for both head-work and hands-work without status for either (placing emphasis on each worker's self esteem); to the view where each have a complementary relationship and a contribution to make towards better quality production. Rural schools which usually build

a close relationship with their communities are ideally placed to change a community's thinking about work, recognising and valuing success in work no matter which type of work it is.

Residents expressed their ideas about some problems in the school curriculum, and saw these as surmountable. They made some suggestions for the alleviation of the problems. Primary education for rural students was viewed as being of a high standard, secondary education for rural students has been criticised, not in the content of what is currently offered, but in the range of offerings to be studied. It was suggested that the range needs to be widened and different approaches taken to extending the provisions. Access to tertiary education presented difficulties for rural students. The cultural features of rural communities brought forward by several interviewees need consideration for curriculum in rural schools (e.g., Italian, aboriginal, rural occupations, heritage). Two participants in particular focused on the overall organisation of education and suggested that districts based on cultural links would be an improvement on State-based administration. Details of cultural heritage were emphasised as being important in schooling, both now and for the future.

In general it appears that some traditional gender patterns do still exist in rural areas, but there is also some blurring of these patterns. Statistics from the three sites studied show that for the major occupations men and women follow the traditional pattern: women working in the health and education sectors and men working in the building, engineering, farming sectors. The women are more likely to have another occupation as well as their commitments to the farm or property and are more likely to have spent time in an urban environment studying to gain qualifications or working. The women take on the role of family homemaker, and child carer and developer, in a bigger way than the men, while the men do the outside/farm work. The blurring of the patterns seems to have occurred for reasons within individual situations rather than from any deliberate plan to break gender barriers. Examples of this are wife and husband jointly managing the fruit and vegetable growing business, and the wife doing all the accounting because she is the one in the

partnership with the literacy skills. Then there is speaker Q who with her husband and family conduct an earthmoving business. She does a lot of the management from the home base because she is the one who is there on the spot all the time. No examples of men breaking barriers to enter the traditional women's work arenas were cited .

In summary, and with reference to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter: Rural dwellers construct the relationship between education and various kinds of work in a range of ways: hard physical work leads to success; the educated are an 'elite' group who can avoid manual labour; success should be recognised as realising one's potential (the kind of work being irrelevant). Valuing all kinds of work and the contribution each individual makes to a community is important. Rural dwellers value schooling highly and have well informed views on the benefits and deficits in schooling as it is currently offered. Rural dwellers want their children to have access to the curriculum provided for urban students but see the current offerings and modus operandi of the education system as less than ideal. Primary education in rural areas is viewed as being of a high standard; the range of curriculum offerings for secondary students is viewed as needing extension and different delivery modes. Students in rural areas need courses which provide a basis for rural living and working. Women whose interviews are reported perceive some patterns of gender distinctions of labour along traditional lines. Blurring of traditional patterns seems to occur for reasons within individual family situations rather than from any planned approach to cross gender barriers. Females may occupy more linguistic space than the males.

CHAPTER 6

SYNOPSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

> *To listen to people discussing education is very often to listen to people revealing deeply held beliefs about the nature of society and the individual, the social order, status and equality and so on.* (Bell & Sigsworth 1987: *58*)

Chapter 6 provides a synopsis of the study, of the findings related to the objectives and research questions, and draws conclusions from the study. Implications of the study for theory, for research methodology, and for education policy and practice are delineated; the limitations of the study and some suggestions for future research are discussed.

6.1 SYNOPSIS

At the time of writing, major reorganisations are affecting the world, there are general trends moving from production to information. The world view for rural dwellers and for primary producers is changing because of the societal forces of globalisation in technology, in communications, in transport, in education and in economic matters - especially markets. Some rural communities are 'bleeding' because of these influences and the rapid nature of the changes. Other rural communities are actively seeking ways to adjust to the changes. In a short time span, primary production and the role of the producers (farmers) have been socially and economically redefined in large part by the new relationships that need to be formed from a centre of some sort (global, national), and the communicative options and demands those new relationships call upon (Muspratt, Freebody and Luke: 1999).

This work has attempted to view rurality in Australia within the global picture, and to suggest ways that rurality and rural communities and schooling might maintain a prominent place in the developing situations.

6.1.1 Objectives of the study

This study was designed to focus on specific sites to produce findings that will inform policy developers and curriculum designers and educators in different rural contexts. The objectives of this study stated in Chapter 1 Section 1 were:

- to delineate some of the distinctive features of rural communities,
- to interpret how schooling and literacy are socially constructed by members of the rural communities studied;
- to interpret the power of literacy in these communities, and the connections people construct between literacy and economic change and the future, and between literacy and various aspects of the culture of the community.

6.1.2 Research questions

The research questions stated in Chapter 3 Section 3 were:

1. How do residents of rural communities construct rurality and rural living?
2. Is there evidence in accounts of the relation between rural and urban, of a 'centre-margins' discourse informing these constructions?
3. How do rural dwellers construct the relationship between education and various kinds of work (e.g., head-work and hands-work)?
4. Do they value schooling highly?
5. Do rural dwellers describe themselves and their children as needing the same schooling or the same curriculum as urban dwellers?
6. Do women/men in rural communities perceive a pattern of gender distinctions of labour?

