Curriculum Literacies: Experiences of teaching curriculum literacies in an independent middle school in South East Queensland; a complex relationship between the practices, the site, and the practice architectures that enable and constrain.

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Curriculum Literacies: Experiences of teaching curriculum literacies in an independent middle school in South East Queensland; a complex relationship between the practices, the site, and the practice architectures that enable and constrain.

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the apparent decline in the literacy levels of school aged students in Australia has been of interest to governments, researchers, and the general public. Research has shown that literacy is important for academic and learning success (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003). Therefore, in Australia, the national curriculum documents state that all teachers across every phase of schooling are responsible for teaching literacy (ACARA, 2013). However, as the literacy demands of the middle and senior secondary phases of schooling are complex and discipline-specific, it is more appropriate to consider the notion of teaching curriculum literacies across the learning areas rather than literacy in the singular. Thus, teachers in the middle and senior phases of schooling need to teach students how to switch between the different literacies they will encounter in a typical school day. Nevertheless, research has suggested that teachers often fail to address the literacy of their own subject areas and, instead, rely on English teachers and students' past literacy learning experiences in the early primary years (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Luke et al., 2003; Parris, Fisher, & Headley, 2009). Furthermore, independent schools in Australia have experienced growth in enrolment numbers over the past two decades but there is little current research into the teaching of curriculum literacies at these sites. Therefore, this qualitative, ethnographic case study aimed to investigate the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school teachers at an independent school in South East Queensland.

A practice theory framework was employed, specifically the theory of practice architectures and the corresponding theory of ecologies of practices. These two theories allowed an examination of the site-specific nature of the curriculum literacies teaching practices and hence, provided an ontological perspective. The perspective enabled the study

to focus on the site-based nature of the curriculum literacies teaching practices rather than the individual teacher. The data for the study was collected through a combination of classroom observations, interviews and document analysis. Data analysis occurred through an iterative process of reading, rereading, and analysing teacher sayings, doings, and relatings and the corresponding cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political site arrangements or practice architectures.

The data sources revealed that teachers across a range of subjects were teaching aspects of the underpinning curriculum literacies using a range of approaches. Furthermore, while the curriculum literacies teaching practices evident at this site occurred in the current Australian educational context of accountability, performance, and high stakes testing, a surprising finding was the lack of focus on the external testing regime in the practice architectures that shaped the observed curriculum literacies teaching practices. Rather, a common finding was that all teachers linked the importance of curriculum literacies to the well-being of the students' future lives.

Additionally, the findings in this study showed the complex nature of the curriculum literacies teaching practices, and the cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political site arrangements. Hence, curriculum literacies teaching practices cannot be seen in isolation. Rather, they shape and are shaped by the social; by the site arrangements and exist in ecological arrangements with other practices visible at the site. Thus, the notion of Best Practice in curriculum literacies teaching practices, as mandated by the national curriculum documents policy or even other research, is incongruous with the theory of practice employed in this study. Instead, research into curriculum literacies teaching practices requires a consideration of what is relevant and appropriate to schools, students, and teachers at a particular moment. Therefore, if governments, researchers, schools,

teachers and parents want to change curriculum literacies teaching practices, policy mandates are insufficient. Any changes to current curriculum literacies teaching practices can only occur at the site level and need to take into account the site-specific arrangements that enable and constrain the curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Keywords: literacy, curriculum literacies, middle school, practices, practice theory, practice architectures, site arrangements

Statement of Originality

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

[redacted]

Gail Hager

15 November 2018

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Life is a series of moments. It is a series of stories we hear and tell along the way. It is filled with the voices of those we meet and who share the journey with us at various junctures. This thesis is a moment in that journey. It shares the stories and the voices of those who have joined me momentarily along the path. My heartfelt thanks go to the wonderful participants who were willing to share their experiences. The study would not have been possible without you. Thanks also to:

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To my ever-patient, ever-loving best friend and husband of 35 years, Carl, I don’t have words sufficient to describe your support. Thank you for allowing me to be me.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of those who went part-way along the journey: R.I.P. Dr Barb Garrick; my cousins who were brothers, Bruce and Richard; and last, my mum, Maureen. Missed always.

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Glossary of Terms

The definitions used in this thesis are provided below: For further detailed explanations of key concepts see Section 1.5.

Curriculum Literacies: The use of the plural 'literacies' rather than the singular, 'literacy', demonstrates the multiple literacies students encounter in their daily school lives. In addition, the term curriculum is used as a noun to express "the interface between a specific curriculum and its literacies, rather than literacies related to curriculum in a generic sense, or a single literacy that can be spread homogeneously across all curriculum" (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999, p. 32). In particular, the term encompasses pluralistic understandings of subject-specific reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and critical thinking practices (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2001).

Ecologies of Practices: Kemmis et al.'s (2014) theory that practices are linked in ecological relations.

Education Complex: Kemmis et al.'s (2014) concept comprises five educational practices found in schools: teaching, learning, professional learning, leading, and researching.

General Capabilities: This document underpins the Australian national curriculum. It delineates the general capabilities that should be developed in students in every learning area and at every stage of the curriculum. Literacy is one of these capabilities.

Initiate, Respond, Expand [IRE]: A traditional model of teaching that is teacher led. The teacher initiates the questions, the students respond and the teacher evaluates the response.

Independent schools: In Australia, independent schools are not linked to any school system, for example, state or Catholic. They are governed on an individual school basis and connected to local communities.

Literacy: The field is highly contested and there is no single, universally accepted definition. The definition employed in this study, whilst not an academic one, is nevertheless the one Australian teachers are more likely to use and is taken from the Australian national curriculum documents. "Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts" (ACARA, 2013).

Middle Years: In this study, the term middle years of schooling refers to the first three years of high school. In the independent schools in Queensland, this time frame is usually Years 7, 8, and 9. Students' ages range from around 12 to around 14 years.

NAPLAN [The National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy]: In Australian schools, all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participate in national, external literacy and numeracy tests. These tests are held annually in August.

Practice: The term can be used as both a noun and a verb. The definition employed in this study is the one used by Kemmis et al. (2014) and encompasses the notion that practices are

social activities and are visible in an individual's (sayings) language, (doings) actions, and (relatings) relationships. Practices also are site-specific.

Practice Architectures: Kemmis et al.'s (2014) concept of site-specific cultural-discursive (language), material-economic (resources), and social-political (power relationships) arrangements that shape, and are shaped by practices.

Praxis: There are two ways of viewing praxis. In an Aristotelian sense, praxis is a particular kind of action. It is action that is morally-committed, and deliberately focused on forming good individuals and societies (Kemmis, 2008). Educators who engage in practices that are morally committed to the good of individuals and society can be said to be practising from a praxis-informed approach.

Project-based learning [PBL]: At the school in this study, this term was used to reflect an initiative brought into the school by the Principal. Middle school teachers in all key learning areas based all teaching and learning around projects that were meant to be authentic and pose challenging questions.

Question and Answer [Q and A]: A model of teaching similar to IRE where the teachers used questions to scaffold learning. Evaluation of the students' responses may or may not be present.

Chapter One - Setting the Scene

My fourteen-year-old son walked into the kitchen after school one evening brandishing a document in his hand. This contained his latest Year 9 school report with these results: Satisfactory for English, High for Physical Education, and High for Mathematics. Delving more deeply into the results, I discovered he had been rated Satisfactory in the criteria related to literacy (Communication) in both Mathematics and Physical Education. At the subsequent parent- teacher interview, I questioned the teachers about the lower grade for literacy and how it impacted his ability to obtain a higher grade overall for both Mathematics and Physical Education. I was distressed to hear that the two teachers did not teach the literacy of their subject explicitly. The mathematics teacher said to me that he assumed students had sufficient literacy to cope with the literacy demands of mathematics by Year 9. The Physical Education teacher was more reflective of her practices and promised to help my son and others in the class improve the literacy criterion the following term. She mentioned my son was the top student in the class and should have been rated as Very High but the lower grade in the Communication criterion prevented a higher rating.

1.0 Introduction

Researchers are prompted to undertake research for a number of reasons. The journey for this researcher began quite personally with concern for my son's apparent discrepancy in scores on a school report, in particular, the communication criteria that reflected my son's apparent literacy levels. This incident cemented my belief that the

teaching of literacies across the curriculum was vital for students, and fostered my desire to discover more about teachers' actual practices.

In this introductory chapter, the background context will be outlined, an overview of the study, its significance, and the research questions stated, and explanations of key concepts used in the thesis provided. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis. First, the general background context will be provided.

1.1 General Background Context

Internationally and nationally, governments, researchers and the general public have expressed concerns over the apparently low literacy levels of school-aged students at all phases of schooling (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Rothman & McMillan, 2003). In particular, the complex literacy demands in the middle years of schooling have resulted in calls for teachers across all learning areas, to teach the subject-specific literacies (Alvermann, 2001; Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Luke et al., 2003). International and national efforts to improve the literacy levels of school-aged students, have led to the implementation of various policies, national curricula, and curriculum changes; for example in the United States of America [USA], the 2001 *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB), and in the United Kingdom [UK], the *Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010. In Australia, the authors of the report, *Beyond the Middle*, commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training, argued for literacy to be taught across the curriculum, particularly at the middle school phase (Luke et al., 2003). In addition, the introduction of a national curriculum, supported by the *General Capabilities* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA],

2013) and the recent *National Literacy Learning Progression* (ACARA, 2018), has placed focus on the teaching of literacy at all levels of schooling and in all learning areas across the curriculum.

However, several issues that have emerged since the introduction of these initiatives, is the apparent reliance of middle school subject teachers on the English teachers, and also on students' past literacy learning experiences in the primary years. This reliance on other factors has led to an apparent failure by middle school subject teachers to address the inherent literacy demands of their own subject areas (Luke et al., 2003; Parris et al., 2009). For their part, many students seem to be unable to transfer skills learnt in the primary years to the middle school years and need explicit teaching of the subject- specific literacies to enable them to make these connections (Billman & Pearson, 2013).

Research examining how to improve general teaching practices and learning outcomes has explored the critical role played by teachers in addressing the complex literacy demands of the curriculum in the middle and senior phases of schooling (Plummer, Nyholm, Quince, & Dione, 2010). Teachers need to support students to make connections between skills learnt in the primary years, and those used in their secondary phase of schooling. There are several pedagogical practices that can be used by teachers to teach the literacies of their subject and provide the required support to make connections. Explicit teaching is one curriculum literacies teaching practice. Scaffolding is another important curriculum literacies teaching practice. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory has been linked to the pedagogical practice of scaffolding. In particular the key concepts of the zone of proximal development and the knowledgeable other (David, 2014), explain how learning occurs with the assistance of one who knows or understands more than the one learning. Thus, the teacher is the knowledgeable other who assists the learner, via

appropriate scaffolding, to make connections between prior literacy learning and new knowledge and skills.

However, research has found an apparent lack of explicit teaching and scaffolding of students' literacy across the curriculum and consequently, recommendations have been put forward for teachers to provide this support more deliberately (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003; Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999). This is echoed in the media and has led to a perception in the Australian community that schools might not be preparing students to meet national literacy benchmarks (Singhal, 2017; Talon, 2017). In the context of independent schools, media perceptions can impact enrolment numbers and hence, finances. If independent schools are not seen to be teaching students effectively, the fear is that parents will withdraw their students, leading to increased financial pressures on the school. With independent schools facing greater competition for student enrolments, the published results from nationwide literacy tests such as NAPLAN can also have an immediate effect on a school's student numbers. Hence, it appears as if independent schools are interested in research activities that might lead to improved test performances and possible increases in enrolment numbers (J.C., personal communication, 2014)[1]. To date, a review of the literature has revealed a gap in research around independent schools and curriculum literacies teaching practices. Nevertheless, research into professional teaching practices has increased in recent years (Nicolini, 2013).

1.2 Overview of the Study

This study explored the curriculum literacies teaching practices in several learning areas of the curriculum at an independent school in South East Queensland (Australia). A

key aim of this study was to investigate the practices of teaching curriculum literacies in the middle school phase. The research questions that guided this study were:

Research Question One: What are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Two: What enables and constrains the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the site and the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

The purpose of the research questions was to provide a comprehensive insight to the curriculum literacies teaching practices apparent at the research site and to identify possible influencing factors. The theoretical framework used in this study is the theory of practice architectures and its corresponding theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). This theoretical framework is found in the seminal work on the theory of practice architectures and the theory of ecologies of practices written by Kemmis et al. (2014). It needs to be acknowledged that the overall research approach was ontological in nature, in keeping with the theoretical framework employed. An ontological approach is concerned with researching reality and answers "what" type questions. So, in this study, an ontological approach enabled an exploration of the curriculum literacies practices that were actually visible. In addition, while there are many approaches to the teaching of literacy, the view that literacy is a social construction was adopted in this study. Therefore, both the theoretical framework and the view of literacy as socially constructed, enabled the

[1] This includes emails and informal conversations. Only initials supplied to protect privacy.

researcher to investigate the site and the practices together, rather than the teachers alone. The discussion now turns to the research context.

1.3 Background

The international context

Improving learning outcomes for school students is a stated goal of international education legislation and policies (for example, the 2001 *No Child Left Behind*; Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, [OfSTED], 2011). Extensive research studies have been undertaken to offer the means by which to achieve this goal. Some of these recommendations include improving teacher performance (Bennett, 2013; Frey, 2010), improving reading and comprehension (Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake, 2008) and teaching students to 'read to learn' (Culican, 2004). The literature has suggested that students might not be achieving as well as they should (Alvermann, 2001; Thomson, De Bortoli, & Buckley, 2012) and there has been a corresponding concern based on the literacy learning outcomes reflected in international reports on literacy results (Rothman & McMillan, 2003). For example, in the USA, the 2001 *No Child Left Behind* legislation mandated standardised, state-wide tests of mathematics and language in an endeavour to lift student literacy standards and improve student learning outcomes. However, with Darling-Hammond's (2010) influence on the former Obama administration, the reliance on these tests has changed and is changing. Similarly, in the UK, the OfSTED (2011) report made several recommendations for improving national literacy levels. These recommendations included raising the expectations of staff for low-achieving students especially in Year 7, using all available assessment data to plan relevant literacy outcomes, and also ensuring

teachers receive regular professional learning opportunities to improve their knowledge of literacy teaching.

Furthermore, the concern with student literacy levels has a long history. For example, the involvement of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] in endeavouring to improve literacy levels spans 65 years (UNESCO, 2000). Goals 3, 4, 5 and 6 of UNESCO's *Education for All* policy document (UNESCO, 2000) state the commitment of UNESCO to improving learning outcomes for all through an emphasis on improved literacy levels. Countries are working to improve student literacy levels through participation in international tests such as The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's [OECD] Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or in studies such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. These international trends have had material effects in Australia.

The Australian context

In Australia, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians [Melbourne Declaration] (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008) showed a similar trend towards improving learning outcomes for school students and the focus on implementing external, standardised testing of literacy has been evident. This is clear from the increased emphasis placed on the National Assessment Plan: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Australia's participation in PISA. However, citing the 2012 results from PISA, Thomson et al., 2013 reported that "nine countries scored significantly higher in reading literacy than Australia" (p.9). Media reports have also cited Australia's relative poor performance in comparison to other countries (Riddle & Lingard, 2016). Research too, has linked improved outcomes in

learning to literacy (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003). Therefore, it can be inferred that an improvement in learning outcomes is linked to improvements in literacy levels in students at school.

This link between learning outcomes and literacy levels has implications for all educational and training sectors: schools, vocational education and training colleges, and universities; and also for workplaces and the Australian economy in general. Furthermore, teachers operate in a context that is increasingly demanding of teacher accountability, places an emphasis on external national examinations (NAPLAN), and has also seen the introduction of a national curriculum (ACARA). The advent of public websites such as MySchool which publishes the results of national testing and gives other details about all schools in Australia, has led to a new age of public awareness of school results and has had related effects on teachers and teaching such as low morale and resignations (Garrick & Pendergast, 2014). The increased need for teacher accountability has taken the form of external, national testing [NAPLAN] that is normed and rigorous and requires students to meet minimum standards of achievement.

Furthermore, as Brown (2005) suggests, the "language of business has now become integral to how we [the general public] think [schools are businesses and not educational institutions] about schools as words like 'value', 'accountability', 'failing schools' (rather than students who fail courses or grade levels), and cost/ benefit ratio have become part of the national education dialogue" (p. 121). Thus, in an age described by some as neoliberal (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005) it appears as if the demand for improved learning and literacy outcomes is connected to any government's need for a skilled workforce. Neoliberalism has been described by the publishers of Saad-Filho and Johnston's (2005) work as the "dominant ideology shaping our world today" (back cover synopsis) and hence,

it is logical to infer there will be some impact on education as a result. Indeed, the ACARA website (accessed 11/ 11/ 2014) provided viewers with a link to a report in *The Financial Review* (Mitchell, 2014) which outlined the connection between Australia's future and the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. The Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) also emphasised the need for Australia to compete economically with China and other Asian countries. In a 2013 PISA report, it is argued that "literacy skills matter not just for individuals, but for economies as a whole" (p. 6). The media takes up the cause too and numerous newspaper articles over the years have made similar comments. *The Australian* (29/1/2015) contained an article berating Australian schools for their "patchy …irrelevant" careers education and calling on "companies and enterprises to have a stronger presence in the classroom" (Morton, 2015, p. 3).

However, there is another side to this picture. Other writers have questioned whether the apparent crisis in literacy in fact exists at all (Freebody & Welch, 1993; Gee, 1990). In particular, Snyder (2008) likens literacy teaching in Australia to a 'war' between those who prefer to define literacy more traditionally and romantically in terms of skill acquisition and those who define it from a post-modern perspective. The post-modern perspective views reality as a social construction and language (or literacy) the vehicle for "creat[ing] a particular view of reality" (Richardson, 1990, p. 116). Thus, the issue of a definition of literacy becomes crucial because it not only influences how literacy is taught and assessed, but determines to what extent one can be evaluated as literate. It might also influence the practices of teachers who are deemed responsible for teaching literacy.

The Queensland context

In Queensland, the 2000 report into literacy, *Literate Futures* (Queensland Department of Education), emphasised the need to improve student literacy levels and has

led to the implementation of various policies in State and Catholic schools. For example, State schools initiated *Literacy-the key to learning: Framework for Action 2006-2008 (*Department of Education, Training and the Arts [DETA], 2006) and more recently, as part of the *Advancing Education Action Plan* (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2016), State schools implemented the *Every Student Succeeding: State Schools Strategy*, 2016-2020, 2017-2021, 2018-2022 (DET, 2016, 2017, 2018). One aim of these strategies has been to improve student engagement through a focus on literacy. Thus, teachers in state schools have implemented amongst other initiatives, *Moving Literacy Forward*, P-12 (Education Queensland, 2016). This initiative recognised the whole school approach to teaching literacy evident in the national curriculum. It also recognised the need for explicit teaching of the specialised literacy demands across the curriculum as well as the importance of the middle school years. In Brisbane, Catholic Education implemented their *Literacy and Numeracy: A position for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane* (Brisbane Catholic Education, 2006).

However, independent schools in Queensland are non-systemic and devise and implement their own school-led policies. While these generally reflect current trends, their implementation is individualised (J.C.,personal communication, September, 2014) and there is no one action plan or strategy all independent schools adopt or implement. Furthermore, the last decade has also seen an increase in the demand for private schooling: for example, nationwide combined[2] independent schools make up 7.3%, out of a total 8.8 % for this category [combined schools] of schooling (ACARA, 2018b) Additionally, in an article, Robertson (2014) of Independent Schools Queensland outlined the challenges facing independent schools in the foreseeable future. He cited issues related to funding

uncertainties, reviews of curriculum and changes to assessment and reporting requirements as some of the challenges facing independent schools.

Of further interest is Education Queensland's (now State Schooling) move to incorporate Year 7 into junior secondary state schools in 2015, as part of the *Flying Start* (Department of Education, Training and Employment [DETE], 2011) initiatives. Many independent schools have established middle school phases and are interested in improving the learning outcomes of students in this phase of schooling. Finally, because NAPLAN currently tests students in Years 7 and 9, these middle years are of interest both to schools and researchers. Honan (2010) identified "this phase of schooling [middle years] as particularly challenging because of students' increased disengagement from schooling" (p.139) and the need for students to master increasingly complex texts. Henderson (2012) describes the middle years as transitionary and involving increasingly sophisticated and complex usage of literacy. In addition, Feirson (1997) has noted that "middle schoolers manifest a significant change in levels of motivation" (p. 25). Finally, it has been shown that by the middle years, a shift has occurred with students needing to "read to learn" instead of "learning to read" (Blanton, Wood, & Taylor, 2007, p.76). Indeed, the national curriculum documents (ACARA, 2013, 2018) mentioned already make it clear that literacy is the responsibility of all teachers, not just the English teacher, postulating a need for "future work [that] includes … a review of the extent to which general capabilities [including literacy] have been addressed in the Australian curriculum" (ACARA, 2013a, p.3). Pendergast and Bahr (2010) also argue that research into "the history and emergence of middle schooling in Australia" is an important task (p. 10). Moreover, Cairney (2017) asserts that "literacy in the middle years is perhaps the most neglected" (p.7). Finally, the

[2] Combined in this instance refers to schools that deliver both primary and secondary education

Middle Years of Schooling Association [MYSA] (2008) position paper clearly states that the engagement of young adolescents must be a priority for education. Hence, the international and national contexts provided rich background and justification for this study.

The school research context

This study was undertaken at an independent school located in South East Queensland, Australia. As independent schools in Queensland are not systemic, individual schools are responsible for establishing an ethos that suits their particular context. In this case, the school research setting has a religious ethos that was established when the school opened. The religious ethos is visible in all public documents that relate to the school: for example, the school website (accessed at various points through the study), marketing literature, and advertised employment opportunities. For the purposes of this study, the school remained anonymous, and is referred to as Abimelech College throughout this thesis.

Abimelech College is a co-educational Prep-Year 12 school with approximately 2175 students. The MySchool (ACARA, 2018b) website and related statistics provided the following information about the school. The website lists 22% of the students as coming from an English as Additional Language or Dialect [EAL/D] background and 1% are identified as indigenous. In addition, the school has a published ICSEA value of 1093 in comparison to the average value of 1000. Thus, it is located in a marginally middle socio-economic area. There are 159 teaching staff and 146 non-teaching staff. The school website (accessed 9/9/2015) states that the college is Apple–affiliated and it foregrounds the integration of technology in its teaching practices. This means that for the phase of schooling of relevance to this study, the middle years, all students in Year 7 had personal iPads, and all students in Years 8 and 9 had personal laptop computers. In addition, each classroom was fitted with a data projector and screen, and had access to the school WiFi

system. Each teacher had a personal laptop computer and the Year 7 teachers also had personal iPads. The laptops and iPads were supplied to the teachers. The funding arrangements for the student iPads and laptops were not stated on the website but in an interview with a member of the school leadership team, it was mentioned that the technology was funded in part by parents and in part by federal and state government initiatives (Gavin, Head of Curriculum–Technology, 9/5/2016). A final aspect of relevance to this study was the school online learning platform, Haiku. All members of the school community had access to Haiku. Part of Haiku enabled teachers to upload all resources relevant to a unit of work, including tasks, assessment items, and homework. This enabled parents, for example, to be informed about activities and teaching and learning tasks in a particular classroom on a regular basis. It also enabled teachers and students to access required resources from home.

Another initiative of the school of relevance to this study was the introduction of Project-Based Learning [PBL]. The school website (accessed 5/3/2016) described PBL as differing from teacher-centred and teacher–directed learning. Instead, in PBL teachers are the facilitators and students work through authentic challenges and activities with guidance. One of the goals of PBL is to encourage deep learning. Part of the resourcing linked to the school's PBL initiative was the establishment of PBL specific classrooms. These classrooms were equipped with a range of different furniture allowing flexibility in layout. The furniture also allowed for grouping and individual work to occur simultaneously. See Appendix M for a photograph of part of one room.

To conclude this section, a short comment on the structure of the school leadership is given. Abimelech College was structured in a traditional hierarchical manner. The Principal headed the whole college and worked in collaboration with three other members

of the school executive team: the Head of Secondary, the Head of Primary, and the school Chaplain. The Principal reported to the governing board, led by the school chairman. The secondary school comprised the middle years (Years 7-10) and the senior secondary (Years 10–12). The Head of Secondary was responsible for both middle and senior phases and was supported by two deputies: one was responsible for behaviour, the other for administrative tasks. Curriculum leadership in the middle school came from the Dean of Middle School and in the senior, from the Dean of Studies. [3] Heads of Departments (HoDs) comprised the middle level of leadership and these roles were filled by teachers who also occupied these roles of extra responsibility. HoDs were responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum, along with the teaching staff. See Figure 1.1 for a summary of this structure. This figure shows the hierarchical nature of the organisational structure and the distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005; Timperley, 2005).

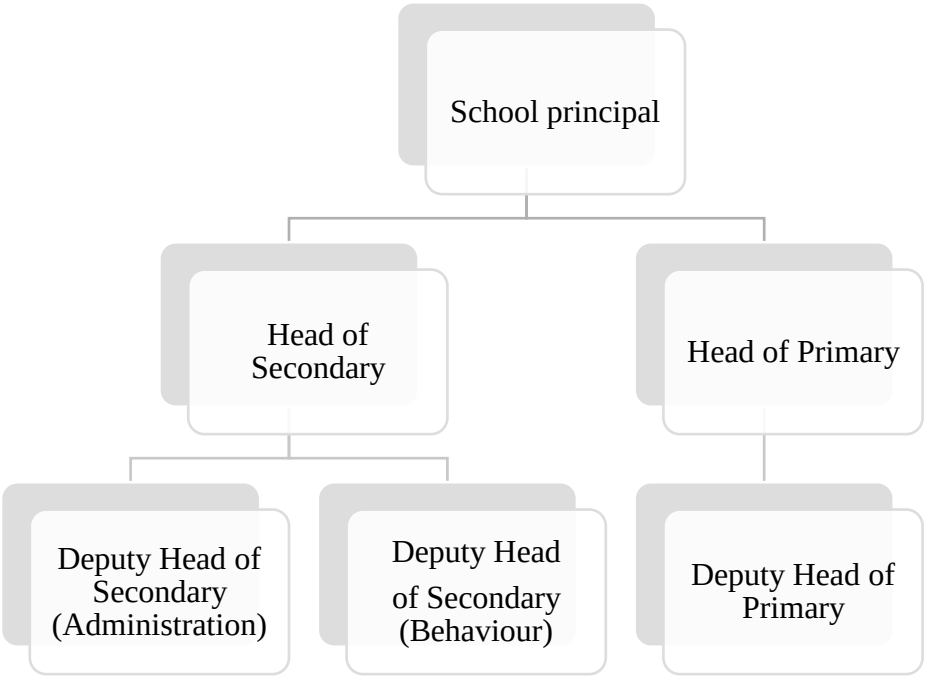

Figure 1.1. School organisational structure.

[3] This structure has changed since the study was undertaken but this was the structure in place during the research period.

The enabling and constraining nature of the leading practices (Kemmis et al., 2014) was an important aspect of the findings of this study and is discussed in Chapter Seven. The discussion turns now to the significance of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has investigated the curriculum literacies teaching practices and experiences of middle school teachers in an independent school in South East Queensland and is significant for a number of reasons. First, the context of an independent school (rather than a school from the Catholic or Queensland State Schooling systems) is important given the limited amount of research previously undertaken within this system in Queensland. During a literature scan, one paper was found (Beutel, 2006) that investigated teacher pedagogy in an independent school in South East Queensland, but the teaching practices investigated were general rather than literacy related. The current study helps to fill this gap in the literature regarding current curriculum literacies teaching practices in the independent system.

Second, given the already established context of neo-liberalism in Australia's education sector, which emphasises the role of privatisation and the growing trend towards private schools, (Robertson, 2014) the need for further research in the independent school sector is evident. Third, the notion of curriculum literacies underpins Australia's national curriculum and this policy implementation should have been taken up by schools when the curriculum was mandated. However, this study investigates if this is the case in the independent sector or whether the policy has been dissipated somewhat (Maguire, Ball, & Braun, 2013). Fourth, the importance of continuing research into the middle school phase has been established. Last, the study examined the curriculum literacies teaching practices using a practice theory approach and in particular, the theory of practice architecture and

the corresponding theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). This study adds to the growing body of knowledge around this particular theoretical framework and in particular, to the application of the theory of practice architectures to the field of literacy. In the following section, the key concepts relevant to the study are explored.

1.5 Key Concepts

Literacy

Definitions of literacy are plentiful and confusing (Lu & Cross, 2014). Furthermore, the field is highly contested which means there is no single definition of the term (Hanneman, 2015). However, in general, it is possible to identify three distinct understandings of literacy: first, literacy as basic skills, or second, literacy as functional, or third, literacy as critical/ cultural (Cook-Gumperz, 2006; Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001). The skills-based understanding views literacy as comprising discrete skills such as reading and writing. Historically, research into literacy has focused on skills learnt in early childhood and especially reading (Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, 2010; Rowe, 2005; Wood, 2006). This more traditional, skills-based approach resulted in a definition of literacy related to discrete skills, and in particular, reading and writing (Luke & Woods, 2009). UNESCO's definition of literacy, first coined in 1966, and which remains current, also favours a basic skills approach that privileges the teaching of reading and writing. Lu and Cross (2014) cite the UNESCO definition as:

(a) A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (her) everyday life.

(b) A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (her) everyday life.

The current international and national high stakes testing regime (PISA, PIRLs, NAPLAN) also seems to favour a definition of literacy that is closely related to this discrete skills approach. In fact, in his article on the role played by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in the development of the first NAPLAN tests, Freeman (2009) states that NAPLAN tests "the basic literacy and numeracy skills that all students in Australia should have" (p. 3). This understanding of literacy sees literacy as a set of hierarchical, singular skills.

The second understanding of literacy reflects a more functional use of literacy. For example, the definition of reading literacy used by PISA (2013) is "understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society" (p. 9). The PISA definition has changed too, as reflected in the 2015 draft reading literacy framework (PISA, 2013). "Changes in our concept of reading since 2000 have already led to an expanded definition of reading literacy, which recognises motivational and behavioural characteristics of reading alongside cognitive characteristics" (p. 5). Interestingly, PISA's use of multiple choice items, and ICT or online test papers seemingly contradicts this definition and further complicates the issue so that the high stakes testing view of literacy becomes a reductionist one that seeks to reduce literacy to a quantifiable and measurable number.

This functional view of literacy stands alongside the third understanding that perceives literacy as a situated social practice and from a critical/cultural point of view (Gee, 1990, 1996; Lankshear, 1997). Thus, literacy is a social practice, "embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices" (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001, p. 4). The third understanding of literacy also encompasses the notion of *new literacies* to describe "digitally based media that are screen-based, that is to say, forms of communication that are

not generated or distributed on a page" (Kirst, 2012, p. 17). The concept of embracing the world of technology and all its challenges for definitions of literacy was reflected in the coining of the term *multiliteracies* in 1994 by the New London Group (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). The term multiliteracies highlighted both linguistic diversity and multimodal forms of linguistic expression evident in twenty-first century written and spoken texts. There is no doubt that the advent of technology has had a profound impact on students and, in turn, has had important implications for contemporary literacy teaching (Unsworth, 2001). Teachers have had to reconsider what it means to be literate in the 21st century and the implications for curriculum literacies teaching practices. Unsworth (2001) for example, distinguishes between old [print] and new literacies [multiliteracies] and suggests that these new, multiple ways of knowing require students to engage in constantly evolving literacy practices. Henderson (2012) describes competency in multiple literacies as "absolutely vital for negotiating the demands of school" (p. 8). Other writers have added to the debate around what literacy at schools involves. For example, Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) argue that "as the knowledge students have to learn becomes more specialized and complex, so does the language that constructs that knowledge" (p. 588).

The assumption that literacy can be defined from the perspective of a social and cultural construction is important to this study, particularly as the theoretical framework utilised is an ontological one rather than epistemological. Ontological assumptions question what is real, why and how. Thus, by employing Kemmis et al.'s (2014) theoretical framework of practice architectures, reality is constructed in the site. That is, in the case of curriculum literacies teaching practices, what is taught occurs in a site (for example, the classroom) and is dependent on the practice architectures that make the practice possible. Hence, while curriculum literacies teaching practices are embodied in the teacher, they are

also always situated in the practice architectures and the site (Kemmis et al., 2014). Thus, the ontological approach is in keeping with the view of literacy as a construction that occurs in a particular social and cultural context.

In addition, the concept of literacy in the plural, *literacies* is important for this study. Literacies in the plural is linked to the notion that students encounter a diverse range of literacies, not just across different subjects, but also within a single subject (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999). Furthermore, these different literacy practices are socially constructed within the site. In this study, the notion of the site also encompasses the different subjects that make up the middle school curriculum. Hence, the understanding that literacy practices are socially constructed within a particular site is important. However, as it is teachers who are primarily responsible for teaching curriculum literacies at school, their understandings of the concept of literacy are important. Therefore, in this study, it was important to gain insight into the teacher participants' understandings of literacy to shed light on the social constructedness of the curriculum literacies teaching practices evident in each classroom.

Finally, for the purposes of this study, the definition of literacy provided by the Australian national curriculum was employed. While it is acknowledged that this definition is not academic, it is the definition Australian schools and teachers are more likely to use. This is because it appears in the documents they should be consulting and using to plan units of work. The ACARA (2013) definition of literacy is:

> In the Australian Curriculum, students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading,

> viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. (para. 1)

While this definition has been critiqued as claiming a socio-cultural and functional approach while privileging the enactment of another more basic one, (Lu & Cross, 2014), it nevertheless was important to this study as it enabled me to widen the scope of what it means to be literate in the modern sense. It embraces the notion of literacy as a skill and simultaneously as a social construction for a particular purpose and context. This notion is appropriate to the constructionist paradigm. It is also appropriate for the ontological approach of the theoretical framework of this study.

Curriculum literacy(ies)

Initially, literacy teaching tended to concentrate on the Early Years when students were learning to read and write (Christie & Derewianka, 2010). Therefore, research also tended to focus on reading in the Early Years. However, as the definition of literacy has changed, and as high stakes testing in Australia, and internationally, has moved into the middle and senior school phases, there has also been a move towards teaching literacy through the middle years and onto secondary and post-compulsory education (Luke et al., 2003; Wood & Blanton, 2009). Initially, literacy teaching across the curriculum stressed more generic skills (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003). However, subsequently, research has shown that language use becomes more complex as students move through the latter phases of schooling and explicit teaching of the underpinning literacies is important for academic success (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003). Thus, because the link between language and learning has been clearly

established (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003; Wyse, Andrews, & Hoffman, 2010), it is imperative that students improve their language skills in order to improve their learning.

Teachers across these latter phases of schooling have traditionally concentrated on teaching the content of their subjects. Nevertheless, they also need to focus on explicitly teaching the underpinning language of these content areas (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Luke et al., 2003; Wood & Blanton, 2009; Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2003). The significance of explicit teaching is evident in the General Capabilities document (ACARA, 2013) and recently, the National Literacy Learning Progression (ACARA, 2018). The General Capabilities document (ACARA, 2013) identifies and formalises the concept of literacy as one of the strands underpinning the entire national curriculum. The General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document states that:

> Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. (p. 1)

Terms used to describe the teaching of literacy across the curriculum at all school phases include: curriculum literacies (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999), disciplinary literacies (Moje, 2008), content area literacies (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Mckenna & Robinson, 1990), reading and writing in the content areas/subject areas and writing or reading across the curriculum. However, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably in both policy documents and research papers. The USA has tended to use content literacies (Vacca & Vacca, 2005) with the term disciplinary literacies becoming increasingly popular. The term

curriculum literacies has been used in Australia (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001; Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999; Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2001, 2003) and refers to:

> ‘curriculum’ [that is used] deliberately as a noun, rather than the adjectival 'curricular', in order to demonstrate that this conjunction represents the interface between a specific curriculum and its literacies, rather than literacies related to curriculum in a generic sense, or a single literacy that can be spread homogeneously across all curriculum. (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999, p. 32)

This definition has been used by Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999) to explore the literacies of senior secondary schooling, However, it is also relevant to this study into the middle school phase as it describes the complexity of literacies in the secondary environment. This complex literacy environment commences in the middle school phase and possibly even earlier. Research has shown that students at all phases of schooling, not just the senior secondary years, are expected to manipulate the different literacies they encounter across a school day in the various subjects that underpin the curriculum (Wyatt-Smith et al.,1999).

Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999) expanded the definition of curriculum literacies recommending that teachers also consider:

> terminology and specific vocabulary; symbolic codes and other representational forms; relationships between common everyday language and subject-specific terminology; the language of the processes of the subject, such as scientific processes; the match between the language of

> instruction and the language of assessment; the gaps between preparatory literacy education and the actual and current reading and writing demands of the specific subject; the literacies of the classroom and its interactions within which curricular learning is to occur. (p. 34)

Thus, the concept of curriculum literacies moves away from the singular view of literacy to pluralistic understandings; to the "conceptualisation of literacies in terms of the integrating of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and critical thinking practices in recognisably appropriate subject-specific ways" (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2001, p. 309). The notion of integration is important and is discussed in Chapter Six. However, it should be noted that for the purposes of this study, the term subject literacies is sometimes used interchangeably with the term curriculum literacies.

Middle years

The definition of what constitutes the middle years of schooling varies and is often nebulous (Pendergast & Bahr, 2010). Chadbourne (2001) defines it as the years between Year 5 and Year 10 depending on the context. Shaw and Alchin (2005) define middle years as " [the] middle ground, with a continuum of primary school attitudes and responses at one end and senior secondary responses at the other" (p.27). This view is echoed by Perso (2005) who describes middle schooling as a "transition from a primary school setting to a secondary one" (p.25). Other researchers view middle schooling in broader terms that encompass both organisational and educational (curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment) aspects (Chadbourne 2001; Pendergast & Bahr, 2010).

Middle schooling has also received attention as a stated commitment to action in Australian Federal Government policies and plans. The Melbourne Declaration,

(MCEETYA, 2008) stated "Australian governments commit to working with all school sectors to ensure that schools provide programs that are responsive to students' developmental and learning needs in the middle years, and which are challenging, engaging and rewarding" (p. 12). In Queensland, this commitment has led to the formation in state schools of the junior secondary phase, covering Years 7 to 9. The independent sector in Queensland, while commonly using the term middle years, varies in what these year levels constitute. Some schools use the term middle years to refer to Years 6 to 9, while others prefer to refer to Years 7 to 9. Pendergast (personal communication, 22 January, 2015) agreed with the use of this terminology advising that:

> Junior Secondary is an initiative of DETE for state schools only …Independent and Catholic sector schools vary in the use of terminology. A middle school is a generic term and so in the case you refer to I think it is the best choice.

The *MYSA Position Paper* (2008) defines the middle years as a period roughly from age ten to fifteen, stating further that "middle schooling is an intentional approach to teaching and learning that is responsive and appropriate to the full range of needs, interests and achievements of middle years' students in formal and informal schooling contexts" (p.1). The schooling model suggested by the *MYSA Position Paper* (2008) stresses the "interconnectedness between the three concepts of People, Practices and Places, critical for middle schooling success" (p. 1). The MYSA (2008) definition and model seems broad enough to suit the varied contexts of the independent sector as it integrates the organisational factors and curriculum and pedagogical practices necessary for this research.

Education, teaching, practice and praxis

A study related to educational teaching practices requires definitions of these terms. Kemmis et al. (2014) offer useful definitions of all four. While there are many other definitions that might be utilised, theirs have been employed in this study because they relate specifically to education in local sites. Kemmis et al. (2014) define education as:

> the process by which children, young people and adults are initiated into forms of understanding, modes of action, and ways of relating to one another and the world … and that are …orientated towards the good for each person and the good for humankind. (p. 26)

The two-fold notion of education as both an initiation into practice and for moral good is an important consideration for this study. These ideas are discussed further in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven.

Teaching is also a term that has been defined in many ways. Teaching might be viewed as a process connected to learning. Teaching also involves practices. Kemmis et al. (2014) define teaching as "a practice of designing and enacting…that initiate them [students] into a substantive practice being taught" (p. 98). This definition is useful as it encompasses the idea of specific actions (design and enact) which can be observed in some way. Hence, the curriculum literacies teaching practices were observable in the classrooms.

Finally, practice can be both a noun and verb. It can be defined simplistically as the opposite of theory and as a series of actions. However, the definition of practice as it is employed in this study is much more complex. Practice is:

> a form of socially established cooperative human activity in which characteristic arrangements of …(doings) are comprehensible in terms of …(sayings) and when the people and objects involved are distributed in …(relatings) and this ... "hangs together" in a distinctive project. (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 31)

This view of practice encompasses the notion of actions that are visible in an individual's sayings, doings and relatings (Kemmis et al., 2014) and also simultaneously socially constructed or site-specific. This understanding of practice as both individual and social suits the view of literacy as a social construction and hence, situates curriculum literacies teaching practices within a specific site. Furthermore, this ontological view of practice is important to the theoretical and analytical frameworks of this study. Kemmis et al. (2014) also distinguish between what they call distinctive and substantive practices. Distinctive practices comprise, in education, the five practices of teaching, learning, professional learning, leading, and researching. The term substantive practice refers to what the students are learning i.e. what is called the content. For example, teaching is a distinctive practice, and teaching students the practice of skim-reading a passage is a substantive practice.

Finally, an understanding of the term praxis is important to the notion of practices, teaching, and education being conducted from an approach that is committed to individual and societal moral good. Educators who engage in practices that are morally committed in these ways (individual and societal good) can be said to be practising from a praxis-informed approach. There are two ways of viewing praxis. In an Aristotelian sense, praxis is "a particular kind of action. It is action that is morally-committed, and oriented and

informed by traditions in a field" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 19). It is also used in a post-Hegelian, post-Marxian sense. Used this way, praxis is a "history-making action" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 20). Kemmis (2008) and Kemmis et al. (2014) use praxis in both ways. Kemmis (2008) describes educational praxis as:

> Educational praxis is action that is consciously directed not only by the intention or purpose (telos) of aiming towards the good for students and the good for humankind; educational praxis is action consciously directed towards forming good individuals and good societies. (p. 20)

This concept of educational praxis is important for this study and is discussed in more detail, particularly in Chapter Seven.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. This first chapter provides the international and national context for the study. Additionally, it examines the significance of the study and offers explanations of several relevant key concepts and terms that are used throughout the thesis.

Literature relevant to the study is reviewed and discussed, and any research gaps are identified in Chapter Two. The research design, relevant theoretical frameworks, and methodology pertinent to the study, as well as the approach to data analysis, are outlined and discussed in Chapter Three. Findings of the study are presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The teaching of reading practices and the practice architectures are provided in Chapter Four and the writing practices and practice architectures are explicated in Chapter

Five. The findings in these two chapters are presented from two approaches: the first approach uses the first understanding of literacy as comprising the teaching of discrete skills that privilege reading and writing; the second approach uses the third understanding of literacy as literacy as socially situated and examines the enabling and constraining site arrangements that impact the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Using the ideas of Wyatt-Smith and Cumming (2001), in Chapter Six, the findings are presented from an integrated perspective of curriculum literacies teaching practices: one that views curriculum literacies teaching practices as intertwined or enmeshed (Kemmis et al., 2014). The findings are discussed and the research questions answered in Chapter Seven, and the study concludes in Chapter Eight with reflections and recommendations for future research.

Each chapter starts with either a quotation or an anecdote. The use of these literary devices reflects the researcher's voice. Each anecdote or quotation reveals the personal response of the researcher to either the findings of that chapter or the research journey during the writing of that particular chapter. One of the hallmarks of qualitative research is the use of creative complexity and evocative representation (Tracy, 2010). In addition, at times, the use of first person adds to the representation of the researcher's voice. The presence of the researcher's voice is a characteristic of ethnographic research design (Hoey, 2014) and is discussed further in Chapter Three. In the following chapter, Chapter Two, the literature which has been reviewed during the course of this study is discussed.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write: a man [sic] will turn over half a library to make one book.

Samuel Johnson

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature that informed the study is reviewed and the key concepts introduced in Chapter One are discussed in further detail. In the first section the research context is discussed and the notion of an apparent crisis in literacy is questioned. This is followed by an examination of one of the central concepts of this study, middle schooling, and a discussion of where literacy is foregrounded in education. The review then moves to an examination of literacy and its contested nature. In the next section, consideration is given to what it means to be literate and the possible pedagogical approaches to literacies. Finally, the potential influences on pedagogy are discussed. In the final section, as the present study involved an investigation of teaching practices, it was important to review what the literature has revealed about professional practices and educational practices specifically. As the term and the field of literacy is highly contested, so too is the study of practices.

The literature review covers a range of articles and books around understandings of literacy, its contested and complex nature, curriculum literacies, practices and pedagogical approaches in the middle years of schooling. In addition, while research into literacy has examined various age-groups, historically the focus has been on early childhood literacy and reading strategies (Christie & Derewianka, 2008). However, internationally and nationally, there have been calls for an increased focus on literacy research in the middle and high school years (Luke et al., 2003; Wood & Blanton, 2009). There have been many

reasons for these calls, but partly it has been because of the advent of middle schooling. For example, in Queensland, Year 7 was incorporated into a dedicated junior secondary phase of state education as recently as 2015. In addition, the introduction of international and national high stakes testing covering a greater range of age groups has also led to concerns about apparently falling literacy levels and hence, the calls for further research. Of additional importance to this study is the gap in the literature concerning prevailing curriculum literacies teaching practices and the independent school system in South East Queensland, Australia. Representatives of independent schools have confirmed the paucity of research occurring in this sector in South East Queensland, in Australia (J.C., personal communication, September, 2014; P.B., personal communication, 2016). Thus, by examining the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school teachers in an independent school in South East Queensland, this study offers rich material which can be added to current understandings of curriculum literacies teaching practices.

2.1 Literacy Crisis or Construction?

There are many competing accounts for the apparently low levels of literacy in school aged students, including poor teaching, low socio-economic status, and learning difficulties. However, a paper by Luke and Woods (2009) enables one to view current debates concerning literacy levels in another light. As Luke and Woods (2009) argue, the concept of an apparent crisis in literacy levels can be interpreted as a political construction. Hence, the ways in which teachers approach literacy teaching are seen to represent the dominant political ideology so that literacy teaching involves “uncritical transmission, decoding, and reproduction of dominant and potentially distorted views of the world” (p.12).

Using this model, the apparent literacy crisis can be explored by asking:

- In whose interest is it for literacy standards to be regarded as in crisis?
- For what purpose?
- Who benefits from this view of literacy standards? (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 11).

Adopting a critical approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices enables one to question the extent to which the crisis in literacy is real or a construction created by economists and politicians. This skepticism regarding the extent of the apparent literacy crisis has been supported by others, including Luke et al. (2003) and Honan (2010). In particular, Honan (2010) argues that many young people who are apparently illiterate as evaluated by standardized tests, are able to "use literacies in meaningful and successful ways in their outside-school lives" (p. 147). This demonstrates that using the results of a standardized test is only one way of determining whether or not an individual can be deemed literate.

This notion is also evident in Snyder's (2008) book which, in the context of Australian education, raises the notion of *literacy wars*. Snyder (2008) presents arguments against the apparent crisis in literacy, for example contending that Australian media coverage has reported the debate over literacy standards intensely but it is those who view literacy in its more traditional sense who have been the focus of these media reports. Furthermore, Snyder (2008) argues that the reason for the ferocity of media reports is to undermine confidence in public education. Thus, any perceived crisis in education has been linked historically to socio-economic and political change (Luke & Woods, 2009; Snyder, 2008). In other words, a crisis in literacy is constructed as a means to a political and economic end. Thus, one might approach research of current curriculum literacies teaching

practices simultaneously from the perspective of a crisis, and from the view that teachers' pedagogical practices are a response to the current climate of high stakes testing (Luke & Woods, 2009) and driven by the current emphasis in NAPLAN and ACARA on traditional grammar. This approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices equates being literate as being grammatically correct. Snyder (2009) equates grammar instruction with societal issues, arguing that a breakdown in grammatical accuracy might be viewed by some as a break down in traditional societal values. Hence, a call to return to basics is a cry for a return to a more traditional, romanticised way of viewing society. Therefore, high stakes testing that emphasises grammatical accuracy and a particular cultural bias relates to "political discussions about disciplines, rules and social harmony" (Snyder, 2008, p.38). Thus, the very nature of the crisis in literacy is contested and linked to political and economic issues.

Furthermore, Snyder (2008) argues that the more creative approach to learning in the early 80s was considered unsuitable for the emerging competitive global economy. Therefore, standards and formalised testing and benchmarks received greater focus. This trend to high stakes testing is evident internationally and nationally. For example, in 2002 just after the passing of the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act*, figures in the USA recorded that about six million middle and high school students read below grade level (Wise, 2009). That piece of legislation recognised the importance of basic skills in the early years of schooling and established a reading program to assist those in the early years (Wise, 2009). Additionally, in England, a report by OfSTED (2011) focused on the teaching of reading in 12 primary schools. This report stated that one in five children who left primary school had not reached the expected standard for reading and writing. Moreover, interestingly, even in 1998, Reynolds argued that connections existed "between the UK's poor performance in

international surveys of achievement and poor levels of economic performance" (Reynolds, 1998, p. 147).

In Australia and internationally, such as the UK, there have been many different recommendations concerning strategies to improve literacy results. These range from improving teacher effectiveness, to increasing student engagement (Luke et al., 2003; OfSTED, 2011). Currently, in Queensland, this move towards improving student outcomes in literacy, commenced under the 2011 *Flying Start* initiative and is evident still in the 2017 *Every Student Succeeding Strategic Plan*: *2017- 2021*. In addition, national curriculum and policy documents in Australia (General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013); Melbourne Declaration (MYCEETYA, 2008)) have highlighted the need for literacy and numeracy skills to underpin every aspect of education.

Funding for all schools at both state and federal level in Australia is linked to improvements in literacy and numeracy. From 2015, part of the 2013 Australian Federal Government's *Students First* plan and the 2013 Queensland *Great Teachers = Great Results* plan, targeted funding to improve teacher effectiveness in delivering literacy and numeracy. Currently, this trend continues under the 2016 Queensland *Advancing Education: An Action Plan for Education in Queensland*. There have been similar trends in the UK (OfSTED, 2011) and in the USA's 2001 *No Child Left Behind* policy (Alvermann, Phelps, & Ridegeway, 2007). Many of these initiatives and policies can be attributed to neo-liberal values mentioned in Chapter One and consequently, to the view of literacy and literacy teaching that privileges a more reductionist, discrete skills-based approach. Thus, the literature review establishes connections between literacy and the economy and provides a background to the study. This link between policy and economics is further discussed in the following section.

2.2 Economic Rationalism and Policy

The concept of linking the economy to education and literacy in particular is an important consideration to a study of current literacy pedagogy (Lam, 2001). Economic rationalism:

> refers to a mindset that the market should provide the foundation for all economic, political and social decisions. It is grounded in assumptions that economies, markets, money and prices can always, at least in principle, deliver better outcomes than states, governments, and the law, and that the market provides the only practical means for setting values on anything. (Pusey, 2003, p.9)

Sumsion (2006) attributes the rise of economic rationalism in Australia to the Whitlam Government (1972–1975) and argues that government policy has changed dramatically since then, from one more responsive to community needs, to the current era of accountability and market-based forces such as regulations and complex administrative requirements. Brown (2005) further explores what she terms the *shadow curriculum* and ‘the language of business to how we think about schools as words like value, accountability, failing schools, and cost/ benefit ratio have become part of the national education dialogue” (p. 119). Hence, the context in which curriculum literacies teaching practices now occur is more rigid, and regulated.

Using the work of Lam (2001), changes in educational policies in Australia, the UK, the USA, and Canada can be attributed to neo-liberalism and the view that governments drive change, whether or not those in education agree. In addition, Lam (2001) has

suggested that conservative governments in these countries share three beliefs: poor performance of public institutions (including schools), a preference towards free markets, and a reduced role of government, and that these beliefs are impacted by the emergence of globalisation, with its increased competition, and an "information and communications revolution" (p. 350). Thus, educational policy in Australia, the UK, the USA and Canada, has undergone a paradigm shift which needs teachers to realign themselves. In essence, this means changing their practices to meet growing government pressures for accountability and the implementation of high stakes tests such as PISA, PIRLS and NAPLAN. In education, therefore, it might be argued that a technical / skills-based approach to literacy is favoured rather than a critical / high cognitive thought processing one. As Lam (2001) has described it, "a new set of criteria … [have] emerged, with the ultimate purposes of making education more cost-efficient and outcome effective" (p. 351). Hence, the context that is now evident: the cries for teachers to produce literate students with measurable literacy skills, coupled with the perception that students are illiterate and teachers need to be more accountable. The Rowe Report (2005) in Australia, entitled *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy* contains direct references to literacy and economic prosperity:

> reading competence is foundational, not only for school-based learning, but also for children's behavioural and psychosocial wellbeing, further education and training, occupational success, productive and fulfilling participation in social and economic activity, as well as for the nation's social and economic future. (p. 11)

Wise (2009) sums up the whole debate around literacy and the economy best when he describes the attitude in the USA towards literacy as a "national crisis that demands a national response" (p. 370). In the USA, that response was the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* . In Britain, national reports into schooling (OfSTED, 2011, 2013) also indicate that literacy levels are seen as a crisis. In the 2013 OfSTED report, reference is made to the fact that "literacy is a huge issue for the nation, our society and our economy, not just for schools," and the report goes on to say that the importance of literacy has been established in Europe and that a "recent European report spoke of a literacy crisis that affects every country in Europe" (p. 7). In Australia, the response to the apparent literacy crisis has been the creation of national literacy and numeracy tests and a national curriculum with the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) and the recent National Literacy Learning Progression (ACARA, 2018) documents highlighting the need for literacy teaching to underpin the whole curriculum.

The literature review has established the context of economic rationalism and made the link between this and high stakes testing. A review of current educational policy documents in Australia was also necessary to determine the extent to which literacy is a focal area. A pertinent starting point is the Melbourne Declaration (MYCEETYA, 2008). Goal 2 spells out a commitment to "develop successful learners who have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy and are creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas" (MYCEETYA, 2008, p. 8). After the Declaration, and to achieve one of the stated goals to improve literacy standards, national standardised tests (NAPLAN) were introduced, with the goal being to "identify students at an early stage who were not meeting minimum standards in literacy and numeracy" (Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment Report, 2014, p. 6).

However, the Whitlam Institute (Dulfer, Polesel, & Rice, 2013) in its submission to the 2014 review into NAPLAN expressed concern that high stakes tests and the era of accountability would create pedagogy driven by data and economic needs rather than educational outcomes. Thus, the link between literacy levels and economic rationalism is clear.

It is not simply the presence of NAPLAN that provides a focus on literacy levels and pedagogy. The association between literacy and economic rationalism is to be found in the 2009, 2011 and 2016 *National Reports on Schooling in Australia*, (ACARA 2011, 2013a, 2018a) and the *ACARA* documents outlining the national English syllabus. The 2009, 2011, and 2016 reports use language related to economics such as 'key performance measures', 'data', 'cost effective', 'achieving objectives', 'outcomes', and 'targets'. These terms are all economic ones and lend credence to the contention that education has become driven by an economic model. If this is the case, pedagogical practices related to literacy will likely continue to be driven by issues other than those related to student well-being and achievement, despite any assurances from governments to the contrary.

This link between curriculum literacies teaching practices and economic issues is evident in the present Australian Federal Government's educational policy plans. For example, the 2013 *Students First!* Plan outlined the government's commitment to concentrate on developing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in all schools. This plan highlighted the connection between the economy and education using language such as 'funding models', 'targeted initiatives', 'international competitors', 'national prosperity'. In addition, the 2014 review of the national curriculum, ACARA, reiterated the focus on teacher quality (Australian Government, 2014). Recommendation 18 of the report reconfirms the commitment to embedding literacy across

the curriculum. This concept is detailed in the General Capabilities (ACARA , 2013, p.1/2) document which states that:

- all teachers are responsible for teaching the subject-specific literacy of their learning area
- all teachers need a clear understanding of the literacy demands and opportunities of their learning area.

In 2018, ACARA released the *National Literacy Learning Progression*, a document that further reiterates the importance of students "being able to use the significant …distinctive literacy …representative of the content of that learning area" (ACARA, 2018, p. 3). Thus, the report into the 2014 review of ACARA and the national documents provide a useful context for the present study and also provide a context for the changes evident in education since 2008. The next section of the literature review establishes the importance of middle schooling.

2.3 Middle schooling and adolescent literacy

Historically, the teaching of literacy has received attention at the early childhood phase of schooling. However, developments in the field of literacy have highlighted the need for teachers in middle and secondary phases to incorporate literacy in their teaching (ACARA, 2013; Alvermann, 2001; Goldman, 2012; Moje, 2015; OfSTED, 2013; Vacca & Vacca, 2005; Wise, 2009). Hence, a number of studies have focused on the literacy of middle school students and in particular, have examined reading instruction (Slavin et al., 2008; Thomson, 2010) and various models of reading including Literature Circles (Hamilton, 2013), Book Clubs (Lattanzi, 2014), Comprehension (Bradarich, 2012), and Morphology (Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006). Studies into the importance of writing

have also been conducted (Christie, 2013; Harris, 2013; Rose & Martin, 2012; Zheng, 2013). Much of this research seems to have been based on the traditional approach to literacy and to researching the effectiveness of specific programs, and, as research in the USA seems to have favoured the quantitative approach (Alexander, 2006), this trend is hardly surprising. However, the contemporary view of literacy as being socially constructed requires research that considers the social and political contexts of classrooms.

In the USA, this contemporary view has led to studies related to engagement and motivation and other affective factors (Bergman, 2013; Cole, 2008). These studies raise the notion of middle schooling and its relationship to the continued development of literacy skills in the broader sense. In Australia, various reports in 2001 established the importance of middle schooling, while also questioning the potential longevity of this emerging trend in education (Chadbourne, 2001). The definition of what constitutes the middle years of schooling varies. Chadbourne (2001) defined it as the years between Year 5 and Year 10, depending on the context. Middle schooling is also "formal education that is responsive and appropriate to the developmental needs of young adolescents" (Chadbourne, 2001, p. 2). This understanding of the middle years phase of schooling appears broad enough to suit the context of this study and guided the investigation. Chadbourne (2001) examines the nature of middle schooling, its pedagogy, and reasons for utilising an approach that focuses specifically on this age group. There is little mention of literacy in Chadbourne's (2001) study, but its overview of middle schooling pedagogy is important. In particular, it mentions the need for specific middle schooling pedagogy to increase student engagement.

The importance of middle schooling has also received attention as a stated commitment to action in Australian Federal policies and plans. For example, a goal of the 2008 Melbourne Declaration was for "all school sectors to ensure that schools provide

programs that are responsive to students' developmental and learning needs in the middle years, and which are challenging, engaging and rewarding" (Melbourne Declaration, MYCEETYA, 2008, p. 12). Other Australian studies also reflect this commitment. Culican, Emmitt, and Oakley's (2001) report into middle schooling in Victoria specifically outlines literacy and pedagogical approaches relevant to young adolescents. Their qualitative study also highlighted the need for specific intervention in this age group because of the perceived disengagement and high drop-out rates often associated with early adolescence, a factor mentioned in many papers on middle schooling including the ones already reviewed. Of significance to this study is the finding that there is a need for continuity between the primary and secondary years, particularly at the point of transition and furthermore, a need for: 1) a common language for talking about literacy and an integrated approach to literacy across all key learning areas of the curriculum; and 2) scaffolding for students to assist them in their literacy development across all key learning areas (Culican et al., 2001).

Luke et al.'s (2003) report into literacy and numeracy teaching in the middle years was a milestone in Australian education. Building on previous studies, the authors examined pedagogical practices underpinning literacy teaching in the middle years and offered several recommendations for future teaching and research directions. Importantly, they called for further research into the middle years of schooling calling this further research second generation and suggesting it needed to be longitudinal research (Luke et al., 2003, p. 7). This recommendation is echoed more recently by Hardingham who writes "a comprehensive research agenda is needed to help direct and sustain the reform [middle years schooling] effort" (Pendergast & Bahr, 2010, p. xvi) Thus, this present study into middle schooling curriculum literacies teaching practices builds on the body of research in Australia.

Research literature also used the term “adolescent literacy” (Goldman, 2012; Maziarz, 2007; Moje, 2015; Snow & Moje, 2010; Wood & Blanton, 2009). However, it appears as if this term is used interchangeably with middle school students and is used to highlight the need for specific and explicit instruction in the literacies underpinning the subject areas of middle and high school adolescents, rather than the learning to read that is taught in the early years of schooling. That adolescent literacy is currently demanding attention can be attributed to the growing complexity of the literacy and technological demands of this century (Goldman, 2012; Snow & Moje, 2010; Wood & Blanton, 2009). Researchers argue that many students enter these years with basic skills in literacy such as reading and writing generally, but lack the complex skills required for content mastery (Alvermann, 2001; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Wise, 2009; Wood & Blanton, 2009), and other researchers such as Freebody (2011) contend that literacy needs increase from the middle years. Goldman (2012) reiterated the need for all teachers to be enabled to deliver the underpinning literacy of their content area. The literature review now turns to an examination of literacy and its contested nature.

2.4 Understandings of Literacy

The “evolving information age” (Unsworth, 2001, p. 7) has resulted in literacy understandings arising less from a traditional skills-based perspective and more from an understanding of literacy as a social and cultural construction. Hardman and Abd-Kadhir’s (2010) view of literacy sees students actively engaged in meaning making across a wide range of contexts. Dombey (2010) argues that “literacy should be seen as ideological – as social practice, grounded in social, historical and political contexts of use, into which learners are initiated” (Wyse et al., 2010, p. 110). Thus, in a contemporary sense, being

literate means being able to use a diverse range of literacies critically, simultaneously, and in different social contexts. It also means that teachers need to be actively engaged in teaching students about the required literacy practices.

Peterson (2011) suggests that four new literacies are necessary for a 21st century learner: multimedia authoring skills, multimedia critical analysis, cyberspace exploration strategies, and cyberspace navigation skills. These new literacies therefore have consequences for classroom practice as teachers need to develop new understandings of at least three aspects:

- what constitutes a text, so that multimodal ones can be included,
- what new resources should be utilised and included and finally,
- how to include popular texts in addition to more canonical ones (Unsworth, 2001).

While these aspects might be linked to teaching the subject of English more than the literacies across other subjects they still have relevance for the other subjects too. Traditionally, texts used in subjects such as Mathematics, History, and Geography have been hard copy textbooks. However, modern curriculum documents mention the inclusion of multimodal texts. Certainly, the inclusion of new and popular online texts and resources need to be considered across all subjects, not just English.

Furthermore, teachers need to engage in pedagogical practices that respond to the changing literacy demands. One particularly important aspect of this change from print to an electronic format is the emphasis now placed on being visually literate (Peterson, 2011; Unsworth, 2001). While previously teachers have taught some aspects of visual literacy, the demands are far higher today, with some researchers arguing that the need to be literate in ICT is “fundamental to life” (Peterson, 2011, p. 6). Likewise, Bulfin and McGraw (2011) explored some of the implications of these new literacies for classroom practice. However,

they argued that teaching around technology needs to be "more about the practices and activities" (p. 2). In essence, they argued that English teachers have always attempted to engage students through popular culture, and technological advances offer just another means to this end. They believe that literacy teaching should focus on technologies as "objects of inquiry" (Bulfin & McGraw, 2011, p. 3). Thus, there are several important aspects to the contemporary notion of literacy.

In summary, understandings of literacy have moved away from a primary focus on reading and writing skills towards one that "emphasises texts, or language events, including images, sounds, gestures and other semiotics" (Wyse et al., 2010, p.1). However, the idea that literacy in its many forms needs to be taught, remains unchallenged. What has changed is the focus and conceptual understandings of literacy teaching in the classroom. Three different conceptual understandings are discussed further: content literacy, disciplinary literacy and curriculum literacies.

2.5 Content Literacy

Content literacy has been defined as "the ability to use reading and writing for the acquisition of new content in a given discipline. Such ability includes three principal cognitive components: general literacy skills, content-specific literacy skills (such as map reading in the social studies), and prior knowledge of content" (Mckenna & Robinson, 1990, p. 184). The focus on content literacy emerged in the 1970s with the work of Harold Herber, and initially, the teaching of content literacy focused on reading skills. However, this focus on reading skills specifically was not a new one. Thomson (2010) traces the advent of this focus in the USA to the early 1900's. Initially, this was limited to "reading to learn" (Goldman, 2012) with teaching comprehension strategies the instructional practice most often used during this time. Consequently, any struggling readers were referred to

specialists for remedial reading (Wood & Blanton, 2009). Comprehension skills were linked to schema theory advocating the necessity to link students' prior knowledge to any new content as a means of improving comprehension. Teaching genre or textual structure was also seen as beneficial for comprehension (Thomson, 2010). Additional instructional strategies focused on improving general reading strategies (Goldman, 2012).

However, the debate around teacher responsibility evident throughout this period often meant that middle school teachers taught just the content and did not teach the literacies required and hence, compounded the difficulties of students who were struggling (Goldman, 2012, p. 93). It is worth noting that this reluctance by content teachers to engage in teaching content literacy is echoed by other researchers (Luke et al., 2003; Moje, 2008; Parris et al., 2009).

There is a plethora of available literature offering a range of instructional practices available to content literacy teaching (Alvermann, Gillis, & Phelps, 2013; Vacca & Vacca, 2005; Wood & Blanton, 2009). Most of these repeat the instructional practices related to improving comprehension and activating prior knowledge and also include reference to new literacies. The term 'new literacies' has been defined previously in Chapter One (see Section 1.5). Essentially, teachers are asked to consider the ICT demands of their subjects and include explicit teaching about the literacies associated with these technologies. Interestingly, Moje (2009) argues that there might be cases where current literacy practices are sufficient to cope with these technologies. Some studies also include reference to diverse populations: migrants, speakers of languages other than English, students with disabilities (Alvermann et al., 2013; Vacca & Vacca, 2005), and others also include a focus on writing in addition to reading (Alvermann et al., 2013). Some literature has also indicated the challenges faced by content area teachers when trying to incorporate content

literacy teaching (Daisey, 2012; O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Challenges included: time constraints, lack of resources, and a lack of personal literacy knowledge. These challenges were investigated in the current study and are addressed further in Chapter Seven in the discussion of the research findings.

The literature review also showed that there are renewed calls for content literacy to be taught explicitly (Goldman, 2012; Luke et al., 2003; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, 2014; Snow & Moje, 2010; Wood & Blanton, 2009). Moreover, the focus on teaching disciplinary literacy has gained momentum particularly with some researchers criticising content literacy as teaching skills that are too general (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Moje & Speyer, 2008). However, researchers such as Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, and Stewart (2013) have also critiqued the debate for its potential to create a “literacy–content dualism” (p. 353) which might hinder rather than assist effective teaching practices. That is, the concern that potentially, middle and senior school teachers might see the teaching of literacy as a choice between teaching content knowledge or teaching literacy, and would be more likely to favor the teaching of content.

2.6 Disciplinary Literacy

The emergence and importance of content area literacy or disciplinary literacy or literacy across the curriculum, has been well documented since 2003. However, Moje (2008) raises the idea that disciplinary literacy teaching is more than just teaching the language of a content area. She argues that disciplinary literacy is “a form of critical literacy because it builds an understanding of how knowledge is produced in the disciplines, rather than just building knowledge in the disciplines” (Moje, 2008, p. 97). Fang and Coatoam (2013) distinguish between content area literacy and disciplinary literacy, arguing

that the former develops generic reading and writing skills to promote effective learning in the content areas, while disciplinary literacy aims to develop students' ability to engage in the different and specific ways that disciplines communicate, evaluate and produce knowledge. This view of teaching literacy in a discipline concurs with literature on critical literacy and fits the definition of literacy as socially constructed, an important position taken by this writer. For example, Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) argue similarly that "content literacy emphasizes techniques that a novice might use to make sense of a disciplinary text …while disciplinary literacy emphasizes the unique tools that the experts in a discipline use to participate in the work of that discipline" (p.8). In other words, teachers use disciplinary literacy knowledge and practices to teach students how to think, write and read as a member of that discipline.

Other studies in the USA (Billman & Pearson, 2013; Gillis, 2014; Moje, 2015; Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011) have also investigated this notion of disciplinary literacy. The general consensus is that disciplinary literacy allows teachers to include literacy in their practices as "the reading practices promoted by disciplinary literacy are actually drawn from the disciplines themselves rather than being imposed on them by the reading community" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014, p.628). The argument is that a focus on seeing themselves as members of a specific community is motivational for both teachers and students who might view disciplinary literacy as being relevant because they participate in the literacy practices of their field (Cambourne, 2013; Faulkner, Oakley, Rohl, Lopes, & Solosy, 2012; Hannant & Jetnikoff, 2015; Plummer et al., 2010; Roberts, 2013; Strong, 2010). In Australia, the national curriculum also emphasises the subject specific nature of literacy (Unsworth, 2015). Australian researchers such as Martin (2013) and Matruglio (2016) have investigated how to apply disciplinary literacy to subjects such as Biology and

History (Martin, 2013) and History (Matruglio, 2016). Martin (2013) uses Systemic Functional Linguistics, and in particular, the concept of field to discuss how teachers can embed literacy in specific disciplines whereas Matruglio (2016) uses the Systemic Functional Linguistic system of Engagement in a discourse analysis to explore differences in writing in what might be considered a single discipline, History. Matruglio (2016) argues, however, that the writing demands of Modern and Ancient History are different.

In summary, while the body of knowledge around the use of disciplinary literacy is growing, it appears that teachers need to develop their knowledge and skills further and there is still much work to be done (Fang & Coatoam, 2012; Martin, 2013; Matruglio, 2016).

2.7 Curriculum Literacies

The term, content literacy has been widely used in international research but the term disciplinary literacy is currently being used by researchers. In Australia, while the research into disciplinary literacies is growing, the term curriculum literacies has been commonly used. Wyatt-Smith, Cumming, Ryan, and Doig (1999) define curriculum literacies as “the interface between a specific curriculum and its literacies, rather than literacies related to curriculum in a generic sense, or a single literacy that can be spread homogeneously across all curriculum” (p.32). While this work focused on the senior years of schooling in Australia (the so-called post-compulsory years) it is nevertheless important to this study. First, it recognised the contested nature of literacy education and the multi-theoretical and multi-disciplinary nature of literacy education and research. Second, the work examined the “enacted curriculum” (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001, p. 2). The research that formed the basis of this thesis also examined enacted practices: specifically,

exploring what were the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were occurring. Third, the complexity of the literacy demands of the senior years of schooling requires careful scaffolding and teaching in the transitionary years between primary and senior schooling. Hence, an understanding of what literacy requirements exist in senior school is useful to assist teachers as they guide middle years' students towards the learning area specialisations of senior schooling (Henderson, 2012).

Globally, nationally, and locally, the importance of teaching literacy and curriculum literacies has been established. Current literature offers several reasons for this. First, improving learning outcomes for school students is a stated goal of education policies both internationally and nationally (MYCEETYA, 2008; OfSTED, 2011). One way to improve results has been to improve students' literacy. Second, literacy is not just important for successful academic outcomes at a school level, but also for active participation in the broader, social community. As an adjunct to the view of literacy as necessary for participation in the wider community, an emphasis on the economic factors associated with literacy has been noted. Wyse and Opfer (2010) further discuss this idea of globalisation and its connection to education policy and in particular, literacy teaching and learning. While the purpose of this literature review is not to debate the realities of globalisation, it is worth noting that "the real impact of these pressures on state institutions, such as education, is shaped by policymakers' perceptions" (Wyse et al., 2010, p. 439). Countries such as the UK, the USA and Australia recognise the need to compete internationally, and hence, this is one reason for the rise of the regulatory state designed to minimise economic risks (Wyse & Opfer, 2010).

Lastly, a consideration is necessary of the apparent slump in learning outcomes that has been identified as occurring in Year 4 (Chall, 1986), and the need for more academic

proficiency in literacy after the early years phase. That these two are connected is evident. However, Hirsch (2003) questions whether this slump commences suddenly or whether there is evidence to support an argument that it begins sooner, but is more apparent in fourth grade because of increasing complexity and demands across the curriculum. The improvement of reading comprehension is considered to be an important component of preventing this decline in learning outcomes. Kitson (2011b) discusses this decline and shows how using multimodal texts in Years 3 and 4 can build reading comprehension. Hirsch (2003) argues that for students' reading comprehension to improve, three factors are important: fluency, vocabulary, and domain knowledge. He shows that increased time spent on improving these factors is likely to lead to improved comprehension. However, as students move up the school phases, this often fails to occur as teachers concentrate more on content (Luke et al, 2003; Parris, Fisher, & Headley, 2009). Therefore, if students are not given explicit instruction in vocabulary, along with domain knowledge and are not fluent readers, comprehension of the more complex, academic texts of the middle school years is likely to be impeded. Hence, it is of critical importance that teachers continue to teach curriculum literacies.

Furthermore, academic tasks increase in complexity as students move through school. This means students need to be more proficient in academic literacies (Herman & Wardrip, 2012). The concept of academic literacies was originally used in university settings but has become relevant in schools too. This thesis is not examining academic literacies but, suffice to say, academic literacies require students to be able to switch between writing styles and genres of the diverse subjects across the curriculum. Research has revealed the differences that exist between subjects (Herman & Wardrip, 2012; Unsworth, 2001). For example, functional linguists such as Halliday (1985) and Martin

(1992) have identified a range of genres for each subject. The generic structures are quite different as are the language features required to read and write competently within them. Students moving through the school phases and subjects need to negotiate an ever-increasing range of text types and features (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). Hence, students require specific teaching of these types in order to become proficient at them.

2.8 What is needed for students to be literate in subject areas

This literature review has shown that to be considered literate in contemporary times is more than just being able to read and write. Unsworth (2001) went further and argued that literacy is best viewed along a continuum and the focus should be on *becoming* literate rather than *being* literate. He attributed this notion of a literacy continuum to the rapidly changing emergence of new technologies that students are required to master. This idea was also raised by Avramidis, Lawson, and Norwich (2010) who challenged a narrow definition of literacy as applied to students who are considered illiterate or struggling to meet minimum standards of literacy. Avramidis et al. (2010) placed school literacy amongst a wider continuum of social communication and argued that the changing nature of literacy has affected what it has meant to be considered illiterate and hence, potentially can impact the way teachers view and teach students who are considered traditionally to be experiencing difficulties with literacy. Therefore, a consideration of what it means to be literate from a number of perspectives was necessary in this literature review. Hence, the review included a consideration of what it means to be literate from these perspectives: general literacy (including reading and writing), multiliteracies, critical literacy, subject

literacies (or disciplinary literacies), as well as what it means to be literate in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, History, and Geography.

From a general perspective, what it means to be literate encompasses many facets from developing reading and writing skills to having the motivation to become literate. The General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document delineates these skills in detail and does not limit them to reading and writing. The document identifies "behaviours and dispositions" (ACARA, 2013, p. 9) necessary to develop literacy. These include: "learning to be self-sufficient; working harmoniously … being open to ideas … from and about diverse cultures; improv[ing] and enhanc[ing] work; and being prepared to question the meanings and assumptions in texts" The General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document also views literacy along a continuum, as previously mentioned and supports the notion that literacy develops over time. Therefore, students need time to develop more than just the traditional skills of reading and writing. The General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) also supports the contemporary view of literacy as a social and cultural construction and hence, reflects the research in this area (Culican, 2004; Hirsch, 2003; Hoffman, 2010; Unsworth, 2001; Wyse, Andrews, & Hoffman, 2010).

Motivation and engagement are also key factors in becoming literate (Paris & McNaughton, 2010). Teachers are encouraged to develop tasks and activities that are authentic and engage the learner (Pascoe & Wyatt-Smith, 2013) and facilitate the development of student vocabulary and comprehension (Biemiller, 2003; Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006; Hirsch, 2003). The link between literacy, vocabulary, and comprehension is well documented (Brozo & Sutton Flynt, 2008; Scott & Nagy, 2009) and is therefore not discussed further beyond a few observations. With reference to vocabulary building, a study by Scott and Nagy (2009) argues the need for building what

they term “word consciousness” (p. 106). Scott and Nagy (2009) assert that this term encompasses both the knowledge *and* dispositions necessary to “learn, appreciate and effectively use” words. Thus, as reflected in the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document, it appears as if disposition and behaviours are intrinsic to being literate. However, a more exhaustive scan of literature than is the scope of this review would be necessary to examine this point. Brozo and Sutton Flynt (2008) further the argument for providing texts that motivate students, particularly adolescents. Kitson (2011b) argues for multimodal texts to serve a similar purpose. Given the numbers of students who reportedly disengage from school (Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake, 2008), motivation and engagement appear to be significant factors in assisting students to become literate in subjects across the curriculum.

From the perspective of the Australian national curriculum documents and the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013), literacy involves two processes: comprehending and composing texts. Four areas of knowledge are crucial to both processes: Text knowledge (text structure and cohesion), grammar knowledge (sentence structures, words and word groups, and expressing opinion and point of view), word knowledge (subject vocabulary and spelling), and visual knowledge (understanding how visual elements create meaning). There is a plethora of literature available examining the two skills of writing and reading that are linked to composing and comprehending. While it is acknowledged that there are other composing skills (signing, speaking) and also comprehending skills (listening, viewing), as the predominant skills required for school learning and assessment are reading and writing, this literature review now considers these skills.

Reading

There is a vast body of literature available regarding reading and teaching practices related to reading. Notwithstanding all the models of reading available and the plethora of research around reading and its importance to academic success in the later years of schooling, there is still a view that teachers are not catering to the demands of the discipline specific reading required in the middle school years. In particular, Blanton et al. (2007) found that the complex expository texts found from around the fifth year of schooling were challenging, even for competent readers, and that when reading instruction was offered, it often failed to meet the requirements for successful mastery. So, while this thesis does not focus on reading in all its forms, nevertheless it is important to consider some of the teaching practices and understandings of reading, particularly those relevant to middle school teachers.

Other research papers offer a myriad of recommendations around teaching reading and what students need to be literate. Morris and Stewart-Dore (1984) describe four stages of reading: Stage 1 (Preparing for reading); Stage 2 (Thinking through the reading); Stage 3 (Extracting and organizing information) and Stage 4 (Translating information from reading to writing). Henderson (2012) offers some reading principles and practices but argues that teachers need to be flexible in their choice to enable the learning needs of all students to be met. One approach advocated by Henderson (2012) is for teachers to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning by linking literacy learning to outside school lives. This was an issue that needed to be investigated during the study. Henderson and Exley (2012) also argued for the use of multiliteracies pedagogy as an approach to teaching literacy. Part of this approach involves using overt instruction, providing scaffolding, and

teaching the subject metalanguage. During this study, it was important to investigate whether or not teachers used these teaching practices.

Reading models include models by Fang and Schleppegrell (2010), Fisher and Frey (2012), Freebody and Luke (1990, 1999), Moje (2008), and Rose and Martin (2012). Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) argue the case for an approach to literacy teaching using a functional analysis of the language underpinning a subject, whereas Moje (2008) has provided a framework that suggests teachers consider 4 Es: engage, elicit/engineer, examine, and evaluate as part of their curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Curriculum literacies teaching practices include building knowledge of the field, activating prior knowledge, and developing the specialist or technical vocabulary of a particular subject area. The practice of building knowledge of the field is linked to the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). The teaching and learning cycle comprises four stages that are designed to scaffold the students' learning experiences. These four stages are: build knowledge of the field, deconstruct the text, joint construction, followed by independent construction. In particular, building knowledge of the field ensures teacher and students share understandings of the topic. Activating prior knowledge aids in building comprehension of a text and involves eliciting from students what they already know in order to build further on that knowledge. This particular practice is useful for students whose first language is not English but is also useful for all students.

Research has focused on content area reading and currently, reading in the disciplines in the form of disciplinary literacy. Brozo et al. (2013) argue that content area reading is an "outside-in" approach while disciplinary literacy "evolves from the inside out" so that the text "and the goals for reading the text dictate the reading processes" (p. 354). However, other researchers argue that teaching general reading strategies is useful,

especially for those students who struggle with reading and writing (Faggella-Luby, Graner, Deschler & Drew, 2012). In Queensland at least two guidelines to teaching reading are available to teachers: the 2010 *Teaching Reading and Viewing* and the 2010 *Teaching Reading and Viewing: Comprehension strategies and activities for Years 1–9*. These guidelines provide useful metalanguage for describing the practices related to teaching comprehension. A third guideline is available to teachers in Victoria (Australia), *A Common Language to talk about Comprehending and Composing* (Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia, Numeracy and Literacy Unit [DECD], 2014), which provides a useful language framework to describe practices related to both comprehending and composing, and also the four knowledges required in each process. A useful cross-curricular, general reading resource for middle school teachers in Canada is the *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12* developed by teachers.

There are many practices teachers can employ to teach reading and specifically, reading comprehension. For example, teachers might need to continue to develop students' specific text, word, and grammar knowledge before they [students] commence reading any assigned text. This development of prior knowledge is important to enable students to make connections between prior and new knowledge, make inferences, and engage with texts beyond a superficial understanding (QCAA, 2010). Explicit teaching is also required around practices related to reading imagery and developing reading comprehension skills, as well as developing comprehension of multimodal texts (QCAA, 2010).

In Australia, national curriculum documents, in particular, The General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) detail three aspects of comprehension: Navigate, read, and view learning area texts; Listen and respond to learning area texts; and Interpret and analyse learning area texts. Practices related to these aspects of comprehension include "applying knowledge of

layout, content, vocabulary, grammar and visuals" (DECD, 2014, p.24). They also include "navigating a wide range of more demanding subject texts with extensive graphic representations" (DECD, 2014, p. 24). Thus, in order to comprehend a text fully, teachers need to teach students how to link these aspects in order to create meaning. Furthermore, these practices need to be taught explicitly (Rowe, 2005). In addition, teaching reading practices can be employed pre, during, or post reading so that students learn how to navigate a text at different stages in the reading process. Freebody and Luke (1990) suggest that teachers should also encourage students to operate within the Four Roles of a Reader model. Freebody and Luke (1990) advocate the explicit and sequential teaching of reading allowing for teacher explanation, modelling, guided practice and application.

Writing

Similarly to teaching reading, there are different ways to teach writing across the different subjects. Furthermore, there are many assumptions and approaches underpinning the teaching of writing that occur in subject areas (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Topping & McManus, 2002; Young & Fulwiler, 1986). Therefore, it is acknowledged that the different assumptions about writing held by teachers in different subject areas are likely to inform the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in the classroom. In addition, present beliefs about writing in Australian education are also likely to inform its teaching. Urquhart (2005) outlines the following general assumptions about writing:

- Writing is a complex process
- It is linked to assessment and writing to learn
- It is part of developing critical thinking skills in middle years
- Teachers need to consider both the task and the assessment rubric in their teaching,
- Teaching practices related to writing are complex.

In addition to these assumptions, a sixth can be added: writing can be taught as a four stage process: pre-write, draft, revise/ edit, rewrite (Tompkins, Campbell, Green, & Smith, 2015), while Sejnost and Thiese (2007) use the terms creating, shaping and revising. Walshe (2015) describes writing as a process that provides teachers and students with a language framework for talking and thinking about writing.

The concept of curriculum literacies foregrounds the need to teach the subject specific ways of writing and the concept of disciplinary literacy extends this idea (Cambourne, 2013; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Moje, 2008, 2015; Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014, 2015). The concept of disciplinary literacy suggests that teachers need to initiate students into the "writing practices used by a field of study to create and disseminate information" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014, p. 630). Klein, Boscolo, Gelati, and Kirkpatrick (2014) have proposed that, in the primary years, students frequently write more general text genres and apply general reasoning strategies, but this tends to change in secondary school and beyond where writing is usually more discipline based. Klein et al. (2014) in clarifying their developmental approach to writing in the disciplines have argued that while secondary students may be taught discipline specific research strategies in some areas (e.g., History), in writing, they may be taught only how to write a text more general in nature (e.g. an argument structure) that is not specific to the particular discipline. Similarly, Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) argued that content area writing has resulted in more generic literacy skills being taught, rather than those writing skills specifically required in the disciplines.

For Australian teachers, approaches to teaching writing in the subject area are shaped by the curriculum documents provided, in this case the ACARA Literacy Continuum (2013), and the National Literacy Learning Progression (ACARA, 2018). These

documents detail ‘the what’ (Kitson, 2015) of writing or composing, and the sub-elements of text knowledge, grammar knowledge, word knowledge, and visual knowledge and assist teachers to understand the literacy demands of the different learning areas. However, as Kitson (2015) has suggested, the literacy continuum is only a starting place, and may not be particularly supportive for middle school teachers who have no background in literacy practices for writing. Wyatt-Smith and Jackson (2016) argue that curriculum documents cannot be expected to provide comprehensive strategies on how to teach writing.

Nevertheless, the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document outlines the developmental nature of communication from the spoken texts of the Early Years phase of schooling, to the formal and academic nature of writing tasks in the Middle and Senior years. Learners are required to compose a variety of spoken, written, visual, and multimodal texts across their schooling. Furthermore, similar to comprehending texts, students need to be taught and then use several writing practices in order to compose the required texts. The teaching and learning cycle mentioned in the section on reading is useful for writing too. Deconstruction of a text often also involves the use of a model text to focus on explicit structural and language features of a particular genre. Genre theory, developed in Australia in the 1980’s, describes how writing is used across the curriculum for a variety of purposes and audiences (Derewianka, 2015). Proponents of genre theory support the active role of a teacher in teaching this writing practice, particularly using the key stages of the teaching and learning cycle. In Australia, different genres are used in subjects across the curriculum with the most number being found in Science and History (Unsworth, 2015). Other researchers such as Lawrence, Galloway, Yim, and Lin (2013) argue that students are expected to master a range of written genres across the curriculum:

to support their learning, to convey the complex thinking of the subject area, and to demonstrate their learning so that it may be assessed.

One guide useful to Australian teachers around the teaching of writing practices is: the Queensland 2009 *Teaching writing* while a second guideline, *A Common Language to Talk about Comprehending and Composing* (Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia, Numeracy and Literacy Unit, 2014) provides a useful language framework to describe general composing practices. The 2009 *Teaching Writing* guide suggests that teaching practices focus on teaching students how to write a number of different texts for different purposes, including writing for learning and writing to demonstrate learning. The idea of writing for different purposes has also been posited by other researchers. For example, Unrau (2004) divides writing purposes into three categories: writing to assess learning, writing to promote learning, and writing to observe student work. 'Writing to learn' (van Drie, Van Boxtel, & Braaksma, 2014) is where writing is considered a means or medium to support learning and is a component of writing across the curriculum approach (Gammill, 2006).

However, some researchers (May & Wright, 2008; Wise, 2009) have found that secondary schools tend to have a series of challenges with regard to implementing approaches, as discussed above. For example, writing and literacy skills in general are often viewed as only the problem of a select group of students, and teaching practices tend to be remedial in nature, rather than targeted for all students. Teacher beliefs can also impede the teaching of writing in the disciplines, with some teachers resisting, based on the belief that these skills should be taught in primary school, or that it is only the responsibility of English teachers. For example, Gleeson's (2015) research has shown that teachers are polarised in their beliefs about how to teach writing and other literacy skills in their subject

areas. Other challenges to teaching curriculum literacies practices can be that secondary teachers lack the knowledge required as they are rarely trained to teach writing and other literacy skills (Gillis, 2014; Moje, 2008). Rather, as Gillis (2014) and Moje (2008) have suggested, secondary teachers are experts in their subject discipline, but may have little desire to teach writing and other literacy skills.

Wilson, McNaughton, and Zhu (2017) in their study of 22 New Zealand schools and 104 secondary teachers working with Year 12 found that literacy instruction in subjects such as Biology, Mathematics, and English areas primarily focused on vocabulary and word meanings. Further, there was little observed focus on developing students' knowledge about text structure and language, apart from in English. This seems to confirm Shanahan and Shanahan's (2008) point that disciplinary texts are rarely taught, and can be challenging for adolescents to write.

Wilson et al. (2017) also found that rather than extended dialogic approaches to classroom talk, which is one of the most powerful ways to develop subject area literacy (Wilkinson & Son, 2011), traditional Initiation, Response, and Evaluation (IRE) patterns (Mehan, 1979), teacher centred approaches including question and answer, and modelling or lecturing were mostly observed in their study. Whilst these approaches are well accepted, researchers also argue that adolescents often require a more active participation in learning (Pendergast & Bahr, 2010).

Finally, while many of the arguments for teaching writing across the curriculum can be linked to meeting the needs of diverse learners, it is important to consider Luke et al.'s (2003) claim that because of the changing nature of Australian society, all students could become at risk of experiencing difficulties with literacies across the curriculum and hence all require scaffolded and explicit teaching of writing which is outlined in much of the

literature. This argument has been supported by others. For example, Christie (2013) recognises that given the diversity of Australian learners, all teachers will teach English as a second language at some time or another. Moreover, as will be shown in Chapter Three, around one-fifth of the school population at the research site is identified as EAL/D and at least 1% as indigenous.

Multiliteracies

The idea that there are multiple ways of knowing is evident in the contemporary view of literacy. This view includes the concept of multiliteracies which "address[es] the codes and conventions of making meaning across modes, including linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, spatial, and various (multimodal) combinations of these" (Lu & Cross, 2014, p. 43). Developed in 1994 by the New London Group, the concept of multiliteracies encompasses new technologies and digital media as well as traditional notions of print and visual images. Kitson (2011a) describes multiliteracies as "a way of planning for reading in the 21st century [that] calls for a more discriminating approach to reading, with a focus on critical literacy" (p. 11). Other writers have mentioned the increasing diversity of 21st Century texts that students are expected to master (Barton, Arnold, & Trimble-Roles, 2015).

The importance of multiliteracies is reflected in the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document. It is interesting to note that this document lists multiliteracies separately, as an essential strand similar to the literacy one, whereas researchers tend to view multiliteracies as part of the general concept of literacy. The Australian national curriculum document highlights the need for new multiliteracies to be incorporated across the curriculum. However, their advent has also led to students needing to be literate across a greater range of texts than previously and also more discerning in their use of texts.

Connelly (2011) lists competencies she views as necessary in order to use multiliteracies. These include:

• Play – experimenting with one's surroundings and problem-solving

• Performance – adopting alternative identities, improvising, and discovering

• Simulation – interpreting and constructing dynamic models of real-world processes

• Appropriation – sampling and remixing media content

• Multitasking – shifting focus as needed to salient details

• Distributed cognition – interacting with tools that expand mental capacities

• Collective intelligence – pooling knowledge and comparing notes with others toward a common goal

• Judgment – evaluating the reliability and credibility (p.22).

Connelly (2011) also calls for more research into this area, specifically research into the impact of technology on learning. One could also argue that the incorporation of multiliteracies across the curriculum would have material impact on teaching practices too. Connelly (2011) also recommends that students utilise the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). This model underpins the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document. Using the Freebody and Luke (1990) model, in order to be considered multiliterate, students need to be taught how to be text users, text analysts, text decoders, and meaning makers. Furthermore, Connelly (2011) argues that students also need to understand and use semiotic tools of representation, discourse, and intertextuality in order to compose and fully comprehend these texts. Thus, to be literate in multiliteracies requires using and comprehending a new meta-language.

Therefore, this view of multiliteracies is once again foregrounding an approach to the socio-cultural concept of literacy. One challenge arising from these multiliteracies has

been identified by Curwood (2011) who outlines the findings from a research study in the United States that has implications for Australia and in particular, the professional development of teachers. This study found that "the ways in which technology is integrated within the English curriculum are still very much dependent upon teachers' beliefs, values, and skills" (Curwood, 2011, p. 68). While the study focused on English teaching, it also has implications for the present study.

Critical Literacy

Another challenge which has been identified by Curwood (2011) is the continued need for students to become critically literate. A Monash University study (Snyder, Jevons, Henderson, Gabbott, & Beale, 2011) into the multiliteracies raises the question of students developing critical awareness and in particular, what they termed "critical marketing literacy" (p. 32). That is, students need to be aware of the ways in which marketing campaigns strive to capture their attention (and finances). One might argue that students have always needed to be literate in this way. However, Snyder et al.'s (2011) study highlights how rife these marketing practices are amongst young students, more so than previously. Other writers have also highlighted the increased need to develop critical literacy (Kitson, 2011a; Unsworth, 2001). Unsworth (2001) in critiquing the work of Luke (2000) explains that "a rudimentary working definition of critical literacy … involves a meta-knowledge of diverse meaning systems and the socio-cultural contexts in which they are produced and embedded in everyday life" (p.15/16).

Thus, being literate also encompasses understanding the social constructedness of encountered texts. Dombey (2011) argues that this understanding involves students having the ability to create "new meanings" (Wyse et al., 2010, p. 110). This view of being literate has been reflected by Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999) where the authors explored the notion of

curriculum literacies and the "situated view of literate practices that differed in kind, as well as form" (p. 33), thus highlighting the many different literacies existing in subject areas. Being literate requires switching rapidly and frequently among these (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999). As already discussed in Section 2.6, various researchers have used the concept of disciplinary literacy to encompass the differences in subject area literacies (Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Moje (2008) argues that disciplinary literacy is "a form of critical literacy because it builds an understanding of how knowledge is produced in the disciplines, rather than just building knowledge in the disciplines" (p. 97). This view of teaching literacy in a discipline concurs with the already reviewed literature on critical literacy and fits the definition of literacy as being socially constructed.

Subject literacies: Science, Geography, Mathematics, History

An understanding of the socially constructed nature of texts can be enhanced through an application of semiotic tools (Connelly, 2011). This literature review has already noted that students need to use and understand representations in order to be literate in the 21st century. This is reflected in what it means to be literate in the subject areas, specifically Mathematics and Science because all disciplines can be represented by signs that have meaning (Waldrip, Prain, & Carolan, 2010). Tang and Moje (2010) discuss multimodal representations in Science in particular and argue that they "see science literacy, and disciplinary literacy in general, as the cultural practices that encompass specific ways of talking, writing, viewing, drawing, graphing, and acting, within a specialized discourse community" (p. 83).

Hence, in order to be literate in Science, students need to know how to "integrat[e] the multimodal elements of representations according to scientific conventions in order to construct the canonical meaning of accepted scientific concepts" (Tang & Moje, 2010, p. 84

83). In other words, as Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) argue, students need to do what the experts do in order to succeed. Therefore, teachers need to scaffold their learners' subject literacies to facilitate this development. Klein and Kirkpatrick (2010) discuss the need for students of Science to learn how to think in Science and they show that representations provide a way for this to occur. Hence, for students to comprehend scientific texts and data, teachers need to teach them the representations specific to Science. These representations are also multimodal in nature and involve complex literacy understandings to enable students to learn the new knowledge they require.

The use of multimodal texts and representations also underpins the Geography curriculum. As Butler (2013) argues, as a discipline, Geography has changed, necessitating a change in the literacies required for success in this subject. Butler (2013) also identifies several of the text types in the Australian curriculum that students need to negotiate in order to compose and comprehend. These include: maps (print and digital); three-dimensional models, including the globe of the world; diagrams; statistical tables and graphs (numerical data displays); photographs (print and digital); factual descriptions, explanations, fictional stories (based on geographical concepts); interviews, field study reports, persuasive texts, and arguments (Butler, 2013). He adds that another text type is the actual landscape. While the question of whether this constitutes a text or not is a debatable one, students still need to be able to visualise the landscape in order to make sense of the representations found in written texts. Butler (2013) mentions the gap in research around the required literacies for Geography and attributes this to a lack of focus historically on Geography as a separate subject within the curriculum. Nevertheless, he outlines several key factors of what it means to be literate in Geography as required by the national curriculum. A key factor is

developing the complex language skills required from the mid- primary phase. The development of visual literacy is also seen to be significant.

Visual literacy is also an important aspect of mathematical literacy, for example diagrams, charts, and tables make up just three of the visual forms learners in Mathematics classrooms typically encounter. However, mathematics literacy also comprises communication. Turner (2010) argues that reading and decoding statements or tasks or objects is an important part of understanding a mathematical problem. Analysis and problem–solving require interpretation of mathematical data, and terms and explanation or justification of the solution might also be required. Thus, cognitive processing is an important element of mathematical literacy. Also important to mathematical literacy is "understanding and manipulating" symbols and algorithms (Turner, 2010, p. 60). Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) agree, arguing that mathematical texts pose additional language challenges as they use two different languages, natural and mathematical symbols in addition to visual representations. Technical mathematics vocabulary is also difficult and learners often have to use everyday words in a complex and abstract way. Research has suggested ways that teachers can make mathematical literacy more visible (Hillman, 2014; Thompson & Rubenstein, 2014), but this can be "difficult for teachers, especially at the middle and senior phases of schooling" (Hager, 2018, p.361) as teachers in these phases of schooling are usually content area specialists, but not necessarily literacy specialists.

The notion that content area or subject teachers are not literacy specialists is well supported in research (e.g., Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Gillis, 2014; Moje, 2008). In a study analysing expert readers across History, Mathematics and Chemistry, Shanahan, Shanahan and Misischia (2011) concluded that teachers rarely paid attention to teaching literacy despite the presence of a growing number of papers, reports, and models.

Schleppegrell, Greer, and Taylor (2008) argue that students need to understand academic language in these years, and in particular, the different genres, vocabulary, and grammar of each subject. Schleppegrell et al. (2008) argue that History in particular is linguistically challenging as it requires students to read and interpret texts rather than experience content in a hands-on way. Literacy in History requires interpretation, recognition of sequences of events, understanding of authorial points of view, the weighing of evidence, and the formulation of arguments (Schleppegrell et al., 2008) and also the ability to form abstract connections (Shanahan et al., 2011). Hence, it is important for teachers of subjects across the curriculum at school phases beyond early primary years to teach the literacy demands underpinning each subject. The key role played by teachers was also emphasised in the Northern Territory Literature Review (2010) which concluded that teachers needed to know about literacy learning and also required a wide repertoire of practices. The review turns now to a discussion of pedagogical approaches to teaching literacy.

2.9 Literacy Pedagogy

Research has revealed many different pedagogical practices that can be considered "best practice" and utilised to improve student literacy. Henderson and Exley (2012, p. 21) argue that teaching literacies in the middle years is problematic as there is no "one-size-fits-all curricular and pedagogical model". Kitson (2015) has developed a framework that teachers can use to assist in the development of literacy skills. She identifies three key stages that need to be considered when planning to teach subject literacies:

- Identifying literacy demands (the *what*);
- Building literacy capabilities (the *how*);
- Reflecting on literacy capabilities (*what now*)

Kitson (2015) provides examples of how this might occur in a Geography lesson and specifies the importance of embedding literacy into the stages of teaching and learning. Kitson's (2015) example also highlights the multiplicity of literacies required to comprehend one Geography lesson and supports Connelly's (2011) use of a similar framework to develop multiple literacy capabilities and Wyatt-Smith et al.'s (1999) argument about the speed at which students are required to comprehend texts in a single lesson.

While the General Capabilities document (ACARA, 2013) provides some detail on literacy requirements, it gives little or no guidance to pedagogy. This aspect was also important to this research. The pedagogical practices that are reviewed below are not exhaustive, but provide some aspects important to the analysis of curriculum literacies teaching practices.

The Literacy Literature Review undertaken by the Northern Territory's education department (2010) described various effective approaches to improve student literacy including:

• a balanced and integrated range of oral, reading and writing activities that provide opportunities for students to be a code breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text analyst

• explicit, systematic teaching and learning sequences (p. 10).

Another approach of interest to this research is explicit instruction which has been lauded as a pedagogical practice that achieves effective literacy learning outcomes (Edwards-Groves, 1999; Hall, 2002; Kasprzak, 2010; Norton, 2009). This was also evident in the Northern Territory Literature Review (2010) which summarised effective literacy teaching as being "systematic and explicit" (p. 17). Indeed, the Australian Liberal-National Coalition Federal Government in 2014 announced funding for Indigenous education using

this model of literacy teaching. One of the features of explicit instruction is an emphasis on scaffolding as a classroom practice. Research studies using explicit instruction have revealed the significance of scaffolding to improved outcomes (Goeke, 2008). In Australia, studies carried out in Western Australia have supported this research (Culican, 2004; Kasprzak, 2010; Norton, 2009). The review of the Australian curriculum (Australian Government, 2014) recommended that further research be undertaken into the efficacy of explicit instruction.