6.1.3 Synopsis of findings

Halfacree (1993: *29*) proposed a view of rural in the theory of social representations, which calls for investigating the 'status of the rural in discourse' so that its meaning (the concept of rural) can be better understood. This theory delineated how people comprehend, explain and express the complex patterns of stimuli and experiences,

flowing from the social and physical environment in which they are engaged (Moscovici: 1984).

The 'status of the rural' explained by the interviewees in this study includes the following patterns. Social conditions and community living in rural areas (as seen by some rural residents) have different strengths and risks from social conditions and community living in urban communities. Rural residents recognise the attributes of a rural community (a lifestyle choice they have made) as social openness, ready access to recreational facilities, ease of communication using modern technology, and a less pressured way of life. Some of the strengths and risks pertain to the nature of rural people's relationship to their environment (e.g., dependence on the vicissitudes of the elements).

Rural residents stress the relevance, significance and complexities of cultural identity. This is important to all aspects of development. Ethnic and aboriginal communities within rural communities often are not given status or not integrated into the social or political fabric of the whole community. Some residents think that attitudes to aboriginal residents are changing, that people are becoming more interested in understanding the values of each other. The interviewees in this study gave no evidence that attitudes to ethnic communities are changing. Within primary industries culture, centre-margin relationships are being altered and stretched to world-to-local industry relationships as different from urban-rural relationships. The shifting boundaries produce insecurity - social, political, economic and psychological. Global economic downturns have made it more difficult for farmers and primary industries to survive. The marketplace for farmers has become much more competitive due in part to the more global industry relationships and also to the changing supply-demand relationships. National markets have also become more competitive. Technology has also forced alterations on production and markets, and on consumer expectations. Farmers, and other rural workers, have to learn how to deal with these re-formations, fluctuations and demands.

Centre to margin activity and communication still thrive, but modern communications technology is making some marks here - some forms of business can be carried on effectively from a rural area using good quality communications technology. Some described the impact of marginalisation in a centre-margin relationship, but are prepared to take an opportunity to use benefits gained from visiting the centre for their living on the margins.

Three different views of the education and work relationship were explored. The first was the view that hard physical work (manual labour, hands-work), not education (head-work), leads to success, head-work and hands-work were regarded as incompatible. The second view was an elitist view of education (head-work): the educated are a 'cut above the rest' and they can avoid the basics, including doing manual labour to earn a living. The third view challenged the concept of success that is promoted by a white-collar system of schooling and suggested that success should be realising one's potential and gaining satisfaction from that achievement. Rural schools, rural teachers, and rural curriculum developers, need to consider the question of 'What is success?'. The hands-worker (be s/he ditch digger, tractor driver, or other) who is doing his/her work well is making a contribution to the production team that is just as valuable as the contribution made by the scientist or the economist. With the emphasis more on information and its use to improve production processes and higher quality products, the valuing of the contributions of every team member becomes even more important, the hands-work can be too easily forgotten. Socio-economic rating scales and considerations of socio-economic factors, used in research and policy development, should be used with caution and in conjunction with other community-based factors. Emphasis on socio-economic ratings tends to devalue the contributions of a range of workers. Current education is based on inappropriate premises concerning the real world, community living, work, achievements, success and happiness.

Rural secondary students may be disadvantaged by not having access to a wide range of curriculum offerings , and at tertiary level by inequities (mostly financial) of access, but

technology could be used to assist in broadening the range of offerings at secondary level, and library resources across the country could be better utilised. Primary students in rural areas have good quality educational opportunities and may have some advantages over urban students. Equalising urban and rural may not be appropriate for consideration of educational needs and curricula.

Curriculum in rural schools needs to be matched to rural resources and rural occupations and lifestyles, and to encourage enterprise. Education authorities and curriculum developers need to consider ways of assisting teachers to understand the textual forms and demands that give particularity to the rural communities in which they teach. (cf Freebody 1992: *42*). Education (and curriculum) could be controlled locally, that is, on a district basis where cultural and community ties can be recognised and maximised. Basic curriculum in literacy and numeracy could, in the future, become global offerings. Rural students have access to a literate culture but there are important distinctions between rural literacy and urban literacy. While education remains a centralised provision, it needs to provide a context for training in the communication skills that shape rural people's views of their communities.

Some residents in rural areas identify gender patterns in literacy activities and literacy events, but it is not a clear cut pattern. Family interactions, individual motivations, abilities and preferences, and educational experiences, all influence the patterns. Some traditional gender patterns still exist. Women make significant contributions to rural life but do not seem to have ready opportunities to take leadership roles. Females may occupy more linguistic space than males, yet the literacy practices seem to be conducted for the purposes of benefit to the family.

6.2 FINDINGS IN THEIR RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study illustrates the relevance of some of Sher and Sher's ideas. Their view (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2) is that a rural development policy must include a clear vision of excellence in rural education and ways to make that a central part of the rural agenda. This vision must include :

1. Steps to design curriculum so that the rural community is the foundation and focus of that curriculum.
2. Activities that will develop positive attitudes to the rural and information emphasising the values of rural life, so that youth can be proud of their rurality.
3. Strengthen, with more resources and planned development, adult and community education in rural areas.
4. Expand and deepen the education offerings that encourage and foster rural entrepreneurship.

This study has aimed to add to an understanding of rural life and its relevance to planners and policy makers in education, schooling and curriculum.

Part of the stimulus for this study was the position developed by Halfacree, as discussed in Chapter 2 Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.4, proposing a response to impose some order on the diversity of the rural without losing the significance of the diversity (social representation) . Representation of the rural in this thesis has added to Halfacree's argument by highlighting the differences between and within rural communities.

The study also parallels the Freebody, Ludwig, & Gunn (1995) study in urban communities in that it focuses on rural communities, though Freebody, Ludwig and Gunn considered the school situations in much greater detail. Similar detail for rural school communities could be a follow-up to this study.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major implications of this study relate to theory, to research methodology, and to educational policy and practice.

6.3.1 Implications for theory:

Halfacree outlined four approaches to theories on which definitions of the rural are based. Aspects of these four approaches are evident in the talk of the participants interviewed for this work. Halfacree's theory of 'social representations' has been supported by the results of the analytic methods of the study. It has been shown that rural space is hybrid space created in a variety of cultures and in a wide range of locations and accountable through the local discourses . This study's focus on rural communities has highlighted the complexities and diversities of the rural communities that were studied. The different approaches and debates about 'defining rural' must continue, and researchers must avoid promoting a unidimensional category of 'rural' because in many ways to be rural is to be diverse. Rural experiences are different to urban experiences, and they are not uniform, but differ according to the specific location and culture of a place. The changing and developing nature of the rural communities has also been prominent in this study. The implications of these complexities and changes are that rural communities should be studied regularly so that the effects of the changes can be traced and documented.

There is a varied set of understandings among rural dwellers about education. For some, education is bringing knowledge and skills to life in the rural location and enabling residents to avail themselves of the urban offerings that may enhance their occupations and leisure activities thus utilising the benefits of two cultures to their best advantage.

For others, there are the expectations that education will enable them to move away from the rural areas, to go to the city, to take up other careers, to lead a different lifestyle. Hypotheses and generalisations which express negative approaches to rural cultures and to rural education must be reduced and the positive aspects promoted. Any centre-margin discourse must be scrutinised for its relevance and the feasibility of the assumptions on

which it is based. Education policy developers, social researchers and rural policy planners need to re-evaluate the philosophical premises on which the current concept of success is based: success for the individual school student, success for education and schooling, and success in adult life.

6.3.2 Implications for research methodology

The use of Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) in this work has demonstrated the efficiency of this type of analysis. The conversations, the talk, of the rural residents has been taken, as it stands, and put through a rigorous analytical procedure. The reasoning practices of the interviewees have been demonstrated and the issues raised by the rural dwellers made relevant for policy and practice development. This methodology has value for future social and education research. MCA can add an extra dimension to other types of research by reducing the stereotyping that results from generalisations made and bringing to the fore the orderliness which exists within the local cultures.

The development of this thesis from a larger project yielded benefits. The context of the large project provided a body of descriptive information and a large pool of data from which to draw, thus making easier the selection of themes, and the choosing of data 'slices', for this work.

6.3.3 Implications for practice

This thesis shows that it is necessary to revisit some assumptions about curriculum and pedagogical practices. The importance of contemporary culture and cultural background that was emphasised by some of the interviewees has strong implications for local educators, and for education policy developers. The distinctive cultural practices of the locality need to be understood by local educators and 'tapped into' for resources (human, material and ideological) and for teaching students about their heritage and for their future, for understanding the students' culture and language and being able to build on this in terms of school curriculum offerings and different pedagogical practices. For schools and their communities, this has implications for structuring relationships so that

the textual forms and demands of the local culture can be recognised, understood and included in the school curriculum. There needs to be continuity from school to community to match rural resources, occupations and lifestyles and to encourage enterprise. Vocational curriculum and activities should develop a focus on rural occupations. Teacher educators need to study ways of preparing their preservice trainees to research local cultures and to draw what is relevant for the school curriculum. With these principles in mind more attention should be given to adult and community education in rural areas.

The notion of rural education is significant both to rural communities and to urban communities. While rural schools and curricula need to include, and not ignore, urban curricula, there is a reciprocal need to include some rural studies in urban schools' curricula. Teachers, administrators and teacher educators must be encouraged to think positively about rural communities and rural education and to critically analyse and to counteract the negative publicity of the media.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is a descriptive, qualitative study. It included three rural communities and a limited number of individuals, and is a qualitative study involving detailed individual interview analysis. It is not the type of study from which strong probabilistic generalisations can be made, and there is no wish (or need) to generalise any of the findings. The interviewees may be representative of any rural community in Queensland although this can not be supported, though it is possible that the views of the persons interviewed may correspond with views of rural residents in other rural locations. The important issue for representativeness is that the perceptions are recognisable and are available in the communities studied. This study has not attempted to report all that the residents said, nor to explore how these views fit in with other aspects of their lives, because there is no access to case study data. The study was designed to focus on

specific sites to produce findings that will inform policy developers, curriculum designers and educators working in different rural contexts.