Other important pedagogical practices include a focus on Higher Order Thinking Skills modelled on Bloom's taxonomy. Cambourne (2013) explores this notion and the difficulties teachers have with linking content and thinking skills specifically related to their subject areas. Subject areas "are human-created domains of inquiry, each with specific methods for constructing knowledge and promoting disciplined theories about the big questions of life," (Cambourne, 2013, p. 10). This concept of constructing knowledge is linked to a specific notion of literacy as a social, political and economic construction. In Queensland in the late 1990s and early 2000s, this notion of literacy was taught in the senior English curriculum as critical literacy and was part of a movement that viewed literacy as more than just a specific set of skills.

Luke and Woods (2009) discuss the importance of critical literacy for the classroom. They explain how critical literacy is able to explore the social and cultural contexts of texts, while also enabling students to engage "explicitly with the technical features and social uses of written and multimodal texts" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 9). This understanding of literacy formed the basis for literacy education in Queensland and is an important link to Bourdieu's work on social capital (Albright & Luke, 2012). Literacy pedagogy using this understanding has attempted to link traditional literacy skills (textual features) and higher

order thinking skills to enable students to analyse how "texts are a means for construing, shaping, and reshaping worlds in particular normative directions with identifiable ideological interests and consequences for individuals and communities" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 9).Various other models of literacy teaching across the curriculum include Moje's (2015) 4 Es and Fang and Schleppegrell's (2010) model of functional language analysis.

Last, in terms of teaching literacy to adolescents, curriculum literacies teaching practices need to take into account, the difficulties experienced by many students during the adolescent years (Honan, 2010). Increasingly, the literacies used at school appear irrelevant to the literacies used by students outside of school (Gee,1990). This often leads to student disengagement and boredom. Two literacy practices advocated are the need to create an active learning environment, and encourage students to generate and share ideas (Alvermann, 2006). There are many ways to achieve these goals. One way to do this is suggested by Chadbourne and Pendergast (2010) who argue that integrating teaching across subjects and using 'real-life' problems. Project Based Learning [PBL] is a model of teaching that can facilitate both integration and 'real-life' problem-solving (Bender, 2012). In addition, while many teachers use the traditional Initiate, Respond, Evaluate [IRE] pattern of pedagogy, researchers such as Edwards-Groves, Anstey and Bull (2016) outline the potentially constraining aspects of the traditional IRE pattern of pedagogy and call for more dialogic patterns of talk in the classroom, arguing that research is showing how beneficial this pedagogical practice is for all student learning.

A key aspect of teachers' curriculum literacies teaching practices is considering what might impact on their choices. One factor that was considered was the enabling or constraining influence of high stakes testing. Luke et al.'s (2003) report raised another possible factor, school leadership of literacy. Padgham and Chatto (2013) report on

anecdotes shared by principals in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory regarding literacy practices in schools and stress the important role played by principals in leading literacy education and practices. The importance of principals leading literacy practices was confirmed in another Australian study, *Principals as Literacy Leaders*, 2009-2010 (Trimper, 2009). In addition, a Queensland study, *Principals as Literacy Leaders in Indigenous Communities* (Johnson, Dempster, & McKenzie, 2013) confirmed the vital role played by the principal working within the community. While the school in which the study occurred was not located in an Indigenous community the school data showed there were Indigenous students enrolled and hence, the study might have some relevance. The role of school leaders was investigated during this study.

There are various understandings of school leadership. One understanding is the notion of distributed leadership. Timperley (2005) describes distributed leadership structures arguing that transformation in schools is not the result of one person's efforts. Timperley (2005) further develops his argument to show that it is how school leaders "promote and sustain conditions" and the "dynamic interactions" that occur, that matter. Two approaches to distributed leadership are evident: descriptive (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004) and normative (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003). The descriptive approach to leadership requires an examination of how leadership is distributed through working with artefacts such as materials and symbols. On the other hand, the normative approach involves distributing leadership across more people and the creation of new roles. Another framework of leadership posited by Dempster (2009) describes three fundamentals central to leadership: purpose, context, and human agency. This framework was utilised in the *Principal as Literacy Leaders* mentioned in the previous paragraph. In the case of school leaders, a clear, moral purpose should drive them, and the purpose is to improve

students' lives through learning. Within this framework, five dimensions are seen as important: professional development, curriculum and teaching, conditions for learning (physical, social and emotional), parent and community support, and sharing leadership.

In contrast to the approaches to leadership described above that focus on the person or people, other researchers describe leadership in terms of leading practices (Grootenboer & Hardy, 2017; Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2014; Wilkinson, Olin, Lund, Ahlberg, & Nyvaller, 2010). These authors draw attention to the "situated knowledge and situated action" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 157) of the work of leading. One of the roles of the school leader is to create educational conditions which transform teaching and learning, providing some similarity to Timperley's (2005) notion of promoting conditions that sustain. In particular, Kemmis et al. (2014) investigate the practice architectures of leading which shape teaching practices. Kemmis et al. (2014) distinguish between positional and informal leading practices. The work of Wilkinson et al. (2010) has established the important role of the leading practices of senior school leaders in creating conditions that enable the flourishing of a praxis–informed approach to teaching. Other researchers, (Edwards-Groves, Grootenboer, & Ronnerman, 2016; Grootenboer, 2018; Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves, & Ronnerman, 2015; Grootenboer, Ronnerman & Edwards-Groves, 2017; Wilkinson, 2017) have described the leading practices of middle leaders and established the importance of their leading practices to the transformation of schools. These articles provided rich material for the investigation of the leading practices at Abimelech College.

In addition to the important influence of leaders and leading practices, researchers such as Padgham and Chatto (2013) have stated the need for a common language across schools for talking about literacy. Other studies in the USA support this notion. Thomson (2010) reported two findings important to the present study. These related to schools

promoting shared values of adolescent literacy instruction and having a supportive infrastructure. Part of the infrastructure required was a commitment to professional learning and opportunity for collaborative implementation of literacy across the curriculum. Luke et al. (2003) also recommended the need for whole school approaches towards literacy. However, their report found that subject teachers made little effort to teach literacy across the curriculum. Instead, teachers had "ceded the teaching of reading and writing to English teachers, many of whom also lack systematic expertise in the teaching of reading" (p. 37). This finding was supported by other researchers such as Goldman (2012) who reported similar findings.

Luke et al. (2003) also called for enhanced professional development of teachers in whole school literacy approaches. Other studies in Australia echo this need (e.g., Beutel, 2006; Faulkner et al., 2012; Robinson & Timperley, 2007), while international research papers and education reports in the UK and the U.S.A. have also supported these recommendations (Ash, 2000; Bennett, 2013; Frey, 2010; OfSTED, 2013; Reynolds, 1998). These papers have opened the way to further research into teachers' practices and potential links to professional learning. This notion will be presented as part of the findings in Chapter Six and discussed further in Chapter Seven.

One final influence on literacy pedagogy is the integration of technology. In Australia, technology is one of the general capabilities mentioned in the national documents of the same name (ACARA, 2013). The body of research into the influence of technological integration is extensive (Hur, Shannon, & Wolf; 2016). While the purpose of this review is not to discuss technology integration in the classroom in any detail, it is important to note that overall, research has shown the positive effects of its integration (Hur, Shannon & Wolf; 2016). A study by Bitner and Bitner (2002) outlined keys to successful

integration of technology with the crucial factor being the teacher. Hur et al.'s (2016) study investigated the relationships between internal and external factors affecting technology integration. The authors noted that professional learning of teachers was the key to positive use of technology. Also, principals played a central role in the integration of technology, particularly in teachers' willingness to be innovative. Another study by Danielsson, Berge, and Lidar (2015) discussed the various power relationships between students and teachers in technology–rich classrooms. The review turns now to a consideration of the theoretical framework of this study, practice theory.

2.10 Practice Theory

This study investigated the teaching practices of middle school teachers. In that sense, it has investigated, in particular, *professional practices*. Both 'professional' and 'practices', are contested terms. Since the term 'practices', as it has been used in this thesis, has been defined in Chapter One, the concept is revisited only briefly here. Green (2009) argues that practice is a "distinctive form of social life" and should not be understood simply as "other in terms and concepts such as theory or policy" (p. 2). He argues for the crucial importance of relating knowledge and practice particularly in the neo-liberal age of managerialism and accountability. Thus, the term practice is linked to new notions of what constitutes being a professional. Green's (2009) argument is important to this thesis as it offers a way of viewing educational practice from within the neo-liberal context. In other words, any focus by governments on teaching practices can be understood as part of "bureaucratic professionalism" (Green, 2009, p. 4) and an attempt to regulate what teachers do in the classroom.

In contrast to the aforementioned approach, which seems to offer a scientific discourse around practice, Schwandt's (2005) second model of practice offers a praxis-informed approach that contrasts a model of practice that defines theory and practice as opposites. Schwandt's (2005) second model closely links the notion of practice with purposeful engagement with the world. Engagement with the world suggests "shared understandings and values, connected to everyday experience" (Schwandt, 2005, p. 322). Green (2009) also differentiates between what he terms two meta-philosophical traditions associated with defining practice: neo-Aristotelian and post-Cartesian. Schwandt's (2005) understanding of practice operating within a praxis-oriented approach falls within the former tradition: neo-Aristotelian, and hence, practice has a moral and ethical purpose. This view of practice as having integrity was an important aspect of this thesis.

Nicolini (2013) argues that definitions of the term practice need to be understood within the context of the theoretical approach that is utilised. Nicolini (2013) cites the examples of MacIntyre (1981), who views practice from a cultural perspective, and Wenger (1998), who views practice from a social/historical perspective with a focus on individuals interacting in 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Nicolini (2013) also suggests there is some agreement about practices being situated in time (historical) and space (geographic), but what counts as a practice is also contested. Kemmis (2009) agrees with the contested nature of practice, and the need to examine definitions in the context of a specific theoretical approach. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) outline five different aspects of practice that might be taken depending on the theoretical approach. In a sense, these different views of practice when seen as competing can lead to "false dichotomies" (Kemmis, 2009) between those who see practice from the individual's perspective and those who view practice from the social perspective. Kemmis (2009) concludes that while

these five aspects appear to be competing, in fact, in his view, they might be more interconnected in nature. Therefore, Kemmis (2009) has postulated a view of practice that is dialectical in nature:

> The aim of thinking in dialectical terms is to think relationally-for example, to think how the individual is made by the social, and how the social is made by individuals, and how things seen from inside appear from the outside and vice versa. (p. 21)

Hence, the view of practice as both individual and social: "reflexive-dialectical" leading to an approach to practice that is "socially and historically-constituted, and as reconstituted by human agency and social action" (Kemmis, 2009, p. 21). Suffice to say here that this view of practice enabled an approach to that the findings and analysis of this current study that encompassed the contested nature of literacy teaching.

The approach to practice theory used in this thesis employs the seminal work of Kemmis et al. (2014) so it is their definition of practice that has been used throughout this thesis. To reiterate, practice used by Kemmis et al. (2014) is defined as "a socially established cooperative human activity" (p. 31), comprised of an individual's "sayings, doings, and relatings" which "hang together" in projects. The characteristic sayings, doings, and relatings are both enabled and constrained by particular site arrangements or "practice architectures" (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008).

Of further interest is the contention by Green (2009) that professional practices in fields such as education are being increasingly re-shaped by neoliberal policies. Consequently, Green (2009) argues that teachers face the emergence of "bureaucratic

professionalism" (p. 4) and resultant reframing of what it means to practise professionally. Therefore, research focus on practice has grown in interest and relevance (Green, 2009). What has been described as a 'practice turn' (Schatzki, 2001) in social research has been informed by a variety of practice theories. However, each theory is different and there is no "unified theory of practice" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 1). This review turns now to the theory of practice which has been utilised in this thesis.

2.11 Theory of practice architectures

Kemmis et al. (2014) build on other practice theories but claim that interactions do not occur without intervention. In contrast, people develop understandings of the world through years-long participation in, and interpretation of, the world. They acquire and use commonly shared languages to interact in the physical and social spaces of the world. Therefore, Kemmis et al. (2014) claim that "participants in a "community of practice" encounter one another in "intersubjective spaces" (p. 4) of language, time and space, and, social relations. Kemmis et al. (2014) describe these three intersubjective spaces in terms of three dimensions and three distinctive media through which people participate in the world. Moreover, these intersubjective spaces are arranged in ways that are site-specific. These arrangements are already found in the space or have been brought in. In addition, these arrangements always exist in some form in the social world and can be transformed. The three arrangements, dimensions, and media are:

- Cultural-discursive arrangements existing in the dimension of semantic space and realised through the medium of language
- Material-economic arrangements existing in the dimension of physical-time and space and realised through the medium of work and activity

- Social-political arrangements existing in the dimension of social space and realised through the medium of power.

The three arrangements 'hang together' in various ways: in places, people, practices, practice landscapes, and practice traditions (Kemmis et al., 2014). Practice landscapes (for example, a classroom) and practice traditions (historical conditions present at a site at a particular moment) both enable and constrain the ways in which people interact. Kemmis et al. (2014) argue further that practices are shaped in the dimensions of semantic, physical space-time, and social spaces. The three dimensions and the cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements are always bundled together in what Kemmis at al. (2014) call "practice architectures" (p. 14). Drawing on the work of Schatzki's (2003) concept of site ontologies, Kemmis et al.'s (2014) practice theory highlights the importance of the site as a place which both enables and constrains what practices are possible. Therefore, it is the particular set of conditions that exist at the site that make possible the practices that occur there.

The theory of practice architectures which has been developed by Kemmis et al. (2014) is based on an understanding of practices coming into being because of people acting collectively. Individual practices are orchestrated in collective projects that are both social and relational. At the same time, both individual and collective participation is prefigured and shaped by the practice architectures that exist at the site. These practice architectures are the particular cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that enable and constrain the sayings, doings and relatings of practices. Practices are enmeshed with the particular practice architectures and might leave behind in the site distinctive traces of the words, activities, and relationships of participants and the practice architectures. Therefore, practices engage with the site in the sayings (language

and discourses used), the doings (activities and work), and relatings (the social connections) of a practice and are enmeshed with the practice architectures.

Of relevance to this study is the premise that student learning involves being 'stirred into' particular practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). This is different to the traditional notion of a teacher transmitting knowledge or content. According to Kemmis et al. (2014) learning is "a process of initiation" into "substantive" practices and this initiation occurs in different ways (p. 55). Learners learn the language, activities and ways of relating, and the practices of a particular project. Therefore, learning is "intersubjective and interactional" so that learners co-habit certain semantic space, physical space-time, and social-space (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 57). Drawing on Wittgenstein (1958), Kemmis et al. (2014) describe learning as a process of being "stirred into" practices as they participate in these practices. This participation often occurs with the guidance of a teacher. Hence, according to Kemmis et al. (2014) learning is a process of initiation into the projects and, the sayings, doings and relatings of practices. Kemmis at al. (2014) conceive of learners not as learning new practices but as entering new practices that already exist and are known. The concept of stirring in is not a passive one for the learner. It involves the active co-participation of a learner in the language, activities, and ways of relating that "hang together" in the project of the practice and that together comprise the practice (p. 59). Furthermore, using the ideas of Bourdieu (1990) and, in particular, his concept of habitus, Kemmis et al. (2014) argue that learners learn the dispositions (knowledge, skills, and values) of a practice in which they co–participate. Hence, by participating in the sayings, doings, and relatings of a practice, learners are stirred into that practice.

Thus, Kemmis et al. (2014, p. 37) argue that the theory of practice architectures contributes a new way of understanding education as it occurs at the local site. Furthermore,

they argue that any attempt to change practices requires addressing not just individuals but creating new conditions or arrangements so that new intersubjective spaces are encountered by those who participate in the practices. Hence, for the purposes of this study, any attempt by policy makers to legislate the teaching of curriculum literacies across all school phases means establishing specific languages, constructing new spaces and times, and also providing physical and financial resources. It also involves connecting teachers, leaders, and all communities in new networks to enable this policy to come to life and be enacted by those inhabiting the local site. Thus, major changes to practices are only sustained by those who enact them and cannot be imposed. If teachers are merely operatives, without any professional and moral agency, education becomes schooling. Kemmis at al. (2014) distinguish between schooling that is "beset, harried and institutionalised" (p. 8) and education that is "oriented towards the good for each person and the good for mankind" (p.26). Therefore, education involves initiating learners into practices that enable them to live well and also to inhabit a "world worth living in" (p. 39). This definition of education stresses its double nature and its practice being conducted as praxis. The concept of praxis was an important one to investigate in the present study.

Theory of ecologies of practices

In addition to the theory of practice architectures articulated in the previous section, Kemmis et al. (2014) argue that practices exist in sites in ecological arrangements. The ecological arrangements are interdependent with the practices and the practice architectures. Thus, the sayings, doings, and relatings of one practice unfold and become the practice architectures that enable and constrain another practice. For example, the sayings, doings, and relatings of a particular teaching practice become the practice architectures for learning. Therefore, as one practice unfolds it leaves traces that enable and constrain other practices.

The ontological perspective of this theory is important as these traces are visible in the particular cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that exist at a site in complex ecological relationships. The ecological relationships are termed 'ecologies of practices' and in education, comprise five educational practices they posit exist in schools: student learning, teaching, professional learning (initial teacher education and continuing professional learning), leading (educational leadership and administration), and researching (educational research, critical evaluation and assessment). Together these five practices form the "Education Complex" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 51). Thus, these five practices form webs of connections and, using Capra's (2005) principles of living systems, Kemmis at al. (2014) argue that "practices and ecologies of practices relate to other practices and other ecologies of practices in ecological ways" (p. 49). Consequently, one practice impacts another practice and hence, practices might travel from site to site. Furthermore, these five practices have always existed in education in some relationship or another and are "nested" within the Education Complex (p. 51).

According to Kemmis et al. (2014, p. 49), who use Capra's (2005) principles of ecology, it is possible to analyse the relationships between these practices in the Education Complex through a consideration of:

- Networks: practices exist in relationships with other practices
- Nested systems: Different levels of practices are nested within one another
- Interdependence: The sustainability of different practices is dependent on other practices in ecologies of practices
- Diversity: An ecology of practices would include many different practices
- Cycles: It is possible to observe something cycling through practices
- Flows: Energy flows through the ecology of practices

- Development: Practices develop through stages
- Dynamic balance: An ecology of practices regulates itself through self-organisation.

Furthermore, Kemmis at al. (2014) argue that the five practices that form the Education Complex are historically resilient and resistant to change. Hence, any changes to practice require changes to all five. This idea is relevant to changes at both systemic and local levels of education.

2.12 Summary

This chapter has discussed the relevant literature concerning the contested nature of literacy, the context in which curriculum literacies teaching occurs, and in particular, the economic and political considerations have been summarised. The potential impact of high stakes testing on curriculum literacies teaching practices has been discussed and also different ways of looking at literacy as a concept have been offered. These include the view that literacy is a singular concept wherein teaching discrete skills such as reading and writing are privileged, or as a socially-constructed concept where a functional or integrated view of teaching literacies (in the plural) is fostered. The importance of teaching literacy across all phases of schooling and, in particular, the middle years, has been established. The concepts of content literacy, disciplinary literacy, and curriculum literacies have also been discussed. In addition some practices and models related to teaching curriculum literacies were offered. Finally, practice theories and the theories of practice architectures and ecologies of practices were reviewed. The literature reviewed also established the gap in research around curriculum literacies teaching practices and middle school teachers in independent schools in South East Queensland. In Chapter Three the research design and analytical framework for this study will be provided.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

Google' is not a synonym for 'research'.

Dan Brown

3.0 Introduction

This study used a qualitative, ethnographic case study research design to investigate the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school teachers in an independent school, in South East Queensland, Australia. The school has been identified using the pseudonym Abimelech College. The study was informed by Kemmis et al.'s (2014) practice theory and data analysis was conducted using the theory of practice architectures and the corresponding theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). The justification for the choice of an independent school has been established in Chapter One (see Section 1.3 and 1.4). The data collection was undertaken across term four of one academic school year and continued in term one and term two of the following year. In this chapter, the purpose for the study will be outlined, the research questions stated, and the research design explained. In addition, the theoretical framework that informed the study is presented along with a discussion of methodology, methods, and analysis. Last, issues related to ethics, reliability, and validity are discussed.

3.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the curriculum literacies teaching practices of the middle school teachers across a range of subjects at an independent school. The practices were interpreted to gain an understanding of the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were occurring at the site and the complex nature of the relationships

that exist between a site and the practices that occur there. The study involved observing the teachers as they taught their subjects and particularly, gaining an understanding of the teaching practices used to teach the underpinning literacies of their subjects. It also included listening in interviews and informal discussions to the teachers' explanations, reasons and descriptions of their curriculum literacies teaching practices and their understandings of these concepts. The research findings add to the existing body of knowledge around teaching practices related to curriculum literacies. However, the study has also given a voice to teachers as it was conducted in a sense with them [as they participated in the interviews and informal discussions] rather than only about them. In addition, the view that literacy is a social and cultural construction was important to the study.

3.2 Research Questions

The overarching aim of the study was to investigate the practices related to the teaching of curriculum literacies by middle school subject teachers at an independent school in South East Queensland. The research questions that guided the study were:

Research Question One: What are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Two: What enables and constrains the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the site and the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

In order to address these questions, a particular theoretical framework, methodology and research design were employed.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was informed by practice theory, and in particular, the theory of practice architectures and the corresponding theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). The study was grounded in a constructionist paradigm that sees reality as constructed and needing to be interpreted (Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2003). According to the constructionist paradigm, all reality comprises human practices that are constructed through interactions between humans and the world (Crotty, 1998). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) argue that a research paradigm is important to establish the design and direction of a research study. This study is a qualitative one that is relevant to the view of literacy as socially situated utilised in this study and the constructionist paradigm of the researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) perceive qualitative enquiry as “a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world” (p. 3) and researches “specifics of particular cases” (p. 12). Similarly, Gee (1990, 1996) has advocated that literacy is socially situated. In this study, I entered the worlds of the teachers in middle school classrooms and I relayed their curriculum literacies teaching practices that were situated at a specific site (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The experiences of the teachers were evident in the curriculum literacies teaching practices visible in the classroom observations and also in the semi-structured interviews that were recorded and transcribed. These transcriptions have been included in the findings chapters verbatim where relevant. Thus, the use of a qualitative paradigm enabled the participants’ voices to be heard and their point of view expressed. However, since knowledge is a construction and requires interpretation, it must be acknowledged that

even these transcriptions might be representations of a fluid reality (Silverman, 2003). In other words, other researchers at other times might interpret the findings differently. The three research questions (outlined in Section 3.3) that guided this study explored individual and collective understandings, beliefs, and practices which were interpreted to gain an "understand [ing of] the meanings and purposes of human activity" (Alexander, 2006, p. 210). In other words, the curriculum literacies teaching practices that occurred across a range of subject areas.

Thus, the value laden nature of qualitative research is acknowledged (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I also acknowledge my own potential biases in terms of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks chosen for this study and the potential limitations of these frameworks. Even the choice of research topic was a consequence of my own personal journey and reflected my own ontological and epistemological beliefs as evident by the anecdote recollected at the start of Chapter One. These beliefs are at the heart of a qualitative, constructionist paradigm and have enabled me to see reality as multiple and fluid, and the relationship between myself and the research site as a flexible, interactive one (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The theoretical framework (see Section 2.10 and 2.11) used within the qualitative paradigm that guided the study is the practice theory of Kemmis et al. (2014). In particular, the two theories of practice architectures and ecologies of practices informed the research. The theories of practice architectures and ecologies of practice are ontological in nature. Hence, the observation of practices as they occurred at the site was important. This theoretical perspective allowed an explanation of teacher practices aligned with their sayings, doings, and relatings. Incidentally these concepts align closely with the three concepts of People, Practices and Places mentioned in the *MYSA Position Paper* (2008).

This theoretical perspective also allowed for a full consideration of the site: both the classrooms and the school itself; so that the enabling and constraining arrangements and other practices enmeshed within the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014) became visible. In particular, the theory of practice architectures draws on Schatzki's (2005) notion of site ontologies. According to Schatzki (2005), practices are always located in time and space. These practices are shaped by the particular arrangements that exist at a site at a certain time. Kemmis et al. (2014) thus argue that practices are "at least partly prefigured" by the existing "content and conditions" at a particular site at a particular moment in time (p. 33). This ontological view also enabled the examination of the curriculum literacies teaching practices as socially situated (Gee, 1990, 1996; Lankshear, 1997).

3.4 Methodology: Ethnographic case study

The qualitative paradigm, which is informed by a social-constructionist view of the world, allows for a variety of methodological choices. While there are many understandings of the term 'methodology', Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) define it as "the overall approach to research" and methods as "tools used for collection and analysis of data." (p. 197). This definition enabled me to choose an approach relevant to answering the research questions. Freebody (2003) defines ethnographic research as "describing and analysing the practices and beliefs of cultures and communities" (p. 75), while Nunan (1992) argues that ethnography allows researchers to "understand human behaviour …by incorporating the subjective perceptions and belief systems" of the participants (p. 54). Thus, an ethnographic case study was an appropriate methodology for the study of curriculum literacies teaching practices as it enabled me to answer the research questions that guided the study. The

research questions related to the curriculum literacies teaching practices, behaviours, perceptions, beliefs and the relationships visible at the site.

Creswell (2012) argues that an ethnographic case study is relevant to research involving "a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs and languages that develop over time." (p. 463). As I was examining teachers' curriculum literacies teaching practices that had likely developed over time and which also occurred in a specific site, an ethnographic case study was an appropriate research design. In addition, the use of the theory of practice architectures, and an individual's sayings, doings, and relatings was appropriate for a study involving "patterns of behavior, beliefs and language" (Crewswell, 2012, p. 463). In this study, the behavior patterns were linked to the curriculum literacies teaching practices, the beliefs concerned what teachers stated and thought about incorporating the curriculum literacies teaching practices into their lessons, and language related to the sayings of the teachers as they taught the curriculum literacies of their subjects. The cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that were analysed also shed light on the patterns of behavior (social-political; material-economic), beliefs (cultural-discursive), and languages (cultural-discursive).

Finally, an ethnographic case study allowed me to observe a variety of classrooms and teachers' practices thereby enabling "collect[ion of] whatever data are available" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.2). Multiple forms of data collection are also common to ethnographic studies and hence, enabled me to collect data through observations, semi-structured interviews, field notes, a focus group interview, and document analysis (Creswell, 2012). Data collection methods are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.6.

3.5 Research Design

This study was undertaken using a qualitative approach, specifically an ethnographic case study (Creswell, 2012). An ethnographic case study is useful for researchers to examine the socially and culturally dynamic world of teachers. This world changes and is likely to be viewed differently by participants at different times, so an ethnographic case study allowed for a "highly interactive" study to occur (Freebody, 2003, p. 78). The research took place over a nine month period, spanning the end of one academic school year, and into the first half of a second year. This allowed the researcher and the participants the time to discuss and refine understandings over the research period, in keeping with the ethnographic characteristic of spending significant time in the field (Freebody, 2003; Silverman, 2003). Furthermore, the longer time frame enabled the inclusion of a broader range of subjects across the curriculum. It is also important to note Creswell's (2012) description of an ethnographic case study as that which "searches for shared patterns that develop as a group interacts over time" (p. 465). As the study involved searching for deep insights, sufficient time at the site was needed to develop rapport and trust with the participants. Hence, the research was conducted over three school terms with each term lasting approximately ten weeks, except for term four in the first year of the study. Access to the teacher participants in this term was shortened because a number of factors including sports carnivals and end of year activities resulted in cancellations of classes where an observation had been scheduled. Similarly, during the rest of the study, scheduled observation lessons were sometimes cancelled because of unexpected school activities and / or staff absences.

Middle school subject teachers from the school volunteered to participate in the study. I have professional contacts with these teachers and the selected school and all

participants had expressed a previous interest in participation in research. In addition, staff from the school had previously participated in a two year action research project that I facilitated and which covered a similar topic to the present study. One participant from the previous action research project volunteered to participate in the current study.

Data collection methods and tools, in keeping with a qualitative, ethnographic case study, such as observation, field notes, photographs, individual discussions, and semi-structured interviews were used. The use of these methods and tools is discussed in Section 3.7. The research involved classroom observations of lessons as the participant teachers were teaching. Observation of lessons occurred over the whole nine month period. The research also included observations of whole school and departmental meetings with the prior permission of those who were leading the meeting. These observations took place at the start of the academic year in year two of the study during the student free days. Individual discussions with teacher participants following a classroom observation were also held when convenient. In addition, semi-structured interviews with participating teachers and members of the school leadership team, and a follow up focus group interview were held. The individual interview times were negotiated with the teachers and the focus group interview was held towards the end of the nine month research period. Documents, both public (for example, school website) and private (for example, planning documents), were analysed to examine curriculum literacies teaching practices throughout the nine month research period. The classroom observations, transcriptions of interviews, field notes, and documents provided data for all three research questions.

Provision was made for member checking and participant feedback during the research period. Member checking and participant feedback involved the participants reading through transcripts or holding informal conversations with the researcher to verify

the accuracy of data collected. The member checking and participant feedback enhanced the reliability of the study findings and also gave participants an opportunity to discuss the findings as they emerged. Participants were emailed transcripts of the interviews to check for accuracy. In addition, after lesson observations, if teachers had time to spare, they were asked to present their view of the curriculum literacies teaching practices that occurred. This allowed for "continual revision …of the hypotheses and interpretations" (Freebody, 2003, p. 78). The use of member checking and participant feedback also limited the potential for researcher bias to influence the study. See Table 3.1 for a timeline of the study.

Table 3.1

Timeline of Study

	Dates	Activities
Year One	**September**	Study presented to staff for volunteer participation Discussions with interested staff conducted Participants selected Website accessed Interview with Head of Secondary School
	October	Observation of Year 9 Business Studies and Year 7 History Informal discussions with Liane and Henry Interview with Dean of Middle School Data collection - planning and resource documents School website accessed Member checking
	November / First few days in December	Observation of Year 9 Business Studies and Year 7 History Data collection - planning and resource documents Informal discussions with Liane and Henry Interview with Liane, Henry and Head of Secondary School, Dean of Studies, and Dean of Curriculum Development and other school leaders (Head of Business, Co-ordinator of History) Member checking School website accessed

Year Two	**January**	Observation of Student Free Days including departmental meetings School website accessed
	February	Observation of Year 7 English, Year 7 Mathematics and Year 9 Business Studies Informal discussions with Liane, Diane and Kieran Interview with Kieran Member checking Document collection - planning and resources
	March	Observation of Year 7 English, Year 7 Mathematics and Year 9 Business Studies Informal discussions with Liane, Diane and Kieran Interview with Liane and Diane Member checking Document collection - planning and resources
	April	Observation of Year 7 English, Year 7 Mathematics and Year 9 Business Studies *After holidays:* School website accessed Observation of Year 8 Geography, Year 9 Science Informal discussions with Gary, Robert and Henry Document collection - planning and resources
	May	Observation of Year 8 Geography, Year 9 Science Informal discussions with Gary and Henry Interviews with Gary, Robert, Dean of Leadership and Head of English, Head of Curriculum (Technology) Document collection - planning and resources
	June	Observation of Year 8 Geography, Year 9 Science Interview with Head of Secondary School Focus group interview Informal discussions with Gary and Henry Document collection - planning and resources Member checking

Participants

Freebody (2003) argues the important nature of participant selection for ethnographic research. He outlines three approaches: expedient, purposeful, and probable. Expedient participants are ones who are available. Purposeful participants are those who are chosen because they are representative of certain requirements, and probable selection occurs when participants are selected on the basis of wishing to generalise. The participants in this study were selected because they were available and had volunteered to participate. Hence, their selection was expedient. Six middle school teachers and seven members of the school leadership team volunteered to participate in the study. The teachers taught into a variety of year levels and different subjects across the curriculum. The school leadership team comprised of members of the school executive team, and also higher and mid-level managers. Teacher participants were drawn from several subject areas: English, Mathematics, Business Studies, History, Geography and Science; and a range of age groups and years of teaching experience. All year levels (7-9) in the middle school were represented.

Liane, Diane, and Kieran were members of the school leadership team and also taught several classes in middle school: Business Studies (Year 9) and English (Year 7), and Mathematics (Year 7). Robert was a highly experienced teacher but little usable data emerged from these observed lessons because, early on in the study he was allocated a pre-service teacher and had to withdraw from the rest of the study. However, he did ask to be interviewed and to participate in the group focus interview. Gary was a highly experienced Science, Mathematics, and HPE teacher who was keen to learn more about how to include curriculum literacies teaching practices into his general pedagogy. Henry was the least experienced of the teacher participants but he too, was willing to participate in the study

and to learn more about his curriculum literacies teaching practices. Therefore, the use of a number of participants across a range of teaching areas helped to increase the multivocal (Tracy, 2010) nature and depth of the findings.

As the aim of the study was to interpret and not generalise, participant numbers were large enough to allow for "data saturation", but not too large that analysis became unwieldy (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 242). The participant numbers were also large enough to allow for within case analysis to occur (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), that is examining curriculum literacies teaching practices across different subject areas, but limiting external reliability. The intention of this ethnographic study was not one of generalising outside of the immediate context (Nunan, 1992), hence large participant numbers were not required as is the case in quantitative studies. Qualitative inquiry such as this study adds to the knowledge base of researchers interested in the field of curriculum literacies and related teaching practices and, while not generalizable in the quantitative sense, the study can be used as a base for other studies. See Table 3.2 for a summary of the participants, teaching experience in years, the school year and subject taught, and also the time frame in which the research occurred.

Table 3.2

Teacher Participants, Subjects and Year Levels Taught

Teacher	Subject	Year Level	Number of years teaching	Research Time Frame
Liane	Business Studies	9	15	Year 1, Term 4, Weeks 6-9
Henry	History	7	2	Year 1, Term 4, Weeks 6-9
Liane	English	7	15	Year 2, Term 1, Weeks 1-9
Diane	Mathematics	7	18	Year 2, Term 1, Weeks 1-9
Kieran	Business Studies	9	15	Year 2, Term 1,

				Weeks 1-9
Henry	Geography	8	2	Year 2, Term 2, Weeks 1-9
Gary	Science	8	25	Year 2, Term 2, Weeks 1-9
Robert	Science	9	34	Year 2, Term 2, Weeks 1-3

In addition to the teachers who participated in the study, several members of the school leadership team were willing to be interviewed to provide additional perspectives. These staff members provided useful information about other educational practices such as leading, and professional learning, and the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements at the site. The information provided by the leadership team informed Research Questions Two and Three. See Table 3.3 for a summary of the leaders and their leadership roles.

Table 3.3

School Leadership Team

School Leader	Area of Leadership (School Year Level in Brackets)
Myles	Head of Secondary School (7-12)
Clement	Dean of Studies (7-12)
Liane ★	Dean of Middle School (7-9)
Owen	Head of Leadership (7-12)
Mary	Dean of Curriculum Development - MS (7-9)
Gavin	Head of Curriculum - Technology (7-12)
Christine	Head of Department - English (7-12)
Kieran ★	Head of Department - Business (7-12)
Diane ★	Head of Department - Mathematics (7-9)
Colette ♦	Co-ordinator of History (7-9)
★were participating teachers and members of school leadership	
♦ was not an official member of leadership, but provided guidance to other History teachers	

Kieran, Diane, and Liane were interviewed in their positions as members of the school leadership team and provided additional data specifically related to curriculum literacies

leading practices. They also participated in the study as teacher participants and these interviews provided data related to curriculum literacies teaching practices and informed Research Question One.

3.6 Data Collection Methods: Observations, interviews, document analysis

The study used classroom observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews (individual and focus group), analysis of documents, and further individual discussions with teacher participants to collect data. Thus, rich data were gathered that grounded the findings of the research. The "interplay between the research site and the [research] questions" (Freebody, 2003, p. 76) allowed for flexibility during the research, enabling the discussion of early findings with the participants, the development and posing of new questions by the researcher, and further clarification to be sought from the participants as the data were collected and analysis commenced.

Observations of lessons and field notes

The observations and the field notes provided useful information about the curriculum literacies teaching practices and the practice architectures at the site and informed Research Questions One and Two in particular. Given that the research questions focused on understanding and exploring teachers' practices around curriculum literacies teaching practices, the use of observations allowed me to gain an understanding of "the cultural patterns and practices …from an insider's perspective" (Freebody, 2003, p. 76). Despite being familiar with the school and also invited back to conduct this study, I was not a "complete participant" but nor was I a "complete observer" (Creswell, 2003, p. 186). Hence, while I was likely not an intrusive presence, I still needed to establish rapport with both the teachers and students. Therefore, I suggested each participating teacher decide

whether or not it was appropriate to introduce me to the class. Only one teacher, Henry, introduced me to the class directly. The others simply invited me in with the class as they walked in at the start of the lesson. At all times during lesson and staff meeting observations, once the lesson or meeting commenced, I sat silently at the back of the room or in my allocated seat. At the conclusion of a lesson, if the participating teacher had some time to spare, we spent a few minutes in discussion of any issues or questions the teacher or I wished to raise in relation to the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Often these discussions occurred as both teacher and researcher were packing up and moving elsewhere. Details of these informal conversations were noted in the notepad the researcher used for this purpose. The notepad was kept in an easily obtainable place which enabled quick notes to be taken even if the researcher and teacher were walking together. The notes then became part of the field notes for that lesson.

The lessons which were observed were negotiated with the participating teachers and selected at random by them; that is, they were examples of what occurred in a regular class rather than specifically chosen for what they might reveal about curriculum literacies teaching practices. Although there is the potential for this research practice [giving teachers the freedom to choose what lessons would be observed] to not reveal relevant data, it allowed for authenticity in data collection. This was because the teacher participants reported in the interviews and the informal discussions after the observations, that they did not feel under pressure to manufacture lessons to suit the researcher. Issues of trustworthiness are discussed further in Section 3.9.

Observations of lessons for at least two different subjects were conducted each term (see Table 3.2 in Section 3.5). Lessons were observed at least twice weekly for English and Mathematics (out of a possible five lessons timetabled weekly), weekly (out of a possible

two weekly lessons) for Business Studies, Geography, and History, and weekly (out of three weekly lessons) for Science. Lesson times varied from forty minutes to seventy minutes. During the observations of lessons, the following aspects were noted as part of the field notes: teacher interactions with students and activities undertaken by teacher and students (to enable an analysis of doings, and relatings); the particular language utilised by the teacher related to curriculum literacies (to enable an analysis of the sayings); resources utilised by the teacher and student, furniture layout and general classroom setting (ie posters on the wall, notices on pin boards). These resources enabled an analysis of material-economic arrangements visible at the site.

Field notes comprised of the researcher's observations about and questions related to what curriculum literacies teaching practices were visible, and other teaching practices that might shed light on enabling and constraining site arrangements. For example, the use of technology was foregrounded in every observed lesson and became an important aspect of the findings. Thus, an observation form was not used but observed lessons were audio recorded using either a computer or an iPad (see Appendix A for relevant consent forms) where practically possible and transcribed by the researcher as soon as possible after the lesson. Sometimes, parts of a lesson were conducted outdoors where audio recording was not possible. For example, during a Year 9 Business Studies lesson where an outside site inspection took place. When it was not possible to audio-record, field notes were used.

On the many occasions that students undertook group activities and the teacher walked around facilitating these, the audio recording was stopped as it became impossible to hear the teacher's voice clearly. When this occurred, the field notes were used to focus on the teacher / student interactions and any audible words or language used by the teacher that demonstrated curriculum literacies teaching practices. The audio-recorded lessons were

transcribed verbatim with any unclear, inaudible, or unknown words, phrases, sentences identified in the transcript. Additionally, pauses longer than three seconds were included as well as other comments such as laughter, interruptions, and vocal intonations where possible (see Appendix N for transcription conventions). Teachers were de-identified and students referred to by number to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The transcriptions and field notes provided "a database composed of words" (Creswell, 2012, p. 17) and formed the basis of the findings by providing thick descriptions of curriculum literacies teaching practices (Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 2010).

Observations of staff meetings

In addition to lesson observation, the researcher was given access to observe staff meetings during three staff planning days that occurred at the start of term one in the second year of study. Staff meetings comprised of:

- Whole school staff (prep to year 12) where the direction and leadership vision for the school year were outlined
- Senior school (year 7 to year 12) where items such as behaviour management, teacher duties and responsibilities, timetabling, and student leadership were outlined and briefly discussed
- Departmental meetings (e.g. English) where Heads of Department outlined the curriculum and plans for the academic year were discussed.

While these staff meetings were not audio-recorded, field notes were taken that described the researcher's thoughts, questions to follow up, group dynamics, staff interactions (for example, who seemed to hold a position of power), furniture layout, and resources used. These meetings also provided further rich data that helped to inform Research Questions Two and Three. These two questions explored the practice architectures and the

relationships between the practices, the site and the practice architectures. The content of these field notes was therefore both “descriptive” and “reflective” which enabled me to record personal thoughts and start identifying broad themes related to curriculum literacies teaching practices as they emerged (Creswell, 2012).

Interviews

Each teacher participant was also interviewed individually about mid-way through the term in which their lessons were observed. The interviews occurred at a time most convenient to the participant and in a venue of his / her choosing. The members of the school leadership team were interviewed when it suited their schedules. For example, the Head of Secondary School agreed to be interviewed at the start of the study and provided valuable data around his understandings of curriculum literacies. He also agreed to be interviewed a second time towards the end of the study and provided additional data related to leading practices that informed Research Question Three. Each interview was semi-structured in nature. Semi-structured interviews allowed for some pre-determined open-ended questions to be posed but also allowed for interviewee responses and lines of thought to be followed up (Freebody, 2003). Participants were asked general, open-ended questions about their understandings of literacy, what their curriculum literacies teaching practices were, and what they believed were enabling and constraining factors. Other factors were discussed as they arose in the interview (see Appendices B1 and B2 for samples of interview questions). Most teachers opted for an interview in their classroom, seated at their desks, while others preferred a comfortable seat in a quiet corner of the staff room.

Members of the school leadership team were interviewed, by their choice, in their individual offices. Interview times varied between thirty and forty minutes. Each participant was asked to consent to the interview being recorded and transcribed. Following

each interview and after it had been transcribed, each participant was involved in member checking of the transcriptions. Member checking occurred once the transcription was completed, usually within two weeks of the interview. The transcriptions were emailed to participants rather than left in their pigeon holes in the staff room. This was done to expedite the timeframes and to limit potential breaches in confidentiality and privacy. Participants checked these and either emailed back an amended version (for example, where the researcher had misspelled a particular technical word) or otherwise emailed back to verify their satisfaction with the transcription.

An open-ended focus group interview was held at the end of term two of the second year to enable all teacher participants to provide any further details or ask any further questions. This interview took place during a time scheduled by the leadership team and teachers were given this time away from teaching to participate. The teacher participants arranged for the focus group interview to be held in the staff room during a time when it was unoccupied by other staff members. The researcher posed an initial question around curriculum literacies teaching practices and then the teacher participants directed the talk. One of the limitations of a focus group interview is that some participants do not receive an opportunity to speak. However, this rarely occurred as all the teacher participants were familiar with one another after teaching together for several years. They also mentioned they were all eager to present their views to the researcher. Each participant was encouraged to voice his/her ideas and opinions and respond to questions about curriculum literacies teaching practices, understandings of curriculum literacies, and the place of teaching curriculum literacies in different subjects. This interview provided excellent rich data that verified the initial findings and analysis and informed Research Questions One, Two and Three.

Documents

Documents are also a rich source of information. The participating teachers were asked to provide planning and resource documents related to teaching curriculum literacies. The documents were volunteered and ranged from photographs to unit plans to resources used in lessons. These documents were analysed for data related to cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements in particular but, only if these impacted the curriculum literacies teaching practices. The Head of School had developed a planning template based on the literacy aspect of the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) that I was able to view and cite, but I was not given permission to copy for insertion in this work as he wanted to keep it confidential to the school. In addition, the public aspects of the school website provided rich data around site-specific arrangements, such as cultural–discursive and material-economic resources and also provided some insight to social–political arrangements to inform Research Question Two. Thus, the study generated rich data around curriculum literacies teaching practices, the site and the practice architectures. See Table 3.4 for a summary of the complete data set.

Table 3.4

Summary of Data Collected

Data collection	Total Numbers
Teacher Interviews	8
Leadership Interviews	11
Focus Group Interview	1
Lessons Observed (total)	62
Business Studies (Liane)	5
Business Studies (Kieran)	9
History	5
English	12
Mathematics	11
Geography	8
Science (Gary)	9
Science (Robert)	3

Meetings observed (total)	7
Whole school	1
Whole secondary school	3 (leadership, behaviour management, organisational issues)
Heads of Department	2
English department	1
Documents (total)	29
Website	1
Business Studies	7
History	2
English	10
Mathematics	3
Geography	1
Science	5

3. 7 Analytical Framework

There is an array of data analytic tools available for qualitative, ethnographic case studies. However, the analysis of data needs to take into account various principles (Nunan, 1992). Since ethnographic research is characterised by its details of the particular cultural meanings of a particular group, cultural description and analysis are important characteristics (Nunan, 1992). The descriptions and analysis of teacher sayings, doings, and relatings detailed the specific understandings of, and practices related to, curriculum literacies teaching practices at this particular site. Furthermore, one underlying principle of ethnographic case studies is the assumption that behaviour and context are linked (Nunan, 1992). In this study, the behaviours (or practices made visible in the individual sayings, doings, and relatings) of the teachers were enabled and constrained by the practice architectures (or cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political site arrangements) in the site.

However, it is important to note that one of the criticisms of ethnographic research is its apparent weakness in that it is seen to simply describe and narrate (Nunan, 1992). This weakness can be countered by “going beyond description to analysis, interpretation, and

explanation" (Nunan, 1992, p. 57). Hence, in this study, curriculum literacies teaching practices were identified, described, and analysed, (Research Question One) enabling and constraining arrangements analysed and explained (Research Question Two) and the complex relationship that exists between site, curriculum literacies teaching practices, and practice architectures analysed, interpreted, and explained (Research Question Three).

Taking into account these points raised above, for the purposes of this study, the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014) was used as an analytical framework (see Section 2.11 for details about practice architectures). Patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language (made visible in the sayings, doings, and relatings of the curriculum literacies teaching practices) at the site (Creswell, 2012) were analysed. Analysis took place in three stages. Firstly, data were coded according to general themes related to teaching curriculum literacies. Creswell (2102) describes thematic analysis as "distilling how things work and naming the essential features" (p. 473). The three key themes that emerged as related to curriculum literacies teaching practices were: reading, writing, and interconnected literacy practices. Other general themes that emerged across the data were beliefs about literacy teaching, time constraints, technology usage, professional knowledge, and leadership. Secondly, using the theory of practice architectures, data were examined for the sayings, doings, and relatings of curriculum literacies teaching practices. Site-specific cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that might have enabled or constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies were also identified and noted. This part of the analysis required looking for arrangements related to language, resources, and power relations. In particular, common arrangements identified were related to Project Based Learning (PBL), technology, and the school ethos. A third level of analysis involved using the theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014) to identify and analyse other

practices that might have influenced the teaching practices of curriculum literacies. Practices identified and analysed as relevant were teaching, learning, leading, professional learning, and researching practices. Table 3.5 depicts the phases and the analyses that occurred at each phase.

Table 3.5

Three Phase Data Analysis

Phase	Analysis
One	Coding for Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practices - general themes
Two	Individual sayings, doings and relatings of curriculum literacies teaching practices Site arrangements - practice architectures of curriculum literacies teaching practices
Three	Teaching, learning, leading, professional learning and researching practices - ecologies of practices

The data collection tools and methods used in this study took into account the characteristics of ethnographic research and the theoretical framework that informed this study. The observations provided data related specifically to the site- based practices of teaching curriculum literacies. Simultaneously, interviews and document analysis provided data related to the specific site arrangements and also practices other than teaching curriculum literacies such as leading, learning, and professional learning. Table 3.6 shows an example of the table that was used to analyse the practices. This was the Table of Invention presented by Kemmis et al. (2014), used with permission and modified to take into account the curriculum literacies identified by Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999).

Table 3.6

Example of Analysis Table

Elements of practices	Practice Architectures in the site
Project Writing lesson Year 7 English Aim to prepare students for biography writing	Practice Landscape PBL classroom
Sayings Topic sentence Good communication Count up your words Let's look at structure	Cultural-discursive arrangements Generic structure Biographical / narrative Some language of assessment
Doings Modelling Deconstruction Implicit and explicit teaching Walking around at times Standing in front Some IRE	Material-economic arrangements Whiteboard Teacher iPad Data projector Student iPads Online slides on Haiku
Relatings Directing / guiding/ facilitating – variety of roles	Social-political arrangements School traditional / hierarchical Also learner independence
Dispositions Learner independence ?? Some contrast to IRE – seems to be in conflict to some extent	Practice traditions Marzano ASOT goals on whiteboard
Curriculum Literacies: R, W, S, L, CT, V [4] Reading of slides but not taught / just used Writing taught – aspects of generic structure	Vocabulary audience, purpose, structure Symbolic codes punctuation use of italics Everyday language / subject language needed to revisit meaning of specific terms like audience, purpose Process language write down, give feedback Language of instruction / assessment marking criteria Subject interactions some pair work but mainly whole class teaching

(Adapted from Table of Invention used by Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 226) Used with permission)

[4] Key to abbreviations R – reading, W = writing, S = speaking, L = listening, CT = critical thinking, V = viewing

Table 3.6 is a summarised version of a fuller analysis used for a Year 7 English lesson where the curriculum literacies teaching practice focused on writing a biography and, in particular, how to structure a biography. The example from the lesson is shown in red. On the left hand side of the table are examples of what the teacher said, did, and how she related to the students as she taught how to write a biography. On the right hand side are the site arrangements that were visible and enabled and constrained the writing teaching practice. The practice traditions were those that impacted the writing teaching practice and were already in use in the site. In this case, aspects of Marzano's (2007) *Art and Science of Teaching* were in use at the school. Using this resource, the teacher had followed the established tradition and written the relevant goal for the day on the whiteboard. The last row in the table analyses the specific aspects of curriculum literacies visible in the lesson.