The words of Seidman (1991:*103*) summarise the contributions of this type of research:

> *Every research method has its limits and its strengths. In-depth interviewing's strength is that through it we can come to understand the detail of people's experience from their point of view. We can see how their individual experience interacts with powerful social and organisational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context.*

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Studies such as this one need to be carried out in other types of rural communities, for example, mining communities, isolated fishing communities, rural tourist communities. Such studies would add to the body of knowledge about the diversity across and within rural communities. Further in depth studies on the needs of rural students should be carried out. Studies are needed to look in more detail at the relationships between rural communities and their school communities. Relationships between teaching activities and community activities could be part of this type of study and so could the questions of: 'What is success in the school context and in the community context ? How can teachers be assisted to understand the textual forms and demands that give particularity to the rural communities in which they teach?' (after Freebody 1992:*42*). Ethnic communities, especially the long established ones, could be studied to assess how much real community integration has occurred and the culturally, socially, and politically significant aspects of different facets of those communities.

The powers of schooling are recognisable, if they can be attuned to include and reflect rural life without losing any of the benefits they already bring then they will be more

closely aligned with the needs of their students in rural areas. Sher and Sher (1994: *4*) explained the focus in this way:

> *The key alliances that should be created and activated are within rural communities, across rural communities, between rural communities and governments, between the public and private sectors, and last but not least, across the urban-rural divide.*

If schooling is taken to project a vision of what a society's future might look like, then there is a need to consider whether or not that vision can be (a) standardised in curricula, and at the same time (b) related to the experiences and aspirations of ALL members of a society. In this respect, documenting the views of these rural people challenges the appropriateness of our views of schooling and literacy by providing a view from the geographical margin.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

(USED FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS)

Introduction to the interview

This interview is part of a study we are doing to develop understanding about life in communities such as yours and the particular role of schools and reading and writing especially. The project is being conducted by a group of people from James Cook University, the University of Southern Queensland, and Griffith University.

I wish to ask you some general questions about your lifestyle, your background, your situation in the family and the community, and your views about reading and writing and education more broadly. In the project, we will keep your answers entirely confidential, and no names or locations will be used in our report of the interviews. Our report will deal with general trends and groups of answers.

Please feel very free to ask me to clarify any questions and to expand or comment on your answers any time you wish. It is very important to our project that you understand my questions and that you answer as fully and as honestly as possible. It is also important that you feel free to end the interview or to seek more information about the project at any time you wish.

Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Gender MALE FEMALE *(circle one)*

2. What is your age? _____

3. Were you born in Australia? YES NO *(circle one)*

   If NO, what country were you born in? _____

4. a) What language do you speak mostly at home? _____

   b) What other languages are spoken at home? _____

   c) What was the first language you learned to speak? _____

5. Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? YES NO *(circle one)*

6. Did you grow up in this community? YES NO *(circle one)*

   If NO, how long have you lived in this community?

   (tick one)

   _____ 0 - 5 years
   _____ 6 - 10 years
   _____ 11 - 15 years
   _____ 16 - 20 years
   _____ 20 - 25 years
   _____ 26 - 40 years
   _____ 40 years or more

   and, where did you live before moving to this community? _____

7. Were your parents born in this community? YES NO *(circle one)*

8. a) What language do your parents speak? _____

   b) What was the first language they learned to speak?
   Mother _____
   Father _____

9. What level of schooling did your parents complete?

	MOTHER		FATHER
(tick one)	_____	Primary Year 7	_____
	_____	Secondary Year 10	_____
	_____	Secondary Year 12	_____
	_____	Diploma from TAFE (or equiv)	_____
	_____	Degree from CAE or University	_____
	_____	UNKNOWN	_____

10. What level of schooling did you complete?

(tick one)

_____ Primary Year 7
_____ Secondary Year 10
_____ Secondary Year 12
_____ Diploma from TAFE
_____ Degree from CAE or University

11. If you have completed tertiary studies (TAFE, CAE or University), what is the name of the certificate, diploma or degree? _____

NOT APPLICABLE _____

12. How many people usually live in your house? _____

How old are they, and what are their relationships to you (eg, son, daughter, spouse, etc)

RELATIONSHIP	AGE
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Are you employed? YES NO *(circle one)*

If **YES**, do you work FULL TIME PART TIME *(circle one)*

and, what is your occupation? _____

and, what industry are you employed in? *(SHOW LIST)* _____

If you are unemployed, what is/was your usual occupation? _____

and, what industry are you usually employed in? *(SHOW LIST)* _____

14. **If you are unemployed,** do you receive unemployment benefits (dole)? YES NO *(circle one)*

do you receive some other benefit? YES NO

or are you retired YES NO

15. Do you run your own business? YES NO *(circle one)*

16. What is/was you mother's usual occupation? _____

and, what industry is/was she employed in? _____

17. What is/was your father's usual occupation? _____

and, what industry is/was he employed in? _____

18. Approximately, what is the annual income of your family?

(tick one)

_____ less than $10 000
_____ $10 000 - $20 000
_____ $20 000 - $30 000
_____ $30 000 - $40 000
_____ $40 000 - $50 000
_____ $50 000 - $60 000
_____ more than $60 000

19. **If you have children,** would you like your children, when they have completed their schooling:

	Definitely not	No	Unsure	Yes	Definitely yes
to live in the community?	1	2	3	4	5
to move out of the community?	1	2	3	4	5
to attend University?	1	2	3	4	5
to attend TAFE?	1	2	3	4	5
to enter one of the professions (eg, teacher, doctor)?	1	2	3	4	5
to enter one of the trades (eg, carpenter, plumber)?	1	2	3	4	5
to work on the land?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think your children's education is preparing/prepared them for life after school?	1	2	3	4	5

Q.19A. What do you think the schools should be doing more of, in literacy training ?
Rank.... 1.
2.
3.

20. Where is your house located?

(tick one)

_____ in town

_____ on a block outside town

_____ on a farm

21. Do you

(tick one)

_____ own your home?

_____ own your flat/apartment?

_____ rent your home?

_____ rent your flat/apartment?

22. Do you have any of these in the home, and how often do you use them?

	Do you have one at home?		If YES, how often do you use it during last week?			
			every day	on 3 or 4 days	once or twice	not at all
Radio	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Cassette player	yes	no	1	2	3	4
CD player	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Record player	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Walkman	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Video disc	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Television	yes	no	1	2	3	4
VCR	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Computer	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Video camera	yes	no	1	2	3	4
Telephone	yes	no	1	2	3	4
CB/Shortwave radio	yes	no	1	2	3	4

23. What is a good description of the interior of your home?

	a lot	moderately	slightly	not at all
clean and tidy	1	2	3	4
comfortable and liveable	1	2	3	4
easy to maintain	1	2	3	4
practical and functional	1	2	3	4
country style	1	2	3	4
federation	1	2	3	4
modern	1	2	3	4
antique	1	2	3	4
casual	1	2	3	4

Q.23A. What is it that you like best about your house?

24. Last week, how much time on average did you spend listening to the radio per day on:-
In each line below, circle one.

a) **Weekdays** (per day)	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs
b) **Weekends** (per day)	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs

25. What kinds of radio programs do you like?
In each line below, circle one.

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A lot
Music	1	2	3	4
News	1	2	3	4
Documentaries	1	2	3	4
Sports	1	2	3	4
Talk Back	1	2	3	4
Current Affairs	1	2	3	4

If there is a TV in the home, answer the following questions, otherwise skip to question 39.

26. How many TV sets are there in your house? _____

In each line below, circle one.

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Very often
27. Do you watch TV alone?	1	2	3	4
28. Do you watch TV with friends?	1	2	3	4
29. Do you watch TV with your family?	1	2	3	4

30. Last week, how much time on average did you spend watching TV per day on:-
In each line below, circle one.

a) Weekdays (per day)	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs
b) Weekends (per day)	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs

31. What are you favourite TV programs? *(List **TITLES** in order with your **favourite** first.)*

1._____ 2._____

3._____ 4._____

32. What kinds of programs do you like?
*In **each** line below, circle one.*

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A lot
Soaps	1	2	3	4
News	1	2	3	4
Documentaries	1	2	3	4
Sports	1	2	3	4
Movies	1	2	3	4
Quiz shows	1	2	3	4
Current Affairs	1	2	3	4

33. a) What channel do you mostly watch? _____

33. b) What channel do you prefer to watch? _____

34. What channels are available to you? _____

*For **each** question below, circle one.*

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Very often
35. Do you ever miss your favourite programs because other family members get to watch what they want to watch?	1	2	3	4
36. Do you follow the 'real lives' of the stars of your favourite programs?	1	2	3	4
37. Do you buy magazines to read about your favourite TV stars?	1	2	3	4
38. Do you and your friends talk about TV (e.g., programs, what was on the night before, TV stars, etc)?	1	2	3	4

If there is a VCR in the home, answer the following questions, otherwise skip to question 45.

39. Who in your family uses the VCR to tape TV programs?
In each line below, circle one.

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Yourself	1	2	3	4
Your spouse	1	2	3	4
Children	1	2	3	4

40. The questions below ask you how much you watch from the VCR.
For each question, circle one.

a) How many hours of **taped TV** programming do you watch last week?	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs
b) How many hours of **rented movies** do you watch last week?	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs

The questions below ask who gets to choose video rentals.
For each question, circle one.

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Very often
41. Do you get to choose video rentals?	1	2	3	4
42. Does your spouse choose video rentals?	1	2	3	4
43. Do your children choose video rentals?	1	2	3	4

44. What were the titles of the last four videos you watched?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

The questions below ask you about your reading habits.
For each question below, circle one.