In addition to the above data analysis, Nicolini's (2013) concepts of "zooming in" and then "zooming out" of practices was utilised (p. 219). The "zooming in" allowed a detailed examination of the practices, their related sayings, doings, and relatings, as seen in the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The "zooming out" enabled an examination of the site arrangements and other ecologically arranged practices in the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014) to gain a fuller understanding of the complex relationships that existed at this site.

3. 8 Ethical considerations

Given that the study involved interactions between the researcher and participants, as well as audio-recording participants' views, ethical considerations were important. Therefore, all participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous. Potential participants were given verbal information about the study at a whole staff meeting and

invited to email the researcher if interested in participating. Those staff members who expressed an interest in participation were met with individually and given further verbal and written information (see Appendix C for information letter) and also invited to ask any further questions. In further email correspondence each interested staff member was asked confirm whether or not they would like to participate. Those who volunteered met again individually with the researcher where they signed consent forms (see Appendices A and D for informed consent form and information package). In the writing up of the thesis, pseudonyms have been used for all participants and the school is described in general terms but has not been identified other than its independent nature and general location. Where relevant, it has been referred to as Abimelech College. The use of pseudonyms was to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Transcripts of interviews and field notes were locked away in a filing cabinet located in the researcher's office on the university campus. All interview recordings were deleted once transcription was complete.

The power dynamics in the relationships between researcher and participants also needed to be carefully considered. It is important that qualitative researchers are open and transparent about all the processes involved in the research with all participants, not just the gatekeepers (Creswell, 2012). This assists with the maintenance of a more balanced power relationship between researcher and participants. At Abimelech College, the gatekeeper was the Principal who, through the Head of Secondary School, allowed the researcher to gain access to the site. The nature of the research necessitated the researcher entering to some extent into the world of the research site. Hence, issues of representation and legitimation needed to be considered (Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2003). Representation and legitimation are linked to issues of reliability and validity.

Ellis (1995) offers interesting additional challenges to ethnographic ethical issues that are linked to the persona of the researcher, as touched upon briefly in earlier sections (see Sections 3.3 and 3.7). Of interest is Ellis's (1995) reflection on her experience as an ethnographer where she raises the point that ethnographic research should consider the potential problems of writing about subjects as 'Others'. Ellis (1995) recommends several ways to overcome this issue. Firstly, she advocates a type of member checking whereby participants read what has been written and might challenge any representations and interpretations. In this study, member checking occurred after every interview and along the research journey in informal discussions with participants.

Additionally, I needed to consider my own attitudes and assumptions during the research period and was explicit in revealing my own voice in the research. Creswell (2012) refers to this as researcher reflexivity. I have done this through using first person narration at various moments in the writing up of this thesis and through my use of personal anecdotes and quotations to commence each chapter. As outlined at the conclusion of Chapter One, these quotations reflect my personal response to the chapter contents or the research journey. Secondly, as suggested by Ellis (1995), I tried to 'put myself in the shoes' of my participants to gain a sense of response to my own description. I did this through reading each section of analysis and asking if I would be happy to read this about myself. This enabled me to view the data both objectively and subjectively.

A final ethical consideration concerned the use of audio recordings. The use of audio recordings is closely related to issues of legitimation and so is important. Again, the confidentiality, anonymity, and security of the research participants were paramount concerns. In particular, because student voices formed part of the audio recordings in the classrooms, parents of each student who was a member of a class observed were sent an

information pack and asked to give permission to record the lessons and when they did not want this to occur, no recording was made (see Appendix E for a copy of the parent / student information package and consent form). However, no parent refused permission and all of the observed lessons were able to be recorded. Nevertheless, when there were interruptions during a class when non–class members entered the room, the audio recording was halted to ensure their privacy. During the transcription of the lessons, students were not identified personally and instead, were referred to by numbers and no record of what name corresponded to what number was retained. In addition, the study received ethics approval. See Appendix F for the ethics approval letter (EDN/22/15/HREC).

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Research

While there are many ways to assess the reliability and validity of qualitative work, some argue that as the qualitative research paradigm is so different to the quantitative one, using the same evaluative criteria might be inappropriate (Nunan, 1992). However, research still needs to be rigorous and trustworthy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Nunan, 1992). The four criteria used in this study to increase rigor and establish trustworthiness were triangulation, member checking, thick description, and researcher reflexivity (Tracy, 2010). In this study, the presence of member checking has already been established (see Section 3.5). Triangulation occurred through the use of a variety of data collection tools including field notes, transcripts, and documents. Thick description in the form of verbatim transcripts of lessons and interviews was used in the findings Chapters Four, Five and Six. Researcher reflexivity is also evident throughout the study through the inclusion of first person where appropriate, anecdotes, quotations at the start of chapters, and a personal reflection in Chapter Eight (see Section 8.1 and 8.4).

Furthermore, ethnography presents specific challenges to trustworthiness. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) mention three issues: representation, legitimation, and praxis. The issue of representation was considered by openly acknowledging that any description or interpretation of the findings in this study is a construction However, this acknowledgement also creates problems as research reports, field notes, transcripts, and other written texts also become the construction of one person and hence, open to criticisms of potential bias. The use of member checks was built specifically into the research design to counter this issue. A focus group interview and discussions and interviews with staff members such as Deans and Heads of Department have been included in the data collection to present a multivocal perspective (Tracy, 2010). In addition, the lessons were transcribed following consistent transcription conventions (see Appendix N) to ensure uniformity in the representation.

The issue of legitimation relates to concerns about validity and reliability. Related to these concerns is the need to consider whether data is naturally occurring or manufactured. Silverman (2007) argues that when researchers select a particular site, participants, and research question, the data produced is in a sense, manufactured. Silverman's (2007) main concern seems to be with simply analysing the interviewee responses without looking deeply at the interview process itself. This issue was addressed by stating to the participant at the outset of each interview my personal connection with the subject of the research (curriculum literacies teaching practices) and the school. Legitimation was also addressed by the use of the semi-structured interview format where participants were free to express any other ideas and take the interview in another direction. Therefore, while the interview questions were selected by the researcher, the direction could be determined, to some extent, by the participants as well. Possible power issues

between the researcher and the participants were considered by asking participants to select the venue and timing of interviews. This gave participants some autonomy in the interview process. Participants were also free to choose not to answer questions and to end the interview at any stage. They were also able to choose whether or not to participate in the interview process. In addition, as mentioned in Section 3.7, the teacher participants selected the lessons to be observed. Thus, the teacher participants retained some autonomy even though the researcher selected the research questions under investigation.

The issue of praxis is complex and is used in this study to mean teaching for individual and societal good. For a researcher, praxis-based research includes elements of right conduct (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) concern with praxis in ethnographic studies was considered using Kemmis and Smith's (2008) argument around developing the dispositions and actions of praxis in teacher education. To that end, a consideration of this ethnographic research from a praxis approach meant thinking of the research design and deciding to act for good. Hence, as already discussed in this chapter, the study was conducted ethically and professionally, the researcher was open and transparent in her interactions with the participants, and the limitations of using certain data collection tools were taken into consideration and minimised where possible. In addition, at moments in the writing of this study, I have deliberately used first person and reflected on the research journey so that my first-person relationship with the study and my participation in the world of research was transparent.

Other issues raised by Nunan (1992) involve internal and external reliability and validity. One way to increase internal reliability is through the use of multiple researchers. As this was not possible here, participant examination, and audio recordings were used. Their use increased the reliability of the data as lessons and interviews were audio-recorded

and then transcribed as verbatim as possible. Where verbatim transcription was not possible, this was clearly mentioned in the transcript and included in the extracts as part of the findings where appropriate. Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to examine the transcripts and provide feedback on findings. Internal validity was achieved through the ethnographic process itself and a consideration of the use of data collection and analytical tools already mentioned (Nunan, 1992). However, as the research study does not aim to generalise, external validity was not a critical consideration.

Silverman (2003) argues that the persona of the researcher and his/her identity must be considered in ethnographic research, identifying four considerations connected to the researcher's identity:

- Is the researcher known as this to all / some of the participants?
- What is known about the research and by whom?
- What activities does the researcher engage in and how does this impact on the research and group identities?
- The orientation of the researcher as insider or outsider or…?

These were important considerations in this study as I was a parent and had also been a casually employed member of staff. One way of meeting these considerations was to ensure that I declared my interest and past involvement in the school at the outset. When I called for voluntary participation at a whole staff meeting, this relationship with the school was provided openly. Also, critical to issues of empowerment was ensuring that all participants received information about the research, not just the gatekeepers (for example, the school Principal, and the Head of Secondary School). Interviews with staff occurred after the Head of Secondary School had been interviewed so that staff would not feel that what they said

would be reported to the Principal. Hence, the study was conducted as ethically and honestly as possible.

3.10 Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine the curriculum teaching practices of a range of middle school subject teachers at an independent school. This chapter has discussed the qualitative paradigm that framed the research design and justified the methodology and methods chosen for the study. In addition, the ethnographic case study design was relevant to the view of literacy and curriculum literacies teaching practices as socially situated. Data collection methods included observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The research context was explained as an independent, Prep-Year 12 school located in a marginally middle socio-economic area in South East Queensland, Australia. Participants were selected via expedience and all participants volunteered for the research and gave informed consent. Participants came from a variety of subject teaching areas and from a number of roles in the school ranging from teachers through to the Head of Secondary School. The research questions that guided the study were:

Research Question One: What are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Two: What enables and constrains the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the site and the curriculum literacies teaching practices?

The theoretical framework that informed the research was practice theory and specifically, the theory of practice architectures and its corresponding theory of ecologies of practices. Analysis was three-fold: first, themes related to curriculum literacies were identified, specifically reading, writing, and interconnected literacy practices. Second, the theory of practice architectures was used to analyse the teachers' sayings, doings, and relatings as they taught curriculum literacies. In addition, the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements specific to the site were analysed for how they might have enabled or constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies. Third, the theory of ecologies of practices was used to analyse other practices that might have influenced the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Finally, ethical considerations pertinent to the research were identified and addressed. These considerations included issues related to validity and trustworthiness. I turn now to the research findings.

Chapter Four - Reading Practices and Practice Architectures

The more that you read, the more things you will know.

Dr Seuss

4.0 Introduction to the Findings Chapters

The theory of practice architectures and the corresponding theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014) that form the analytical framework for the findings in the next three chapters are ontological in approach. This enabled a detailed examination of the site and helped determine how arrangements at the site might have enabled and constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies. Therefore, in Chapter Four and Chapter Five an analysis of the findings is presented, together with a short discussion of their significance to the study and the research questions. In Chapter Six examples that typify the integrated, interconnected nature of practices are presented. Ultimately, the final example presented in Chapter Six brings together the theory of practice architectures and the theory of ecologies of practices and discusses vis-a-vis the individual practices and site arrangements, how curriculum literacies teaching practices are enmeshed together in ecologies of practices in the site that enable and constrain (Kemmis et al., 2014).

As was explained in Chapter Two (see Section 2.7), curriculum literacies comprise the teaching of the subject specific literacies of the school curriculum (Wyatt-Smith et al., 1999). These practices include reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and critical thinking specific to each subject. In the findings chapters, using the theory of practice architectures the individual sayings, doings, and relatings (Kemmis et al., 2014) of curriculum literacies teaching practices are presented. In addition, the specific cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements at the site that pre-figured

the curriculum literacies teaching practices are presented. It must be noted however, that while the sayings, doings, and relatings, and the site arrangements, are presented separately, for convenience, they all 'hang together' (Kemmis et al., 2014). Therefore, at times during the presentation of the findings in this chapter and through the rest of the thesis, the sayings, doings and relatings are presented and discussed in combination. Given this context, and after the three-stage analysis outlined in Section 3.7 was undertaken, the following three key themes related to curriculum literacies teaching practices emerged: Reading practices, writing practices, and integrated and interconnected curriculum literacies teaching practices. The findings chapters of this thesis are presented using these three themes.

Findings related to teaching reading practices are presented in Chapter Four and the writing teaching practices are presented in Chapter Five. The integrated curriculum literacies teaching practices are presented in Chapter Six where the theory of ecologies of practices is used to present an example of how curriculum literacies teaching practices are interconnected and enmeshed with other practices. Furthermore, while this study focused on teaching practices, given the interconnected nature of educational practices, some aspects of learning are also discussed in the findings and discussion chapters. Finally, throughout these findings chapters, it must be noted that one larger example is presented through a detailed analysis of the sayings, doings, and relatings and the site arrangements (the practice architectures); and then two or three smaller examples are presented briefly. These examples typify the findings across the different subjects represented in this study.

4.1 Overview of the reading practices observed and overview of this chapter

The reading practices that form the examples of the findings in this chapter, were observed in the following year levels and subjects:

- Year 7 History (taught by Henry)
- Year 8 Science (taught by Gary)
- Year 9 Business (taught by Kieran)
- Year 7 English (taught by Liane).

Data were derived from observations of lessons, document analysis, informal discussions and interviews with teachers. The larger example of Year 7 History (taught by Henry) is presented first, and demonstrates the teaching of both pre-reading and during reading practices. These teaching reading practices were observed in two different lessons and were used at stages in the reading process when students' reading comprehension can be supported ie prior to, during or after reading. Pre-reading teaching practices were used to activate prior knowledge and during reading practices involved extracting information. In this larger example, the sayings, doings and relatings of the practice are discussed in detail as well as the practice architectures.

Three smaller examples of teaching reading practices are then presented more briefly. First, two smaller examples demonstrate the teaching reading practice of teaching/ explaining vocabulary. The first example explains vocabulary through using a textbook (Year 8 Science) and the second example teaches vocabulary through the development of a glossary (Year 9 Business). The third smaller example presents the teaching of reading a text type (Year 7 English).

The teaching of reading practices observed during the study involved a range of explicit and implicit explanations, scaffolding, and modelling. These terms (explicit, implicit, scaffolding, modelling) reflect the participant teachers' understandings of their curriculum literacies teaching practices as they talked informally with the researcher after a

lesson observation, rather than any notion of what the literature might represent as best practice. The concept of best practice is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

The pre-reading practices that were observed were the teaching/ explanation of content-related, and general vocabulary; building knowledge of the field, and the activation of prior knowledge. One additional pre-reading teaching practice was observed in one subject, Year 7 English: the teaching of the text type to be read. During reading practices included whole class and individual guidance of students to extract information to demonstrate understanding and some explicit teaching of key terminology to assist comprehension. The metalanguage used in the literature to describe reading practices varied and in this chapter, some of the metalanguage was guided by Morris and Stewart-Dore's (1994) reading stages.

A summary of the teaching of reading practices observed throughout the study is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Teaching Reading Practices Observed

Subject	Reading Teaching Practice
Year 7 English	Reading a text type Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information
Year 7 History	Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information
Year 7 Mathematics	Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information
Year 8 Geography	Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information

Year 8 Science	Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information
Year 9 Business	Activating prior knowledge Build knowledge of the field Teach or explain vocabulary Extracting information

As the table demonstrates, all teachers in the study were observed using a similar range of teaching reading practices.

4.2 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practices. Pre-reading: Activating Prior Knowledge (Year 7 History)

The data analysis showed that the texts the students were required to read were often dense and required knowledge of how to access and understand text types. In addition, these texts contained complex specialist vocabulary that students were required to decode and understand. The participant teachers often did not teach the meanings and definitions of these specialised terms explicitly. However, one curriculum literacies teaching practice that was observed related to assisting students with comprehension of a technical or informational text by activating students' prior knowledge before they read a text. Most of the teachers who participated in this study were observed using this curriculum literacies teaching practice at various moments and to different degrees, in their lessons.

In the example being presented here, the Year 7 History class was observed in the final few weeks of term four. At Abimelech College, Year 7 History is taught in term two and term four and Geography is taught in term one and term three. These lessons are held twice weekly. Two extracts from the lesson have been used to illustrate and exemplify the findings. The extracts illustrate the pre-reading teaching practice: activating prior

knowledge. Henry, the class teacher, was in his second year of teaching and the observed lesson took place in the last week of the school year (24/11/2015). In Extract 4.1, Henry was activating prior knowledge around Christmas traditions before the students were required to read a selection of informational texts about this topic.

Please note: In this and all following transcripts in this thesis, the teacher is indicated by their initial and students by S: see Appendix N for transcript conventions.

Extract 4.1

After a time of mutual greetings, the lesson commenced as follows:

*H: Please take your seats. (*There was a small flurry of general chit chat as they did this)

H: Ok. Did everybody get that we are actually going to be talking about the history of Christmas. (General inaudible chatter from students).

H: What is Christmas?

*S1: You get presents (*More chatter from students).

H: Just quiet, quiet. Few people are going to have to remember to put their hands up but before you answer I want to pose a specific question. Ok? What is a typical Australian Christmas?

S2: It's well, usually Australians on Christmas day, they probably invite each other over to have a BBQ.

(General noisy but inaudible comments from rest of class).

*H: Shhh [*took 18 seconds for class to respond]. *Ok, class – a few people have to remember to put their hands up, just being quiet and all. Ok? Any other ones? So, ___ said people come over?*

S2: Yeah like a BBQ or something.

(General chatter).

*H: So, BBQ. [*T writes this on the whiteboard]. *And people come over?*

S2: Yeah, gathering.

H: Gathering. Ok. _____ [Nominates another student].

S3: Um, people like go to the beach or um, [inaudible remainder]

H: So swimming. Swimming is involved?

S4: Some people play cricket.

(General chatter).

H: Ok, cricket.

The activation of prior knowledge continued, taking up twenty-four minutes out of a fifty minute lesson. During this time, the teacher remained at the front of the classroom and the students were seated at their desks. Henry initiated comments from the students by posing open-ended questions, the students responded and Henry wrote some of their responses on the whiteboard. The students interjected regularly and chatted amongst themselves. When the students were chatting generally, the teacher was also observed chatting to a few students closest to him. After twenty-four minutes, the teacher led into the second part of the lesson: the reading of the texts. This part of the lesson is presented in Extract 4.2. In this extract, the students in the Year 7 History class participated in small groups to read one informational text they selected from several choices. These informational texts detailed different customs and traditions around the world at Christmas time.

Extract 4.2

T: Ok Grade sevens. Bring it back please. Bring it back please. (Class chatter). *What I want you guys to do really quickly. You are going to actually learn a little bit about some of the interesting things about Christmas. So there are various different worksheets. So I want you to just form small little groups and you're going to actually do the activity – you're going to read and then I want you to share some of that knowledge.*

(General inaudible responses from students).

[The teacher then moved around the room, allowing students to choose one text out of several available to them. As he did this, students were chattering amongst themselves] (inaudible on recording).

H: *Quiet. Have a quick read through this please.*

(Lots of general comments and chatter).

H: Ok Grade 7s, right now you're going to work together. Read through this and you're going to report back. So, make a few notes just on the back or something. Or if there's spare paper but I want you guys to work together right now. You will then report back. You have ten minutes. [The teacher then moved around the room providing individual assistance where necessary, and reading from the texts where required].

Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Activating prior knowledge before reading a text

Sayings

This practice was characterised by particular sayings. First, Henry used vocabulary in the first half of the lesson that appeared to be familiar to the students and allowed them to activate their knowledge based on their own experiences of Christmas: *what is*

Christmas? People come over, swimming is involved, usually Australians, You get presents, they *probably*. Second, Henry used language that was quite informal and personal: *yeah, ok, you get* that students of this age group were likely to relate to. However, it is interesting to note that the actual texts (see extract 4.3 from one of the example texts in the discussion of the cultural-discursive arrangements) contained language that was more culturally-specific than the words used by Henry in the first extract. Third, Henry used instructional language to direct students to what he wanted them to do: *have a quick read through this please*. It is also possible that Henry did not anticipate the students having any problems comprehending the words in the text because of the short time frame allocated to the task of reading, summarizing and reporting back. Thus, while Henry utilised the reading practice of activating prior knowledge to some degree, the words the students found difficult were not part of that practice.

Extract 4.2 also contained language that was directive in nature: *bring it back, what I want you, you're going to read* in keeping with Henry's role as authority figure in the classroom. The language Henry used directed the students to extract information during the reading of the text: *make a few notes and then report back*. However, Henry did not clarify what notes he wanted nor what the students were to report back. Henry also used language that indicated the collaborative nature of the task: *I want you guys to work together*

Doings

Extracts 4.1 and 4.2 also revealed that Henry took on different roles in the classroom. On the one hand, he acted as a facilitator, but he also organised and directed the activity by providing additional individual assistance where necessary by reading the information sheet to some students. In the first section of the lesson, Henry was standing at the front of the classroom and to the side. The students were seated behind desks. They

remained in these positions for most of the lesson. Henry posed questions related to activating prior knowledge and also directed students to the activity. Much of the teaching practice observed in this lesson used the Initiate, Respond, Expand (IRE) pedagogical approach. However, Henry did not teach reading practices explicitly. During the second half of the lesson, the students were expected to work independently from Henry but as a collaborative group. This is clear when Henry asked them to divide into smaller groups and again when he said: *I want you guys to work together right now*. He walked around facilitating the reading activity and checking students were on task, answering individual questions and providing individual reading support but once again, no explicit whole class teaching was observed. This use of group work appeared to be a familiar part of Henry's teaching practice as students settled quite quickly into small groups for the activity and no further whole class scaffolding of group work was given by Henry (Field notes, 24/11/2015).

Relatings

For most of the lesson, Henry related to the students in an apparently casual but also, at times, in a more firm manner. This was evident when he asked the students several times to end or change certain behaviours. The students related to him in a similar vein. This was evident in their chattering amongst themselves throughout the lesson. They appeared relaxed in general although an observation in the field notes queried whether or not students were actively engaged with the task (Field notes, 24/11/205).

Practice Architectures: Activating prior knowledge before reading a text

Cultural-discursive arrangements

First, the language used by Henry to a large extent enabled a western way of thinking about the world. This was evident in Henry using language related to a western

custom – Christmas. He also used language familiar to the students by asking them to discuss Australian Christmas traditions. Additionally, the school has a religious background and Christmas celebrations were being held in most of the classes over that period, hence the language related to the Christmas season was part of the cultural-discursive arrangements at Abimelech College. The use of shared, familiar language and customs has enabled Henry's teaching of this reading practice.

Second, while the language used by Henry was not inherently historical in nature, it is language typically used in group work. For example, words such as: *form small groups, work together, share,* reflected the collaborative nature of the activity and was visible in Henry's use of group work. Collaboration is an important aspect of the cultural-discursive arrangements visible at the school. This was evident on the school website and in interviews with several members of the school leadership team. For example, the Head of the Secondary school mentioned in an interview: *so what we've done in our learning communities is discussing what is good teaching? What is good learning? And so, you know it's about collaboration* (Myles, Head of Secondary School, 15/9/2015). Henry's use of words such as: *I want you guys to work together right now* appear to support this assertion.

Finally, while Henry used language designed to activate prior knowledge through prompting questions, he did not teach the vocabulary of the informational texts explicitly. In an informal conversation with Henry after the lesson, he revealed that he enjoys teaching History because *the burden of literacy is off* (Henry, teacher). This finding in relation to teaching reading practices was evident across several of the subject areas. In other words, part of the cultural-discursive arrangements that might have constrained the reading teaching practices concerned a negative discourse around curriculum literacies teaching

practices and a voiced and unvoiced belief that teaching curriculum literacies was either something to be avoided or a responsibility of the English staff members. For example, another teacher, Kieran mentioned: *I would think that English would focus on the grammar and the structuring of sentences* (Kieran, Business Studies teacher, interview, 7/3/2016).

The Year 7 informational texts also created particular cultural-discursive arrangements. Extract 4.3 (Christmas in Mexico) from one of the informational texts will be unpacked further to discuss what particular cultural-discursive arrangements are visible. The use of ellipsis in the extract denotes where sections of the text have been omitted. The full text is presented in Appendix F.

Extract 4.3

Christmas in Mexico

In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from the December 12th to January 6th.

From December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the "Posada" processions or Posadas. Posada is Spanish for Inn or Lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay. For the Posadas, the outside of houses are decorated with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns.

…

One game that is often played at Posada parties is piñata. A piñata is a decorated clay or papier-mache jar filled with sweets and hung from the ceiling or tree branch.

…

Nativity scenes known as the "nacimiento" are very popular in Mexico. They are often very large, with the figures being life size! …

The language used in the text is factual which is characteristic of an informational text. For example, the text presents information about when Christmas is celebrated and what customs are enjoyed. The sentence structure is easy to follow with few complex phrases and clauses used. The tense is predominantly present tense which can be easy to read. However, the text contains some difficult words. These words are extra challenging because they are not vocabulary cognates. The information text contained words or phrases such as: *piñata, papier-mache, Posada, Pastorelas, nacimiento, and Ihr Kinderlein Kommet*. These words have a Spanish or German derivation and were unfamiliar to the students. They also do not share similar spelling or pronunciation to English words, increasing their level of difficulty.

When the students were reading the texts, they were left to decode the words and likely were expected to infer their meanings from the context. While it might appear as if the teacher was deliberately choosing this pedagogical strategy to encourage students to work out meanings for themselves, this might not have been the case. The field notes from this observation indicated that the teacher spent a large portion of the time "walking around helping struggling students" (Field notes, 24/11/2015) and many students appeared "disengaged". One student appeared disheartened and commented: *I can't do this*. Hence, while aspects of the cultural-discursive arrangements might have enabled the teaching of this reading practice, other aspects might have constrained it.

Material-economic arrangements

Resources that enabled the activating of prior knowledge included the whiteboard which Henry used to write down student responses. The classroom was arranged in an informal manner with students seated at desks in a loose semi-circular pattern. See Figure 4.1.

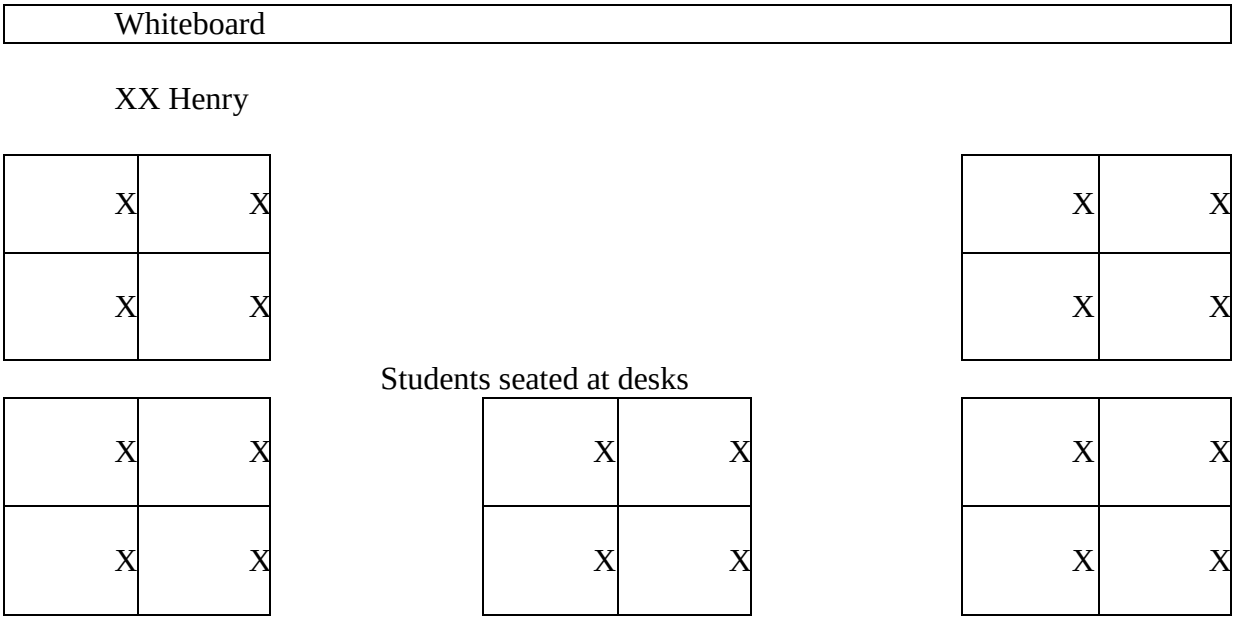

Figure 4.1. History classroom arrangement

This arrangement shown in Figure 4.1 enabled the collaborative nature of the teaching practice by allowing students to form groups quickly and confer with their peers when necessary. However, it constrained Henry's teaching also as he needed to stop the lesson several times to manage student behavior. The informational texts also created particular material-economic arrangements. Students read the informational texts to discover Christmas traditions in other cultures. To some extent, these texts constrained the teaching of other reading practices. For example, Henry left the decoding and comprehending of the informational texts to the students and did not teach the vocabulary explicitly. In addition, the texts did not provide any opportunity for Henry to teach another reading practice: critical reading. This is mentioned in the literature as an important reading practice. The "take notes and report back" nature of the activity might have enabled Henry to check for comprehension but constrained an opportunity for teaching critical thinking.

Social-political arrangements

The social-political arrangements at the school appeared dichotomous or perhaps even conflicting. On the one hand, they favoured a relaxed, informal and engaging relationship between staff and students. However, they also allowed the teacher to manage student behaviour in an authoritative manner. This was evident on the website (accessed 9/9/2015) with the words: *stable and ordered environment* signifying a rules-based and authoritarian approach appearing alongside words such as: *nurturing and encouraging* that appear to characterise a more informal approach. This arrangement possibly constrained Henry's reading teaching practices to some extent. As he revealed in an interview: *with the students I think I struggled with behaviour management, just attitudes, and you don't know how to play it because they're grade 7 and it's their first year at high school* (Henry, teacher, 2/12/2015).

While the teaching practice of activating prior knowledge is the focus of this section and not behavior management, nevertheless it is an important aspect of the social-political arrangements visible in Henry's classroom and at the school overall. Henry seemed to struggle with the dual nature of his role as needing to be both authoritarian and also more facilitative. Henry mentioned several times over the course of the study that he wanted to teach curriculum literacies more explicitly but his time was taken up with teaching the content and managing behavior (Field notes, October / November 2015).

Summation

While the reading practice of activating prior knowledge was not explicitly related to teaching the vocabulary that students found difficult in the reading texts, it did reveal that Henry used this particular curriculum literacies teaching practice prior to giving students a text to read. This teaching practice comprised particular sayings, doings and relatings and

appeared to have been enabled by the shared language and understandings of customs (cultural-discursive arrangements), the use of the whiteboard and the reading text (material-economic arrangements) but might have been enabled and simultaneously constrained by the social-political arrangements at the site, that, while giving authority to manage behavior to the teachers, also privileged student independence and collaboration. This possibly led to Henry's feelings of ambivalence towards the success of his teaching practices. The findings turn now to a presentation of Henry's second reading teaching practice: guided instruction to an individual during reading to extract information.

4.3 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice. During reading: Individual guidance to extract information (Year 7 History)

Instruction to provide guidance as a teaching reading practice occurred with individuals in a class or with a whole class. In the second half of a Year 7 History lesson observed earlier in term four (4/11/2015), the students were working independently on a task requiring them to read an online text and then answer questions related to it. This unit of work related to an online unit called *The Quest* and was the final unit of the year. One prominent curriculum literacies teaching practice employed while students were reading the online text was for the teacher to guide a student through a task using teacher initiated Question and Answer *(Q and A)*. During this class, as students were reading the text and extracting information to demonstrate their understanding, Henry was walking around guiding students and offering individual instruction where required. For example, in Extract 4.4, Henry responded to a student who indicated he was having difficulty reading the text:

Extract 4.4

H: *Have a look here. So, here's the cause. So what do they believe? What does this tell you about the cause? The cause and effect? This is about the medieval period. I want you to have a read. (…)*

H: ok, so first thing we gotta do – look at what's going on. So, [interrupts to say "shhh" to the class*]. Sorry about that so, um – can you read that out for me?*

S1: … (very quietly) often faced …from ..

H: Ok. So with Rome's army gone – Rome's army used to protect them – right? So the cause here of that which we've just read is just here. Rome's army gone –right? Does that make sense? So, then what did they do? Here – they gathered private armies. Does that make sense? You got it?

S1 (nods).

H: Good, now let's look at – here – let's look at this here. You read.

*S1: (*reads quietly to himself*)*

H: Ok, so what did they believe?

*S1: Umm …(*response inaudible*).*

H: Ok, so can you write that for me? That's a cause. So write that and then we'll look at the effect. _____, I will be there in two minutes. Ok?

[Henry went to work with other students and then came back to assist Student 1]

H: Right – because they owned how much?

S: All, the whole?

H: Yeah, so they owned all the land.

S1: Hmm

H: There was too much to defend. Ok?

S1: That's the cause?

H: yes, so that was the cause we just did. So the effect is right here – so read that sentence.

*S1:(*reads*) They owned all the land in the kingdom.*

H: Right, so they had how much land?

S1: The whole?

H: Right – so write that down. … But what was the thing? Then I want you to read this one. Read it so you can think about it and I'm going to come check it in a minute.

S1: Ok.

Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Individual guidance during reading to extract information

Sayings

In Extract 4.4, Henry was not teaching reading skills to the whole class but was engaged in leading and guiding an individual student to extract information from the text using the Q and A teaching practice. In this example, Henry's sayings were characterised by the questioning word: *what* and directing words such as: *have a look*. Henry used questions and answers to scaffold the student through the reading of the text in order to extract information to show his understanding. The scaffolding nature of the practice was reinforced through Henry's use of sequential language such as: *so, then, and then*. Henry also used repetition and rhetorical questions to reinforce what information the student was required to extract. *So with Rome's army gone* is repeated twice and the rhetorical question *right?* is also repeated twice in close proximity to one another.

Doings

Henry's teaching was also characterised by certain actions. Henry's teaching practice might appear to be IRE because he initiated so many of the questions. However, Henry responded during the informal conversation after the lesson that he had spent much time with this student over the course of the year and in his words was *guiding him through* tasks as much as possible (Field notes, 4/11/2015). Henry attempted to assist the student into making connections between what he had read and the required answer by using a connecting word: *so*. Henry also allowed a certain wait time to prompt and encourage the student. However, he did not do this frequently, instead making use of several rhetorical questions. Henry sat next to the student and pointed to key words and information the student could extract in order to show his understanding of what he had read. Thus, while the student was able to extract the required information, much of the actual work of finding the relevant information was done by Henry as he guided the student to extract the required information.

Relatings

The encouragement of the student described in Extract 4.4 was evident of a warm relationship between Henry and the student where Henry was a supportive mentor and guide rather than authoritarian figure. Henry and the student were sitting side by side and Henry related to the student more as a guide and facilitator. This was evidenced by Henry saying: *well done, yes* so that the student, who had been struggling to find the answers when left to his own devices (Field notes, 4/11/2015), was able to come up with the correct answer once Henry provided guidance.

Practice Architectures: Individual guidance to an individual during reading to extract information

Cultural-discursive arrangements

Henry's sayings were enabled by the cultural-discursive arrangements. In Extract 4.4, historical language such as cause and effect was present. However, the student appeared to be struggling to understand it. Thus, Henry was enabled to teach the student the language of the text through scaffolding his reading. The scaffolding of the language then enabled the student to extract the required information to demonstrate his understanding of what he had read. However, the actual online resource appeared to be above the student's instructional level. Hence, Henry needed to provide this individual guidance. As the online resource was not available to the researcher, it is not possible to comment on other cultural-discursive arrangements created by the online resource. Nevertheless, some tentative comments about the online resource are made in the discussion of the material-economic and the social-political arrangements and were based on the observation and the field notes.

Material-economic arrangements

The use of technology enabled Henry and the student to work independently. The unit on *The Quest* was designed to enable students to work through the tasks in a self-paced manner giving the teacher freedom to work individually with students. Specific technology such as computers and online reading resources enabled Henry and the students to access the online resources. In addition, the technology enabled self-paced learning which in turn enabled Henry to concentrate on providing guidance to those who required repetition and assistance with the reading task. However, Henry expressed a sense of dissatisfaction with the online resource as he believed it constrained his explicit teaching of both historical content and, after some reflection, of specific ways of how to read historical content. Henry

mentioned that: *it almost feels lazy* [just to leave the students to read the resource and extract information without any prior teaching]. Also, at times, Henry was frustrated by the need to provide online resources. In an interview he mentioned:

> *The delivery is completely, for the most part, I think, different. It's more like - your average kid would way rather watch a video on a historical event …So, in some ways you're sitting there going well if I can't find an interesting video then the kids aren't going to be engaged – so I need to find an interesting video… you know when I'm planning for weeks, I can't do that, you know?* (Henry, teacher, interview, 2/12/2015)

Thus, the integration of technology as evident in the material-economic arrangements both enabled and constrained this curriculum literacies teaching practice.

Social-political arrangements

Henry's role as individual guide or facilitator was possibly enabled through the site arrangements that encouraged collaborative work and also fostered independent learning. As mentioned previously, the encouragement of collaboration was visible on the school website. However, the school also encouraged the development of learner independence. Again, the website (accessed 9/9/2015) was a useful source for data in this area mentioning: *The purpose… is to help students develop their full potential as independent learners who are prepared to be active*. Furthermore, the integration of technology was an important part of the material-economic arrangements visible at Abimelech College. The school leaders such as the Principal and the Head of Secondary encouraged the use of technology in the classroom and also the development of individual independence. This arrangement was also

visible on the website (accessed 9/9/2015) that stated: *We integrate this technology into all areas of our curriculum*. These enabling arrangements will be discussed further in Chapter Six and Seven.

Summation

The example of the lesson in Extract 4.4 exemplifies a typical teaching reading practice observed in many of the lessons during the course of this study. Henry used the curriculum literacies teaching practice of providing guidance to a student during his reading in order to extract information to show his understanding of what he had read. The next two examples will further demonstrate the reading teaching practices observed in this study. In the following examples, brief descriptions will be provided of first, explaining vocabulary in a text book to assist comprehension and second, teaching vocabulary through the development of a glossary.

4.4 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice. During reading: explain vocabulary in text book (Year 8 Science)

In Year 8 Science, students were expected to read from scientific textbooks that were typically complex and multimodal in nature, containing many diagrams requiring visual knowledge. Gary is an experienced teacher of Science, Mathematics and HPE. The lesson observed occurred at the start of a unit on rocks. Content knowledge was related to volcanic rocks and continental drift. Gary was observed explaining the technical vocabulary that was used through the unit and assisting comprehension of key terminology. In contrast to the previous example (Henry, Year 7 History) of teaching reading through activating prior knowledge, Gary supported comprehension of key specialist vocabulary and concepts by reading an extract from a textbook and explaining the words verbally. He then posed a

series of questions on the white board which the students were expected to answer in writing. However, Gary did not teach students explicitly how to read a visual text or how to extract the information other than by posing questions related to the content that the students were expected to answer.

The lesson observed was an introductory one to the concept of different types of rocks. During this lesson, Gary was building content knowledge and simultaneously, students' knowledge of the vocabulary required to assist their comprehension of the written, visual text. Extract 4.5 demonstrates Gary pre-teaching the vocabulary required to read the textbook. The use of ellipsis in this extract is to indicate omitted aspects of this lesson unrelated to the reading teaching practice under discussion here. After the initial greetings, Gary introduced the content for the day (12/4/2016).

Extract 4.5

G: Today we are going to look at rocks. You will be reading from your textbooks and watching a video. Then you will answer questions I will write on the board. …

I will bring the textbooks around …[pause while Gary handed out hard copies of the textbook to those who needed them].

We will read from the textbook first. Go to this section. You can find it in your electronic copy. If you need a textbook take from the pile in the front. So, look at your textbooks page 279. Yes, that's it page 279. I want you to read and answer the questions I will write on the board. We will read from the textbook first. Go to this section.

[Gary wrote the required chapter and section on the whiteboard then directed the students to find the correct chapter in their e copies found on the school intranet or to take a hard copy of the textbook found in a small pile at the front of the classroom. He commenced reading the extract to the students (see Appendix H).

At times, Gary stopped to explain the meanings of words from the extract.] For example:

G: What does the word destructive mean? What do you think?

Ss: Not sure, um, hurting, breaking

S1: damaging

G: That's about right. Destructive means it can cause damage.

[The same pattern of Q and A was observed for three other words: "igneous, sedimentary and linked". Each time Gary asked the students "*What do you think?*" Each time there was a general class response and each time Gary gave an answer]. For example,

G: So linked means connected.

[Once Gary had finished reading the extract, he proceeded to summarise the concept of igneous rocks using a diagram he drew on the board]. (see Figure 4.2.)

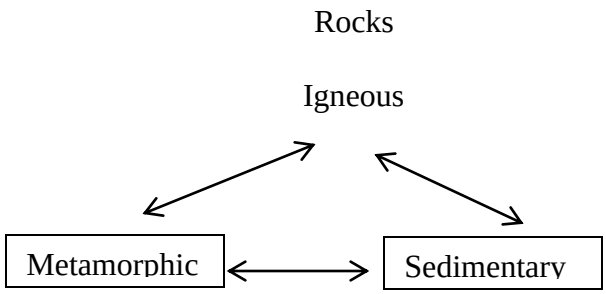

Figure 4.2. Year 8 Science Igneous Rocks

This is the summary of the content Gary and the students were reading about in Extract 4.5. Gary drew this diagram on the whiteboard to assist the students' comprehension of the concept of igneous rocks.

Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Explaining vocabulary in a textbook during reading

In Extract 4.5, Gary was helping students to comprehend the passage to be read by developing and checking student understandings of key scientific concepts. He did this through his sayings, in particular by using question and answer language, a common teaching practice but also related to teaching science where formulating and answering questions is a key process. Gary used directive words such as: *we are going, will be reading* to lead the students through the comprehension process. He also indicated the processual nature of reading a scientific text though using sequential words such as: *then, first,* cueing the students to the steps Gary wanted students to follow in their reading.

Gary also used words related to technology such as: *electronic copy* as students were required to read a text using an e copy on their laptops. Scientific words such as: *igneous* and s*edimentary* were used as these were the words Gary wanted to foreground as important to the students' understanding. He further emphasised this by stating these were the *words of the day* [not quoted in this extract but contained in the whole transcript of this lesson]. Gary's explanation of key concepts was supported further in a group focus interview held towards the end of the research period (4/11/2016) where Gary remarked (in response to the question, "What is the most significant aspect of literacy in your subject area?") *It would be the words*. Gary indicated that he liked to explain difficult words. Thus, Gary's teaching reading practice of explaining vocabulary in a textbook became an enabler of student learning. The ecologies of practices visible at the site will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Both Gary and the students in the Year 8 Science lesson shown in Extract 4.5 were involved in specific doings (actions). Gary also took on several roles: not only did he direct

students to read, write, speak and listen, he also guided them and elicited the specialist vocabulary required to aid comprehension. Hence, in contrast to Henry's lesson explicated in Section 4.2, Gary was quite explicit in his curriculum literacy teaching practice. He set a purpose for the lesson and went through the text explicitly, checking for understanding and clarifying and explaining where necessary. Furthermore, Gary read the text aloud to enable the students to hear how an experienced reader decodes and pronounces the key words. Gary also guided students' learning by posing specific questions related to vocabulary and understanding of the key concepts. Gary facilitated the whole class in this manner and also offered assistance to individuals. Furthermore, Gary utilised technology as part of his teaching practice. The students were required to read from the electronic copy of the text, found on the school intranet, if possible. Gary also attempted to utilise his electronic copy of the text, also available to him through the school intranet, but was not able to access the internet at that stage of the lesson, on his computer. The availability of a hard copy of the text enabled Gary to continue his lesson. Finally, Gary utilised a diagram (Figure 4.2) to explain and summarise the key concept for the lesson.

Gary's relationship with the students was characterised by his guidance of the students during the reading of the text vocabulary and key concepts. He did this in a warm, encouraging way demonstrated by repetition of words such as: *good*. However, he also encouraged student independence by instructing them to work independently: *go to this section. You can find it in your electronic copy. If you need a textbook take from the pile in the front.* However, the fact that Gary explained the key vocabulary as he read through the text is evident that he recognized the reading level was likely to be above the reading level of many of the students in the class. In an informal conversation after the lesson, Gary mentioned that many of the students in his class were struggling academically in most of

the school subjects (Field notes, 12/4/2016) and required more scaffolding and guidance than students in other Year 8 Science classes he had taught previously.

Practice Architectures: Explaining vocabulary in a textbook during reading

The cultural-discursive arrangements that shaped this particular curriculum literacies teaching practice related to the scientific vocabulary found in the textbook. The school had used this textbook for a number of years and Gary was familiar with key concepts that were likely to prove more difficult to understand. Hence, he knew he needed to teach these explicitly to the class.

Similarly to the other examples mentioned in this chapter, the material-economic arrangements of the integration of technology both enabled and constrained Gary's teaching of curriculum literacies. It constrained him somewhat as it wasn't working correctly and therefore, he was unable to show the students the text on the screen. However, the students were able to access the text for themselves giving them a measure of independence.

Gary's use of Q and A appeared to be a traditional teaching practice at the site and therefore, part of the social-political arrangements that shaped the curriculum literacies teaching practices. IRE and/or explicit teaching practices were observed in all lessons during the study. In this lesson, the students did not initiate any questions but were engaged in answering the questions related to the vocabulary and key concepts. The teacher and students shared similar understandings of the nature of the task: teach and learn the vocabulary during the reading of a text in preparation for an activity later in the lesson that was designed so that the students would read the rest of the section in the textbook and extract information to demonstrate their comprehension. This shared understanding of the task requirements likely enabled Gary's teaching.

As is evident from Extract 4.5, Gary employed the curriculum literacies teaching practice of explaining key vocabulary during the reading of a text. This practice also built comprehension prior to the students' reading the remainder of the section in the textbook. The curriculum literacies teaching practice was both enabled and constrained by the arrangements at the site. I turn now to the example of a reading teaching practice of building knowledge of the field. In this brief example, the Business Studies teacher (Kieran) was building knowledge of the field through teaching the concepts that students would encounter in their texts throughout the term. He did this through the development of a glossary.

4.5 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice. Building knowledge of the field by the development of a glossary (Year 9 Business Studies)

The curriculum literacies teaching practice of building knowledge of the field was observed in all the classes but a good example comes from the Year 9 Business Studies class (8/2/2016). Kieran is an experienced classroom teacher who has taught for over 15 years, in a range of subject areas and year levels. As well as being a classroom teacher, at the time of the study, he was also the Head of Department (HOD) for Business.

In the context of Abimelech College, Business Studies was a generic, elective course for middle school students. Year 9 students elected to participate in this subject as part of the school elective program. Business Studies at this school provided students with foundational knowledge for later study in Legal Studies and Economics in the senior phase of schooling. Business Studies was taught for two lessons a week, with each lesson forty minutes in duration. Over the course of the year, 4 units were taught addressing key concepts, skills and knowledge in relation to Legal Studies, Economics and Civics and

Accounting. The following brief extract (Extract 4.6) came from a lesson that occurred at the start of the year and formed part of the introductory unit. After initial greetings Kieran commenced this episode of the lesson:

Extract 4.6

*K: Did you do them? [*Homework questions*]*

Class: yes

K: Open your books please.

[Students busy themselves noisily opening laptops, taking out books]

*K: Open it up, three words, that's all I said [*teacher holds up three fingers and stands at front of room] *And I gave you two of the answers, it's just the one that you needed to … I think even the third one, had a response from the crowd after they did a google search. So, they don't have to be 100% right, I just want to know first of all that you have (indistinct) and you're on track and we will clarify these processes as we go. …*

What's the first word I had on your glossary list? Yup?____ [points to but doesn't name student*]*

S3: accused.

T: accused. Would someone in the room – right at the back – tell me what the word accused means?

*S4: [*first girl to respond*] A person or group who are charged with or on trial for a crime.*

*K: that's a nice technical definition. I like that. Did everyone get an answer like that? [*teacher is still standing at the front of the room*] yeah – so, the key concept is someone who is – don't use the word in the definition – I'm going to break that right now – I think you said charged – [points* back to student*] charged – someone who has been*

charged with a crime – or a group of people who have been charged with a crime – they haven't been found guilty. They haven't been found not guilty [teacher paces up and down front of classroom as he talks*]. Or innocent. They are charged and they are before the court – or they're about to go before the courts. [*Teacher uses anecdote as example to illustrate this point] *So, for example, if I am speeding and I don't pay my fine I can be accused, charged and taken to court. Am I innocent or guilty? Well, I would need to be proved guilty. At the start I am just accused, I haven't been found guilty. I don't need to pay my fine until I am found guilty.*

*Okay? You're all happy with that definition? Nod your head like you understand [*very slight pause*] what was the second word? Do you remember what I said last week about the word innocent?*

Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Building knowledge of the field through development of a glossary

During this practice, Kieran taught the students what certain specialist legal words mean through the development a glossary. The students were expected to research key words given to them in advance as a homework activity and keep them as a glossary using a word document. The glossary was filed on their laptops. In this way, Kieran was building knowledge of the field prior to giving the students specific texts to read using the school online platform. Kieran's teaching practice comprised certain saying. First, Kieran only explained three words. He was linking the words the students had needed to research to the content he would be teaching later in the lesson and that students would read online throughout the unit of study. Thus, Kieran was slowly building knowledge of the field to assist student comprehension.

Second, Kieran taught that word definitions can be guessed and do not need to be entirely accurate*: so, they don't have to be 100% right, I just want to know first of all that you have (indistinct) and you're on track and we will clarify these processes as we go.* Third, Kieran taught that definitions need to be technical, in keeping with the content of Business Studies and, in this part of the unit of work, legal in nature. Kieran emphasised this through his use of affirmative language: *that's a nice technical definition; I like that.* Fourth, Kieran used the words to link back to previous lessons and remind students of prior knowledge to enable him to build content using these concepts. Lastly, Kieran used an anecdote to reinforce the concepts. This was most important as in this way, Kieran was able to reinforce the notion that dictionary definitions or what the students located in their research, are not always suitable. The anecdote therefore, provided a suitable context for the students and assisted in developing comprehension.