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Every day
45. Do you enjoy reading?	1	2	3	4
46. Do you read alone?	1	2	3	4
47. Do you read in groups?	1	2	3	4
48. Did you read to your children when they were young?	1	2	3	4
49. Did someone read to you when you were a child?	1	2	3	4
50. Do you read work related material at work?	1	2	3	4
51. Do you read for religious purposes?	1	2	3	4

52. Last week, how often did you talk to others about what you read?

	Never	Once or twice	Three or four times	At least once a day
to a child	1	2	3	4
to family	1	2	3	4
to co-workers	1	2	3	4
to friends	1	2	3	4
to reading group	1	2	3	4

53. How much time did you spend reading material that is not related to your work, during the last week?	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs
54. How much time did you spend reading material that is related to your work, during the last week?	none at all	less than 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	3 - 4 hrs	5 - 6 hrs	6 or more hrs

55. The list below contains different types of reading material. How often did you read each type, during the last week?

	Not at all	Once	2 or three times	Every day
novels	1	2	3	4
work related material	1	2	3	4
comics	1	2	3	4
general interest non-fiction	1	2	3	4
manuals/How to ../ farm/car	1	2	3	4
newspapers	1	2	3	4
biographies	1	2	3	4
news magazines (*Time, Bulletin*)	1	2	3	4
general interest magazines (*Womens Weekly, Motor Magazine*)	1	2	3	4
Professional journals and magazines	1	2	3	4
bible/church material	1	2	3	4
advertising brochures/junk mail	1	2	3	4
maps/charts	1	2	3	4
financial/legal documents - forms/bills	1	2	3	4
telephone book/yellow pages	1	2	3	4

56. What magazines do you buy regularly? Please list titles.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

57. What are the titles of the last four books you read?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

58. Do you borrow from a library? YES NO *(circle one)*

If **YES**, what type of reading material do you borrow last month? *(Tick the types in the list below)*

	Not at all	Once	2 or three times	at least once a week
novels	1	2	3	4
work related material	1	2	3	4
comics	1	2	3	4
general interest non-fiction	1	2	3	4
manuals/How to ../ farm/car	1	2	3	4
newspapers	1	2	3	4
biographies	1	2	3	4
news magazines (*Time, Bulletin*)	1	2	3	4
general interest magazines (*Womens Weekly, Motor Magazine*)	1	2	3	4
Professional journals and magazines	1	2	3	4
bible/church material	1	2	3	4
maps/charts	1	2	3	4
financial/legal documents - tables, census figures, etc.	1	2	3	4

59. How often do you buy books?

NEVER	ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR	ABOUT 6 TIMES A YEAR	ABOUT ONCE A MONTH

60. The list below contains different types of writing activities. About how often did you do each last week?

	Not at all	Once	2 or three times	Every day
letters to friends and family	1	2	3	4
business letters	1	2	3	4
diary/calendar notes	1	2	3	4
notes to household members	1	2	3	4
notes to school	1	2	3	4
lists (eg shopping lists)	1	2	3	4
fiction/biography	1	2	3	4
poetry	1	2	3	4
legal/financial documents/forms	1	2	3	4
work related reports	1	2	3	4

For each question below, circle one.

	Unnecessary	Somewhat important	Important	Essential
61. What value do you place on good reading skills?	1	2	3	4
62. What value do you place on good writing skills?	1	2	3	4
63. What value do you place on good speaking skills?	1	2	3	4
64. What value do you place on schooling for today's children?	1	2	3	4
65. What value do you place on student self-discipline?	1	2	3	4
66. How important is the parents role in children's literacy learning?	1	2	3	4

67. Do you think that generally people who have better literacy skills earn more money? YES NO *(circle one)*

68. Do you think that people who have better literacy skills have more status in the community? YES NO *(circle one)*

69. Did you think that increasing the general literacy levels of workers makes for improved productivity? YES NO *(circle one)*

70. Did you help your child with homework, last week?

NOT AT ALL | ONCE OR TWICE | 3 OR 4 TIMES | EVERY DAY | NOT APPLICABLE

71. Did you talk with your child's teachers, last term?

NOT AT ALL | ONCE OR TWICE | ABOUT 5 OR 6 TIMES | ABOUT ONCE A WEEK | NOT APPLICABLE

72. In order to do their job properly, what level of reading and writing skills do you think each of the following would need?

	Low	Medium	High	Very high
garbage collector	1	2	3	4
mechanic	1	2	3	4
farmer/grazier	1	2	3	4
banker	1	2	3	4
auctioneer	1	2	3	4
council worker	1	2	3	4
DPI adviser	1	2	3	4
teacher	1	2	3	4
office worker	1	2	3	4
store keeper	1	2	3	4
doctor	1	2	3	4
cleaner	1	2	3	4

For each question below, circle one.

	Never	Rarely, once or twice	up to 5 times	up to 10 times	more than 10 times
73. How often in a month, on average, do you see live entertainment or artistic events (eg, music, ballet, plays, comedy acts in clubs, art exhibits)?	1	2	3	4	5
74. How often in a month, on average, do you and your family eat out (eg, restaurant, hotel, Pizza Hut, McDonalds)?	1	2	3	4	5
75. How often in a month, on average, do you go to the movies?	1	2	3	4	5
76. How often in a month, on average, do you go to nearby towns?	1	2	3	4	5

77. What kinds of music do you like (eg, country western, light rock, classical, jazz)? _____

78. What kinds of regular sporting activities do you do? _____

79. How often, last month, did you take part in formally organised sporting activities?

NEVER ONCE ABOUT 2 OR 3 TIMES EVERY WEEK

80. How often, last month, did you take part in informal sporting activities?

NEVER ONCE ABOUT 2 OR 3 TIMES EVERY WEEK

The questions below are concerned with how often you use the telephone.

	Never	Once or twice	Three or four times	At least once a day
81. Last week, how often did you make telephone calls for business reasons?	1	2	3	4
82. Last week, how often did you make phone calls to friends?	1	2	3	4
83. Last week, how often did you make phone calls to relatives?	1	2	3	4
84. Last week, how often did you make local phone calls?	1	2	3	4
85. Last week, how often did you make STD/long distance phone calls?	1	2	3	4

86. How often do you go on holidays?

NEVER | ABOUT EVERY FIVE YEARS | ABOUT EVERY 2 OR 4 YEARS | ONCE A YEAR

87. Where do you go for holidays? (eg, overseas, beach, city)

_____

_____

_____

_____

88. What activities do you do on your holidays?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPANTS FROM THE THREE SITES

(CATEGORIES)

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPANTS - Littleton TOTAL : 25 females + 23 males = **48**

19 orchardists / farmers / farm workers
2 wine makers
6 sales and service
2 sawmilling
4 driving instructor, builder, electrician, cabinet-maker (1 each of these)
2 caravan park operator and resident (1 each of these)
2 teacher aides
1 computer coordinator
4 YMCA manager, nurse, high school registrar, LOTE teacher (1 each of these)
2 housewives
4 unemployed

6 Italian
1 German
2 Aboriginal These 3 nationalities included in the above sample.

PARTICIPANTS - Maneta TOTALS: 12 males + 42 females = **54**

14 graziers
8 health services
5 council
10 housewives
4 retired
3 cleaners
3 teachers and/or aides
2 transport, earthworks
5 postmaster, secretary, newsagent, librarian, paraplegic (1 each of these)

No tradesmen interviewed, no unemployed , no aboriginals (though 1 part-aboriginal was interviewed and 1 aboriginal agreed to being interviewed but did not attend).

APPENDIX 2 continued

PARTICIPANTS : Veratown : TOTALS : males 29 + females 27 = **56**

10 aboriginals
6 unemployed
7 own and operate their own businesses
7 housewives
4 teacher aides
4 shop assistants
3 farmers
3 managers
3 government employees
2 groundsmen / cleaners
2 retired
3 mill worker, single mum, mechanic (1 each of these)
2 not identified

(78% owned their homes; the factors that were most important to them about their place of living were: owning it, comfort, having space or bigness, and location - country, space, isolation.)

APPENDIX 3

PUBLICITY STATEMENT

(PRESS RELEASE)

Description of Research Project: The Culture of Literacy in Small Australian Rural Communities.

Who Supports this Study?

This study is supported by a grant from the Federal Government through the Australian Research Council (ARC) and is being conducted by staff from the Faculties of Education at University of Southern QLD, Toowoomba; Griffith University, Brisbane; and James Cook University of North QLD, Townsville.

What is the purpose of this Study?

The purpose of the study is to visit three isolated rural communities in North, South West and Western QLD and identify what is unique about the literacy practices in these communities.

When will the Research Take Place?

The visits to these communities will take place in 1993 and the information collected will be analysed in 1994.

What will the Research Involve?

During the visits to the communities researchers will visit schools, talk to community members and identify the general reading and writing activities which people in these communities participate in on a daily basis. The reading and writing activities of three families from each community will be specifically observed by the researchers to provide a detailed summary of the reading and writing activities undertaken.

What Will the Outcomes Be?

The study will describe how people in isolated rural areas use literacy. As a result of knowing more about the literacy practices of isolated rural communities more suitable teaching practices and curriculum materials might be developed. For example, this information will be helpful to educators and will provide information of assistance to those developing programs for teachers who will teach in rural areas. The study will also extend information available to people involved in the development of curriculum documents to be used in isolated rural schools.

APPENDIX 4

AGREEMENT FORM

(SIGNED BY EACH INTERVIEWEE)

Agreement to Participate in Research Project: The Culture of Literacy in Small Australian Rural Communities

I_____of_____

(Print full name) (full address)

_____

(Town) (Postcode)

have read/have had read to me (cross out whichever is not applicable) the description of the Australian Research Council Project : The Culture of Literacy in Small Australian Rural Communities. I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that any information collected will remain anonymous both in the report on the research and any subsequent publications.

Signed_____ Date_____

APPENDIX 5

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

ITEMS NEEDED TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW : 1 or 2 copies of the questionnaire, industry sheet, instructions for interviewers, pencil or pen, tape recorder, batteries, blank tape, audio log, and a smile !

ORIENTATION :
Do the questionnaire interview individually. Interview husband and wife or partner separately (if both are taking part), to interview them together can lead to biased information .

We must begin with the culture,....problems, friction points, etc....., then gradually run through to the literacy agenda. Don't start with the text, work towards it.