During this extract (Extract 4.6) from the lesson, Kieran did most of the talking and moving around the room. He was explaining, initiating questions and providing feedback using traditional teaching practices. The students responded to questions, initiated a few of their own and wrote down answers imitating traditional learning practices. Therefore, in general Kieran was the active transmitter of knowledge and the students the more passive recipients. Field notes (8/2/16) also noted several students engrossed in other activities on their laptops: primarily checking their Facebook accounts. These were minimised on their screens if Kieran started walking towards them.

Kieran used a combination of humour *Nod your head like you understand* apparent nonchalance *So, I'm happy with your grades suffering* [not included as part of this extract but evident on the complete transcript] and also authority, *I'm going to break that right now* in his relationship with the class. He also mentioned the parents later in the complete

transcript as the ultimate authority for the students. However, conversely, the students were expected to be independent and take responsibility for their actions.

Practice Architectures: Building knowledge of the field through the development of a glossary

Kieran's sayings, doings and relatings were enabled and constrained by the cultural-discursive arrangements of the site. In particular, the online texts used in this unit created specific legal discourses. However, the researcher was not given access to these texts so their enabling and/or constraining influence on Kieran's curriculum literacies teaching practice cannot be commented on. However, as is visible in Extract 4.6, Kieran's teaching practice was enabled and constrained by the legal language. In order to ensure that students understood the content, Kieran had to build knowledge of the field and in particular, the vocabulary. The teaching practice of building knowledge of the field through the development of a glossary might constrain his content teaching on the one hand as he had to take time to do this. For example, in Extract 4.6, Kieran used about twenty minutes out of a forty minute lesson to explain vocabulary. This was important as the subject was timetabled to run only 2 lessons a week, each lasting forty minutes. Therefore, any time used by Kieran needed to be spent wisely. However, Kieran was also enabled to build on content using these concepts once the students had written down the definitions as he had less need to revise them constantly.

The use of technology as a material-economic resource was an important enabler and constraint at the site and will be discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven in more detail. During this lesson, the use of laptops likely enabled students to record their answers and conduct research. However, conversely, possibly constrained Kieran's teaching too as some of the students appeared more engaged with other online activities than actively

engaged in the lesson (Field notes, 8/2/ 2016). The room used for the lesson was a dedicated art room and Kevin mentioned this made moving around the room difficult as there was very little available space between the large desks.

Kieran used a mixture of humour and authoritarian language which demonstrated his relationship with the students. Social-political arrangements at the school enabled him to do this: the school encouraged independence as noted elsewhere in this chapter while also supporting Kieran in his authoritarian stance. The practice of building knowledge of the field through the teaching of important concepts and vocabulary, and the development of a glossary was evident in this extract. Kevin's teaching of the practice emphasised that independent student research was also required. Furthermore, the teaching of the practice utilised a review of past teaching and linking to prior and new knowledge by the teacher. It was both enabled and constrained by the particular arrangements noted above. The discussion turns now to an examination of the teaching of a text type that needed to be read.

4.6 Text types

During the observations and document analysis, it was clear that the middle school students at Abimelech College had to comprehend a wide variety of text types. These tended to be factual and informative (Science, History, Geography) and included fiction (biography). Also, the texts were usually increasingly complex over the middle years, contained a variety of generic structures, and were also often multimodal and/ or multisemiotic (in the case of mathematics texts). The text types are consistent with those suggested for this level of schooling in the national curriculum documents. The details of the texts employed at the school that were evident in this study are outlined in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Text types being read in subjects across the curriculum

Subject	Text type
Year 7 English	*Instruction*s eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Explanation*s, eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, *Informativ*e eg articles about famous people, online *Procedural* eg accessing Turnitin (online)
Year 7 History	I*nstruction*s eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Explanation*s, eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Informative* eg handout about Christmas customs *Multimodal informative* eg online activity (Quest)
Year 7 Mathematics	I*nstruction*s eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Explanation*s, eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Informativ*e eg online games
Year 8 Science	*Recount / explanation* eg experiment *Informative* – eg online *Multimodal* eg textbook (visuals such as diagrams, tables and written words), online
Year 8 Geography	*Instruction*s eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Explanation*s, eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Informativ*e eg online content / textbook *Multimodal* eg textbook (visuals such as diagrams, tables and written words)
Year 9 Business Studies	*Instruction*s eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Explanation*s, eg written on white board, in assessment sheets, online *Informative* eg glossary, online content related to judicial system

In addition to the texts outlined, the school used an online learning platform, Haiku, and students were expected to navigate the online multimodal subject pages. Haiku was also available for parent usage. The use of Haiku was evident in all classes observed and in all interviews held and was also a key feature of the school website (see photograph of

school website in Appendix I). However, the researcher did not have access to Haiku so is unable to comment on the texts found on this platform. The impact of technology at Abimelech College and on teaching curriculum literacy practices will be further discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven as the incorporation of technology into teaching practices was a key aspect of material-economic arrangements and also a key feature of practices within the ecologies of practices in the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014). Hence technology played an important role in the findings of the research.

From the texts made available to the researcher, (for example, the Christmas customs, the biography model and the hard copy of the Science textbook) as well as what was visible in lessons when online resources were utilised (noted in Field notes, 2015-2016), it was clear that students needed a wide knowledge of the many audiences and purposes for the text types. Many of the texts utilised were multimodal combining written, visual and audio information. These texts tended to be informational in nature. However, while the texts were utilised at school, and the intended audience therefore can be inferred to be school students, the contents were often very dense and complex for students: for example, as evident in the Science textbook, a photograph of which appears as Appendix H.

The Science textbook contained diagrams that required an understanding of visual literacy. While this is an aspect of curriculum literacies, it was not observed being taught. In addition, many key words were unfamiliar to students and the content outside of student immediate experiences. In Australia, in particular, students' personal experience of volcanoes is likely to be limited although it is likely they would know what one is. The language was also complex, containing, for example, nominalisation such as: *eruption*. Teachers were observed eliciting the technical language required for reading or building knowledge of the field to enable students to read these dense text types. The increased

complexity of the text types from middle school onwards requires explicit teaching of text structure and language features, in addition to how to read visual images and multimodal texts. Across the research period, one teacher was observed commenting on the increased complexity of texts in the senior years and the requirement to build reading capacity in students from middle school. Liane, the Year 9 Business Studies teacher commented:

> *I've pretty much thrown all sorts of things at you this year and you've been on a learning curve like this …that you can at least get the foundation aspects …you don't want to miss out on the fundamental principles. So, I'll give you an example, we teach a lot of the fundamental things that we don't have time for teaching in Grade Eleven for the Legal Studies program. (24/11/2015)*

The need to teach the text types in middle school in preparation for the texts that would be encountered in the senior years was also mentioned by Kieran, also a Year 9 Business Studies teacher, when he said in an interview: *if we teach something in MS and they get in the habit of tackling something that way, then when they get to SS that comes through.* (21/10/2015). However, while this was mentioned, it was not an observed teaching practice during the research period. Nevertheless, one teacher was observed teaching students about the practice involved in gaining <u>knowledge</u> about a specific text type they would be reading. This too, was Liane, but in a Year 7 English class.

4.7 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice. Before reading: teaching the text type (Year 7 English)

Liane was also a highly experienced English teacher. She was observed teaching Year 7 students about how to submit assessments using 'Turnitin' (7/3/16) which is an online platform through which students submit assignments. 'Turnitin' also checks for plagiarism. The curriculum literacies teaching practice required the teacher to teach the students how to read a procedural text. The procedural text students were required to read and comprehend was a set of PowerPoint slides they needed to access individually through the school Haiku site. The slides explained to students how to set up an account and submit assessments electronically. While this procedural text was taught as part of English, nevertheless the literacy required to access 'Turnitin' was shared by all subjects as every subject in the middle and senior phases of schooling required students to submit assessments in this way. This was a new practice for the Year 7 students as they had not encountered it in the primary school phase.

While the lesson was interrupted by a technical issue around passwords and enrolments, the curriculum literacies teaching practice observed was characterised by certain sayings. Similar to the other teachers, Liane used language related to technology and computers. This was because the text that the students were required to read and access was an online set of slides. Words that Liane used that were related to technology and included ones such as: *online, Haiku, google, shared document, look here [*at the whiteboard onto which the slides had been projected from Liane's iPad. This was achieved through Liane accessing the school WiFi and using the data projector]. The technological language also appeared to be shared by the students as Liane did not explain their meaning nor did the students ask questions about them. Therefore, the prior knowledge around

technology appeared to be assumed. This was a key feature of many of the lessons observed in this study across all subjects. Liane used the personal pronoun *we* repeatedly which also suggested that the students and the teacher shared common understandings.

Second, the curriculum literacies teaching practice was also characterised by a certain sequence that needed to be followed. This was evident in the use of time markers such as: *once I know, then I will, the next thing*, and re-emphasised when Liane said: *we are going to have to go through it step by step together.* Thus, the practice of reading this particular text type required step by step reading and following instructions.

Third, and as noted in the previous examples in this chapter, the practice was also characterised by collaboration between students evident in several of Liane's interactions with some students: *you need to actually help him. You have to talk to each other, you need someone in your group to help you.* Liane's use of words such as *need to help, have to talk* indicated the collaborative nature of this reading task and the associated curriculum literacies teaching practice. It was also characteristic of the newly introduced PBL initiative and featured in most of the language used by teachers of Year 7, in particular.

The curriculum literacies teaching practice was also characterised by several doings (actions) by the teacher. First, Liane modelled and demonstrated how the students were to read and follow the instructions in the text. She took them through the slides systematically: *so, have a look at the first slide* When she did this, she stood predominantly at the front of the room. This position at the front of the classroom was characteristic of most of the teacher participants. Second, Liane acted as mentor and guide, as she moved around the room directing students individually or in their smaller groups. The students were following her directions, accessing the information on their iPads and working collaboratively as

directed. Some students needed to be encouraged to work collaboratively, evident when Liane had to intervene and remind them of their responsibilities.

While Liane was the authority and expert figure in the classroom, as was evident in both her words and her position standing at the front of the room and moving around when required to direct students, she also both encouraged and expected independence in the students. This was evident in words such as: *you will* and also in the collaboration between students she fostered. Liane's authority was also evident in her position within the room: she was standing while students were sitting at desks. She also managed student behaviour, giving students permission to leave the classroom and admonishing those who were not following her directions. However, ambivalence in her role as authority and expert figure was also evident when she experienced difficulties with the technology and had to confer with, and defer to, a colleague:

> *alright, we're just waiting on ____, (names second teacher) she's going to help us out with something. Ok, you guys, looking here, looking up this way. Alright, we can't do any more with Turn It In at the moment. Right, we just have to hold on.*

Thus, the relatings of her curriculum literacies teaching practice were both hierarchical and collegial. Nevertheless, the ambivalence in relationships when using technology was mentioned by the other teacher participants and this is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

The cultural-discursive arrangements evident in this lesson were related to technology and Project Based learning [PBL]. The language of technology was

foregrounded in Liane's sayings and appeared to be shared by the students. An analysis of the school website (accessed 5/3/2016) confirmed that the school remained an Apple distinguished school as was evident on the website located in September of the previous year (see Section 1.3). The acknowledgement remained a feature of the home page of the school website. Additionally, the home page advertised various software apps and also the school social media presence. The school also initiated new programs related to teaching and learning in the middle school with the introduction of PBL and thus teachers and students were required to learn the language related to this initiative (Field notes 7/3/16). By the time this particular lesson was observed late in term one, students and staff were more familiar with these arrangements. Specific PBL discourses included included: *for your group, you're the* <u>*expert*</u> *– you're going to have to help these guys, ok? That's your job. Alright I'm going to share you guys around; Alright, we're just going to have to* <u>*do a bit of restarting*</u> *here for a tick.* Teachers were also required to read the text *Project-Based Learning* (Bender, 2012).

The PBL used by Abimelech College foregrounded the use of group work and collaboration in teaching and learning practices, and also used specific language usage such as: *expert and restart*. This specific cultural-discursive arrangement enabled Liane's curriculum literacies teaching practices as the students appeared to share her understanding and this facilitated clear communication. It also enabled Liane to foster independence and collaboration by assigning students to work as peer mentors or experts. The importance of a shared language was also mentioned by the Head of Secondary in an interview when he said: *I think a common language is very important* (Myles, Head of Secondary, 15/9/15) and the role of leading practices will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

The use of specific material-economic resources both enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Specific technology: iPads, data projectors, and air play apps enabled Liane and the students to access the online resources. However, conversely, the issues also constrained the smooth progression of the lesson specifically when time was wasted on technological issues related to access. The furniture of the classroom was also specifically tailored to accommodate PBL. There was a variety of seating available to facilitate both individual and group work and ease of movement was enabled by chairs that were on casters. The room itself was a large one and was divided to accommodate two separate classes but could be opened to facilitate team teaching. For example, this ease of access enabled Liane to seek her colleague's assistance without leaving the class unsupervised when there were issues with the technology.

The social-political arrangements also enabled and constrained Liane's teaching practice. As mentioned previously, the social-political arrangements were dichotomous. The school followed a traditional, hierarchical arrangement in terms of teacher autonomy and authority ie teachers were expected to be the authority and experts in the class occupying a higher power status than the students. Students were the novices, expected to be submissive and receptive to learning. This hierarchical arrangement of power was evident in an observation of a whole school staff meeting held during the student-free days at the commencement of the year (Field notes, 27/1/2016) in which the member of the school leadership team appointed to oversee behavior management (Deputy Head - Student Welfare) detailed the specific behaviour management plans for that year and emphasised the teacher autonomy and authority[5].

[5] Note – this staff member agreed to being observed during these meetings and comments paraphrased but not to being quoted directly in the thesis so direct quotation is not available.

However, conversely the Deputy Head also mentioned that the school leadership foregrounded the need for learners to become autonomous. This desire for student independence and ownership of behavior, was also evident on the school website which stated: *students develop a sense of identity… and a sense of personal responsibility towards others; considerable emphasis is placed on the development of character that will determine success in life* (website, accessed 16/3/2016). Therefore, Liane might have been able to encourage learner independence as part of the PBL initiative and supported by the school values as expressed publicly on the website. However, this independence might also have constrained her teaching. She was interrupted several times by students asking to leave the room to collect printing and also appeared a little frustrated by students who were working at a faster pace: *you are rushing ahead really quickly so can you please make sure that you go to our Haiku page.* One final point to note is that although the text type being taught was a procedural text, Liane did not teach any specific language features of a text type. She directed the students through the reading of the procedural text in more general ways. However, it was a finding that revealed the teachers in the school have started the journey of more explicit teaching of curriculum literacies. The writing practices in Chapter Five revealed a more explicit teaching of the subject- specific written text types.

4.8 Summary of the findings for teaching reading practices

Several teaching reading practices have been presented in this chapter. These curriculum literacies teaching practices were explained using one detailed analysis and three shorter examples to exemplify typical teaching reading practices observed. The first example (Year 7 History) presented reading teaching practices of preparing for reading by activating prior knowledge and providing guidance to students when they were engaged in

extracting information during the reading of a text. The second (Year 8 Science) and third example (Year 9 Business Studies) presented reading teaching practices related to building knowledge of the field and teaching the vocabulary necessary to comprehend a textbook, and through the development of a glossary. The final example (Year 7 English) presented the teaching reading practice of how to read a certain text type.

Using the view of literacy teaching that is first, skills-based and second, is in a crisis (explained by the apparently poor levels of literacy in high stakes tests), the reading teaching practices can be critiqued in a more negative way. One conclusion is that while there are many models and approaches that might be used to teach reading to middle students across the curriculum, the teachers in this study used only certain aspects, teaching mainly the vocabulary and some general comprehension strategies. These teaching reading practices are typical of more general content reading approaches to teaching curriculum literacies. Therefore, while the teaching of reading is present in the subject teachers' general teaching practices, the teaching of reading is not specifically related to the reading required by that subject i.e. the disciplinary reading.

However, as presented in earlier chapters, this is not the only way of approaching curriculum literacies teaching practices. The view of literacy as socially constructed enabled an analysis of the practice architectures that prefigure and are enmeshed in the practice of teaching reading. The ontological approach to analysis enabled an examination of the site-specific cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that both enabled and constrained the teaching reading practices evident at the school during the study. In addition, the findings also revealed that the teachers related to students in warm, encouraging ways and taught reading from an approach that viewed proficiency in reading as necessary for doing well in school studies and later in life. This moral approach

to curriculum literacies teaching practices was evident in an implicit way through the relatings and stated explicitly to the researcher during informal discussions, formal interviews and also the group discussion that took place towards the end of the research. The moral approach also became apparent in the other practices of the Education Complex, particularly leading. This aspect will be discussed in Chapter Seven in greater detail.

Chapter Five - Writing Practices and Practice Architectures

Writing is the painting of the voice.

Voltaire

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the focus is on the teaching of writing practices observed and the enabling and constraining practice architectures evident at the site. The complex nature of the relationship between practices, practice architectures and the site has been signposted in Chapter Four and will be noted again here but will be discussed in depth in Chapter Seven.

In summary, data findings revealed several practices related to teaching writing across the subject areas. Overall, the study found that writing teaching practices comprised:

- practices of writing as a product to demonstrate learning
- practices of writing for learning
- practices of writing as a process that occurs in stages
- practices of writing as a process that is linked to learning.

The writing teaching practices of each subject area are summarised in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1

Summary of writing practices observed

Subject	Writing practice (s)
Year 7 English	1. Writing as a process in stages 2.Writing to demonstrate learning - biography
Year 7 History	1. Writing for learning - Q & A, short response 2. Writing to demonstrate learning - short response
Year 7 Mathematics	1. Writing for learning - note taking using data 2. Writing to demonstrate learning - report
Year 8 Science	1. Writing for learning - Q&A 2.Writing to demonstrate learning - short response
Year 8 Geography	1.Writing to demonstrate learning - multimodal report
Year 9 Business	1.Writing as a process linked to learning 2.Writing to demonstrate learning - report

In Australia, written text types that should be taught are suggested in the national curriculum documents and some of these text types are assessed in the national NAPLAN tests that occur in selected years of schooling including Years 7 and 9 which are two of the focal points of this research. Each subject area has specific texts that students need to learn how to compose. Writing for a particular subject area requires more than just cognitive knowledge of the content of that subject (as current research into disciplinary literacy teaching rather than teaching content writing has shown). It requires initiation into the specific practices of writing certain texts as a member of the particular discipline to which the subject belongs. For example, students need to learn how to compose the structure of a text, how to identify and write for a specific and appropriate audience and purpose and how to write a coherent text. At this school, similar to the findings around text types presented in Chapter Four, text types related to writing were varied. Some text types were obviously utilised for learning, while others demonstrated learning. Some were complex in structure, whereas others were less complex but required quite complex cognitive knowledge and skills to compose effectively. Some text types were taught explicitly and others were part of assumed knowledge. A summary of the text types required for writing are outlined in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2

Summary of text types for writing

Subject and Year level	Text types for writing
Year 7 Mathematics	Report, note-taking using data
Year 7 English	Biography, Interview questions
Year 7 History	Short response answers
Year 8 Science	Note-taking, short response answers
Year 8 Geography	Multimodal report
Year 9 Business Studies	Report, writing definitions, short response answers

5.1 Overview of this chapter

The teaching of writing practices observed during the study involved explicit and implicit scaffolding and modelling of writing practices. The following writing practices form the basis of this chapter: writing to demonstrate learning, in particular the teaching of a generic structure (narrative: Year 7 English biography); writing for learning, in particular the taking of notes using data (Year 7 Mathematics) and second, the answering of questions using short responses (Year 8 Science). Writing to demonstrate learning is typically associated with assessment items, whereas writing for learning is more formative in nature, and supports comprehension of learning in the subject area.

Data for this chapter were derived from the following subjects and year levels:

Year 7 English (taught by Liane)

Year 8 Science (taught by Gary)

Year 7 Mathematics (taught by Diane).

Data were collected from a variety of sources: observations of lessons, transcripts, field notes, interviews, documents. As with the previous chapter, here again the first example (Year 7 English) will be dealt with in great detail to show the depth of analysis, then the ensuing examples (Year 8 Science and Year 7 Mathematics) will be presented and discussed more briefly.

5.2 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Writing to demonstrate learning

Participating teachers across all subjects were observed teaching the students practices of writing to demonstrate learning given its importance for assessment reasons. A knowledge of text type, generic structure and language features is an important aspect of learning to write effectively and is a key feature of the Australian national curriculum. Two

teachers, the Year 7 Mathematics teacher, and the Year 9 Business Studies teacher taught the report genre that was a requirement for writing to demonstrate learning in their subject areas. The Year 7 English teacher taught the narrative genre to enable students to write a biography which was the summative task of the unit and took place during the examination period. The Year 8 Geography students wrote a multimodal report on population growth and distribution to demonstrate learning. This writing task spanned the entire unit with the teacher teaching aspects of the writing required over the term. However, the teacher did not teach the genre required as the task was heavily scaffolded into sections and students were not required to structure the report themselves. They followed the template that was supplied. Similarly, Year 7 History students and Year 8 Science students wrote to demonstrate learning. This writing was not in the form of a specific genre but rather required the answering of a series of questions using short paragraphs during an examination session. Therefore, each teacher taught similar yet slightly different writing practices related to writing to demonstrate learning.

Year 7 Biographies

The Year 7 English teacher, Liane, was observed teaching the students what they needed to know about writing a particular text type in English (22/2/16). In this case, the students were learning about the structure of a biography. The writing of the biography was a summative task at the end of a unit on people of influence. For this biography, students needed to select a person they knew personally and whom they considered to be a person of influence. This type of text is often informative and reflective in nature. During this lesson, the teacher and the notes she used, referred to a biography as a personal recount. Furthermore, Liane taught the writing practice using a model of a biography, (Helen Keller)

unlike the practices of the other teachers who taught genre. The Year 7 English lesson observed was divided into several episodes and was part of a sequence of lessons around writing biographies. The second episode of the lesson involved the teacher teaching the Year 7 students about the textual requirements for writing a biography. During this time, Liane read from the notes and explained the generic structure. See Appendix J for the task sheet for this assessment task. In addition, the notes on biographies used by Liane during this lesson have been reproduced. Please note, the quality of the text in the appendix was impacted by a poor quality original given to the researcher and also by the need to delete certain identifying marks and words. Also, while the example given for this section includes a lengthy transcript, it demonstrated the generally scaffolded nature of Liane's writing teaching practice.

Notes on biography used by Liane

Biography: Personal Recount

Structure

A. Purpose

The purpose of a biography is to inform readers by retelling the events, experiences and achievements of a person's life.

B. Types

- Biography: an individual's life story written by another person
- Autobiography: an individual's life story written by him/herself

C. Context

- Subject matter: the focus is on the experiences and achievements of a person
- Roles and relationships: the writer states facts and is generally not known to readers

- Medium: book, magazine, encyclopedia, Internet
- Mode: written

D. Text

How to write the biography

- Structure

  Orientation: names the person, tell when and why he/she lived and state why he/ she is famous.

  Series of events: list the important people in chronological order. Mention people or experiences that may have influenced his/ her achievements. Explain the causes and effects of events.

  Re-orientation: restate why the person is famous and say what contribution he / she has made to society.

  Visual content: photographs, pictures or illustrations of the person and his/her achievements

- Vocabulary

  Impersonal language for descriptions of events or achievements

  i.e. do not use *I* , *we*

  Descriptive but not exaggerated language eg *During her life she showed remarkable courage by overcoming great difficulties*.

  Emotive expressions eg *She worked hard to make money to support herself*.

  Classifying language: ie put the person in the context of time, place and group eg *He was one of the most famous musicians of the twentieth century*

  Time sequencing: explain events in logical order in terms of time eg *In 1994, at the age of 16 …*

- Grammar

  Verbs: active verbs rather than passive verbs eg *She fought with the resistance, He became the leader, She had great success.*

  Verb form: past tense, present tense eg *He is a well-known expert.*

  Cause and effect language: *this led to, as a result*

  Contrasting ideas or statements linked by appropriate connectives eg *although, however, but*

Extract 5.1 from the lesson

L: Somebody asked me did we have homework and the question was…?

(Students respond as class)*: Yes!*

*L: The answer was yes. Where do we know? And remember, in Haiku, under our English page, ____ [*teacher names herself*] has her own pod – let me remind you [*shows this on the screen using the data projector] *and by checking into this pod, we know that there's week four [*demonstrating this*] and there's the 18th. That's when the week starts and our homework is due today and we had to complete What I know and What I need to Know about the person I want to interview for my biography. …you will have a task shortly where you will be designing your questions and you can't design good questions unless you have done this homework task. So, if you have not done your homework, you are going to find that you are disadvantaged straight away. For those of you who forget where homework is, _____[*names herself*] will always put it in the pod but it's also your responsibility to record it on your iPad in what app? Hands up. What app do you use?*

S1: Notes

L: Notes, correct. Or – there's another one you can use?

S2: Reminders

*L: Reminders. Reminders is a very good app for recording homework , ok? Because it pops up on your calendar. Ok, so let's take a look. [*teacher takes up a hard copy of the task sheet]. *We've got the rules for making our biography work. We've also got an example. Now, we went through some examples last week. ...So, let's have a look here. We touched on the purpose of a biography so let's go through that first one [*first point of task sheet]. *Who wants to read that first paragraph? Hands up! Good job! _____ is up.*

*S3: (*reads) *A. Purpose*

The purpose of a biography is to inform readers by retelling the events, experiences and achievements of a person's life.

L: ok, so that's our purpose. We wrote that out last week in our What we Know about biographies. Ok, we've got two types- we discussed that last week, a biography and an autobiography. There's the difference in writing there for you. We are doing a biography. We are writing about another person. If you were going to write your own, what's that called?

General class response: autobiography!

L: Correct. Ok, if you're gonna write your own. Ok, so our subject matter is focusing on the experiences and the achievements of a person. I would underline those two really important words. The experiences and achievements of the person. ____ you are not being attentive. Do your work. Focus on your work. The roles and relationships – the writer states, so we need to look at the facts. Remember we wrote down when we looked at those two biographies last week? We made a note ,yes? They all have facts. Underline that word – you've got to have some facts about your person. Some information that's generally not known to readers. We're going to do a small, small to medium sized biography about

someone. It's not going to be a long one and it has to be written. You're going to do it using a special app and it's going to make it look really lovely when we go to print it out. Ok, structure. Hands up who would like to read about structure for us? Ok ____ you're up, Go for it. Big voice.

*S4: [*reads] *Structure*

Orientation: names the person, tell when and why he/she lived and state why he/ she is famous.

L: Ok, can we cross out the word famous … because for our biography it's not about the person being famous. It's about the person being influential. That's the key word we wanna use. Let's cross that famous word out and put in influential because for us, we might be interviewing mum or dad, we might be interviewing our uncle, we might be interviewing our youth pastor, we might be interviewing someone else, so ours is about influence. Ok, keep reading, thank you.

S4: List the events using chronological order…

L: Well done! Ok, that's worth underlining, chronological. Who was the really wonderful person who explained that word to us last week? It was you! What was it? Chronological – what does that word mean?

S5: in a sequence.

*L: In a sequence … correct! And it's going to be in like a date sequence for us or an age sequence. [*Liane continues to read from the task sheet*]. We wanna use some photographs or illustrations. You might want to take a photo of your person for example, if they have trophies, or you might have certificates …ok, vocab. Let's have a boy read it for now. Who would like to read the next section on vocab? ___ do you wanna have a go?*

*S6: [*reads] *Impersonal language for descriptions of events or achievements*

i.e. do not use I , we

L: That's right! So we are going to use third person. Do you remember? We discussed that? So use third person language here.

*S6: (*reads the extract*]*

Descriptive but not exaggerated language eg During her life she showed remarkable courage by overcoming great difficulties.

Emotive expressions eg She worked hard to make money to support herself.

Classifying language: ie put the person in the context of time, place and group eg He was one of the most famous musicians of the twentieth century

Time sequencing: explain events in logical order in terms of time eg In 1994, at the age of 16 …

L: Ok, we're going to stop there. Remember last week's example – what we discovered on the first line? The first paragraph of the two biographies we read, we knew the context. It stated that in the first line. So you might have, my mum, the person who is responsible for raising five children and holding our family together. That could be your first line so you've got to give context for why you're interviewing your person. Ok, look at the grammar. We're using verbs – active verbs rather than passive so she fought with resistance, he became the leader, she had great success. We're looking at the cause and effect of that language and we're gonna pull that apart as we go into a few more examples over the next two weeks.

The lesson then moved to a new episode where Liane and the learners read through a short biography of Helen Keller as a model of the type of writing required for the task (see appendix K for extract read here).

Extract 5.2 from the lesson

*L: Ok, so for you when you go and interview your person, and you start writing your biography, ___ [*names herself*] is going to look for these things down the right hand side -*

*Orientation – did you use the person's name? Did you give any key dates? Did you give a reason for why that person is influential? Ok, so there's your rules … right there. Ok, if you can do that in your opening paragraph, you force ____[*Names herself] *to start giving you some marks. If you don't do them, I can't award you marks there so they're the rules, they're the key for your first successful paragraph… so, if I had a pen in my hand, if I had a highlighter, I'd be circling those things on the right hand column, I'd be highlighting them because they're absolutely important bits of information … every paragraph of our achievements focuses on the one topic.*

[Liane concluded this episode thus]:

L: So you want to sum up something about your person. And this is about the length that you will be required to write. This is about the minimum. You have to do, according to your task sheet, if you go back to it, 500 to 600 words. So it's really important that you're very selective about which words you choose.

Curriculum Literacies Practice. Teaching writing to demonstrate learning: teaching generic structure

Sayings

The teaching writing practice demonstrated in the two extracts (Extract 5.1 and Extract 5.2) from the lesson, focused on the practice of writing of a biography to demonstrate learning. Several specific sayings characterised the practice. Liane used

informative language in some aspects. First, Liane introduced the idea that the completion of preparatory tasks was required prior to writing the biography. This was evident in words such as: *we had to complete What I know and What I need to Know about the person I want to interview for my biography. ...you will have a task shortly where you will be designing your questions and you can't design good questions unless you have done this homework task.* In this case, students were required to complete two tasks prior to writing the biography: What I know or need to know, and compiling interview questions.

Second, Liane used most of the lesson to teach students about the required structure and also mentioned audience, purpose and language features. She used a combination of general, explanatory language: *ok, so that's our purpose, there's the difference in writing there for you.* Sometimes, she used explicit language: *so our subject matter is focusing on the experiences and the achievements. It's about the person being influential.* This pedagogical approach was linked to the genre approach to teaching writing. Liane also used questions to check the comprehension of the required vocabulary: *Chronological – what does that word mean?*

Liane's sayings were also characterised by suggestive language – for example, she used the conditional *if* to convey the suggestion that students might like to highlight key words. This is an example of implicit teaching of a practice. She also used the modal *might* to indicate students had a choice of person for the biography. Liane also used examples that students were likely to find relevant. This linked the notes on structure to the actual task the students had to write: *interviewing mum or dad, our uncle, our youth pastor.* The linking to examples would have helped to clarify expectations for the students. Liane pointed out key words: *it's about being influential, that's the key word* to direct the students to important aspects of the task. She also activated prior knowledge: *remember we wrote down, last*

week, Finally, she used directive language such as: *look at* to direct students' actions and responses. Using these discourses, Liane was able to control the learning of this writing practice. She also articulated the metalanguage required for the task in terms of the generic structure and aspects of the content. However, interestingly, she managed to find ways to make the metalanguage student friendly by providing relevant examples.

Doings

During this lesson, Liane taught the writing practice both explicitly and implicitly and also by scaffolding the required genre. In this way, Liane used aspects of the teaching and learning cycle as part of her teaching practice. She deconstructed the text required (in this case, the biography) and then provided a model text (Helen Keller) to guide students through the writing they were expected to produce. Liane was generally standing at the front of the classroom with the students seated at various desks in groups. She had the notes on the biography and the Helen Keller model text, in a hard copy form and was reading through this as she provided some scaffolding of the writing task for the students. Liane also used implicit suggestion. For example, the students were underlining, circling and highlighting key points on the task sheet in response to Liane's implicit suggestion. Her instruction was implicit because she did not tell the students to underline key words explicitly, she merely suggested it. However, the students were compliant in this action, suggesting it is an established expectation.

In addition, Liane gave some explicit direction. For example, she directed students to read aloud. (Field notes, 22/2/16). The reading aloud of a task can sometimes help to clarify the expectations. At the start of the lesson, Liane also utilised the data projector connected via WiFi to her iPad to project an electronic version of the notes and model text onto the whiteboard. This enabled students who did not have a personal hard copy version

or who could not access it on their iPads, to view these resources. Some students were observed using their iPads to take notes but Liane had not told them explicitly to do this: it appeared to be an established practice in the classroom. The implications and further findings related to technology will be discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. Finally, Liane used explicit teaching practice for some parts of this lesson, for example, when she informed the students about required length and also modelled the genre.

Relatings

While Liane was clearly the expert and authority in the classroom, there was also a sense of togetherness created by Liane's use of personal pronouns such as: *we and us*. This use of first-person plural highlighted the common sense of ownership and quite possibly enabled Liane to teach the practice. However, the independence of the students as learners also characterised the relatings in this lesson. This independence was evident in words such as: *you might want to take a photo of your person* or *That could be your first line* and also the silences in this extract. Liane did not explicitly tell students to take notes but many did so without direction, suggesting independence in note-taking is a familiar part of teaching and learning practice. Conversely, the familiarity might also have constrained teaching as certain assumptions might be made about prior knowledge and expectations. The researcher observed a student new to the school sitting quietly to one side and not taking notes. The male student was constantly looking at the work of other students and appeared to be a little confused (Field notes, 22/2/16) so he might not have been stirred in to Liane's practices yet.

Practice Architectures: Teaching writing to demonstrate learning: teaching generic structure

Cultural-discursive arrangements

The practice of teaching writing to demonstrate learning through genre occurred with specific cultural-discursive arrangements associated with the language of technology, some metalanguage of the genre approach evident in the notes, assessment through the task sheet and a particular school ethos. Discourse associated with technology included words such as: *apps, Haiku* and was a language assumed to be shared by both Liane and the students, evident in the lack of questioning by the students and also a lack of further explanation of these terms by Liane. This shared knowledge enabled the practice as Liane was free to continue the writing lesson without the need to explain the technical language.

The metalanguage of the writing task, visible in the notes, shaped Liane's practice by providing information the students could use, for example, structure, purpose, grammar, active words. However, Liane did not teach much of the metalanguage explicitly. For example, she mentioned active verbs and gave some examples but didn't explain any further. It was likely she might have done that at in subsequent lessons: w*e're gonna pull that apart as we go into a few more examples over the next two weeks*. It is also evident that this particular resource constrained the writing teaching practice. By providing just the structure of a biography and some key language points, there was no provision made for the development of critical thought or problem solving.

The lesson was also characterised by the language of assessment visible in words such as: i*f you don't do them, I can't award you marks there so they're the rules.* This language also appeared to be shared and the requirements associated with successful demonstration of the writing practice made evident in words such as: *they're the key for*

your first successful paragraph. A point to note here is that Liane did not offer the students any opportunity to move away from the structure. In order to be successful in this assessment task, the students had to follow the rules outlined by Liane and the notes. The compliance with rules was reinforced in the task sheet that stated the requirements very explicitly. The requirements were further scaffolded by the checklist provided on page 2 of the task sheet.

Liane also used language associated with politeness and encouragement: *please, thank you, well done* which was a common observation at this school. This warm encouragement and respect enabled the teaching of this writing practice to occur. The students were comfortable and familiar with Liane and were not observed resisting the teaching of the writing practice. In turn, the language used shaped the relatings as evident in the comments above. An analysis of the school website at the start of the study supported this notion and was suggestive of a practice well established at the school. The school website used words such as: *a sense of personal responsibility towards others … striving for excellence in their academic studies, development of character* and the foundational values mentioned on the website included: *integrity, respect, self-control* (accessed 9/9/2015).

In addition to the cultural-discursive arrangements detailed above, it is also pertinent to provide details around the policy documents that underpin the teaching of curriculum literacies in Australia. This document formed part of the cultural-discursive arrangements that enabled and constrained the teaching of the writing practice explicated above. Liane's curriculum literacies teaching practices contained aspects of the language used in the General Capabilities: Literacy document (ACARA, 2013). While the comments that will be presented here refer specifically to Liane's lesson, nevertheless, the curriculum

literacies teaching practices of Liane's lesson exemplify other lessons observed in subjects across the curriculum in this study. The national document states that students require "an understanding [of] the different types of text structures that are used within curriculum disciplines" (ACARA, 2013, p. 8). In this example, the text type in this lesson was narrative / biography. Other subjects across the curriculum taught different text types (see Table 5.2).

Material-economic arrangements

Material-economic arrangements that might have enabled or constrained the practice were related to the use of technology, the paper resources used by the class and also the room in which the lesson occurred. Several classrooms had been specially set up to enable Project Based Learning [PBL] for the Year 7s. This classroom was a designated PBL room, so the furniture allowed for groupings and ease of access for both students and teachers. It was also air conditioned suggesting that conditions for teaching and learning, especially during the heat of a South East Queensland summer, were as optimal as possible. See the photograph of a typical PBL classroom in Appendix M. The furniture was a combination of moveable, lecture style chairs, desks and chairs and two rows of casual lounge furniture. Figure 5.1 shows in a simple form how Liane's classroom was arranged. Some of the implications of PBL will be discussed further in Chapter Seven but in this case, the arrangement of the furniture enabled Liane to move around the room when students required individual assistance with carrying out the activities. It also enabled students designated to offer peer support to move around the classroom. Hence, the material-economic resources enabled Liane's teaching of the writing practice. Figure 5.1 shows in a simple form how Liane's classroom was arranged.

			Whiteboard				
			teacher desk				
desks							
xx	xx	xx chairs				lounge	
						lounge	
			xx	xx			
			xx	xx			
	x	x					
	x	x				x	x
		x	x	x			
withdraw		x	x	x			
room							
				x = moveable lecture style chairs			
		Moveable partition to next classroom					

Figure 5.1 Simple diagram of Liane's PBL classroom arrangement

The withdraw room was used by students who wanted to work quietly or who were deemed to be being distracting to others. It was glassed in enabling both teacher and students visible access.

The access to the school intranet, Haiku, also enabled those students who had forgotten their hard copy of the task sheet, to access it online. Thus, Liane did not have to stop teaching the genre while students left the room to find their task sheet or interrupt herself to manage any potential behavior problems caused by students who were sharing hard copies. Liane confirmed the advantage of using the online platform in a discussion when she said: *it works well for engaging students* (Field notes, 8/3/2016). It also enabled Liane to show students the homework site and remind them that there was no excuse for not

doing homework. The school staff member responsible for technology was interviewed and he mentioned how positive the online learning platform had been for the school community (Gavin, Head of Curriculum - Technology, Interview, 9/5/2016). Teaching and learning resources and practices exist in ecological arrangements (Kemmis et al., 2014) and these will be discussed further in Chapter Six and Seven.

Social-political

In this extract the social-political arrangements that focused on the dispositions of a learner will be discussed. At Abimelech College, the learner was encouraged to be independent and to develop certain key characteristics, particularly respect. The warm nature of the relationship that was evident between Liane and the students during this lesson and simultaneously, the encouragement of learner independence, were characteristic of the social-political arrangements at the school that enabled a moral approach to teaching the writing practice. The independence of the learner was also evident in the change in pronoun usage from the inclusive *we* to the more individual *you.* However, the use of the modal phrase *have to* indicates the lack of choice in reality. While the students seemed to be encouraged to become independent learners, conversely, Liane occupied a position of power and the students were expected to comply with directions given to them.

Liane was also clearly the expert and the authority figure in the classroom, also evident in her word choices. The authority of the teacher was reinforced by the language of assessment, particularly in words such as: *rules* and *I can't award you marks*. The use of strong verbs such as: *you force [teacher] to start giving you some marks* while appearing to delegate authority to the students is immediately contradicted by: *they're the key for your first successful paragraph.*

Interestingly, the technological resources used by the students enabled a certain amount of informality in the relationships visible in the lesson. This was further emphasised by Liane's use of first-person personal pronouns and emphasised that a more equal relationship between Liane and the students might exist. The informal arrangement in the classroom might therefore have enabled Liane to teach the writing practice productively, especially given the middle school pedagogy the school was initiating through the PBL classrooms. In a later informal conversation, Liane mentioned she had been generally satisfied with the students' outcomes on the task (Field notes, 7/3/2016).

Summation

In summary, the writing practice explicated in detail here drew from an approach to teaching which focused on the structure, audience and purpose, and key language features of a required written text. The written text was taught using a combination of modelling, explicit teaching and scaffolding. It was both enabled and constrained by the practice architectures in the site. The practice of teaching writing to demonstrate learning is both enabled and constrained by these arrangements. In this case, while Liane spoke about the writing teaching practice, it was also clear that the learners were expected to take responsibility for learning how to write. As the authority figure in the classroom, Liane expected the learners to conform. The material-economic arrangements enabled her to teach the writing practice, and simultaneously the practice was also enabled through traditions that have been brought into the classroom. In this case, the learning traditions that saw the learners appearing accustomed to sitting quietly and listening without asking many questions. In addition, while the enabling and constraining practice architectures will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven, it is worth noting that for this lesson, technology both enabled Liane to foreground this aspect of the practice by providing her with the

common content that was important for all students and simultaneously, constrained her practice: all Year 7 English classes were expected to use the resources provided on Haiku. This did not allow for the differentiation and individual teaching that research shows is useful for teaching middle school students (Pendergast & Bahr, 2010).

Finally, this particular teaching writing practice was "nested" (Grootenboer, 2018) within the other teaching and learning practices that form an ecological arrangement at the site. The ecological arrangements of the practices at this site will be discussed further in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

5.3 Curriculum Literacies Teaching Practice: Writing for learning

Approaching writing as a learning tool is another key writing practice observed in the classes of this study. Writing for learning is linked to demonstrating comprehension in a more formative, less formal way than the writing to demonstrate learning practice explicated in the previous section. It can also be used as a tool to encourage students to think creatively. Overall, four examples of writing for learning teaching practices were observed: note-taking (Year 9 Business), short response items (Year 8 Science, Year 7 History, Year 9 Business) using data (Year 7 Mathematics) and writing definitions to learn technical vocabulary (Year 9 Business, Year 8 Science). Two examples - the practice of teaching the writing of short response items for learning (Year 8 Science) and the practice of teaching writing for learning using data (Year 7 Mathematics) will now be explicated further.

Writing for learning- short responses: Year 8 Science

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the Year 8 Science teacher, Gary, is a highly experienced teacher of Science. The class observed took place in the second term of the

year, and, as Gary noted at the start of the observation period, by that stage in the school year, the class had settled and was familiar with his routines. This lesson took place midway through a unit on reproduction (6/6/2016). Gary had commenced the unit with animal and plant reproduction and had moved onto human reproduction. As he commented to me when he commenced this unit, he found this section difficult to teach, particularly in light of the religious school ethos (Field notes, 6/6/16). In Extract 5.3, the teaching of writing short responses for learning is exemplified. The use of // shows where parts from the whole transcript have been omitted.

After the preliminary greetings and settling of the class, the lesson commenced thus:

Extract 5.3

G: *So, I'm going to get you to work with me on this a little bit //Looking at some of the literature for you guys to have a look at this week, one of the questions that came up "when do I buy a bra?" (*giggles around the room*). Now, at that point, I didn't want to end up over here but then I started to think about it – these are issues that are really important for some but for others it's very difficult to know what's going on. That's when I realised this – work with me – we're going to find out a little bit about ourselves, our body. Will you please open up your textbooks to page – uh, let's go with page 1 – 154 it is. 154. (*a few moments of class talking – one female student heard commenting "Kill me now", some giggles, another male student heard commenting "that's so wrong"*). Ok, I'm on page 154 so you should just about be there [*teacher is showing page up on screen using e copy of textbook]. *Alright? (*some inaudible asides to students*). We looked at plants, no-one giggled, we looked at kangaroos, no-one giggled. Alright? Page 154. Alright? Now, first of all there is a little bit up there about puberty and changes in males. We're going to go through these dot points and I want you to look at, boys, you will be able to identify with*

some of these, maybe all of these, I don't know // I worked with a lot of students playing sport and in PE and I found that generally upto the age of about Year 5, there wasn't a lot of difference between boys and girls playing sport. Boys weren't stronger than girls, I'd say girls, sometimes, just sometimes, girls were more capable. Then I noticed in about grade 6, 7 that the boys started to dominate quite a lot to the point where we said let's just do a boys' PE class and a girls' PE class. I sometimes think that's still probably the best way to go.

*This is what I would like you to do for me – alright? Everybody. You're going to rule up a table on a page for me ___ (*Named male student*). Changes in males. ___ (*named same student*) use a bit of lateral thought. What's going to be on the other side of this table?*

S1: Changes in females?

*G: Changes in females. Alright. Ok, So, it only needs to be half a page. I don't want to be sexist so we will look at males and females. Now, your first task is to read and you will see, probably the last page – I want you just to pick four dot points, and write down, pick any four dot points. Now, they don't have to relate to you – what I would do Year 8 – is pick the ones you don't already know. There's some pictures there too [*teacher is scrolling through each page on his laptop and showing students what pages to read]. *I don't know how good they are but they're pictures. Come on quickly please. (*Students start to do the activity, some giggle, others whisper amongst themselves. Some questions from students are heard: "what is the title, do we look at females?") *I just want to look at changes today and start to get our heads around this and what's going on. What is going on? I'd rather you just did the males for the moment ok? It's a 30 second task because I want to talk about males, and then get an opportunity to talk about the females (*students continue to write answers and whisper quietly*). Ok. Alright. Who needs more time on the male side of things? (a few "me's" are heard) 30 seconds. [*quiet classroom. Teacher is walking around checking

work]. *15 seconds. Ok! Computers closed please, eyes this way. Let's go. Computers closed. You can go back to that in a minute. We're going to look at this and then I'm going to give the girls two minutes to ask why or how come. //*

G: Would you please write down four dot points for the females? Pick any four that you like. Alright? Off you go. (Students read from textbooks and write down points, general chatter amongst class). *Off you go, quickly.* [Teacher walks around room checking students' work, managing behavior]. *Another couple of minutes* (class is quiet at this point and undertaking task). *Ten seconds. Alright, so we should all have four – not two – four* [looks at a students' answer. Pause for a short while, class is quiet]. *Ok, I've said 30 seconds, one more round of 30 seconds. Ok, can you please close your computers? Um,* (another pause then Gary reviewed the student short answers).

The practice of teaching the writing of short responses to show learning in this lesson was evident in Gary's sayings. First, Gary used explicit directions to explain what students needed to read and base their writing on: *will you please open up your textbooks to page – uh, let's go with page. Now, your first task is to read and you will see. We're going to go through these dot points*. This language was procedural in nature. Gary also used explicit language to direct the writing for learning that needed to occur: *everybody. You're going to rule up a table on a page for me* and *What's going to be on the other side of this table?"*and *I want you just to pick four dot points, and write down, pick any four dot points.* However, there was some latitude or independence allowed as Gary used more implicit language to mention what he would do rather than explicitly telling students to include points they didn't know: *now, they don't have to relate to you – what I would do Year 8 – is*

pick the ones you don't already know. Some of the students asked for clarification: *what is the title, do we look at females?* but Gary did not respond.

Gary also used explicit language to explain the limitations in the length of writing: The limitation was evident in the time words Gary used: *it's a 30 second task; 15 seconds* and also in his comment: *so, it only needs to be half a page.* This language could also have indicated his discomfort with the topic and ethics around teaching to a mixed gender body of students. Gary alluded to this when he mentioned: *let's just do a boys' PE class and a girls' PE class. I sometimes think that's still probably the best way to go.* Additionally, the practice of reading first and then writing notes was not meant to be too complex. This was evident in words such as: *have a little look.* Gary used interactional language to teach that the writing practice also involved opportunity for students to ask questions about their notes and learning: *we're going to look at this and then I'm going to give the girls two minutes to ask why or how come.*

The practice was also characterised by certain doings of the teacher. Similar to other curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in this study, Gary was standing at the front of the room explaining, directing and telling anecdotes. There was, therefore, some explicit teaching of the practice when Gary explained how students needed to format their short responses (in a table with two headings) and what content to be included (dot points for males and females). However, implicit teaching was also evident in Gary's use of anecdotal language. While Gary was talking, students were observed generally listening attentively. They were quiet, facing him, no-one appeared to be fiddling with computers or otherwise disengaged (Field notes, 6/6/16). Gary used his e copy of the textbook screened from the data projector so all students could see the notes. However, students also had their own e copies on their laptops and were able to use those when they read the required text.

Hard copies were also available, and some students were observed using those. Students were writing these notes in their paper notebooks. Gary used a transmissive approach, incorporating IRE and students were observed to be following his directions rather than sitting passively. While the students were engaged in carrying out the writing practice, Gary walked around the room checking progress with individuals and small groups of students in a more facilitative role.

Although Gary's position at the front of the classroom, standing, explaining and directing the lesson emphasised his authority, he also sought the cooperation of the students. This was evident in command language such as: *work with me* repeated several times. Gary used anecdotes to demonstrate to demonstrate his affinity with the students and also first-person plural pronouns: *we, us.* There was a sense of learning together prevalent in this practice: *we're going to look at this* and also a sense of mutual respect evident in Gary's: *will you please open?* However, his authority was also clear in instructional words such as: *I want you just to pick four dot points* There was also a sense that Gary was a little uneasy about the content: *we looked at plants, no-one giggled, we looked at kangaroos, no-one giggled. Alright?* He prefaced the topic with reminders that students did not giggle during the lessons on plant and animal reproduction so the inference for the students was not to giggle during the lesson. Some of the discomfort was felt by the students too: *one female student heard commenting Kill me now, some giggles.* Similar to other reading and writing practices described in Chapter Four and earlier in the current chapter, Gary's relationship with the class is also characterised by a concern for student well-being and learning.

The site arrangements evident in this practice both enabled and constrained. The language used was scientific and also informal. The use of scientific language enabled Gary to talk about a topic that was a little uncomfortable: *it's part of the life cycle we started with,*

it's really quite scientific (part of whole transcript but not part of this extract) The language used also reflected the specific religious cultural-discursive arrangements visible at the school and hence, enabled Gary to talk about the topic: *with the understanding that this is about the miracle of life, conception and birth of the next generation (*part of whole transcript but not part of this extract).The informal, personal anecdotes also enabled Gary to teach the topic. Gary confirmed this with me in a quick conversation during the lesson when he noted that he deliberately shared some of his experiences to *lighten the mood a little* (Field notes, 6/6/2016).