Be careful that we don't create what we get. Don't pre-empt any answers or discussion.

Remember that participants have the power to veto the inclusion of specific pieces of information (e.g. a person may say something and then realise that he doesn't want that used; he can withdraw his statement). The participant must be in control of the information-giving. A participant can "pass" on a question if desired.
"It is important to tell us what you don't do. " - Tell participants this.

Establish rapport with the interviewee.
Explain the use of the tape recorder.
Go through the "Introduction to the interview " page with interviewee.

Relating to specific questions:

Q.5 Omit this question where appropriate.

Q.13, 16 , 17 You will need to refer to the industry list for these questions. See separate sheet

Q.19. The last item on this list may need clarifying with interviewee, and some probing of information given.

Q.23. Rate each item on this list.

Q.47-48 . Talk around the text here. "Do you talk about what you read with your children? .....with family ? ....with co-workers ? .... with friends ? "

Q.52 We want gender indicator of who talks with whom about text in literacy events (women-women, men-men, men-women, women-men).

Q.53 (or thereabouts) Talk around the text; talk and question about writing .
Q.53, 54 . You may need to read these questions aloud twice, so that they are clearly understood.

Q. 57. If titles of books can't be recalled, then accept authors or topics, or whatever significant information the interviewee can give you.

Q. 58. Note that this question refers to a month, as distinct from a week (as used in previous questions).

Q. 73 - 76. These questions need to be read carefully.

The interview will take about 45 minutes.

INDUSTRY

Agriculture, forestry. fishing, hunting

Mining

Manufacturing

Electricity, gas, water

Construction

Wholesale and retail trade

Transport and storage

Communication (journalism, radio,.....)

Finance, property, and business services

Public administration and defence

Community services (nurse, doctor, teacher,.....)

Recreational, personal, and other services (hairdresser, ...)

Not classifiable

Not stated

Managers and administrators

Professionals

Paraprofessionals

Tradespersons

Clerks

Sales and personal service workers

Plant and machine operators and drivers

Labourers and related workers

Inadequately described

Not stated

for Ques. 13, 16, 17.

AUDIO LOG

DATE:.../.../.....
TIME :.....am/pm
VENUE:.....
INTERVIEWER :.....
INTERVIEWEE :.....
PURPOSE :.....
.....
.....
.....

TAPE NO.....
TAPE CODE .....
home .....
school.....
work.....
church.....
community.....
.....
.....

NOTE: Set tape counter on zero, then begin recording. SONY.....OTHER.....

Record No.	Topic or Notes
000	

APPENDIX 6

INTERROGATING INTERVIEW DATA

GUNN, FORREST, FREEBODY

APPENDIX 6

Gunn, Forrest and Freebody (1995, *93-95*) adapted the methods of Jayyusi (1984, 1991) and developed a four-stage process for systematically interrogating interview data. The process they devised is in the sequence that follows :

What categories of people are established in and by the talk? What kinds of people are there "in this topic" such that the talk can be made sensible? In documenting the categories that are hearable in the talk, we also ask about the contrasts that are, perhaps implicitly, set up: What are the "standard relational pairs" (that is 'not-of-this category, e.g., opposite, supplementary and complementary categories of people) provided, and are these relational categories stated or left implicit in the talk?

What attributes are attached to these categories in and by the talk? Again, what are the "standard relational pairs" to these attributes, and are they stated or left implicit in the talk?

What are the cause-effects accounts that are enabled by these category-attribute connections? That is, given that the speaker has set up the important ways of categorising the people implicated in the talk, and attached certain attributes to these categories of people, explicitly or otherwise, what kinds of explanations of social activity are permitted or made inevitable by and from that process?

The fourth phase of the analysis involves looking at the ways in which the speaker supports their categorisations, attribute-attachments, and cause-effect accounts: What substantiation procedures are used by the speaker to support the category-attribute-account connection? There seem to be at least four general kinds of substantiation used in talk:

"shared understandings", in which the speaker takes it as commonly understood and accepted that their accounting procedures are self-evident ("everybody knows that ... ");

anecdotal evidence, in which stories from the past are presented as iconic narratives that support the account ("we had a kid here last year who ... "); This is also found to include moves that may be characterised as "theatrical", such as the quoting of direct speech ("and he said '...'")

official discourses, in which research or policy documents, or media accounts are presented as substantiation ("last year we surveyed the parents at the school and found that ..."); These may also be signalled by the use of numerical data in reporting, such as "about 80% of our farmers are ..."; the specification of the numbers adds substance to the account; and

personal or professional experience is drawn upon to support a generalisation ("I've taught at many different kinds of schools, and the kids here are ... ").

The reporting of affect, such as through the use of intensifiers ("incredibly difficult..") or taboo language, such as swearing.

Extract from:

Gunn, S., Forrest, T. & Freebody, P. 1995 Perspectives on Poverty, Schooling, and Literacy: The views of the participants. In Freebody, P., Ludwig, C., & Gunn, S. 1995 *Everyday Literacy Practices in and out of schools in low socio-economic urban communities Volumes 1 and 2* . Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.