The lesson took place in a Science laboratory. Students were seated in groups at large tables and the teacher's desk was in the front of the room. The arrangement enabled students to work collaboratively and gave Gary easy access to walk around and check work. The room was large and airy but clearly a Science laboratory. Sinks and other scientific equipment and posters dotted the room. This room emphasised the nature of work being undertaken was scientific and that the teaching of Science took place in these facilities. Gary explained that only Science and Biology are taught in these specialist rooms. Additionally, as with the other examples presented in Chapter Four and the first part of this chapter, the use of laptop computers and paper notebooks and hard cover textbooks also enabled the writing practice to occur. Students were able to access the required text to read and had the necessary resources to write their notes. Gary was able to use the data projector to explain where the text was located in the textbook. The topic however, might conceivably have constrained Gary's teaching of the practice explicitly. His use of time words indicated his desire to hurry students through the writing practice.

While the parental voice is not part of this extract, Gary mentioned it several times after the lesson during an informal conversation (Field notes, 6/6/2016). Gary is clearly the

authority in the classroom, but he felt constrained by the unspoken parental presence. He mentioned parents complaining about content if it was too explicit. The Head of Secondary School, Myles, agreed with this comment in an interview (7/11/2016) where he commented: *parents have expectations*, they *question us more, they don't just accept what we say*.

To sum up, the students in this class learnt several important aspects to the practice of writing for learning. They learnt through Gary's "saying" and "doings" that the practice of writing short responses to show learning involved reading a text first, then deciding on points to include. Tables might be used, and dot points were acceptable. The religious cultural-discursive arrangements evident at the school both enabled and constrained the practice as did the topic. Gary's use of a combination of scientific and anecdotal language enabled him to teach the topic and hence enabled the writing practice. However, we do not see evidence of this writing practice being used to assist the development of critical thinking. Instead, students seem to be writing more to learn facts. The findings turn now to a second example of writing for learning.

Writing for learning– notetaking using data: Year 7 Mathematics.

In contrast to the Year 8 Science lesson, where Gary taught the practice of writing down short responses for learning, a Year 7 Mathematics class was observed writing for learning through listening to the teacher and taking notes, using data as they did this. The nature of data varies from subject to subject but, for the purposes of this mathematics classroom, the data used was a series of numerical operations and mathematical topics. During this lesson, the teacher was revising content already taught in preparation for a summative test at the end of the term. The teacher, Diane, is an experienced Mathematics teacher and also has a leadership role in the Mathematics department. The lesson occurred

towards the mid-point of the term (9/3/2016). The teacher was preparing students for an assessment and was using writing to learn practice. As with the second example (Year 8 Science) explicated in Extract 5.3, only extracts from the complete transcript are included here in Extract 5.4 and the use of // in the extract denotes where omissions have occurred.

Extract 5.4

At the start of the lesson, Diane said:

D: We will be revising what's in your test today. You need to write down. Because we learn maths by writing. //

[After some preliminary greetings and a comment about item one, the lesson continued as follows]:

D: Are there any girls who know what the measures of spread are? I want a girl this time, last time ____ (names a boy*) answered. Girls? ...*

S2: Is it mean, medium and mode?

D: Yes because they are measures of the middle of the data aren't they? Measure where the centre of the data is. Centre is the same as middle isn't it? ...//

That's all at the beginning of the test and we'll move on // I think you're all good with addition and subtraction. So you have to write a number sentence a story and write it down. So you remember we did the one in the lift where you went up and down and we write down what we did – yes ___? // Item 7is a B standard question – long division. You'd better practise that so you can do it.

S6: B standard?

D: Yes, B standard and it's long division.// Then we have number 9. D standard. This is the D standard. Write it down, it's the actual question. The difference between (...) the volume of petrol (...) in two tanks is 564 litres. Full stop. If the larger tank (...) has a

*volume of (…) 6755 litres, 6755 litres, (…) what is the volume of petrol in the smaller tank. How would you work it out? ____(*name*)?//*

[The lesson continued in a similar way for the next question. When Diane got to question 12, she said]:

D: *Question 12, C standard. Write a number in expanded form. So how would you write 547in expanded form? 547 write it down now. How would you write that in expanded form? Write it down please. 547. This is not the final test but you're going to write the expanded form (…) Ok, who can tell me what they would write? ____(*Name*)?*

S8: you would write 500 plus 40 plus 7.

D: Does everyone agree with ___? You've done really well. Well done. So you can do these ones. What if we had 57.5? How would you write that? I think you'd go plus 5 tenths or you could put zero point 5. You have to use the number's name when you're talking about numbers because it helps with understanding. So it's five tenths no matter which way you write it. //

[Again, the lesson continued similarly until Question 17. As this was another D standard question, Diane said]:

*D: Item 17, another D standard so I can give it to you. Write it down. If one block measures (…) 1.9 meters comma estimate how many logs will be needed to cover a 6 meter length? So, ____(*name*) 1.9 meters is approximately how many meters?*

S7: Two meters?

D: Two meters. How many 2s go into 6?

S7: 3.

D: So do you think 3 would be your answer? So you write down something like 1.9 m is approximately 2 ms and 6 divided by 2 is 3. Therefore we would need 3 blocks.

*[*teacher writes this on whiteboard]. *This is exactly how you would write it for the test so make sure you write something now to remind yourself. Approximation ok? Does that one make sense? You don't want to be dividing 6 by 1.9.*

In Extract 5.4, the practice of writing notes to show learning was linked to revision for assessment. Furthermore, writing notes related to the data utilised in Mathematics as students listened to the teacher. The term data used in this sense refers to the range of mathematical operations and topics covered in the course of this lesson. While much of Diane's discourse in this extract appeared more informal, everyday language, nevertheless, she used these words in different ways. For example, when she mentions: *a number sentence, a story,* she would not be expecting students to write a narrative such as they would write in English. Instead the word *story* in the mathematical sense denotes writing an equation using mathematical numbers and symbols. In her teaching of this writing practice, Diane shifts between using technical and everyday language. Therefore, the writing of revision notes was also linked to key concepts and vocabulary that Diane elicited from the students: *are there any girls who know know what the measures of spread are?* In this way, Diane was using the writing practice to assist students' learning of the more technical and specialised language of mathematics.

Diane's sayings emphasised to the students that revision involves writing notes: *we will be revising what's in your test today. You need to write down*. She mentioned this point at the outset of the lesson for emphasis then expected students to comply as she did not mention the need to take notes explicitly again until partway through when she repeated a question verbatim from the test paper and instructed students to write it down. This was further clarified when she dictated the question. The familiarity of this practice was evident

in the unstated words – she did not tell students she was dictating – she simply commenced reading the question. Diane's use of pause further highlighted the expectation that students were to write down what she was dictating. The absence of clarifying questions from the students might also suggest this was a familiar aspect of writing notes for revision purposes. It is only towards the end of the revision section that Diane stated explicitly what students were to write down: *this is exactly how you would write it for the test so make sure you write something now to remind yourself* but even this might be seen as less explicit with the use of the words: *write something.*

During the lesson, Diane wrote down several key words on the whiteboard. She remained standing at the front of the room and the students were sitting in groups at various tables. Diane led the lesson and directed what students were to do. Generally, she initiated questions using the IRE and transmissive pedagogical approach. There was evidence of explicit teaching of the practice through her directions to students: *this is exactly how you would write it* and also some scaffolding of the practice through asking questions: *how would you write that?*

Diane related warmly to the students evident in her words of encouragement: *you've done really well. Well done* but was also clearly the authority figure, the expert in the classroom. This was evident in her directive words: *I want* and also in her traditional transmissive pedagogical approach.

The cultural-discursive arrangements that might have enabled or constrained Diane's practice related to the language of assessment evident in the extract. In this case, the practice of writing notes using data for learning was linked to revision for assessment. Assessment words such as *C standard and B standard* were words of assessment shared by both Diane and the students. This was evident in the fact that Diane did not have to explain

what she meant by those terms. In the context of this lesson, C and D standards related to the achievement standards possible with A standard questions being the highest level of achievement possible and E, the lowest level. Teachers of mathematics design questions to cover the full range of outcomes. This class was considered to be the top mathematics class. The Year 7 cohort had been streamed into classes according to ability levels. Diane expected the students in this class to be able to answer C and D questions, hence she gave them the examination questions for these levels.

The sharing of a common understanding of assessment language enabled the teaching practice of writing notes for learning to progress uninterrupted. Additionally, Diane and the students shared some common understandings of the language of mathematics. Where Diane was uncertain of the students' understanding, she was able to relate to previous learning experiences to remind them: *so you remember we did the one in the lift*. Diane also expressed certainty around students' ability also enabling the students to write notes about data: *I'm sure you can work it out*. The practice also used language familiar to the students related to establishing at the outset what students would be doing. The school was implementing Marzano's (2007) *Art and Science of Teaching*. Design Question One of Marzano's (2007) framework suggests teachers provide clear learning goals at the outset of each lesson. This language was evident in the manner in which Diane commenced the lesson: *we will be revising what's in your test today. You need to write down*. This familiarity with teaching and learning practices enabled Diane's teaching of writing for learning using data as she did not need to clarify this goal for the lesson and the students were observed opening iPads and starting to take notes without any further direction from Diane.

The lesson took place in a particular space: the PBL designated classroom. Special furniture had been purchased and the room that was originally two classrooms had been converted into one long classroom, carpeted and air-conditioned. The large room enabled teachers to walk around groups easily and to utilise various spaces. In this lesson, Diane used only the front half of the room although students were free to sit on any furniture they preferred. Several boys grouped themselves at the lounge furniture while most of the students selected the desk and chair furniture. This more casual arrangement enabled the writing practice teaching as the school particularly selected the initiative to cater for middle school learning. In addition, the school had issued every Year 7 student with an iPad. The room was also therefore equipped with data projector and WiFi enabling Diane and the students to use technology if required. Hence, students were allowed to use either paper notebooks or iPads to take notes. The room also contained a large whiteboard at each end. Diane used the front one to write several dot points. This enabled those students who were a little slower at writing to remember the key points of each revision item.

In contrast to the social-political arrangements around the topic and parental expectations, that appeared to constrain Gary's Year 8 Science teaching writing practice, the arrangements seemed to enable Diane. She is on the school leadership team and appeared comfortable in her role as expert in this lesson. She also appeared comfortable with assessment procedures and the possibly constraining role these might play. For example, she said: *another D standard so I can give it to you* but *I can't tell you more because A standard I can't give you the details* (not included in this extract). The unspoken expectation that the students were to be independent also formed part of the social-political arrangements and Diane appeared comfortable with this too: *I'm sure you can work it out* and *you'll be given information, you just have to work it out.* In an interview with the

teacher, she affirmed this relationship describing herself: *I would like to think I was a warm demander* (interview 14/3/2016*).*

In summary, the practice of writing notes related to using data in Year 7 Mathematics was linked to revision. Students appeared to understand the requirement to take notes as Diane went through each item on the forthcoming test. She mentioned the need to write at the outset and then only repeated it a few times through the lesson. Thus, while the practice involved some explicit teaching at times, much was also conveyed implicitly through shared understandings of what was required. Thus, these shared understandings of expectations might have enabled Diane's teaching. This particular form of writing also required students to understand key concepts which Diane reviewed when she felt it might be required.

5.4 Summary of the findings for writing practices

In this chapter several writing teaching practices visible in the subject areas were presented. These writing teaching practices related to writing to demonstrate learning and writing for learning. The writing teaching practices were taught using a combination of explicit and implicit teaching, modelling and scaffolding as part of the teaching and learning cycle. On the one hand, these practices might be critiqued as more general in nature rather than subject-specific ones, as called for in recent research around disciplinary writing. Nevertheless, the teaching of writing practices is evident in the general teaching practices of the participating teachers.

On the other hand, it is possible to examine the specific site arrangements that prefigured these teaching writing practices. This examination revealed that writing teaching practices were both enabled and constrained by the specific site arrangements, but again, it

was evident that they were foregrounded in teacher's general teaching practices. Similar to the teaching of reading explicated in Chapter Four, the teaching of writing was also characterised by an approach that saw writing as necessary for academic and lifelong success. These and other factors will be discussed further in Chapter Seven. The final findings chapter follows, and in this chapter the integrated, interconnected nature of curriculum literacies teaching practices is presented.

Chapter Six - Ecologies of Literacies Practices

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

Martin Luther King

6.0 Introduction

Throughout Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in the classrooms and related to reading and writing were described through the sayings, doings and relatings of the teachers. Also, the practice architectures that prefigure these practices: the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements were observed and discussed. These findings were presented in two separate chapters to reflect the view of literacy as comprising discrete skills with reading and writing predominantly privileged in curriculum literacies teaching practices. This view of literacy was established in the opening chapters. However, it was also acknowledged that reading and writing practices are interconnected with each other and also with other literacy practices such as speaking, listening and viewing.

In addition, while the findings as presented in the two previous chapters can be seen to demonstrate the teaching of curriculum literacies as particularly privilege reading and writing, the simultaneous presentation of findings related to the specific practice architectures (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements) reveal how these curriculum literacies teaching practices are site-specific and cannot be examined without a consideration of the context in which they occur. The ontological perspective is an important one when the overarching aim of this research, which was to investigate the practices related to the teaching of curriculum literacies, of middle school subject teachers at one school site, is considered. Thus, the notion of site was an important

one for this study because Kemmis et al. (2014) argue, that in order to change practices, the practice architectures of a site also need to be changed.

In this chapter, a different perspective will be presented. The findings will be presented using the theory of ecologies of practices. The findings presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five conceivably could lead one to conclusions of the teacher participants and their curriculum literacies teaching practices that are more traditional and possibly, more limited in character. This is one way of looking at the curriculum literacies teaching practices in this site. However, there is another view: that the curriculum literacies teaching practices are enabled and constrained not only by the practice architectures, but also by other practices within the site, both larger ones such as learning, leading, professional learning, research and evaluation, and teaching, as well as the smaller ones related to the literacies of a subject. These practices all interact in "ecologies of practices" (Kemmis et al., 2014) so that the "practices and practice architectures of one practice come to shape or be shaped by the practices and practice architectures of another practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 44).

6.1 Overview of chapter

In this chapter findings will be presented as interconnected and ecologically arranged. Three points from the larger data set will be presented to illustrate how interconnected the curriculum literacies teaching practices were at the site and how they also shaped and were shaped by other educational practices in the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014). Each example is preceded by a brief discussion of the curriculum literacy practice.

The first example (Year 9 Business) will be presented briefly and demonstrates how the practice of teaching one curriculum literacies practice (in this case, teaching a spoken communication process in Business Studies) is integrated with other curriculum literacies (writing and reading, in particular) so that once more, practices shape and are shaped by other practices and co-habit the site in complex relationships. The second example (Year 8 Science) demonstrates the negotiation of the multiple literacies that underpin several subjects across the curriculum and their interconnectedness. The third example (Year 7 Mathematics) moves onto the substantive work of this chapter and the ecological arrangements of practices in this site. This example typifies how curriculum literacies teaching practices are nested in other practices within the Education Complex.

In Chapter Seven I will discuss how these practices were ecologically interdependent at the school site and hence, important to the conclusions I reached. Additionally, the notion of ecologies of practices will be used in relation to curriculum literacies teaching practices to show how the sayings, doings and relatings of one literacy teaching practice (e.g. reading) also shape and are shaped by the sayings, doings and relatings and the practice architectures of another literacy teaching practice (e.g. writing) so that curriculum literacies teaching practices encompass not just one discrete practice but also negotiation through a number of literacies practices.

6.2 Example One: Year 9 Business Studies – Biz Day

Spoken Communication Process

Teachers were observed teaching students to pay attention to the language of the processes of a subject. While these processes might be slightly different for each subject, this study also found common processes shared amongst subjects. While these processes

were not observed being taught explicitly, teachers were observed explaining and using language related to processes such as research, investigate and report in all the subjects observed. In Science, for example, Gary explained language used in scientific processes such as investigating, researching, concluding and identifying. In Mathematics, Diane used language around representation to teach students how to write answers to algebraic type equations; in English, Liane explained reflective language required for writing in personal journals. When teachers spoke about language related to the processes of their subject, they and the students also were engaging in a range of curriculum literacies practices that can be described using the theory of ecologies of practices. For example, while explaining the language of a process such as research, teachers were simultaneously engaged in using a variety of literacy practices such as speaking about research, summarising the process on the whiteboard, reading from resources.

One of the common processes required in all of the subjects across the curriculum in this study is communication. The example to follow typifies the range of curriculum literacies demands required of students related to the process of communication, and how teachers negotiated students through the range. In this case, the process of communicating was undertaken via the spoken mode (a telephone conversation) and the purpose of the communication was seeking information.

Example One: Year 9 Business Studies - Biz Day

In this example, Liane was observed preparing students for the practical application of the business principles they had been studying the whole year. This culminating activity of the unit required students to decide on a product to market, develop a business plan and then implement their ideas. The practical implementation took place on one day at the end of the year (Biz Day). This was the name given to the day when all Year 9 students came

together to market their products to the rest of the school. In fact, Biz Day is an annual event, much anticipated by staff and students throughout the school. The lesson observed occurred a week before Biz Day and comprised different episodes of teaching curriculum literacies practices (27/10/2015). During this lesson, Liane taught the class one of the communication processes used in Business Studies. This was the spoken process of communicating with clients over the telephone. In the first part of the lesson, Liane taught the practices of working with money and a cash float (numeracy required) then she asked students to create a To Do List for the day (writing) before leading the class outside to their specific sites for a visual site inspection (viewing). In the following section, the curriculum literacies practice related to the process of communication in Business Studies is briefly outlined vis-à-vis the sayings, doings and relatings, to demonstrate how Liane negotiated the students through the multiple literacies evident in the communication process.

Throughout this part of the lesson, Liane was using language related to the process of communicating on the telephone with a client: *did you have her on speaker phone, you've made a phone call, tell us how that unfolded Ok, so the lady said …and then?* Liane simultaneously negotiated several curriculum literacies practices with the students using words such as: *ring back, take name (*speaking, listening and writing) *write it down (*writing*) have you checked what you wrote down* (reading). Furthermore, she modelled dispositions important to these literacy practices such as: *paying attention, the best way to do it* and problem solving *what's another way you can handle something like that?* In her actions, Liane simultaneously modelled the curriculum literacies practice of writing down information by herself, through writing key points on the whiteboard. Finally, she demonstrated the process of communication by relating a personal anecdote when she had made a telephone call to a business: *ok, so let me tell you what I did. A few days ago, I had*

to call somebody. The practice of communicating on the telephone also included specific relatings. In this case, relatings of the practice included the need to be respectful*: no, it isn't a problem but it's probably not the best way to do it* and also the development of personal character: *I do know that students who graduate from our college – you guys – there's something about you that is different and it comes down to good character* In addition, students were expected to relate to Liane respectfully and to show this through paying attention (Field notes, 27/10/2015). Thus, Liane's sayings, doings and relatings while teaching the students about the process of communication involved her doing more than just teaching the language of the practice, other curriculum literacies practices were simultaneously interconnected: speaking (what to say and why); writing (keeping a record); aspects of critical thinking (offering alternatives).

Kemmis et al. (2014) have used the term ecologies of practices to describe the interconnected nature of practices. The concept of ecologies of practices is useful when considering the interconnected, the enmeshed, the "dynamically networked" (Wyatt-Smith and Cumming, 2001, p. 309) curriculum literacies teaching practices in this example. The curriculum literacies teaching practices co-exist in the classroom and the school. Not only were the curriculum literacies teaching practices enmeshed so that as Liane taught one practice (a communication process), simultaneously she was negotiating students through another, but also the curriculum literacies teaching practices reflected diversity. Hence, not just one curriculum literacies practice was evident but a diverse range of curriculum literacies practice including speaking, reading and writing practices. These ideas will be developed further in the subsequent examples.

6.3 Example Two: Year 8 Science

Multiple Literacies

Research (for example, Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2001, 2003) has revealed how students need to negotiate several literacies simultaneously during any given lesson and that teachers need to teach students explicitly how to switch between these literacies (Wyatt-Smith et al.,1999). In particular, the integration of multiple literacies has meant that literacy teaching practices need to include explicit teaching of the multimodal "codes and conventions" (Lu & Cross, 2014, p. 43). In this study, the manipulation of several literacies simultaneously occurred within and across subjects: for example, using similar but slightly different symbols to represent concepts in Mathematics and Business Studies; writing reports in English and Geography; or reading diagrams in a Science textbook while taking notes (writing) and listening to the teacher's spoken explanations or viewing an online video recording explaining a particular concept. During this study, teachers across the curriculum were observed assisting students to negotiate the multiple literacies required. Similarly to the example of teaching a communication process outlined in the previous section, the teaching of multiple literacies will be presented briefly to show the interconnectedness of curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Example Two: Year 8 Science

Gary has been mentioned previously as an experienced Science, Mathematics and HPE teacher. The lesson observed occurred towards the end of term two. The unit of work was concerned with rocks, continents and similar concepts and in this lesson (10/5/16), Gary was leading the students through a series of tasks requiring a range of curriculum literacies. Gary's sayings, doings and relatings revealed the enmeshed curriculum literacies practices that were present in this example. None of these curriculum literacies was

foregrounded in the lesson and taught explicitly. However, each was enmeshed and interdependent. An extract from the lesson is included (6.1) but other quotations from the entire transcript are also included in the findings.

Extract 6.1

Ok, so, task one. The rocks. I've got a video about that. Task Two, I'm going to give you a jigsaw puzzle, scissors and glue and you're going to reconstruct Pangaea for me. Somebody tell me what you think about Pangaea? We had a look at it yesterday first lesson. You don't have to know everything. So that's your first task. I'll walk around to show you. So search out an image of Pangaea. How do you spell Pangaea? Alright, now. Can everyone turn to page 2? Page 2. Ok. What do you think the whole task is asking you to do? Hand up. What do you think?

Ok, boys at the rocks, let's have a look. You need to look at this box, alright? I'm going to give you each a card and sheet. So the box has rocks in it, then you look at the description on the card and decide what rocks are in this box. You write the number on the sheet.

One of the curriculum literacies practices was viewing. The example showed Gary negotiating students through the curriculum literacies practice of viewing an online image. Gary was not explicitly teaching students about viewing but was telling the students what they needed to do: *so search out an image of Pangaea. Now, if you call up an image.* The activity involved the students then using their computers to find and view an online image. In another practice, Gary guided the students through a series of tasks requiring multiple literacies. In these tasks, the students were expected to take an active role: *ok, so, task one. The rocks. I've got a video about that. Task Two, I'm going to give you a jigsaw puzzle,*

scissors and glue and you're going to reconstruct Pangaea for me. During these tasks, students had to view and comprehend the video to learn about rocks, and then manipulate signs and symbols to reconstruct an image. Speaking and interacting collaboratively were also features of this task as students worked in pairs or small groups assisting one another to compile the puzzle. This lesson followed the previous day's lesson where Gary had introduced the students to igneous rocks. Gary built on this lesson by using reflective language to build on prior knowledge about the concept of Pangaea: *somebody tell me what you think about Pangaea? We had a look at it yesterday first lesson.* (speaking, low level reflection and recall). Gary then clarified the tasks with the students and simultaneously encouraged some further low-level thinking and recall: *what do you think the whole task is asking you to do? Hand up. What do you think?* He also explained, through the use of scaffolding questions, the additional technical vocabulary the students would encounter when they were reading the task*: I haven't shown you this. What's a legend? What's a plate?* and provided further explanation of these concepts: *yes, it's like a key to guide you*; *Plates are basically the continents, yes*: *Yesterday I think I asked you to identify five plates. There's probably about 12 or 13. Ok.*

While Gary did not provide extensive explicit teaching to the whole class throughout the lesson, he was observed walking around and providing individual explanations and further scaffolding when required (Field notes, 10/5/16). For example, Gary appeared quite comfortable asking students to read aloud and students appeared to be comfortable with this practice. Gary would then ask questions designed to encourage students to consider the relevance of what they had read to the topic of the lesson (Field notes, 10/5/16). Gary was the director of the lesson and related to the students in this hierarchical way. He was the agent of the teaching and learning practices. However, in the

nature of both science enquiry and the stated aim of the school to develop independent learners, Gary expected students to take responsibility for their learning by carrying out the assigned tasks. In turn, the students responded to his direction and performed the necessary tasks both independently and with further scaffolding when required. The social-political arrangements of the school are directed towards equipping students to be leaders in the community and also towards providing mentorship and guidance. Interviews with senior staff throughout the research period confirmed this finding. In particular, Owen, the Head of Leadership, said:

> *So everybody is going to lead in some capacity, somewhere along the line and it's our job to equip those people to lead … its getting the gold out of people [students] and getting them to use their gold to serve other people.* *(*Owen, interview, 10/5/2016)

Thus, in this lesson, the sayings, doings and relatings of negotiating students through the enmeshed curriculum literacies practices in turn supported the practice architectures that shaped student learning: Gary's sayings around viewing created cultural-discursive arrangements that supported the reading of printed and electronic resources such as task sheets, computers and software (for example, Google) Similarly, the doings around viewing supported material-economic arrangements that took the form of students using the computer and software to research, investigate and problem solve. These three processes are an important part of the scientific curriculum literacies learning practices and in turn, created practice architectures of their own. However, these will not be explored further. Finally, the relatings around viewing created social-political arrangements of power

discourses in the classroom. In this case, Gary acted more as a knowledgeable facilitator than an authoritarian expert demonstrated through allowing students to take some responsibility for their own learning albeit with guidance. Thus, different curriculum literacies practices were nested together and existed in interconnected relationships with one another and to the larger practice of student learning.

This nested, interconnectedness of literacy teaching practices is characteristic of other curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in this lesson and across the other subject areas. For example, in another episode of the lesson following the one mentioned previously (Extract 6.1), and while teaching about the identification of rocks (identification is an important scientific process), Gary simultaneously negotiated students through reading, albeit implicitly: *you can all follow please. Can you please read on?* Gary's sayings around identification processes supported cultural-discursive arrangements specifically related to the language of assessment and required students to read a task sheet and cards (decoding and also implicit comprehension of these resources). Gary's doings involved showing students the rocks and identification cards and demonstrating what they were required to do (Field notes, 10/5/2016). Thus, Gary's doings created the material-economic arrangements that enabled students to look at the rock collection (identification) read the cards (reading) and identify their types by recording an answer (writing). While these were examples of multiple literacies being used by students, they were simultaneously part of the language of scientific processes: identify and record.

Finally, Gary's relatings supported the social-political arrangements that enabled students to learn together in co-operative groups, another scientific literacy practice. Hence, the sayings, doings and relatings of teaching identification as a curriculum literacies practice, supported and helped shape other reading, writing and scientific literacies

practices. Or, in other words, receptive skills (reading, viewing and listening) are linked to the productive skills (writing, speaking and creating).

To sum up, this section has discussed how Gary's teaching of one curriculum literacies practice (identification) can support the practice architectures for other curriculum literacies teaching practices. In addition, the curriculum literacies teaching practices are nested within student learning practices, all of which work together in complex ecological relationships. The next section, the third example, will show how teaching, learning and other practices are arranged ecologically in the Education Complex.

6.4 Example Three: Year 7 Mathematics

Ecologies of Practices and the Education Complex

As discussed in Chapter Three and again briefly in the introduction to this chapter, Kemmis et al. (2014) posit the theory of ecologies of practices. They use the term Education Complex to describe the ecological practices that comprise education: leading, teaching, learning, professional learning and researching. These five practices emerged with the advent of mass compulsory schooling and can still be seen in every education system today. Kemmis et al. (2014) argue that the five practices co-habit a site interdependently and might enable and/ or constrain one another. Furthermore, according to these authors, for practices to change in education, all five educational practices need to change. This next section will show how curriculum literacies teaching practices are ecologically arranged with the five educational practices.

Example Three: Year 7 Mathematics

The teacher and subject teaching area that will form the example for ecologies of practices is the Year 7 Mathematics class taught by Diane. Only short examples from the

data collected will be provided but these will give the platform for viewing the data using the ecologies of practices lens. The curriculum literacies teaching practices used by Diane in all the mathematics lessons observed in this study also exemplify how these practices were ecologically arranged with the other practices of student learning, teaching, professional learning, leading and, researching in the Education Complex of Abimelech College. Using this theory, it can be shown that the curriculum literacies teaching practices were enmeshed in ecological relationships with other teaching, student learning, leading, professional learning, and researching practices. Each practice visible within the Education Complex will be considered to demonstrate the complex web of relationships that existed. I turn now to an examination of how Diane's curriculum literacies teaching practices were enmeshed in other teaching practices.

Teaching practices – PBL and the integration of technology, other practice traditions

First, the other teaching practices that were interconnected with Diane's curriculum literacies teaching practices are examined. In particular, these teaching practices are related to the integration of technology and also the implementation of Project-Based Learning [PBL]. These broad teaching practices had been brought into the school by the Principal and the Head of Secondary School and were part of the practice architectures that enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. These practice architectures have been discussed in other examples cited in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The sayings, doings and relatings of the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in subjects across the curriculum over the course of this study, were shaped by the introduction of PBL, and the integration of technology and the practices were all interconnected. The Head of Secondary School, Myles, mentioned in his interview that part of the reason for commencing the implementation of PBL was to influence teaching and learning practices:

> *Collaborative learning is very big as well. I'd also like to break down walls between different departments where departments can work together. We'll talk about project based learning later – but that's what this is*. (Myles, Interview, 15/9/015)

The introduction of PBL led to changes in general teaching practices and helped shape the cultural-discursive arrangements that enabled and constrained curriculum literacies teaching practices. Central to PBL was the notion of collaborative teaching and learning. Thus, Diane and the other participant teachers encouraged collaboration as part of their general and also curriculum literacies teaching practices. Collaborative teaching and learning necessitated the use of a new discourse so that Diane taught the specific language of PBL as part of her curriculum literacies teaching practices. Words such as: *reset, expert, support peers, work together* became part of the discursive arrangements and took on specific meanings. However, PBL also required the integration of technology so that the language of technology became part of the discourse of the school. Hence, Diane, when teaching curriculum literacies in most of the mathematics lessons observed, used words such as: *I've used Google, You are going to need your iPads open* and also: *upload, print, access the app, use Haiku, open a Word document, use the Mathletics app.*

Material-economic resources used in the mathematics curriculum literacies teaching practices at Abimelech College included a purpose- built PBL classroom that could be used for collaborative group and/ or individual work and enabled the integration of technology. The classroom had a data projector and screen and whiteboard at each end of the room enabling the use of technology in curriculum literacies teaching practices and the teaching of content knowledge. Diane and the students had their own iPads and used them during all

the lessons observed. For example, Diane used apps on the iPads such as Mathletics, Kahoot, word documents, excel spreadsheets as part of her curriculum literacies teaching practices. The material-economic arrangements in turn shaped the social-political arrangements.

These arrangements were also collaborative in nature. For example, *support peers* usually involved collaborative solving of mathematical problems in small peer groups Students were also able to support one another and work together to solve mathematical equations. In one mathematics project that was only partially observed, the students worked in collaborative groups to create an infographic report based on data collected by using spheros. These are small app-enabled robotic balls that can be used to teach coding skills involving mathematical operations and other mathematical concepts. However, Diane was also enabled to be the expert in the classroom. Diane was able to stand at the front of the classroom and teach the whole class and then move easily around the room guiding and encouraging where necessary. Thus, mathematics curriculum literacies teaching practices were influenced by the introduction of PBL and the integration of technology. Furthermore, these teaching practices were enmeshed in leading practices (the Principal and other members of the school executive leadership team introduced the teaching initiatives), learning practices (students used technology, collaboration and peer support as part of their learning practices) and professional learning practices (all staff were involved in professional learning around technology and PBL) at the school.

Second, I would like to comment briefly on one practice tradition that influenced not only the teaching of mathematical curriculum literacies but also, the teaching of other curriculum literacies across the school. At Abimelech College, the teachers looked to the literacy teaching traditions established in the English department. For example, Diane

mentioned correct spelling and grammar as important aspects to consider when writing a mathematical report: *if you look at our criteria in Maths, you have to be able to spell. The words on the criteria sheet, they're not really basic words* (Diane, interview, 14/3/2016). This finding was supported across the study. For example, the Year 7 History and Year 8 Geography teacher, Henry, stated: *to get your head around the actual facts and know how to spell, that's what I think's the major [issue]* (Henry, interview, *2/12/2015).* Kieran, the Year 9 Business teacher made a similar comment:

> *we need to be mindful of grammar and if there's obvious problems with a particular child, highlighting it, talking to them about it, but definitely working on vocabulary and spelling and making sure we get that right*. *(*Kieran, interview, 21/10/2015)

Teachers also conferred with the English department to gain information about text structure to enable them to teach the specific written texts required in a subject. Diane confirmed this too, mentioning: *so when I set up this report writing I actually went to other subjects to ask about report structure so we could be similar- so we try to be similar across the school to some extent* (Diane, interview, 14/3/2016). When asked what other subjects, Diane said *English.* Thus, other teaching practices at Abimelech College are interconnected with the curriculum literacies teaching practices of subjects across the curriculum. I turn now to learning practices and present their interconnectedness with curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Learning practices

In the Mathematics classroom and the classrooms of the other subjects across the curriculum, the interconnectedness of teaching and learning practices was visible. Part of curriculum literacies teaching practices observed were note-taking and reading texts. This teaching practice also was enmeshed in learning with the students observed participating without question in these practices. While student learning is not the focus of this study, it is important to mention it here as part of the ecologies of practices. The student learning practices were connected to the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Another example of this is the use of IRE as part of curriculum literacies teaching practices. The students were comfortable with this particular teaching practice as they answered questions when asked and very few initiated questions of their own. In addition to the more didactic role played by the teachers, they also were more facilitative in their doings, for example, when small group or individual guidance occurred. During these times, students were observed responding favorably overall. They knew what was expected of them as learners.

Furthermore, the learning and curriculum literacies teaching practices were connected to the leading practices at the school as evident when Myles said:

> *I just want to have engaged learning. … we've got so many disengaged kids in grade 9 and 10 because they can't relate learning to what they want to do and they see it as very foreign to them, external to them and they don't engage in learning and we lose them so project based learning is all about exciting, engaged learning …you know it's about collaboration, critical thinking, it's all about investigation and so forth. (Myles, Head of Secondary School, 15/9/2015)*

Clement (Dean of Studies) mentioned another initiative that was evident in Diane's curriculum literacies teaching practices and the student learning practices. When Diane said: *first of all, we're going to write down – ok, can you tell me what these letters mean?* and the students replied: *students will be able to understand*, Diane was implementing practices taken from *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). Clement mentioned that the school had begun implementation of several of these ideas a few years previously*: at the moment we're sort of aiming all the professional literacy in my area at A.S.O.T. - Art and Science of Teaching (*Clement, Dean of Studies, 8/9/2015*).* Thus, a practice of teaching: telling students what they would be learning, and a practice of learning: in this case, students reciting back, was interconnected with and shaped at the site by a practice brought into the school by the Dean of Studies and hence, teaching and learning practices were interconnected with leading practices.

Professional Learning practices

Yet again, the leading practices of Myles' (Head of Secondary School) and Clements' (Dean of Studies) created practice architectures that shaped the practice architectures of professional learning in the school. Teachers were generally left to find their own professional learning activities around curriculum literacies and most said that they did not know where to access these and second, they had other content-related priorities. For example, Henry mentioned:

> *and my job here is to not teach English skill; my predominant job in Geography is to teach Geography skills and my dominant job in History is to teach History skills and it's not at the expense necessarily of literacy but it definitely plays second fiddle. (Henry, teacher, 2/12/2015)*

Diane represented what all the participant teachers mentioned during interviews and informal conversations after class: a lack of professional development around curriculum literacies teaching practices. Diane said *Not really* (in answer to a question around undertaking professional development). While both Myles and Clement acknowledged the importance of curriculum literacies teaching practices in the curriculum, both had other priorities regarding professional learning: Myles - P.B.L. *The key is providing enough in-service and time for them to plan these units adequately* and Clements - A.S.O.T. *I'm sort of aiming all the professional um in my area at at um ASOT* .

Leading practices

The leading practices of the Head of the Secondary School (Myles) shaped the curriculum literacies teaching practices of Diane and the other teachers. During an interview, Myles, said:

> *we need to change the way we teach… That's a journey we're on- it's something you don't do straight away, it's something you take time and you've got to lead your staff with that and for me … the driving is coming from me at the moment… the thing I find about literacy is I think we need a common language with literacy across all the subject areas. And literacy needs to be very strategically taught and acknowledged through other subject areas. It is haphazardly but my next step is to map it out*. (Myles, Head of Secondary School, Interview, 15/9/2015)

Later in the interview, he said "*and I've mapped the General Capabilities to those and what I'd like to see in all units is to see our learning outcomes there and to see our General Capabilities very prominent".* Thus, part of Myles' leading practices was to drive

change to teaching and learning practices at Abimelech College. Here Myles said (sayings) that change was important. He acknowledged that he was driving change and one of the changes he wanted to see was the incorporation of the General Capabilities in subject unit plans. This led to him initiating the creation of something (doing) in that he mapped the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document to the school mission statement and developed a template that teachers needed to use in their planning documents. His relationship (relatings) with the staff appeared to be somewhat ambivalent: on the one hand, he admitted he was the driver and expected the teachers to implement his changes, but he also admitted the changes would happen over time: *it's a journey we're on*. Myles' sayings, doings and relatings of leading practices shaped Diane's curriculum literacies teaching practices as evident in the discussion above.

Firstly, Myles' <u>sayings</u> helped shape the cultural-discursive arrangements. Diane used the language of literacy regularly in the lesson: *write it down, what's the definition? You learn best through writing.* Secondly, the material-economic arrangements in the form of resources were enabled by Myles' <u>doings</u>. These resources took the form of the template that Diane incorporated into the Year 7 Work Program. The work program contained in turn, the language (cultural-discursive arrangements) of literacy (see extract in Appendix L). Specifically, the work program uses language related to literacy such as: *communication, ideas, opinions, investigate, collaborate, share, compose, define and plan* with links to the General Capabilities clearly mapped. For example, in the mathematical learning outcome of communication, the literacy links stated are: *Compose spoken, written, visual and multimodal learning area texts; Use language to interact with others; Deliver presentations; Express opinions and points of view* Finally, Myles' <u>relatings</u> shaped the social-political arrangements. The Heads of Department were expected to implement the

changes as he also mentioned: *I think you'll find that your HODS are aware of this.* An interview with a senior leader confirmed that this was the case: *well I suppose I will take ultimate responsibility but the HODs do it* (Clement, Dean of Studies, 8/9/2015). This arrangement is evident in Diane's opening words to the students: *I'm going to see all the other teachers before school tomorrow*. At this site, the Heads of Department were asked to provide leadership too, for ensuring changes occurred. However, the HODs who participated in the study were ambivalent about this role. For example, Christine (Head of Department - English) stated:

> *To be honest, I think essentially the message I have received year after year, is that it's mine [responsibility], as Head of English [which has led to] a considerable and long-suffered sense of frustration and lack of support (*Christine, 16/5/2016)

Additionally, Mary (Dean of Curriculum Development) mentioned that not all HODs are as passionate about the implementation of changes as others, resulting in a more haphazard approach. This result might constrain the teaching of curriculum literacies with some departments choosing not to focus on its teaching. This finding was confirmed in an interview with the Dean of Middle School who said:

> *I think it's one of those things that other departments other than Maths or English see as "uh, this is eating into my curriculum time," and they haven't necessarily really fully embraced the idea that what they teach in Science or IDT or, you know,*

> *Art, Drama whatever, what they teach there with literacy has the power to empower our students.* (Liane, Dean of Middle School, 7/10/2015)

The final practice of the Education Complex is researching and I turn now to this practice.

Researching practices

As understood by Kemmis et al. (2014), researching practices include: educational research, critical evaluation and assessment. Thus, characteristic of researching practices is critical reflection and questioning. Furthermore, the researching practices are deliberate, planned and focused on interaction and communication with others. An aim of researching practices is to transform the practices at the Education Complex. While the study did not actively collect data around researching practices, nevertheless, data did reveal evidence of researching practices that interconnected with curriculum literacies teaching practices. The researching practices that were evident at Abimelech College were driven by the members of the executive leadership team and hence, enmeshed in leading practices. In this case, the appointment of a leader to investigate the NAPLAN data is likely to impact future curriculum literacies teaching practices as the leading, researching and curriculum literacies teaching practices are ecologically arranged. However, at the time of the study, this leader was new to the position and when interviewed said:

> *we collect a lot of data but don't do much with it at this school at present so my role is to look at things like NAPLAN and we've done whole school testing, tomorrow and Thursday we're doing some Mighty Minds literacy and numeracy testing and then looking at specific data and a year group and what are their strengths, what are their weaknesses. (Mary, 14/9/2015)*

So, while Diane and the other teachers were aware of the data, researching practices of this nature were not enmeshed with the curriculum literacies teaching practices overtly. However, researching practices can also be oriented towards professional research. In the case of the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in the Year 7 Mathematics classroom, some enmeshment with professional research was evident in the teaching of text structures such as reports. Professional research around functional linguistics and the teaching of generic structure and language features was discussed in the Literature Review in Chapter Two. In addition, the curriculum literacies teaching practices related to report writing were enmeshed in assessment practices at Abimelech College. Specifically, the teaching of the report genre was linked to summative assessment in all three subjects mentioned above.

In summary, this section has shown how curriculum literacies teaching practices literacy are enmeshed and interconnected in ecological relationships with the five practices in the Education Complex. These relationships will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter findings of literacy teaching practices have been presented that are more integrated in nature, and that reveal the social constructedness and site-specific nature of curriculum literacies teaching practices. These findings related to the teaching of a communication process and the negotiation of multiple literacies. Furthermore, in this chapter it has been shown how it is possible to view the teaching practices of curriculum literacies using the theory of ecologies of practices. The third case study exemplified how curriculum literacies teaching practices are enmeshed in and shaped by other practices of teaching, student learning, professional learning, leading and researching. In Chapter Seven,

the findings will be discussed in relation to the three research questions posed at the outset of the study.

Chapter Seven - Complex Relationships

Nothing is perfect; life is messy, outcomes are uncertain.

Hugh Mackay

7.0 Introduction

The highly contested nature of the concept of literacy has been supported and foregrounded in this thesis. In addition, researchers in the field have been called on to reveal their epistemological and ontological stance when writing about their research (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001). I too, have described my epistemological and ontological stance throughout this thesis and particularly in Chapter One and Chapter Three. This stance is based on a social constructionist view that requires knowledge to be interpreted. Hence, the analysis and interpretation of the findings is based on a view of literacy that is socially situated. Throughout this study the Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999) concept of curriculum literacies has been employed to examine and analyse the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were observed in a range of subject areas across the curriculum. In addition, the definition of literacy found in the General Capabilities: Literacy (ACARA, 2013) proved useful for the analysis. Even though it was noted that this is a document related to policy and hence, the definition provided is not an academic one, nevertheless, it is the document teachers are likely to access when looking for information about literacy. Therefore, it was important to consider its contents. In addition, documents related to policy are based on literature reviews and can be considered as a base for best practice for curriculum literacies teaching practices.

In Chapter One and Chapter Two, it was noted that the understandings of literacy have undergone tremendous change from one that favoured the development and teaching

of discrete skills such as reading and writing to post-modern ones which view literacy as socially situated. Hence, the Wyatt–Smith et al. (1999) and ACARA (2013) definitions of literacy enabled an examination of a wide range of curriculum literacies teaching practices. This was because the use of both definitions enabled an examination of traditional curriculum literacies practices that teachers might be using; the use of the post-modern understanding of literacy as socially situated so that the curriculum literacies teaching practices were examined as they occurred at a specific site; and finally, the incorporation of the concept that different subjects across the curriculum teach different (or similar) literacies practices.

In the three findings chapters, the curriculum literacies teaching practices, practice architectures and ecologies of practices that were visible in a range of subject areas across the curriculum at Abimelech College were presented. In Chapter Four, the teaching of several reading practices that were evident in the sample classrooms was presented, while in Chapter Five, the teaching of several writing practices was described. In addition, in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the notion of literacy as socially situated and the theory of practice architectures enabled an examination of the site-specific cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that shape and are shaped by the sayings, doings and relatings that constituted the curriculum literacies teaching practices. In Chapter Six, Kemmis et al.'s (2014) concept of the Education Complex and the theory of ecologies of practices were used to analyse the data and hence the ecologies of literacy practices was presented. Based on the research findings, and using the theory of ecologies of practices, the argument was made that the curriculum literacies teaching practices were shaped by and shape each other in interconnected, nested ecologies of literacy practices. For example, reading does not occur in isolation from writing, speaking or listening.

Furthermore, the curriculum literacies teaching practices are ecologically arranged with other teaching, student learning, professional learning, leading and researching practices in the Education Complex. In this chapter the findings will be considered together and the research questions will be discussed and answered in more detail. Therefore, the complex relationships that existed at the school site among curriculum literacies teaching practices, the practice architectures of the site and the ecologies of practices within the Education Complex will become evident.

7.1 Research Questions revisited

The main aim of the study was to investigate curriculum literacies teaching practices in the middle school phase of an independent school (Abimelech College) in South East Queensland. Given the context of literacy teaching as a "high status policy with impeccable provenance" (Maguire, Ball & Braun, 2013, p.324), the study investigated the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were visible at this site and what enabled and constrained these teaching practices.

The research questions that guided the study were:

Research Question One: What are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Two: What enables and constrains the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the site and the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

In response to Research Question One, the curriculum literacies teaching practices in relation to the literature presented in Chapter Two delineate the curriculum literacies

teaching practices observed in this study. The enabling and constraining practice architectures of the curriculum literacies teaching practices are discussed in the section answering Research Question Two and finally, Research Question Three will be discussed vis-a-vis the literature reviewed, especially the ideas outlined by Kemmis at al. (2014) related to the ecological arrangements of practices. However, it must also be noted that while the discussion of each research question is presented separately, nevertheless, as curriculum literacies teaching practices, practice architectures, and ecologies of practices are interconnected and enmeshed, at times the individual discussion considers all three research questions. In addition, the three research questions are considered together in the final section of this chapter. The discussion concludes with a consideration of the complex relationship that exists between practices at sites and curriculum literacies teaching practices.

7.2 Literacy teaching practices: Research Question One

There are various responses to the first research question: what are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers? On the one hand, the teaching practices can be described as privileging the teaching of reading and writing as per the more traditional, skills-based approach to literacy (see Section 1.5) In Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the reading and writing practices that the teachers taught during the study were described. These can be summarised as follows:

- Reading practices: teaching some technical vocabulary, activating prior knowledge, building knowledge of the field, using question and answers to develop reading comprehension, extracting information, and

- Writing practices: teaching aspects of textual structures required for demonstrating learning and, building vocabulary and taking notes for learning.

However, on the other hand, the observed teaching practices also focused on other aspects of curriculum literacies. Curriculum literacies teaching practices related to a spoken communication process, and aspects of multiple literacies were described in Chapter Six. In addition, the interconnected ecologies of practices that influence curriculum literacies teaching practices were presented. The interconnected ecologies of practices are discussed vis-à-vis research question three.

Approaches to curriculum literacies teaching practices

The approaches out of which these observed reading and writing curriculum literacies practices were taught were predominantly the basic skills and the functional (Lu & Cross, 2014; Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001). The basic skills approach to literacy foregrounds the teaching of reading and writing skills in particular and suggests that these skills develop independently of the social and cultural context in which they are used, being dependent instead on the cognitive abilities of the individual. The basic skills approach to teaching the reading and writing literacies required across the curriculum was evident particularly in the teaching of vocabulary and the emphasis placed on spelling and grammar by many of the teachers [Field notes (2015-2016), participant interviews (2015-2016), focus group interview (2016)]. However, a more functional approach to the curriculum literacies teaching practices was also evident.

The functional approach to literacy teaching was evident when the teachers in this study linked literacy to lives outside of school in several instances: for example, Year 7 English, Year 7 History, Year 9 Business Studies. It was further apparent in Chapter Six in particular where, for example, writing practices were connected to speaking and viewing

practices as outlined in the first two examples cited (see Section 6.2 and 6.3). Lu and Cross (2014) argue that the functional approach highlights the changing nature of texts from simple to more complex. The Year 9 Business Studies teacher (Liane, 24/11/2015) was observed teaching the students about the changing nature of texts from the middle school years to the senior years. In addition, the second Year 9 Business Studies teacher (Kieran) also mentioned the need for curriculum literacies teaching practices in the middle years to develop the foundational skills required for success in the senior years (Kieran, Year 9 Business Studies teacher, 21/10/2015). However, explicit teaching about the complexity of texts was not observed. Research has highlighted the need for explicit teaching of this aspect of teaching reading practices (Blanton, Wood & Taylor, 2007). Importantly, too, while the teachers certainly negotiated students through the multiple literacies as was reported in Section 6.3, there needed to be more explicit teaching and the fostering of a critical stance (Henderson & Exley, 2012).

Other approaches to teaching curriculum literacies practices can be found in the definition provided by Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999). Using this definition, one could argue that while the teachers in this study were privileging the teaching of some discrete aspects of writing and reading practices such as vocabulary and textual structure, and certain aspects of other curriculum literacies teaching practices, they were not foregrounding the teaching of other subject specific practices such as speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking. However, they were observed teaching some aspects of subject-specific processes such as communication. In addition, while curriculum literacies teaching practices included a focus on the language of assessment, for example, as evident in Year 7 Mathematics, there needed to be a more explicit focus on the match between the language of the classroom and the language of assessment. Moreover, while the explicit teaching of vocabulary was

foregrounded in curriculum literacies teaching practices, yet again, there was very little explicit consideration of any gaps between foundational reading and writing and current literacy demands (Wyatt-Smith, et al., 1999).

Using the processes and knowledges of literacy outlined in the General Capabilities: Literacy (ACARA, 2013) document as a basis for discussion, it is apparent that the curriculum literacies teaching practices at Abimelech College comprised some teaching of text, word and grammar knowledge in reading and writing practices. In addition, the document mentions the need to develop learners who are self-sufficient. This was echoed by Henderson (2012) who stated learners need to take responsibility for learning. The development of learner independence was a feature of the curriculum literacies teaching practices during this study. However, the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document, whilst providing organising elements, is brief in nature and does not detail how or what specific content to teach, although it has evolved over time since their first conception in 2012 (Kitson, 2015).

The National Literacy Learning Progressions (ACARA, 2018) provides some further explanation of what teachers should be looking for in relation to curriculum literacies at key points in time.[6] In addition, teachers are able to access the national curriculum documents for English (ACARA, 2011), in particular, the Language strand. As Derewianka (2012) has shown, the language strand of the English curriculum is based on the Hallidayan model of language. Halliday's (1985) functional systemic linguistics approach emphasises how language is used differently in different contexts and therefore, helps to explain why the language in the mathematics texts and classroom is different to the

[6] In 2018, ACARA released the National Literacy Learning Progression which includes some content related literacy knowledge.. However, as this document was not available during the period of this study, its impact and use by the teachers cannot be discussed.

language of the science or history texts and classrooms. This functional linguistic approach to teaching the literacy of a discipline is gaining ground in the form of disciplinary literacy (see for example, Moje, 2008 in Section 2.7). Research in this area provides specific information around what the actual literacy practices are, that should be taught (see Section 2.7 for example). In addition, as outlined in Section 2.8, there is a body of literature detailing disciplinary specific literacies such as Mathematics, Science, Geography and History. However, none of the teachers in the study mentioned any detailed familiarity with this body of knowledge nor were they observed teaching the discipline specific literacies in any great detail.

Teacher knowledge

Moreover, the participant teachers also mentioned that they lacked knowledge about curriculum literacies teaching practices other than the ones related to reading, writing and vocabulary as discussed above. They knew about the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) document, but did not refer to or use it regularly. This was confirmed by Christine, the English Head of Department in an interview (16/5/2016). The implications of this finding become evident when the practice architectures and ecologies of practices are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, it was clear that the teachers involved in the study all believed that they lacked sufficient knowledge of the specific literacies of their subjects to enable them to identify and teach the required subject specific literacy practices apart from writing and reading. Thus, it can be argued that the curriculum literacies teaching practices were general in nature and that teachers did not stir learners (Kemmis et al., 2014) into the curriculum literacies practices specific both to the subject and more particularly, the discipline required at the secondary (high school) phase of schooling (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). Nevertheless, the teacher participants in this study had started the

journey. However, this is only part of the story. This is because the nature of the curriculum literacies teaching practices and the relationships observed at the site are complex and cannot be described, analysed and discussed comprehensively only from this general perspective. Despite the initial evidence that the teacher participants did not know or use many curriculum literacies teaching practices, nevertheless, curriculum literacies teaching practices were evident. Furthermore, while the teachers in the study mentioned they did not use any models in their curriculum literacies teaching practices, their curriculum literacies teaching practices aligned with aspects of some models, albeit perhaps unknowingly.

Models of curriculum literacies teaching practices

Models such as Moje's (2015) 4 Es Framework, Fang and Schleppergell's (2010) Functional Language, and the Australian genre approach to writing based on Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (Christie & Derewianka, 2008), suggest different ways of teaching curriculum literacies. Freebody and Luke's (1990) Four Resources model is also useful. Curriculum literacies teaching practices observed at Abimelech College aligned with aspects of at least two of these afore mentioned models. Practices from these models were evident in the doings (actions) of many of the curriculum literacies teaching practices. For example, the teaching of some of the generic structure as an aspect of the practice of teaching text types advocated by Christie and Derewianka (2008) was evident in Year 7 English, Mathematics, Year 8 Geography and Year 9 Business Studies.

In particular, some curriculum literacies teaching practices aligned with aspects of Moje's (2015) model: Engage, Elicit, Examine and Evaluate. Teachers taught students to "engage" in the practices of the subject. For example, in the Science classroom, students were actively involved in identifying igneous rocks, while in the Business Studies classroom, students actively engaged in running a business enterprise during Biz Day. The

Science and Business teachers confirmed these were activities they would expect students to encounter in the real world. During these activities, students were involved in spoken interactions and some low-level thinking skills, both of which are aspects of teaching the underpinning literacies of a subject.

As shown in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the teachers provided teaching of these practices via various "doings" such as modelling, guiding, scaffolding, negotiating and posing questions. Many of the curriculum literacies teaching practices used an IRE approach, with some use of dialogic talk. However, as part of engaging in the practices, students also needed to be taught how to frame real world questions related to problem solving processes in that subject (Moje, 2015). While the teachers posed questions, they were not observed teaching students how to pose these questions themselves in any of the lessons observed. Other researchers have suggested the importance of student engagement, particularly at the middle school phase (Brozo and Sutton Flynt, 2008; Kitson, 2011b; Paris & McNaughton, 2010). Certainly, the teachers in this study made an effort to engage students as evident in Henry's comments about needing to choose engaging videos (see material-economic arrangements in Section 4.3).

Another approach related to student engagement was the introduction of PBL to Year 7, an initiative which was brought into the school by the Principal at the start of 2016. This initiative was designed to improve learner engagement by forming real-world questions, investigating data, analysing, and synthesising; all aspects of engagement that Moje (2015) has suggested are key aspects of teaching a subject's literacies. However, at the time of the study, the implementation of PBL was in its early stages, therefore, very little explicit teaching of the curriculum literacies related to formulating real-world questions, investigating, analysing and synthesising was observed. As the Director of

Curriculum Innovation (DCI), Gavin, commented in his interview on the implementation of PBL: *I think it's a long game* (9/5/2016). Teachers needed time to develop their teaching practices in formulating real-world higher order thinking skills.

Included in Moje's (2015) 4 Es model is the need for teachers to "elicit and engineer" specific literacy practices. The participating teachers used this aspect to a large extent in the lessons observed. For example, in Science, History and Business Studies, teachers were observed eliciting technical vocabulary, activating prior knowledge and building knowledge of the field in preparation for reading texts. However, the engineering and elicitation needs to occur within a clear purpose and audience (Moje, 2015). Some lessons observed provided clear information about audience and purpose: for example, in the Business Studies report on Biz day and the English biography. However, at times information about required purpose and audience were obscure: for example, the vocabulary elicited by Kieran in Business Studies and Gary in Science was linked to examinations and other forms of assessment, rather than to explicit teaching around the specific audience and purpose required for the writing used in Business Studies or Science. The lack of meaningful context very rarely leads to students engaging in deep learning or transferring knowledge from one subject to another (Moje, 2015; Tardy, 2006). This lack of transfer of knowledge was acknowledged by most of the teachers interviewed, including the leadership and supported other research findings (Billman & Pearson, 2013).

The third and fourth Es from Moje's (2105) 4 Es framework concern "examine" and "evaluate" language. While the teachers utilised some aspects of examining language, in particular, teaching vocabulary and the structure of texts and sometimes introductions and conclusions (as in the cases of the English and Mathematics teachers), there was no evidence of evaluations of why certain language was used or how language is used as a

social construct. It is important for teachers to show distinctions between language use in different subject areas, to enable students to utilise the language effectively, which, in turn may lead to improved student outcomes (Moje, 2015). Fang and Schleppegrell's (2010) model on Functional Language would be a useful one for teachers in this study to adopt more fully as functional linguistics differentiates how knowledge is constructed in the subjects across the curriculum, through different uses of language. In addition, functional linguistics provides a common metalanguage to describe the features of the language used (Unsworth, 2015). Finally, while teachers used parts of the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016); Christie and Derewianka's (2008) genre approach to writing would be another useful model to adopt. Ultimately, a more focused and explicit disciplinary approach to teaching curriculum literacies would benefit the learners at Abimelech College.

Summary

In summary, it is evident that while certain reading and writing practices were taught, these were general and there were more curriculum literacies practices that could have been taught. In addition, the curriculum literacies teaching practices aligned with some aspects of models such as Moje's (2015) 4 Es. Some low-level thinking was evident in the curriculum literacies teaching practices, but an approach that is more critical in nature, would also be useful (Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001). Nonetheless, this study needed to look further than the more discrete and / or functional approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices. The presentation and discussion of practices in Chapters Four, Five and Six showed that practices can be seen as being comprised of sayings, doings and relatings. This understanding of practice is crucial as it enabled me to look beyond the traditional skills-based approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices to what might

have shaped these practices. This is because other researchers have recognised the importance of the classroom in shaping practices there. For example, Kibler (2011,) described the classroom as a "unique instructional niche …shaped by teachers and students" (p.212) and Lee (2008) argued that writing was affected by the individual context of the classroom. These practices unfold amongst site-specific practice architectures, and so now the discussion turns to Research Question Two which focuses on the conditions and arrangements that enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices, specifically the complex nature of the relationship between the site, the practices and the practice architectures.

7.3 Best practice is … site-specific. Practice Architectures: Research Question Two

Much of the discussion of Research Question One views curriculum literacies teaching practices from an understanding of what might be called Best Practice. In other words, researchers and curriculum documents suggest the best teaching practices that should be used by teachers and schools. However, modern understandings of literacy are more complex and socially constructed. This meant it was important in this study to think beyond what might have been considered general best practice, and beyond what appeared to be apparent, to other factors that were evident and to interrogate the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were observed in the classrooms. Thus, the practice architectures that were evident at the site were examined and consideration given to how these might have enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Hence, rather than considering the curriculum literacies teaching practices in isolation or in relation to what might constitute best practice, they were viewed as interconnected and "enmeshed" (Kemmis et al., 2014) in the "ideas, activities, relationships, identities and capabilities of

the participants" and the specific site arrangements (p.35). Therefore, the second research question, what enabled or constrained the teaching of the curriculum literacies practices, was able to be answered.

The cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that might have enabled and constrained curriculum literacies teaching practices were usually specific to a particular classroom or teacher but there were some important commonalities across the school site. In this section, the enabling and constraining nature of the practice architectures created by the integration of technology, the use of PBL, and the school ethos are discussed. These were not the only aspects of the practice architectures but they were identified in the early stages of the analysis and emerged as key aspects of the arrangements at the site. The enabling and constraining aspects of these arrangements have been commented on briefly in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The practice architectures created by the integration of technology, the use of PBL, and the school ethos, are now discussed in turn and in particular, in terms of how they might have enabled and/or constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed in this study.

Cultural-discursive arrangements: Technology

As explained in the school context (see Section 1.3) Abimelech College was (and currently, still is) an "Apple–affiliated" school and advertises this on the website. All students in the middle years had their own iPad or MAC laptop. All teachers had a MAC laptop and the school embraced the use of electronic resources through the HAIKU platform. All students and parents had access to the resources uploaded to this platform. Each classroom had a screen and data projector and was WiFi enabled. The integration of technology was a key feature of all the lessons observed and also featured in all the interviews conducted. Additionally, the integration of technology was on the agenda at the

three staff days (non-teaching days) observed at the commencement of the year. Thus, the practice architectures created by the integration of technology both enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices architectures.

The cultural-discursive arrangements around technology were evident in all the lessons observed. The teachers and students appeared to share the language of technology with words related to technology such as *upload, print, access the app, use Haiku, open a Word document* used regularly and without further explanation from the teacher. Therefore, this apparent shared understanding of the language of technology likely enabled the teaching of other aspects of curriculum literacies as teachers did not have to spend time explaining this technical vocabulary. The value of common shared understanding of language is consistent with other research findings (Culican et al., 2001; Padgham & Chatto, 2013; Unsworth, 2015). This finding seems consistent too, with Moje (2009) who has questioned the need to extend or change literate practices just because "they look and feel different" (p. 351).

However, The Digital Rhetorics project (DEETYA, 1997) found that teachers generally only took into account the operational side of technology, in other words, the language related to the activities of technology use, and rarely integrated the cultural and critical dimensions. The need to integrate critical language to the language of technology is evident in other studies (Bulfin & McGraw, 2011; Durant & Green, 2000), and its absence in the curriculum literacies teaching practices at this study was noted. The teachers certainly used technology as part of their curriculum literacies teaching practices and included multimodal texts. Also, although they acknowledged that the integration of technology across the curriculum was widespread, there was little mention of the cultural dimension other than in the context of a particular task, for example, using the iPad to

create the Mathematics report or for the English biography. There was also no mention of fostering a critical stance towards the technology in the curriculum literacies teaching practices. As critical thinking was an aspect of curriculum literacies that was highlighted by Wyatt-Smith et al. (1999), it was interesting to note that this curriculum literacies teaching practice was not observed during the study. However, it is acknowledged that this practice might have occurred at other times.

Nevertheless, teachers appeared to use the operational language of technology with ease and shared common understandings with students. However, the teachers' verbal responses to the integration of technology differed. All teachers commented on the time wasted when the technology failed to work correctly. In one Year 7 English lesson that was observed, forty-five minutes out of the allocated seventy minutes of the lesson were taken up with trying to solve a technological issue. Some teachers took the matter further as is indicated in comments such as:

*On the flip side – it is one of the great time wasters of the modern classroom (*Business Studies teacher)

It's a multi headed beast! (Science teacher)

Technology is killing teachers (Science teacher 2)

I believe that for solid learning to occur, specifically as it relates to literacy, nothing replaces a pen and paper (Head of Department – English)

It definitely is that pressure – just naturally – it's not even spoken (Geography teacher).

Thus, this negative discourse around the integration of technology into curriculum literacies teaching practices also likely constrained the teaching. Moje (2009) has called for more research to be undertaken to examine the use of technology, in particular in the teaching and use of multiliteracies arguing that "the research that exists on digital text use

and its effects on achievement (as measured in tests and grades) is not extensive, and what does exist is inconclusive" (p. 357). Thus, while the positive rhetoric around the integration of technology to enhance learning was evident on the school website, the teachers did not seem convinced. This leads to the inference that teacher beliefs and attitudes towards integrating technology in their curriculum literacies teaching practices might well have constrained their practices in that, while they used technology, they might have taken for granted that the students shared the same understandings of its language and did not foster a critical stance towards it. The importance of teacher beliefs and the link with teaching practices has been foregrounded in other studies (Curwood, 2011; Gleeson, 2015).

Conceivably too, the teacher assumption that students shared a common understanding of the language of technology, might have constrained the explicit teaching of the vocabulary when used as part of curriculum literacies teaching practices and also the development of a critical stance. Cumming and Wyatt-Smith (2001) and also the General Capabilities: Literacy (ACARA, 2013), have called for the teaching of critical thinking within curriculum literacies but this was not as obvious in the cultural-discursive arrangements created by the integration of technology despite its widespread use at Abimelech College. On a more positive note, Sahlin, Tsertsidis, and Islam (2017) argued that the integration of technology made learning more accessible and therefore, more engaging. This is consistent with the History and other teachers' comments regarding the positive engagement of students in curriculum literacies teaching practices, (for example, as shown in the Year 8 Science reading example) when technology was used. The discussion now turns to a consideration of PBL.

Cultural-discursive arrangements: PBL

PBL was a new initiative brought into the school by the Principal at the start of 2016. This initiative was planned to commence in Year 7 and then continue through the three-year middle school period. Project-based learning created cultural-discursive arrangements at the school that in turn, enabled and constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies. While the initiative was brought into the school by the Principal, its implementation was based on a model used by another independent school in New South Wales that shared a similar socio-economic status [SES], values and beliefs, and cohort of students, to Abimelech College. The attitude of the executive leaders at Abimelech College towards the introduction of PBL was evident in the language used: *so project based learning is all about exciting, engaged learning* (Myles, Head of Secondary, 15/9/2015).

The importance of providing engaging and relevant learning experiences for adolescents has been well documented (for example, Alvermann, 2001; Cambourne, 2013; Chadbourne & Pendergast, 2010; MYCEETYA, 2009; NT Department of Education and Training 2010). However, as Rose (2006) has argued, "teachers require a detailed knowledge and understanding of literacy" (p.4). As already shown, just what comprises this knowledge and understanding is a highly contested field and often leads to confusion for teachers. However, it was acknowledged at this school that teachers and students had to learn a new language around PBL. The Head of Secondary School agreed commenting: *I think a common language is very important* (Myles, 15/9/2015). Thus, certain cultural-discursive arrangements of PBL were visible, in particular all teachers and students needed to use a common language. The Year 7 English and Mathematics teachers used these words and phrases throughout their curriculum literacies teaching practices and frequently

repeated their meanings. Thus, they were engaged in stirring students into the practices (Kemmis et al., 2014) of PBL through teaching the language of PBL.

As Chadbourne and Pendergast (2010) argue, one philosophy of middle schooling is using an approach that challenges students intellectually and also enables them to "work within their zone of proximal development" (p. 29). All the staff interviewed agreed that PBL as an instructional practice, had the potential to offer both challenge and support to students' learning. Additionally, the initiative was implemented to improve engagement and hence, student outcomes (Chadbourne & Pendergast, 2010). Teachers and staff alike had to learn this special language and engage in collaborative learning and teaching. At the outset of the implementation, Year 7 English teachers worked with Year 7 Religion teachers and set up a joint program that both introduced the students to the language of PBL and also enabled some cross-curriculum language to be taught. Chadbourne and Pendergast (2010) contend that for middle schooling to be engaging and worthwhile, then cross-curriculum connections are important. Hence, it can be argued that the PBL initiative enabled teachers not only to teach the specialised vocabulary of this teaching practice, but also to teach the language across the curriculum in the manner as suggested by research such as Chadbourne and Pendergast (2010).

Cultural-discursive arrangements: School Ethos

The school ethos has been described and referred to in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. The discussion now turns towards the possible enabling and constraining influence of the cultural-discursive arrangements created by the school ethos. Education can be defined in several ways. However, the understanding that has been employed is "one of the double purposes of education is to enable students to "live well in a world worth living in" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 17). This moral aspect to education has been critiqued as missing in

modern schools (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015) but an important finding of this research has been the presence of this concern with well-being and lives after school in the curriculum literacies teaching practices. While the teaching of curriculum literacies in this school can be interpreted in a variety of ways nevertheless, permeating each teacher's curriculum literacies teaching practices (as evident in their sayings, doings and relatings), and evident in the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political site arrangements, was a sense of students needing to be literate in order to live well in their future lives.

Thus, while the curriculum literacies teaching practices might be viewed from an approach that is schooling focused (Kemmis, 2008) with an emphasis on accountability and scores in high stakes tests, this was only part of the picture at Abimelech College. The teachers at this school seemed committed to ensuring that students were educated around literacy and were navigating this path amidst the competing conditions of accountability and high stakes testing. An analysis of the teachers' curriculum literacies teaching practices showed that they frequently mentioned learning literacy for use in the world outside of school and this was associated with living more productive, worthwhile lives. The interviews and lessons observed demonstrated this commitment repeatedly and this approach was evident in the teachers' sayings as well as the cultural-discursive arrangements at the site.

Furthermore, while the school was still operating under constraining conditions, one of the stated goals of Abimelech College was to encourage learners to become curious and to learn passionately (website, accessed 16/3/2016). In addition, the website states that teachers want to *lay the foundations for successful lives* (website, accessed 16/3/2016). As Pendergast and Bahr (2010) and others have argued, part of developing passionate learners

at the middle school phase involves encouraging learner independence and responsibility. The teachers at Abimelech College seemed to be committed to teaching curriculum literacies to develop learner independence and responsibility, even if at other times, transmissive curriculum literacies teaching practices were visible that foregrounded a more passive response by the students; and despite needing to include more explicit teaching of subject specific literacies as advocated by the concept of disciplinary literacy.

Kemmis (2008) has argued that teaching from a moral stance is enabled by "the kinds of structures, practices and relationships which foster, express and, in the end, constitute the collective good for humankind" (p. 18). Therefore, I turn now to a discussion of these arrangements visible in the school. The cultural-discursive arrangements that enabled a moral approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices were evident in the school website (accessed 3/5/2016). The website used words and phrases such as: *laying the foundation for lifelong learning, real-world problems, educating students in leadership* and contained blogs with topics such as: *bloom where you are planted; the art of conversation; what pet shall we get* and these in turn used phrases such as: *my mum brought me up to have good manners, love, encourage and hope; instilling values and attitudes that will last our students a lifetime; various local service opportunities [outside the school] are provided for students*. The school's mission statement is summed up in this sentence from the website:

> not only are we committed to having a positive impact on the lives of our community today, but equally we are duty – bound to plant seeds outside our community *and this one:* our students can …serve one another and be examples of compassion, integrity and vision. (accessed 9/9/2015)

These words are in direct contrast to the trend in education today that emphasises words such as accountability, performance and measurement as discussed in Section 1.3.2 and 2.2. As Kemmis (2008) has argued, teachers “choose ... They do their best to meet the needs and interests of their students and communities. But they may have to do so by teaching against the grain of the advice they receive” (p.22). Despite the contested nature of what constitutes education, the cultural-discursive arrangements created by the school ethos publicly supported and indeed, advocated for meeting the needs of students and the community. Therefore, the school ethos enabled the more moral approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices evident in the lessons observed, the interviews conducted and the documents analysed.

It must be mentioned, too, that the school ethos simultaneously created cultural-discursive arrangements that constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. The school advertises on the website that each subject teaches the content from a distinct religious viewpoint. However, the need to use this distinct religious language was also constraining. For example, in Year 8 Science, the religious ethos of the school constrained Gary’s teaching of some of the terminology related to reproduction because he felt some parental and leadership pressures to gloss over some of the content terminology (Field notes, 6/6/2016).

In summary, the previous sections discussed the enabling and constraining nature of the cultural-discursive arrangements that characterised the use of technology, the implementation of PBL and the school ethos to curriculum literacies teaching practices. The discussion turns now to the material-economic arrangements.

Material-economic arrangements: Technology

Material–economic arrangements related to technology were also instrumental in both enabling and constraining curriculum literacies teaching practices. All members of the school community had access to the electronic resources. Conceivably, the easy access to these resources enabled curriculum literacies teaching practices. For example, the ready availability of the technological resources enabled the teachers to expand their curriculum literacies teaching practices beyond reading and writing of printed texts. This move towards incorporating digital and printed texts is supportive of the national curriculum documents and the expanded understanding of what constitutes literacy teaching practices in the 21st century. In addition, Bitner and Bitner (2002) argued the importance of having on-site technical support. Certainly, at Abimelech College, there were a number of IT support staff as well as one member of the school leadership team available to support teachers in the inclusion of technology to the curriculum.

However, teacher participants also mentioned the large amount of time and sums of money spent on technology and, when asked about whether or not technology integration was valuable, one teacher's response was important because of the lengthy silence and shrugged shoulders it evoked. While the concept of "gaps and silences" in texts and indeed, the whole notion of "critical literacy" might be contested (Reid, 2012), nevertheless it is worthwhile to include a discussion of the silence inherent in the teacher's response as it is likely that it provided some clues towards how technology usage in the school might have constrained literacy teaching. Acknowledging the problems inherent in undertaking an analysis of the teacher's vocal silence (Reid, 2012), it is possible to make certain inferences about the teacher's response and the non-verbal response of the shrugged shoulders is

worth commenting on. It is well documented that non-verbal communication is as useful as verbal communication and can often provide deeper insights to messages being conveyed.

In the case of the teacher's shrugged shoulders, combined with the lengthy silence, it is possible to infer that the teacher did not agree with the widespread usage of technology and/ or that the teacher perhaps felt constrained to answer the question. It seemed apparent from interviews and informal discussions held after lessons that time and money were being spent on equipping teachers with the resources and professional learning necessary to support the usage of technology in the school, perhaps to the detriment of other professional development such as improving the literacy knowledge of teachers. As Bitner and Bitner (2002) argue, "the crucial determinant of whether technology succeeds or fails in the classroom is a less than obvious one…the teacher" (p. 95). In another study which examined the integration of technology to the classroom, Oppeneheimer (2003) highlights the constraining nature of technology on both teaching and learning practices. In particular, the failure of technology and the moments wasted during valuable teaching time on rectifying these problems often leads to the teacher becoming a trouble shooter rather than focusing on teaching. While it is acknowledged that Oppenheimer is a journalist, nonetheless, findings at Abimelech College are consistent with the idea that time and money that might be better utilised elsewhere, can be wasted on technology. Thus, technology and its usage in the school, while likely enabling curriculum literacies teaching practices on the one hand by providing important material–economic resources, also likely constrained curriculum literacies teaching practices given the time and money spent on its implementation rather than on other resources such as professional learning.

Material-economic arrangements: PBL

The collaborative nature of PBL was also reflected in the material-economic arrangements. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the nature of the classroom furniture [7] was discussed but it is pertinent to comment a little further on the role it likely played in enabling the teaching of this specialised language. As is visible in the photograph, (see Appendix M) the furniture used in the PBL classrooms was a mixture of traditional desks and chairs, high stools and higher bench-height tables, tables and lounge-like sofas, chairs on rollers with flip top writing areas (similar to a lecture room) and whiteboards, data projectors, screens, and pin boards at each end. The material-economic arrangements enabled teachers to implement collaborative learning, particularly the use of group work, and team-teaching when teaching curriculum literacies. For example, the teaching of writing in the Year 7 English lesson used group work in some parts of the lesson. In combination with the collaborative nature of PBL language, students were able to form *huddles* to discuss their group assignments. This type of group work was enabled by the easily moveable furniture in each room.

Edwards-Groves, Anstey and Bull (2016) outline the potentially constraining aspects of the traditional IRE pattern of pedagogy and call for more dialogic patterns of talk in the classroom, arguing that research has shown how this pedagogical practice is beneficial for student learning. The furniture used in the PBL classroom enabled increased dialogical patterns of talk through the use of group work. In addition, the spoken interactions are part of curriculum literacies and hence, should be encouraged. Thus, the material-economic arrangements also enabled this aspect of curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Material-economic arrangements: school ethos

The material-economic arrangements of the school ethos also enabled a more moral approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices. In particular, all students had access to the electronic resources through the school intranet and also the use of individual iPads or laptops. Thus, when teachers asked students to locate electronic glossaries in Year 9 Business, or create word documents in Year 7 English biographies, or access an app in Year 7 Mathematics, or engage in collaborative research for a project in Year 7 History, all students had the resources that enabled them to engage in the literacies of these subjects. The resources were provided to the students by the school as confirmed by Gavin, Head of Curriculum - Technology (Interview, 9/5/2016) and hence, students who potentially were unable to afford the resources were not disadvantaged. Kemmis and Smith (2008) argue that a moral education involves compassion and hence, the availability to all of the material–economic resources that enabled curriculum literacies teaching practices can be described as showing compassion.

While the arrangements have been presented separately for convenience in the discussion above, practice architectures do not work in isolation. Hence, the social-political arrangements are also important aspects of enabling and constraining curriculum literacies teaching practices. These are discussed next.

Social-political arrangements: technology

Social-political arrangements related to technology at the school also played a role in enabling and constraining curriculum literacies teaching practices. The school structure was traditionally hierarchical and, as this arrangement was reflected in the traditional power relationships between teacher and student, it likely enabled curriculum literacies teaching

[7] See also Appendix M for a photograph

practices to some extent. This enablement was evident in the apparent acceptance of the students towards modelling and scaffolding through the integration of technology (for example, using the data projector / screen and iPad to show a model of an English biography to Year 7) offered by teachers as part of their curriculum literacies teaching practices. While students asked clarifying questions, no challenge to the teacher's knowledge or skill was noted (Field notes, 2015–2016). Control of questions is often associated with control of power (Danielsson et al., 2017). Teacher talk in most instances revealed that the traditional IRE pattern was followed except where group, pair or individual work enabled a collaborative and facilitative relationship between the teacher and the students. Hence, overall, the teacher talk privileged the knowledge and skills of the teacher who was the authority, the expert (Danielsson et al., 2017). However, this was not always the case.

While a Foucauldian analysis has not been used in this current study, Danielsson et al.'s (2017) study of power and knowledge in the classroom using Foucault's notion of power that sees "the knowledge within a practice [as] linked to power" (p. 169) provided an interesting insight to the shift in social-political arrangements that were visible when related to technology. This shift was evident when teachers seemed to defer their authority to the students based on an assumption that the students had more knowledge of the operational aspects of technology. Furthermore, Bitner and Bitner (2002) highlight the fear often felt by teachers with respect to technology breakdowns. This fear was evident in the lessons observed and was a feature of the interviews held with teachers who expressed uncertainty around operating resources and mentioned that students were better equipped than they were. This shift in the social-political arrangements was an interesting feature of the usage of technology and was visible in lessons such as the Year 9 Business class.

In addition to the shifts in the social-political arrangements visible in the classroom, where teachers were often less comfortable with using technology and would defer to student knowledge, teachers also tended to be constrained by the hierarchical structure in the school. Gavin and others interviewed explained that the Principal and the Head of High School had decided that technology would be integrated in a particular way and therefore, staff were expected to do this. However, staff who participated in this research seemed reluctant to embrace this initiative.

A possible consequence of this hierarchical structure was that some of the teachers then deferred to the Heads of Department or the English department for guidance. However, as the teacher responsible for analysing data and working with curriculum development noted: *I think we're years behind, we're years behind* [other schools] (Mary, Dean of Curriculum Development, 14/9/2015). Mary seemed to believe that teachers were not taking up the challenge fully to integrate technology to their literacy teaching practices and were waiting for the middle leaders to provide the guidance. Hence, the Principal and other school leaders had both an enabling and constraining influence on the integration of technology to the curriculum literacies teaching practices (Bitner & Bitner, 2002; Hur et al., 2016). The leading practices are discussed in greater detail when research question three is considered.

Thus, it is evident that the specific arrangements related to technology at the school both enabled and constrained literacy teaching practices and contributed to the complex social-political relationships that existed at the site between these practices and their practice architectures. However, technology was not the only common aspect that created practice architectures which enabled and constrained curriculum literacies teaching practices. Arrangements created by PBL were also note-worthy and contributed towards the

complex relationships between curriculum literacies teaching practices and the practices at the site that were the focus of this study.

Social-political arrangements: PBL

The collaborative nature of PBL in turn created social-political arrangements that were collaborative in nature. At Abimelech College, the PBL classrooms were set up to enable small group teaching and learning, individual teaching and learning and peer collaboration to occur. Also, the layout and furniture of the PBL classrooms enabled a wide variety of talk to occur. The use of dialogic talk as part of curriculum literacies teaching practices was not as widely used in the more traditionally arranged classrooms. Edwards-Groves et al. (2016) argue the enabling aspects of dialogical talk and of value here is the authors' idea that dialogical talk enables a joint valuing of both teacher and student and in turn, this can foster critical and higher order thinking skills. The teaching of curriculum literacies also involves teaching thinking skills so it can be inferred that the social-political arrangements of PBL enabled some implicit teaching of this aspect of curriculum literacies, even though higher order thinking skills were only rarely observed being taught explicitly or implicitly (see the example of Liane in Section 6.2).

Additionally, Chadbourne and Pendergast (2010) argue that it is beneficial for middle school learning to foster a sense of community through the use of small groups. A sense of community can foster a "climate of trust and care" (Chadbourne & Pendergast, 2010, p. 31) and in turn, when students feel a sense of belonging, learning can occur more easily. Certainly, the social-political arrangements created by the PBL lessons observed fostered a collaborative and team-teaching approach to teaching curriculum literacies. For example, the Year 7 History teacher, the Year 8 Science and the Year 7 English teachers all used group work when teaching curriculum literacies. Additionally, student independence

and some lower-level thinking skills were encouraged through the use of open-ended questions such as: *what do you think? you are the expert, what do you think you should do?* (Field notes, 3/2/2016 – 21/3/2016). However, while it can be argued that the social-political arrangements might have enabled the use of some lower-order thinking in subjects such as English and Mathematics, Cambourne (2013) challenges what it really means to teach higher-order thinking skills, arguing that learning needs to be viewed as a cyclical process of "constructing, de-constructing, re-constructing, and communicating meanings while engaged in collaborative acts of problem-solving" (p.12) to meet the literacy needs of students in the twenty-first century. Alvermann (2001) supports this contention that co-operative teaching and learning can lead to improved literacy learning. The teachers involved in PBL during this study, have commenced this journey and hence, the teaching of curriculum literacies in these subjects is likely to have been enabled by the introduction of PBL to the school. To summarise, because of the social-political arrangements created by the introduction of PBL, teachers were enabled through modelling, demonstrating, implicit and explicit teaching practices, to teach new language (sayings), new ways of interacting (doings and relatings) and were able to encourage some lower level thinking skills even though these were not observed being taught explicitly very often.

Alvermann (2001) continues her discussion on effective literacy learning showing that teachers who care for students as individuals are equally important, so I turn now to a discussion of the social-political arrangements of the school ethos and the enabling and constraints of this practice architecture on the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were visible at the school.

Social-political arrangements: School Ethos

The social-political arrangements of the school ethos also enabled and constrained a moral approach to teaching curriculum literacies. In particular, the leadership arrangements at the school, while hierarchical also enabled distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005; Timperley, 2005). Schools in Australia are required to publish data related to student outcomes, and while there is increased demand for data-driven analysis and teaching, simultaneously, new opportunities have been created to examine pedagogy and to create new leading practices (Wilkinson et al., 2010). In particular, the Principal and the Head of Secondary School at Abimelech College created two new leadership roles, one of which was a role to examine data. This appointment enabled the teacher in this role to examine the scope and sequence of literacy practices from Year 7 through to Year 12 and in her words, opened up opportunities to ensure that *all the skills have been taught* in an open, collaborative way (Mary, Dean of Curriculum Development, Interview, 14/9/2015). Conversely, however, the appointment also constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies because it led to a staff perception that it was the sole role of this leader to examine data related to literacy and suggest changes to practices. For example, Gary mentioned: *I guess if somebody came in and said, oh look, you know, the literacy level of the kids based on yadda, yadda, yadda, is this, then we might look at it* (7/6/2016). The second role, the creation of the Head of Curriculum - Technology, provided this leader with the time and opportunity to implement PBL and also to integrate technology, both initiatives which have had an impact on the teaching of curriculum literacies at the school. Research shows that the creation of new roles has the potential to implement changes to pedagogy and curriculum that can have positive results for teaching and learning (Camburn et al., 2003; Timperley, 2005; Wilkinson et al., 2010). This trend has been evident at Abimelech College

and the teaching of curriculum literacies. In particular, this was visible in the new arrangements created by the integration of technology and the introduction of PBL and their resultant enabling and constraining influence on the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Additionally, as Kemmis (2008) has shown, when collaboration occurs, it is more likely to result in a human response to education that must end in a moral society. This is a goal of a praxis oriented approach to education and discussed by Kemmis (2008):

> We, however, have our particular task, and I believe that it is one that will require greater courage to pursue than in earlier years. Our task is to do what people in the Education Tradition have always tried to do: to produce good people and a good society. …I believe education is under threat in the West today, and that our times will require educators to speak in defence of education. (p. 26)

Despite the global increase in calls for accountability and for singular Best Practice and Benchmarks, as well as the competing demands on teaching and learning time established in Chapter One, the teachers at this school have heeded instead the marginalised call to defend education and to return to being "agents of education" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 26) by utilising a moral oriented approach to literacy teaching rather than one that favours the discrete teaching of skills as a commodity that can be measured and marketed. An interesting feature of the research findings that needs to be considered at this point, is the minimal attention paid to high stakes tests in the lessons observed and the minimal comments made about these tests in interviews. The comments that were made came predominantly from members of the school leadership team. For example, Mary made this

comment: *it [student test results] hasn't been shared with day to day teaching staff* (Mary, Dean of Curriculum Development, Interview, 14/9/2015).

Thus, it is evident from the discussion related to the specific site arrangements that were created by the integration of technology, the implementation of PBL and the school ethos, that the relationship between curriculum literacies teaching practices, the site and the practice architectures was a complex one. In the next section, a fuller discussion of the complex nature of this relationship is given, through an examination of the ecologies of practices evident at the school. However, I would like to conclude this section with some further general discussion around two key cultural-discursive arrangements that shaped the curriculum literacies teaching practices.

The role of the national curriculum

While this study has not focused on collecting data around the national curriculum other than as it arose in the observations, informal discussions and interviews, nevertheless, a discussion on practice architectures would be incomplete without mention being made of the possibly influential role "systemic leading practices" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 171) played in the curriculum literacies teaching practices at this site. These systemic leading practices create the cultural-discursive arrangements that help shape the curriculum literacies teaching practices and are nested and enmeshed in other practices found in the Education Complex.

Teachers in the middle school phase needed to have clear direction and guidance on the curriculum literacies teaching practices that should be included in their practices (Kitson 2015). This guidance might be expected to come from the curriculum documents. However, others argue that curriculum documents cannot be expected to provide comprehensive strategies on how to teach (Jackson & Wyatt-Smith, 2016). While teachers

were more aware of curriculum literacies teaching practices in their subjects, they all mentioned a lack of knowledge related to literacy. Furthermore, as all the teachers in this research mentioned in interviews and a focus group discussion, most were not consciously using the General Capabilities: Literacy (ACARA, 2013) framework at the time of research. Kieran's comment summed up the others' response when asked about the General Capabilites: *I'm almost trusting that those cross curriculum priorities – whatever they're called – weave themselves through in some ways* (Kieran, 21/10/2015). Nevertheless, they all agreed that they were more conscious of the need to teach reading or comprehension in some form (particularly vocabulary) because of the ACARA (2013) documents, but not as something new: it was something they believed was part of their general teaching practice and also part of the practice tradition established by the English department. This finding links to research around teacher disposition and beliefs playing an important role in teaching practices (for example, Gleeson, 2015). One of the distinguishing features of the theory of practice architectures utilised for the analysis of data, has been that "people matter" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008) and that the individual practitioner cannot be separated from his practices.

However, some provision needs to be made for professional learning. Without exception, the teachers in this study mentioned they were unaware of professional learning opportunities in the curriculum literacies field. With an initiative that commands attention nationally and internationally, professional learning opportunities for curriculum literacies needed to be more readily available and advertised more widely than they appear to have been at this school. It seems that a lack of widespread, readily available professional learning to the teachers at this school conceivably constrained curriculum literacies

teaching practices. However, conversely, the existence of the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) likely enabled curriculum literacies teaching practices because:

> *I think first of all, I've become more conscious of it as an explicit thing rather than just because I teach the way I teach. I've been more cognisant of what I'm doing. (*Kieran, Year 9 Business Studies teacher, 7/3/2016)

The influence of professional learning will be discussed further when Research Question Three is discussed and answered. To conclude this section, I turn now to a consideration of the influence of the English curriculum.

The cultural-discursive arrangements created by the English curriculum

Practices do not occur in isolation. They are shaped by the practice architectures and in turn, shaped by the practice traditions that are part of the history of the site in which practices occur (Kemmis et al., 2014). In particular, the cultural-discursive arrangements realised in the teachers' sayings during this study were shaped by a particular tradition of teaching literacy that can be traced to the English department at Abimelech College. The specialist discourse around text structure, in particular, was part of the practice tradition shaping the curriculum literacies teaching practices. The teachers confirmed the use of English discourses around genre. In particular, Kieran and Henry mentioned in interviews that they expected the majority of literacy teaching in the school to be done during English. Henry, in particular, was grateful to be teaching subjects other than English. Kieran mentioned *I would think that English would focus on the grammar and the structuring of sentences*. In addition, the Year 7 Mathematics teacher, Diane also mentioned how she was

trying to incorporate the text structure taught by English into her report writing teaching practices to maintain a consistent whole school, approach. The importance of a whole school approach to the teaching of curriculum literacies has been established in other studies (for example, Luke et al., 2003). Hence, the practice tradition from English of teaching genre, in particular, that was evident in the cultural-discursive arrangements at the school, enabled the teaching of at least the text structure, even if the complete genre approach was not used.

Summary

To summarise, Research Question Two, what enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices, has been discussed and answered in this section. The discussion has shown that the practice architectures created particularly by the use of technology, the PBL initiative and the moral approach to education were "mediating preconditions" (Kemmis, 2008) and hence, important enablers and constrainers of the curriculum literacies teaching practices at Abimelech College. Furthermore, cultural-discursive arrangements formed by the national curriculum and a practice tradition of the English department were also important enablers and constrainers of these curriculum literacies teaching practices established when research question one was discussed and answered. Thus, the practice architectures and the curriculum literacies teaching practices related in complex ways at the school site. The discussion turns now to an examination of Research Question Three and the relationships between the curriculum literacies teaching practices and the other practices of the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014).

7.4 Practices are interrelated. Ecologies of Practices: Research Question Three

The nature of the relationships between the curriculum literacies teaching practices and other practices at the site was examined in Research Question Three. While the complex nature of this relationship has been discussed in some depth in the preceding sections, here the complexity of the relationship is discussed more fully, particularly in relation to the theory of ecologies of practices posited by Kemmis et al. (2014) who argue that "practices are established and exist in ecological arrangements" (p. 43). The ecological arrangements in the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014) comprise five practices: student learning, teaching, professional learning, leading and researching. While all five are nested and interconnected as discussed in Chapter Six (see Section 6.4), only two of the practices in the Education Complex that were particularly influential on curriculum literacies teaching practices in this study, are discussed in this section. The two practices are leading and professional learning. The interconnectedness of the two practices to the curriculum literacies teaching practices and the complex nature of this relationship form the basis of the next discussion.

Leading

Much has been written about leadership in schools (Grootenboer, 2018) and the contested nature of defining leadership (Timperley, 2005). While this study is not a comprehensive treatise of leadership practices at Abimelech College, and the term "leading" is used deliberately here, to differentiate between leadership and leading practices (Kemmis et al., 2014), it is important to note that leading practices encompass not only the practices of those filling leadership positions as members of the school executive team (comprising the Principal and the Head of Secondary School). Leading practices also encompass the practices of the senior management team members and the middle leaders: those who "have

an acknowledged leadership position, but are also involved in teaching in the classroom" (Grootenboer, Ronnerman & Edwards-Groves, 2017, p. 243). At Abimelech College, these positions were usually the Heads of Departments or Subject Coordinators. The employment of the concept of "practices of leading" shifted the focus of analysis in this section, away from individual leaders and their interconnections towards the relationships between the five different practices in the Education Complex (Wilkinson, 2017). While a more detailed discussion of the specific site arrangements and how these might have enabled or constrained leading practices could be offered, this is neither the aim of this thesis nor of this section. Thus, the focus for this section is on the relationships between the practices of leading and the curriculum literacies teaching practices. The comments on the relationships are also based on reported rather than observed instances of leading practices and the limitations of reporting practice in this manner have been taken into account when analysing the findings and explicating them in this section. For ease of discussion, these leading practices have been divided but, in reality, they are all enmeshed as "the outputs of one practice sometimes [are] the inputs into other practices" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p.52).

As mentioned in several instances, practices occur in specific sites and are shaped "by the particular historical and material conditions that exist" at the site (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 33). Abimelech College had an established and very clear school ethos. The practice architectures created by the school ethos and their influence in shaping curriculum literacies teaching practices have been discussed. At this point, it is pertinent to mention the connectedness of leading practices to the school ethos. Dempster (2009) argues that school leadership requires three fundamentals: a clear, moral purpose, context and agency. The role of school leaders then, is the improvement of student lives, their learning and their achievements. That the school leaders at Abimelech College were clear on this moral

purpose to the lives of the students has been discussed throughout this thesis. It was evident in the interviews conducted with the senior leaders, the data provided through the school website, and, importantly, evident in the curriculum literacies teaching practices. As Hardy and Garrick (2017) have argued, "praxis does not exist in isolation, but is also the product of the particular conditions…" (p. 147). Thus, the leading practices were important in creating conditions that enabled the praxis-informed approach.

Of interest too, in this discussion are certain school initiatives that were being implemented during the time of the research. These initiatives were driven by those in executive leadership positions in the school. The initiatives were enmeshed in certain leading practices and created conditions that enabled and constrained curriculum literacies teaching practices. In particular, the school Principal and the Head of Secondary School had driven the implementation of both technology integration and PBL. Also, the Head of Secondary School had modified the General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013) literacy framework into a planning template to be incorporated in curriculum planning documents. Lastly, the various members of the senior management team and the members of the middle leaders' team were responsible for ensuring technology integration, PBL and the General Capabilities template were included in teaching and learning documents and then practically implemented in the classroom by teachers in their departments. In the case of Abimelech College, while the senior leaders delegated the responsibility for implementation of initiatives to others in the middle leadership roles, it appears as if they did not provide conditions to enable the implementation of these initiatives. The conditions created by the leading practice of delegation are discussed in the following sections.

Executive Leading Practices: Template

Of interest to this discussion is the artefact (Spillane et al., 2004; Timperley, 2005) in the form of a template developed by the Head of Secondary School. Myles developed the template as part of the school response to the General Capabilities (2013) national curriculum document. I have already outlined its implementation as part of the cultural-discursive arrangements that were visible in the Year 7 Mathematics class (see Example 3, Section 6.4). However, when asked about the availability of any model used by the school to facilitate the teaching of literacy across the curriculum, the answer was an emphatic negative from all staff members. Kemmis et al. (2014) describe resource management as playing an important role in the dispersal of leading practices, in this case, material-economic (the physical template) and cultural-discursive (the language chosen) resources. Wilkinson (2017) argues that school leaders have the power to make a positive difference and Timperley (2005) supports this notion to a point, arguing that artefacts can enable or constrain teaching practice. With the introduction of the template, Myles' leading practice was enabling the teaching of curriculum literacies teaching practices through drawing attention to its importance right at the planning phase of teaching. Kitson (2015) has argued how important this phase is to the teaching of literacy. However, there were two constraining aspects of this leading practice. Firstly, the template lacked sufficient detail. It was comprised of a series of dot points, for example: *use knowledge of sentence structure; Understand learning area vocabulary* which placed responsibility for having or gaining knowledge about literacy elements such as sentence structure, onto the teacher. Second, Myles and the senior management team then left this initiative solely in the hands of the middle leaders (Heads of Department) to drive. This was confirmed by Myles, Clement (Dean of Studies) and two of the HODs (Business and English) involved in this study.

The lack of sufficient detail was constraining as middle school teachers are generally content experts but not literacy experts and usually require guidance in gaining additional knowledge (Gillis, 2014; Kitson, 2015; Moje, 2008). The perception of subject teachers as content teachers was confirmed in interviews with teachers. For example, Henry, the Geography and History teacher said*:*

> *And my job here is to not teach English skill – my predominant job in Geography is to teach Geography skills and my dominant job in History is to teach History skills, … you know as far as actually learning spelling and things like this, it's not as vital I would almost say*. *(*Henry, teacher, 2/12/2015)

The constraining nature of a leading practice that is designed by, but its implementation not followed up by, senior management can be attributed to some of the inherent problems of teacher leadership (Timperley, 2005) where some disrespect might creep in. However, according to the two HODs interviewed, this does not appear to be the case. Rather, as the English HOD mentioned:

> *To be honest, I think essentially the message I have received year after year, is that it's mine [responsibility], as Head of English [which has led to] a considerable and long-suffered sense of frustration and lack of support*. *(*Christine, 16/5/2016)

Additionally, Mary (DoCI) mentioned that not all HODs were as passionate about the template as others resulting in a more haphazard approach to its implementation. This

ambivalence might constrain the teaching of literacies with some departments choosing not to focus on its teaching. This finding was confirmed in an interview with the Dean of Middle School who said:

> *I think it's one of those things that other departments other than Maths or English see as "uh, this is eating into my curriculum time," and they haven't necessarily really fully embraced the idea that what they teach in Science or IDT or, you know, Art, Drama whatever, what they teach there with literacy has the power to empower our students.* (Liane, 7/10/2015)

As Grootenboer et al. (2017) argue, a "characterising dimension" of middle leading is their "leading alongside and in collaboration with their colleagues" (p. 244). As such, middle leading practices play a crucial role in student learning and if these practices do not emphasise an aspect of the curriculum, in this case, embedding literacy elements into the planning documents through incorporating the template designed by the Head of Secondary School, the constraining role of middle leading is evident. Several other studies have confirmed the important role played by the leadership in schools on developing teaching and learning literacy practices (Dempster, 2009; Trimper, 2009).

Executive Leading Practices: Technology

The incorporation of technology into the curriculum at Abimelech College has been discussed in the previous section (see Section 7.3). Yet again, this leading practice was initiated by the executive leadership team at the school but responsibility for its implementation delegated to the middle leaders. This is an important consideration as research has shown the impact of the principal's leading practices on learning outcomes is

small (Grootenboer, 2018). It is the practices in the classroom that matter and in the case of leading, the leading practices of the middle leaders that seem to count (Grootenboer, 2018). The veracity of this argument was evident also, at Abimelech College. The creation of a new position, Head of Curriculum - Technology, was to enable the implementation of technology. As Gavin said in an interview: *essentially I'm a go-between, between the IT department and the staff* (Gavin, 9/5/2016). However, Gavin went on to say that: *the staff in high school potentially haven't been used to the fact [integration of technology] and then we kind of get this little bit of a disconnect because they're not quite sure what's going on* (Gavin, 9/5/2016).

So, while Gavin, in the role of a middle leader, and, possibly the Principal, saw the value of using technology to teach curriculum literacies, (for example, Gavin mentioned the plethora of apps available for teaching literacy), the teachers needed to embrace the inclusion of technology as part of their curriculum literacies teaching practices. As Grootenboer (2018) argues, "a middle leader can impact classroom practices" (p.8). In his role, Gavin was attempting to implement leading practices around technology but it was the teacher in the classroom who made a difference. Hence, while Gavin's role enabled the leading of technology in the school, the teachers themselves likely also constrained the leading. This thesis has already shown both the enabling nature of technology and its constraining nature as teachers have endeavoured to include technology in curriculum literacies teaching practices (see Chapters Four, Five and Six).

Professional Learning

Kemmis et al. (2014) remind us that the term professional learning represents a shift from the term professional development with the former representing a teacher's view of what is required and the latter, a provider's one. With that caveat in mind, the professional

learning practices at the school site were examined. The professional learning practices related to curriculum literacies teaching practices at Abimelech College were enmeshed with leading practices. Both leading and professional learning practices seemed to represent a rather haphazard approach to professional learning. For example, when the researcher asked each teacher about the availability of professional learning around teaching literacy, all mentioned being unaware of any. However, the middle school Dean of Curriculum, Mary, mentioned that one of the practices at the school around knowledge of professional learning availability is:

> *If it's a brochure it goes through the office, they open it and then they just choose who it goes to. It will go in somebody's pigeon hole from that point. And sometimes, most of the times it is quite accurate but sometimes it will miss a whole lot of people.* (Mary, 14/9/2015)

Moreover, teachers were left to decide what, when and how their learning around curriculum literacies should occur. The Dean of Studies, Clement, commented: *teachers do, sort of on an ad hoc basis find things on the internet and so on and PDs that might come across for them* (Clement, 8/9/2015).

Research has documented the crucial role played by teacher professional learning to improvements in student learning outcomes (Beutel, 2006; Dempster, 2009; Faulkner, Oakley, Rohl, Lopes, & Solosy, 2012; Luke et al., 2003; Robinson & Timperley, 2007). The teacher participants mentioned a lack of knowledge around curriculum literacies teaching practices. Thus, in order to change curriculum literacies teaching practices at the school, teachers needed access to more professional learning opportunities. However, these did not

seem to be readily available. In addition, the key link between principals and professional learning has been established (Dempster, 2009; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Trimper, 2009). Thus, it is likely that the executive leading practices needed to include greater provision for professional learning to develop curriculum literacies teaching practices. Hence, it was evident that leading, learning and therefore teaching and professional learning practices were interconnected and interacted in complex relationships.

A comment on ecologies of practices

It might appear from the preceding discussion that the practices interconnect in ways that are more linear. However, this is not the case. Practices are ecologically arranged (Kemmis et al, 2014; Grootenboer, 2018). As previously outlined in Chapter Three, Capra's (2005) ecological principles underpin the notion of ecologies of practices. These principles are useful for understanding the interconnectedness of practices. First, the curriculum literacies teaching practices exist in networks. The curriculum literacies teaching practices occur in relationship with student learning and other content related teaching practices. Second, the practices are nested. Thus, curriculum literacies teaching practices are nested in practices of teaching, learning, professional learning, leading and research / evaluation. Teaching a curriculum literacy practice of reading in Year 7 History, for example, is nested within teaching students about different historical and cultural customs. In turn, this teaching practice is nested in student learning practices of research and developing greater independence as a learner. This in turn might be part of the leading practice of developing autonomous students which in turn is nested into research that supports independence in a learner and so forth.

Third, curriculum literacies teaching practices are dependent on and sustained by other practices. So, for example, this study revealed there was interdependence between

curriculum literacies teaching practices and professional learning. The teachers in this study commented on the need for more professional learning to enable the development of curriculum literacies teaching practices for the ultimate goal of producing literate students who can lead productive lives. Four, there was a diversity of curriculum literacies teaching practices evident in the range of reading, writing, speaking and other curriculum literacies explicated in this thesis. Fifth, there was evidence of cycles in the curriculum literacies teaching practices. For example, the Head of Secondary School developed the literacy template which was passed onto the Heads of Department who incorporated it into the planning documents and then passed these onto the classroom teachers.

Sixth, "energy" (Kemmis et al., 2014; Grootenboer, 2018) flowed between practices. So, for example, energy was visible in the relatings and social-political arrangements. Teachers and students related in warm, often collaborative ways. Seventh, curriculum literacies teaching practices developed in stages. For example, teaching reading practices occurred in several stages of pre-reading, during reading and post-reading. Moreover, curriculum literacies teaching practices in subjects such as Mathematics and Business Studies built on the English department's genre teaching practices. Eighth, and lastly, curriculum literacies teaching practices were dynamically balanced by "internal and outside pressures" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 49). For example, the internal pressures of teaching, learning and evaluation enabled and constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies practices while outside pressures such as the presence of high stakes tests also enabled and constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies. Therefore, in this section, Capra's (2005) principles have been used to illustrate further the complex nature of the relationships at the site.

7.5 Concluding discussion

The discussion in this chapter has centred on the three research questions posed at the outset of the study. It is important to draw these questions together and consider the study in the context of the overarching aim to explore the curriculum literacies teaching practices that were employed by middle years teachers of subjects across the curriculum. As has been evident throughout this study, there are several interrelated aspects that were important to this exploration. First, research shows that there are competing and contested understandings of literacy. Hence, in any research related to examining curriculum literacies teaching practices, what constitutes curriculum literacies teaching practices is dependent on the view of literacy teaching that is adopted by a researcher. This study adopted two differing views. The first view was one that saw literacy teaching as being in crisis and the need for teachers to be more accountable. This view also encompasses curriculum literacies teaching practices that privilege the teaching of reading and writing. Certainly, the teachers in this study could be critiqued from this view. Many of the curriculum literacies teaching practices focused on the basic approach (Lu & Cross, 2014) which emphasises the development of skills that are independent of their social and historical context. Hence, it can be concluded that there is much more that teachers could be doing. Some of these changes to curriculum literacies teaching practices were suggested when Research Question One was discussed.

However, the second view of literacy adopted in this study was that teachers incorporate curriculum literacies teaching practices in ways that are socially constructed and site-specific. Therefore, an exploration of the site-specific nature of practices was important to this study. The teachers who participated in the study were members of a "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and encountered one another in

intersubjective spaces comprising language, space-time and social relationships. Thus, curriculum literacies teaching practices were comprised of sayings, doings and relatings. The curriculum literacies teaching practices were enabled and constrained by the practice architectures that were visible at the site. These practice architectures were the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements Therefore, the curriculum literacies teaching practices identified during this study cannot be seen in isolation. Rather, they shape and are shaped by the social, by the site arrangements that are already there or are brought in. Furthermore, despite the curriculum literacies teaching practices evident at this site being conducted in age of accountability, performance and high stakes testing, a surprising finding was the absence of the neoliberal "presence" in the practice architectures that shaped the curriculum literacies teaching practices observed. Thus, the notion of Best Practice in curriculum literacies teaching practices, as mandated by policy or even other research, is incongruous with the ontological view of practice as presented in this study. Site-based education means considering the development of what is relevant and appropriate to particular schools, students and teachers at a particular moment (Kemmis et al., 2014).

In addition to the two views of literacy discussed in the previous paragraphs, the curriculum literacies teaching practices were shown to co-exist at the site with other practices. The five practices at the Education Complex form nested, interconnected and complex relationships visible in the ecologies of practices. These practices are resilient and resistant to change and hence, any changes to policy at a systemic level need to take into account the notion that, in order to transform one practice, it is necessary to change all the practices in the Education Complex.

Fourth, the study has shown that despite the context of neoliberalism, the possible establishment of league tables, the existence of high stakes tests, curriculum literacies teaching practices were conducted at Abimelech College from an approach that it is morally right and important for student well-being that they be literate. The moral approach is linked to the concept of praxis in education. Praxis, as discussed in Chapter One and Two (see Section 1.5.4 and 2.9), can be defined in several ways each of which is contested (Kemmis, Mattson, Ponte & Ronnerman, 2008). Nonetheless, as used in this study and defined in Chapter One, a praxis-informed approach to education foregrounds the dual purpose of education which entails a commitment to practices that are grounded in an awareness of the moral implications of those practices.

The praxis-informed approach to the curriculum literacies teaching practices was a surprising yet welcome finding especially given that Edwards-Groves and Grootenboer (2015) lamented its general absence in modern education. These findings, while not transferable, might have implications for future considerations of curriculum literacies teaching practices. This study has shown the dual purpose of education evident at Abimelech College in the sayings, doings and relatings of the teachers and shaped by and shaping the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. Thus, the teaching of curriculum literacies practices through a praxis-informed approach will enable teachers to be agents of schooling, negotiating managerial and neo-liberal agendas and following rules, and also agents of moral education, enabling students to become successful, confident and creative citizens who are able to interact with others and participate in life at school and into adulthood (Melbourne Declaration, 2008; ACARA 2013). In this way, curriculum literacies teaching practices can become less a response to

accountability and claims of crisis and more responsive to the specific needs of learners in specific contexts. Perhaps then, we will have a society that is truly just and equitable.

7.6 Chapter Summary

In summary, the research findings and responses to the research questions have been discussed in this chapter. It has been shown there are many ways that these questions might be answered: it depends on the lens one adopts when both framing and answering the questions. As has been argued throughout this study, there are different ways of looking at the teaching of curriculum literacies and indeed, literacy in general: one is from a perspective that might argue the existence of a literacy crisis in Australian schools, and that teachers need to do more, and be more accountable. There is a plethora of literature available to enable teachers to improve their literacy teaching strategies (see for example, Sections 2.4, 2.9 and 2.10). The curriculum literacies teaching practices observed at the site were discussed in answer to Research Question One. Findings were presented that might be perceived as valorising this view of literacy teaching. One could argue that the curriculum literacies teaching practices taught at Abimelech College needed to be more specific: that they were too general and needed to be disciplinary specific.

However, this study has also presented another view: curriculum literacies teaching practices exist in complex, interconnected and enmeshed ecologies of practices that enable and constrain. These relationships are complex, site-specific and mediated by the practice architectures. The specific arrangements that existed at the site in the form of practice architectures were discussed in answer to Research Question Two. In particular, it was noted how these practice architectures prefigured, and enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. Finally, in response to Research Question Three,

interconnected practices from the Education Complex (Kemmis et al., 2014) were discussed and the complex nature of these relationships to the curriculum literacy teaching practices established.

Hence, the complex nature of the relationship between the literacy teaching practices observed at the site, the practice architectures, and the ecological arrangement of other practices was a vital consideration when examining the teaching of curriculum literacies. These curriculum literacies teaching practices might be a mandated part of professional teaching practices as evident in key policy documents, but, as Kemmis et al. (2014) argue, it is what occurs at the site, at the unfolding of the practices that is important. It is the actions of the individuals (the teachers) and the conditions at the site that make the enactment of these curriculum literacies possible. Thus, if transformation of any practice is to occur, then all practices within the Education Complex, including the practice architectures, need to be changed. Hence, if curriculum literacies teaching practices at Abimelech College, or indeed, other schools, need to be transformed, this transformation will not be achieved solely through policy and curriculum documents, no matter how high status the provenance. As the theory of practice architectures and its corresponding theory of ecologies of practices reveal, change to practices will only be achieved when the site-specific arrangements that enable and constrain, and ecologies of practices that are interconnected and enmeshed, are changed. Further reflection is provided in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Eight - On a reflective note

Reflection is action-oriented, social and political. Its 'product' is praxis (informed, committed action), the most eloquent and socially significant form of human action.

Stephen Kemmis

8.0 Introduction – a personal reflection

As this study has shown, the concept of literacy is not only a contested term but, also literacy is a necessary part of both teaching and learning. International and national policies have mandated that it is not only the task of teachers in the early years of schooling to fulfil the obligation to create citizens who are highly literate: for example, Melbourne Declaration (MYCEETYA, 2008), but teachers at all phases of schooling, including the middle years. High stakes testing in the form of, for example, NAPLAN (Australia) and PISA (International) suggests that there is an acceptable model of what it means to be literate whereas a postmodern perspective suggests that understandings of what it means to be literate are social constructions. Therefore, teachers who are tasked with teaching students what it means to be literate, are faced with competing demands on what to teach and how to do it, while operating in a "pressure-cooker" (Emmi, 2017) world of high stakes testing, league tables, and accountability.

Throughout this study, the aim has been not to view the teaching of curriculum literacies from a negative perspective, pointing out to teachers the gaps in their curriculum literacies teaching practices. Nor has it been to add to the already vast body of literature around how to teach literacy. Instead, in adopting an ontological theoretical and analytical framework, the study has focused, not on the individual, but on the practices of teaching

curriculum literacies, and the site-specific enabling and constraining arrangements that prefigure the practices (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The study has shown the praxis-informed approach to teaching curriculum literacies that was visible at Abimelech College. Similarly, it was important to me as a researcher, that I present the study as a form of praxis. Hence, I have endeavoured to present in as objective, unbiased a way as possible, the curriculum literacies teaching practices I observed at the school site. The use of an ontological approach enabled the examination of the practices at the site rather than a focus on the individual. That did not mean the agency of the teacher was ignored but rather that the conditions that existed at the site that enabled and constrained practice were foregrounded. This also enabled the examination of the complex relationships that were evident in the site between the curriculum literacies teaching practices, the practice architectures and the other practices nested in the site. Finally, this approach also enabled the examination, not of what might constitute best practice but, as argued by Grootenboer and Hardy (2017) of practices that are "particular to the needs, people and traditions" (p.410) of the site at which they occur.

The necessity of adopting a "critically reflexive, social-justice oriented" (Mahon & Galloway, 2017, p. 183) teaching pedagogy and the difficulty of doing this in a neoliberal world committed to accountability, managerialism and the current pressures on teachers to improve outcomes, was presented in Chapter Two. The teachers encountered along this journey have used curriculum literacies teaching practices that reflected a praxis-informed approach. However, it was not the concern of this study to measure how successful or not any curriculum literacies teaching practices might be but to show how these practices have been both enabled and constrained by the arrangements that existed at the site. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a reflective summary of the research findings, the research

questions and the research journey while acknowledging, as argued by Pennanen, Bristol, Wilkinson and Heikkinen (2017) that the process of reflection on research is not an easy one. Nevertheless, I will use this chapter to make sense of the research process (Pennanen et al., 2017).

Education today is a vastly different world to the one I encountered growing up and as a young teacher. Policies formulated at the highest levels of government both internationally and nationally have placed enormous pressure on schools and teachers to perform. However, a general aim of this study, posed at the outset of this research journey, was to examine the teaching of curriculum literacies within the context of a "high status policy intervention with an impeccable provenance" (Maguire, Ball & Braun, 2013, p.324) in an age of neoliberalism and amidst call for increased accountability. At this research site, the findings showed that the teaching of curriculum literacies occurred within a complex nest of interconnected and interrelated practices that shaped and were shaped by other practices. Also, that despite the high-pressure world of the modern classroom, teachers are still committed to the well-being of their students' future lives. The remainder of this chapter will provide a thoughtful summary of the research questions and how the study met these questions, offer some conclusions and provide some recommendations for future research.

8.1 Summary of the research questions

The study examined the practices of teachers in the middle school phase of schooling specifically around teaching curriculum literacies and addressed three questions:

Research Question One: What are the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Two: What enables and constrains the curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between the site and curriculum literacies teaching practices of middle school subject teachers?

The first research question addressed the teaching practices related to curriculum literacies. The study found that this question could be answered in a variety of ways depending on the analytical approach taken and also depending on the view of literacy adopted. Using a view of literacy teaching as a more discrete set of skills and also, taking into account the Australian *General Capabilities* (ACARA, 2013) framework that divides literacy into two main processes (composing and creating), curriculum literacies teaching practices observed at the site included teaching the reading practices (Chapter Four) and the writing practices (Chapter Five) required in different subjects. These practices were often common to a number of subject areas. For example, in Chapter Four, teachers utilised similar practices to teaching reading that were mainly linked to teaching students the specialised vocabulary of the subject, necessary for accessing the content. Writing practices described the teaching particularly of generic structures such as the Mathematics and Business report writing practices described in Chapter Five. Writing to learn practices were also described.

However, utilising the view of literacy as a social construct, the ontological nature of the theory of practice architectures, and the theory of ecologies of practices, curriculum literacies teaching practices were presented in a more holistic way mostly in Chapter Six. In this way, for example, the practices of reading are enmeshed with writing, speaking, listening and other literacy practices so that no practice exists in isolation. I gave the

example from the data of the teaching of a communication process and multiple literacies in Chapter Six, to support this assertion.

Woven through the data was a concept I didn't expect to find-the concept of teaching curriculum literacies from a praxis-informed approach. I included references to praxis-informed curriculum literacies teaching practices when I mentioned the moral approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices evident in the sayings, doings and relatings, as well as the practice architectures. I also gave evidence of where I observed how the teaching of curriculum literacies practices was informed by a praxis-informed approach throughout Chapters Four, Five and Six. Praxis has been described as the missing element in education today (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015; Kemmis, 2008). However, the teachers in this study taught curriculum literacies as part of their everyday pedagogy and frequently mentioned its significance to students' achievements making connections to its importance not only at school, but to the adult lives of the students. The inclusion of a praxis-informed approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices is an important finding. In modern 21C society, where high stakes tests, accountability, managerialism and pressures are the backdrop for curriculum literacies teaching practices, it was refreshing to note that the teachers who were participating simply got on with the job of teaching curriculum literacies as best they felt able and were concerned with teaching curriculum literacies for the good of their students.

The integration of technology was also an important aspect of teaching curriculum literacies. Teachers used technology to provide material-economic literacy resources such as electronic reading resources, models of written texts, to create and compose various assessment items and to view audio-visual resources amongst other uses. They also

included technology in their sayings, drawing frequently on the language of technology as a shared one with the learners.

Practices do not exist in isolation and so research question two examined what conditions at the site might have enabled and constrained the curriculum literacies teaching practices. The theory of practice architectures enabled an examination of the prevalent conditions and a consideration of how these might have enabled or constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies. Cultural-discursive arrangements included the template introduced by the Head of Secondary School that both enabled and constrained practice. Other cultural-discursive arrangements that likely enabled and constrained the teaching of curriculum literacies included the new language of the PBL initiative introduced to Year 7 in 2016 and also the use of technological language. Teachers often assumed students shared common understandings but the Head of Curriculum-Technology (Gavin) raised concerns about these assumptions. Finally, the language of the national curriculum document (General Capabilities, ACARA, 2013) underpinning the teaching of literacy in Australia, also formed part of the arrangements. This framework likely enabled practice by providing a national framework all teachers can utilise but also, was likely constraining in that teachers lacked time to access it, did not have any professional learning around its implementation and also mentioned its lack of detail.

Material-economic arrangements particularly in the form of technology integration were both an enabling and constraining influence on the teaching of curriculum literacies. Teachers found the regular break-down of technology very frustrating and constraining while simultaneously praising the availability of electronic resources. For example, textbooks did not have to be carried around or forgotten as they were accessible to all on the intranet. Other resources included the iPads for Year 7 and laptops for Years 8 to 9.

These resources ensured all students had access to the electronic teaching resources used by the teachers and hence likely enabled their teaching.

In addition, social-political arrangements revealed information about the power relations that existed in the school. Data revealed the hierarchical and somewhat traditional teaching style adopted by teachers, also evident in the leadership structure. These arrangements conceivably enabled some aspects of the curriculum literacies teaching practices, notably but quite possibly also constrained the teaching practices in some way. As discussed in several instances, more effective curriculum literacies teaching practices embrace dialogic approaches (Edwards-Groves et al., 2006). The introduction of PBL seemed to be an initiative designed to increase opportunity for dialogic talk.

Finally, I discussed the notion of the Education Complex and used the theory of ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014) to examine research question three. Thus, leading practices and professional learning practices at the site were examined and comments made about how these ecological arrangements might have contributed to the teaching of curriculum literacies. Leading and professional learning practices, those visible at the school and possibly, at a national level, were nested in and interconnected with the curriculum literacies teaching practices. These interconnected practices formed complex relationships that enabled and constrained literacy teaching practices. The senior executive team initiated the integration of technology and PBL and the inclusion of a template to planning documents but left its implementation to other members of the school community. One the one hand, these leading practices likely enabled curriculum literacies teaching practices as already discussed but on the other hand, the practice of delegating implementation also led to a sense of being unsupported and caution was expressed over

the extent to which an individual Head of Department was prepared to implement these initiatives.

Nationally, although the focus of this research was not on leading practices at this level, some tentative conclusions based on the data provided, might be made. Firstly, teachers struggled to find the time to access the national documents and also made mention of the fact that they often did not realise where they were located. This leads one to assume that their availability could be more widely advertised but, whether or not they already had been, was not part of this research. Secondly, teachers mentioned they had insufficient knowledge of what curriculum literacies to teach and again, while the availability of professional learning outside of this school context was not researched, nevertheless, one might also conclude that more site-specific professional learning around the content of the General Capability: Literacy (ACARA, 2013) might need to be available to teachers at this school. Other research has shown that teachers in the middle years and above are content rather than literacy experts and require a framework and guidance (Gillis, 2014; Moje, 2008) and this research supports those findings. These are readily available in the form, for example of Moje's (2015) 4 Es model, Fang and Schleppergerell's (2010) functional language model, Christie & Derewianka's (2008) work on writing, Rose and Martin's (2012) work on writing and Kitson's (2015) model on literacy planning and integration. While aspects of these models could be aligned to the curriculum literacies teaching practices, none was consciously used. Instead, every teacher mentioned the lack of a model for integrating curriculum literacies teaching practices and a lack of knowledge about identifying the literacies of their particular subject area.

Thus, the teachers at this school seemed to lack opportunities for professional learning even though senior management leading practices delegated responsibility for this

learning to teachers. While this leading practice enabled teachers to seek out relevant learning opportunities, it might have constrained their learning and hence, their teaching of curriculum literacies as other research has argued the value for all students, of literacy leading from the senior leadership team at a school (Dempster, 2009; Johnson, Demspter & McKenzie, 2013; Trimper, 2009).

From the above discussion and reflection, it can be concluded that experiences of teaching curriculum literacies at this site are complex and clearly, these teaching practices are enmeshed in other practices, and both enabled and constrained by the arrangements at the site. At the heart of the curriculum literacies teaching practices though, is a clear commitment to teaching for the good of each student. As Kemmis (2008) argued, "educators are thus confronted by an invidious choice: to conduct their practice as *praxis*, oriented by tradition and by considerations of the good for each person and the good for humankind as these are expressed in education, as *agents* of education, or to conduct themselves as *operatives* of the education systems in which they find themselves". The teachers at this school have already made that choice.

8.2 Theoretical reflection

It is important, too, that I reflect on the application of this theory to this study. As I have mentioned, the ontological approach was useful in providing another perspective on professional practices. The theory of practice architectures enabled an examination of curriculum literacies teaching practices that were socially situated and relevant to that view of literacy. It enabled an examination of "conditions of possibility" (Kemmis, Wilkinson & Edwards-Groves, 2017, p. 241). Thus, I could examine what curriculum literacies teaching practices were possible (enabled by conditions) and what were not (constrained). However, it is also important to mention that this examination does not provide "neat, closed"

interpretations (Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 241). Instead, it must be acknowledged that these interpretations are likely to be "messy and contested" (Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 245). Nonetheless, they reflect the happenings, the concrete what and where of curriculum literacies teaching practices as they occurred in a particular time and space, mediated by certain discourses and power relationships; by interactions between practices and a site.

The theory of practice architectures requires a particular approach: one that is descriptive, interpretive and critical (Kemmis et al., 2017). This study has used ethnographic observation and transcripts amongst other tools, to describe both curriculum literacies teaching practices and the site at which they happened. It has interpreted the practices to understand what the teachers thought and believed, as well as to understand the culture of the school. This was achieved through interviews and document analysis. Finally, the critical nature of the study was evident and offered comments on the resources such as technology and the template. The curriculum literacies practices were also evaluated against the "moral and political orders" i.e. the age of accountability and the praxis-informed approach taken by the teachers.

8.3 Back to the beginning – a journey undertaken is a journey that has not quite ended

Limitations of research

And so, I return to the beginning of the journey and reflect on what I have learnt. As always, research conducted is limited in its applications and this research is no different. An inherent danger in qualitative research approaches is the criticism that findings are not transferable. Nevertheless, using an ontological site-based approach to this research in addition to the qualitative, ethnographic methods, has allowed me to look, not at what might constitute best practice, but at the actual practices and the conditions at a specific site

that might enable or constrain practice. Hence, while the findings might not be transferable, they are relevant to the site in which they are enmeshed and have inherent interest in, value to, and possible application in similar sites elsewhere. I am also aware that criticism might be levelled at the small number of participants and / or the subjects represented but, as I argued at the outset, the intention of this study is not one of replication or generalising outside of the immediate context (Nunan, 1992) and hence, the sample size was determined by those engaged in the curriculum literacies teaching practices.

Contributions to research

The following paper was a fully refereed part of conference proceedings:

- Hager, G. (2018). Disciplinary Literacy in the Mathematics Classroom. In J. Hunter, L. Darragh, & P. Perger (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 41st annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia Making Waves, Opening Spaces*. (pp. 361- 368). Auckland, NZ: MERGA.

and the next paper has been accepted for publication:

- Hager, G., Grootenboer, P. & Kitson, L. (in press). *The Business of Doing Business: Examining writing practices through the lens of practice architectures.*

In addition, as a relatively new theoretical framework, this study has contributed to the growing body of knowledge around the theory of practice architectures and the theory of ecologies of practices and the possibilities for a praxis-informed approach to research represented within this theoretical framework. It also adds to existing work that examines practice architectures in school subjects such as English (Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2015). To my knowledge, it is also the first thesis that uses this theory to examine the issue of curriculum literacies teaching practices in the middle years at an independent school. Others have used different forms of practice theories but not the framework posited by

Kemmis et al. (2014). Finally, the *General Capabilities* (ACARA, 2013) document is also relatively new and this thesis will contribute to the growing body of knowledge around the Australian national curriculum and to the already extensive body of knowledge around teaching literacy.

Significance of research

As I reflect on this journey, I have found myself pondering the importance of the research I undertook. Very rarely does one want to feel that what one undertakes has been unimportant. However, as a researcher I am aware of the limitations of what is possible. Nevertheless, this research is important for a number of reasons. First, it has provided an avenue for giving voice to teachers and their practices within an approach that does not criticise them for yet another perceived gap in professional practice nor add to their already extensive burden of content to be taught. Second, it has focused on the practices observed rather than the individual, while still recognising the agency of the individual. Third, it offers a more socially just way of examining practices by focusing not on notions of Best Practice but instead on the site and the conditions that prefigure the curriculum literacies teaching practices and the factors that enable and constrain these teaching practices. Finally, it is valuable for recognising the good in and for each person in the praxis-informed approach evident in the practices observed (Kemmis, 2008).

A personal touch.

I began this journey with mixed feelings of trepidation and excitement. Somewhere in the middle I developed anxiety and confusion. Towards the end, I wondered if it was all worth it. However, I also developed a deep respect for my teaching colleagues who continue to work towards the good of their students despite the daily grind of it all, so often expressed by members of the teaching community and despite the continued pressures

brought to bear on them by external forces beyond their control. Ironically, I commenced the journey thinking that although I would be exploring curriculum literacies teaching practices, nevertheless it was likely I would also be commenting on ways practices might be changed and indeed, the initial attraction of Kemmis et al.'s (2014) theory was the words of the title – *Changing Practice, Changing Education*. As somebody who has always been deeply committed to social justice issues, I have found it unfair that teachers are blamed so frequently in the press for any perceived literacy issues and yet, conversely, I recognised that at the heart of social justice issues is a need to ensure all people have access to literacy education that will empower them. Thus, I was wondering if practices might need to be changed to meet this concern and if so, how this might be achieved.

Along the way, I came to realise that my role as researcher in the field of literacy, notwithstanding all the issues inherent with conducting research in a community in which I am known to some extent, is an important one. I came to understand that I too, am part of the practice architectures at this specific site and, while Silverman (2003) identified four problematics with the researcher's identity that I have discussed in an earlier chapter, my contribution to recognising and advocating for a return to a praxis-informed approach to curriculum literacies teaching practices (and indeed, in all teaching) is necessary if the education profession is to avoid, as Kemmis (2008) so eloquently says:

"the tragedy with which we shall all become more familiar as the juggernaut of the national curriculum rolls through Australia in the coming years [so that] teachers will increasingly be called to make a choice between, on the one hand, acting as professionally and acting educationally, for the good of each student and the good of humankind, and, on the other, doing what they are told" (p. 26).

8.4 A vision for the future

Recommendations for future research

The teaching of literacy is a highly contested field and all teachers are expected to be teachers of literacy. The problematics of this expectation have been discussed elsewhere in this thesis. At the heart of teaching however, is the "encounter between teachers and learners" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 26) and, I believe, any research needs to reflect this heart rather than one based on performance and accountability. Quantitative studies in education have been well received because of the premise that these studies lead to greater performance both in teachers and learners. This may be so, but, in Western schools, anecdotal evidence around adolescent student stress levels, high anxiety, dropout rates, and disengagement and amongst young people, suggest that another approach is required to complement studies based on the quantitative research paradigm.

Thus, my recommendations for future research in the teaching of curriculum literacies at the middle school phase include adopting a greater number of studies utilising qualitative approaches that enable the voices of teachers and students to be heard. Furthermore, I recommend studies that research further examples of praxis-informed approaches to teaching curriculum literacies at the middle school phase to bring back that missing element.

I would like to conclude this study with the words of one of the participants in this study "you've got to try see them as an individual and therefore care for them as an individual" (Gary, 7/6/2016). This, I believe, is achieved through a praxis-informed approach to teaching, learning and research.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Teacher Consent Form

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- understand that the project will include audio recording
- understand that you might be asked to show lesson plans, unit plans and other planning documents

Name
Signature
Date

☐ I agree to participate in the project.

☐ I agree to being audio recorded.

YES NO (Please circle)

Name
Signature

Date

Appendix B1 - Sample interview questions – teachers

Interview Questions: Teacher Participants

Interview

Thank you for volunteering to participate

Signed consent – indicating you know what the research is about

Process of interview – record / transcribe / report / improve quality of teaching and learning

All confidential / de-identified in transcription / transcript locked away

Recording deleted

Stop / withdraw at any stage

Any questions

Personal details : for possible cross case comparison

Position _____

Gender: M/ F

Age group: 30/ 35 35/ 40 40 / 45 45/50 50+

Teaching experience -------- years TOTAL

Early childhood (P-3) …….. years

Upper primary (4-6) …….. years

Middle years (7 – 9) …….. years

Senior secondary (10 – 12) ……. years

Educational qualifications: Certificate Diploma Degree Other _____

Date achieved

Professional Qualifications: Diploma Degree Other _____

Date achieved _____

Semi-structured – related to curriculum literacies, possible questions

1. What is your understanding of the term literacy?
2. What is your understanding of the term curriculum literacy?
3. Tell me about the school philosophy? How does this relate to curriculum literacy?
4. Have you done any Pd in relation to curriculum literacy?
5. Tell me what you think about PD around curriculum literacy?
6. Did you implement any of those ideas? Reasons?
7. Tell me about your ideas around teaching curriculum literacy?
8. What expectations does the school have about teaching curriculum literacy?
9. Is there a particular model you follow?
10. What about the general capabilities document – tell me what the school does in relation to its implementation.
11. What resources are used by the school to teach literacy / curriculum literacy?

End with a general: Is there anything further you would like to add/ comment you would like to make?

Thanks for your time. I am stopping the recording now.

Appendix B2 - Sample Interview questions - leadership

Possible Interview Questions: School Leadership

Interview

Thank you for volunteering to participate

Signed consent – indicating you know what the research is about

Process of interview – record / transcribe / report / improve quality of teaching and learning

All confidential / de-identified in transcription / transcript locked away

Recording deleted

Stop / withdraw at any stage

Any questions?

Personal details

Position _____

Gender: M/ F

Age group: 30/ 35 35/ 40 40 / 45 45/50 50+

Teaching experience -------- years TOTAL

Early childhood (P-3) …….. years

Upper primary (4-6) …….. years

Middle years (7 – 9) …….. years

Senior secondary (10 – 12) ……. years

Educational qualifications: Certificate Diploma Degree Other _____

Date achieved

Professional Qualifications: Diploma Degree Other _____

Date achieved _____

Semi-structured – related to curriculum literacies

12. What is your understanding of the term literacy?
13. What is your understanding of the term curriculum literacy?
14. Tell me about the school philosophy? How does this relate to curriculum literacy?
15. What expectations does the school have about teaching curriculum literacy?
16. Is there a particular model you follow?
17. What about the general capabilities document – tell me what the school does in relation to its implementation.
18. What resources are used by the school to teach literacy / curriculum literacy?
19. What is your understanding of your role in teaching and learning of CL?
20. If I were a parent looking to enrol my child, what publically available documents would give me information about the school policy related to literacy and cl?
21. Can you tell me about your understanding of the role played by literacy in MS particularly?
22. Has the school been involved in any previous research around literacy? If so, can you tell me about it?

Other possibilities: HEAD Secondary school

1. Who is responsible for implementation of CL?

2. Can you tell me about the planning and implementation of CL at the school?

3. Can you tell me about any vision you might have for the school involving literacy?

4. Can you talk to me about the resources available for staff to teach literacy?

5. Do you know what PD is available to staff for teaching literacy? Who typically might attend such PD?

6. Is there anything unique to ____ (school) that impacts the teaching of literacy?

Other possibilities: MS leadership team

1. Can you tell me about any data you might use in relation to CL and MS students?
2. What informs the practice of teaching literacy / cl in the school?

Conclude with a general: Do you have any other comments you would like to me?

Thanks for your time. I am stopping the recording now.

Appendix C - Participant information letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Gail Hager and I am currently conducting research towards the award of PHD. My thesis is focused on the experiences of middle school subject teachers and curriculum literacies. My thesis involves observing and interviewing middle school subject teachers in the independent school sector in SE Queensland and their practices/ experiences around curriculum literacies. I will also be undertaking document analysis of documents such as lesson plans, unit plans and other planning documents.

As you are a middle school subject teacher in the independent school sector in SE Queensland, I seek your participation and input to this study and request an interview with you. I anticipate that the interview will last approximately 30 minutes and I will be asking you questions along the lines of those contained in the sheet attached to this letter. During the course of this interview you may be asked to share relevant lesson plans, unit plans and other planning documents. A follow-up interview of approximately 30 minutes may also be requested. I would also like to spend some time observing you as you teach your subject area. I envisage this will take place during terms three and four in 2015 and times will be negotiated with you.

I plan to record the interview and have it transcribed verbatim. I will provide you with an opportunity to review a draft summary of the interview prior to the final report being written. Your name will be substituted using a coded pseudonym. Digital recordings will be stored on an external hard-drive and the recordings and transcripts of the interview/s will then be kept in a secure site. Please note that if you accept to be part of this study and then wish to withdraw at any time before, during or after the interview, you may do so without any questions being asked.

During the observation period, I will be as unobtrusive as possible. Observation will involve the use of field notes only. Any audio or video recording will only take place with your informed, prior consent and the consent of students and their parents. If this occurs, I will be focusing the recording on the teacher and not the students. Recording will take place as unobtrusively as possible and no identification of students will be recorded. All notes and recordings will be confidential and your privacy is assured. All names will be

substituted with a coded pseudonym. I will provide you with an opportunity to review a draft summary of the observation notes prior to the final report being written.

I may be contacted day or night on the following phone number – 0414 459 066 and my email address is g.hager@griffith.edu.au. You may also contact my supervisor (see details below). Please find also attached to this letter a consent form. This form outlines some of the major aspects of the study including procedures, risks, confidentiality and research benefits of the study. I am happy to discuss this further if you choose to participate in the study. It is my hope that this study will contribute to what we already know about curriculum literacies and the experiences of middle school subject teachers in the independent sector in SE Queensland.

Yours Sincerely

Gail Hager
Student Researcher
Faculty of Education
Griffith University

Chief Researcher
Professor Catherine Beavis
c.beavis@griffith.edu.au
(07) 55528267

Appendix D- Participant information package and consent form

Title of Research: Curriculum literacies – the experiences of middle school subject teachers.

Chief Researcher: Professor Catherine Beavis

Student Researcher: Gail Hager

INFORMATION PACKAGE AND CONSENT FORM (TEACHERS - Interviews)

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to observe teachers' practices and listen to their stories and to fill a gap in research involving the independent sector. The study will add to the existing body of knowledge concerning teacher practices related to curriculum literacy. However, it will also give a voice to teachers as it will be conducted with them rather than about them

Participation:

You are being asked to participate in an interview which is part of a Doctoral level dissertation. My Dissertation involves interviewing middle school subject teachers about their experiences and practices around curriculum literacies.

I seek your participation and input to this study and request an interview with you. I anticipate that the interview will last approximately 1-hour and I will be asking you questions related to the following:

- Personal background information (age/place of birth/schooling/previous employment...)
- Do middle school subject teachers teach the underpinning literacy of their subject?
- How do middle school teachers teach curriculum literacy?
- If middle school teachers are not teaching curriculum literacy, what are their reasons?

- What influences middle school teachers' decisions regarding teaching the underpinning literacy of their subject?
- What place does curriculum literacy hold within middle school teachers' academic disciplines?

You may also be asked to share relevant lesson plans, unit plans and other planning documents.

A follow-up interview of approximately 30 minutes may also be requested.

I plan to record the interview and have it transcribed verbatim. I will provide you with an opportunity to review a draft summary of the interview prior to the final report being written. Please note that if you accept to be part of this study and then wish to withdraw at any time before, during or after the interview, you may do so without any questions being asked. Also, your responses will be anonymous and will not be reported to the executive or leadership team.

Risks :

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

Benefits :

You may not benefit directly from taking part in this study, however, this study may lead to the implementation of PD at a later stage.

Alternatives :

You may choose not to participate in this study.

Confidentiality :

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. Any data collected as part of this project will be stored securely as per Griffith University's Management of Research Data policy. Any information obtained in connection with this project that can identify you will remain confidential. Your name will be substituted using a coded pseudonym. Digital

recordings will be stored on an external hard-drive and the recordings and transcripts of the interview/s will then be kept in a secure site. I plan to publically present and publish the results of this research however, information will only be provided in a form that does not identify you. Your interview will be audio recorded:

- You will be given an opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion.
- The audio recording will be transcribed and retained until the project is completed, at which point it will be destroyed. The usual retention period is 5 years.
- Only I will have access to the audio recording.
- The recording will only be used to assist with analysis, and will not be used for any other purpose.

"The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 4375."

Consent :

I would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

Questions:

If you have any further questions I may be contacted day or night on the following phone number:

- 0414 459 066

and my email address is:

- G.hager@griffith.edu.au

Chief Researcher: c.beavis@griffith.edu.au (07) 55528267

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au);

The Griffith University Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Title of Research: **Curriculum literacies – the experiences of middle school subject teachers.**

Chief Researcher: Catherine Beavis

Student Researcher: Gail Hager

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- understand that the project will include audio recording
- understand that you might be asked to show lesson plans, unit plans and other planning documents

Name
Signature
Date

☐ I agree to participate in the project.

☐ I agree to being audio recorded.

YES NO (Please circle)

Name
Signature
Date

Appendix E - Parent and student information package / consent form

Title of Research: Curriculum literacies – the experiences of middle school subject teachers

Chief Researcher: Professor Catherine Beavis

Student Researcher: Gail Hager

Parental and Student Information and Consent form (Observations)

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to research the experiences of middle school teachers and students in teaching about literacy in different subjects. It will fill a gap in research involving the independent sector and will add to the existing body of knowledge around the teaching of literacy

Participation:

Your son / daughter is a class member of a teacher who is participating in the research. The study involves observing teacher practices and during this time field notes will be taken and some audio and video recording might occur. I request your permission for this to occur. At no stage, will your son/daughter be identified and any recordings will focus on the teacher.

Please note that if you and your son/daughter give permission and then wish to withdraw at any time before, during or after the process, you and he / she may do so without any questions being asked.

Risks :

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with their participation in this project.

Benefits :

Participants may not benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, this study may lead to the review of current teaching practices around curriculum literacy.

Alternatives :

You or your son / daughter may choose not to participate in this study. If you or your son/daughter chooses not to participate he/she will not be recorded nor will any of his/her data be recorded.

Confidentiality :

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. Any data collected as part of this project will be stored securely as per Griffith University's Management of Research Data policy. Any information obtained in connection with this project that might identify your son/daughter will remain confidential. Digital recordings will be stored on an external hard-drive and the recordings and field notes will then be kept in a secure site. I plan to publically present and publish the results of this research however, information will only be provided in a form that does not identify your son/ daughter.

- Any recording will be transcribed and retained until the project is completed, at which point it will be destroyed. The usual retention period is five years.
- Only I will have access to the recording.
- The recording will only be used to assist with analysis, and will not be used for any other purpose.

"The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other

research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 4375."

Consent :

I would like to ask you and your son/daughter to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

Questions:

If you have any further questions I may be contacted day or night on the following phone number:

- 0414 459 066

and my email address is:

- G.hager@griffith.edu.au

Chief Researcher: Professor Catherine Beavis

c.beavis@griffith.edu.au (07) 55528267

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au);

The Griffith University Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Title of Research: **Curriculum literacies – the experiences of middle school subject teachers.**

Chief Researcher: Professor Catherine Beavis

Student Researcher: Gail Hager

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

- ☐ have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- ☐ I understand that the purpose of the study is to learn more about literacy teaching in the middle years
- ☐ I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher
- ☐ I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw permission at any time, without comment or penalty
- ☐ I understand that the project might include video recording
- ☐ I agree to participate in the project
- ☐ I agree to be included in video recordings of lesson segments
- ☐ I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project;

Name ……. **Parent of ……** **in Year …….**
Signature **Date**

Student Name …… **Signature** **Date:**

Appendix F - Ethics approval letter

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

21-Aug-2015

Dear Mrs Hager

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the provisional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "Curriculum literacies: : The experience of teaching and learning curriculum literacies in an independent middle school in SE Qld ; a complex relationship between the practice, the site and the practice architectures that enable or constrain." (GU Ref No: EDN/22/15/HREC).

The additional information was considered by Office for Research.

This is to confirm that this response has addressed the comments and concerns of the HREC.

Consequently, you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

Regards

Ms Kim Madison
Policy Officer
Office for Research
Bray Centre, Nathan Campus
Griffith University
ph: +61 (0)7 373 58043
fax: +61 (07) 373 57994
email: k.madison@griffith.edu.au
web:

Cc:

Researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students.
You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Code%20for%20the%20Responsible%20Conduct%20of%20Research.pdf

Appendix G - Christmas custom example reading

Christmas in Mexico

In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from the December 12th to January 6th.

From December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions or Posadas. Posada is Spanish for Inn or Lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay. For the Posadas, the outside of houses are decorated with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns.

In each Posada, children are given candles and a board, with painted clay figures of Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph, to process round the streets with. They call at the houses of friends and neighbours and sing a song at each home. The song they sing is about Joseph and Mary asking for a room in the house. But the children are told that there is no room in the house and that they must go away. Eventually they are told there is room and are welcomed in! When the children go into the house they say prayers of thanks and then they have a party with food, games and fireworks.

Each night a different house holds the Posada party. At the final Posada, on Christmas Eve, a manger and figures of shepherds are put on to the board. When the Posada house has been found, a baby Jesus is put into the manger and then families go to a midnight Church service. After the Church service there are more fireworks to celebrate the start of Christmas.

One game that is often played at Posada parties is piñata. A piñata is a decorated clay or papier-mâché jar filled with sweets and hung from the ceiling or tree branch. The piñata is often decorated something like a ball with seven peaks around it. The peaks or spikes represent the 'seven deadly sins'. Piñata's can also be in the form of an animal or bird (such as a donkey). To play the game, children are blind-folded and take it in turns to hit the piñata with a stick until it splits open and the sweets pour out. Then the children rush to pick up as many sweets as they can!

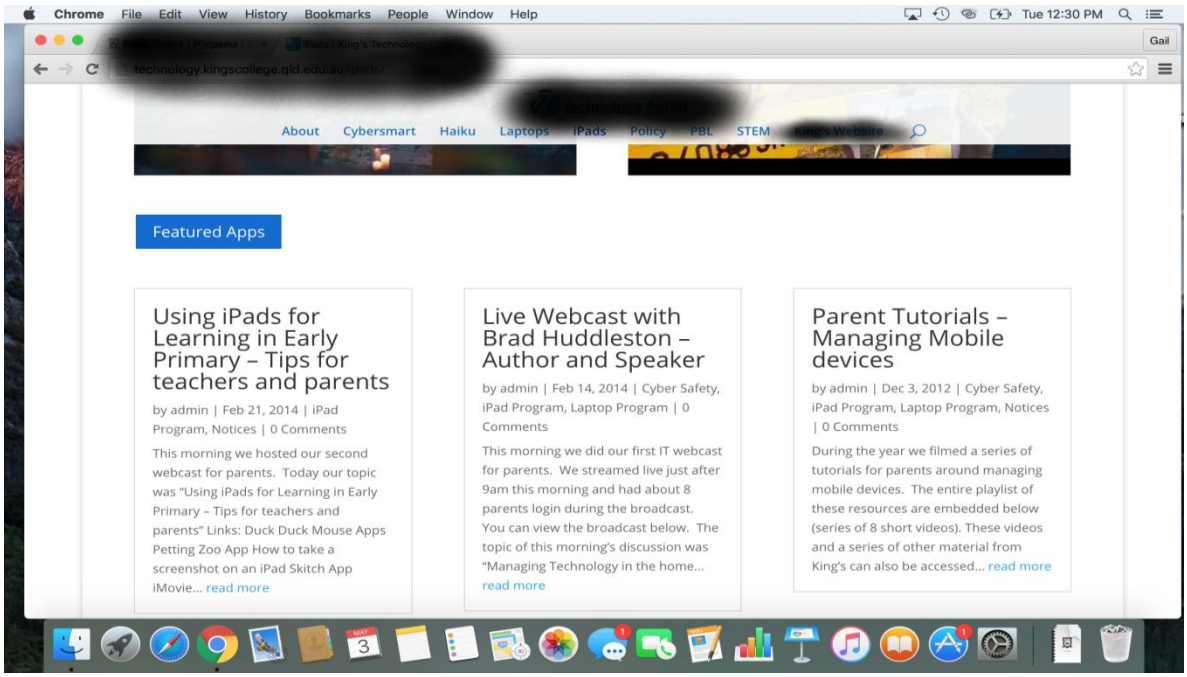
As well as the posada's, another type of Christmas play known as Pastorelas (The Shepherds). These tell the story of the shepherds going to find the baby Jesus and are often very funny. The devil tries to stop them by tempting them along the way. But the shepherds always get there in the end, often with the help of the Archangel Michael, who comes and beats the devil!

Nativity scenes, known as the 'nacimiento', are very popular in Mexico. They are often very large, with the figures being life size! Sometimes a whole room in a house is used for the nacimiento, although this is less common now. The figures are often made of clay and are traditionally passed down through families. As well as the normal figures of the Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the Shepherds and Three Kings, there are often lots of other figures of different people, including women making tortillas, people selling food and different animals and birds, like flamingos! The figures can be bought from markets in cities all over Mexico. The baby Jesus is normally added to the scene during the evening of Christmas Eve. The Three Kings are added at Epiphany.

Christmas Trees are becoming more popular in Mexico, but the main/most important decoration is still the nacimiento.

Christmas Eve is known as 'Noche Buena' and is a family day. People often take part in the final Posada and then in the evening have the main Christmas meal. At midnight, many people go to a Midnight Mass service, known as the 'Misa de Gallo' (Mass of the Rooster). There are lots of fireworks to celebrate Christmas Day.

Appendix I - School website showing Haiku



Please note: Black areas show where identifying marks have been deleted to retain confidentiality of school

Appendix J - Year 7 English task sheet on bibliography

NAME: _____ TEACHER: _____

Year 7 English, 2016

"Influencers"

Biography

GENRE: Biography

LENGTH: 500 –600 words

PURPOSE:
To inform and entertain

AUDIENCE:
Your teacher and peers

CONTEXT:
You are a student writing about a person you know and admire.

IMPORTANT DATES:

1. **Monday, WEEK 7**
   - Pre-submission (Turnitin)
   - Last day for drafts
2. **Monday, WEEK 8**
   (in your English lesson)
   - Printed copy
   - Turnitin

TASK:

Write a biography of someone you know and admire, telling his or her story.

Before you begin **research** that person's life.

THEN

- **State** why he/she is admirable
- **Write about** important moments, dates, and details from their life
- **Arrange** information in chronological order
- **Say** how this person impacts others

NB: There will be an afternoon tea at school later this term, and guests will be invited.

English at

CONDITIONS

- Typed and printed, with task sheet and criteria sheet
- Some class time, mainly homework time
- Written and verbal feedback available on drafts (maximum of two written drafts)

CHECKLIST

✓ I have chosen someone I know personally

✓ I have researched my person (interview? ask others about them?)

✓ I have written 500 – 600 words for this task

✓ I have written in past tense

✓ I have written in third person

✓ I have used very specific details, eg instead of "He went to university for three years", write "Mr Brown studied civil engineering for three years at Sydney University."

✓ I have covered all the steps on the task sheet (research, state, write about, arrange, say)

✓ I read my work again, I fixed every mistake, I have tried to choose the best possible words

Appendix K - Helen Keller extract Year 7 English

Biography [Historical Recount]

Structure

A. Purpose

The purpose of a biography is to inform readers by retelling the events, experiences and achievements of a person's life.

B. Types

- Biography: an individual's life story written by another person
- Autobiography: an individual's life story written by him/herself

C. Context

- Subject matter: the focus is on the experiences and achievements of a person.
- Roles and relationships: the writer states facts and is generally not known to readers.
- Medium: book, magazine, encyclopedia, Internet
- Mode: written

D. Text

How to write the biography:

- Structure
  - Orientation: name the person, tell when and where he/she lived and state why he/she is famous.
  - Series of events: list the important events in chronological order. Mention people or experiences that may have influenced his/her achievements. Explain the causes and effects of events.
  - Re-orientation: restate why the person is famous and say what contribution he/she has made to society.
  - Visual content: photographs, pictures or illustrations of the person and his/her achievements
- Vocabulary
  - Impersonal language for descriptions of events or achievements i.e. do not use *I, we*.
  - Descriptive but not exaggerated language e.g. *During her life she showed remarkable courage by overcoming great difficulties*
  - Emotive expressions e.g. *She worked hard to make money to support herself*
  - Classifying language i.e. put the person in the context of time, place and group e.g. *He was one of the most famous musicians of the twentieth century*
  - Time sequencing: explain events in a logical order in terms of time e.g. *In 1945 at the age of 16...*
- Grammar
  - Verbs: active verbs rather than passive verbs e.g. *She fought with the resistance; He became the leader; She had great success.*
  - Verb form: past tense; present tense e.g. *He is a well known expert*
  - Cause and effect language: *this led to; as a result*
  - Contrasting ideas or statements linked by appropriate connectives e.g. *although, however, but*

Example

Helen Keller

Helen Keller was a famous American who lived from 1880 to 1968. Even though she was severely disabled, she was able to overcome the challenges that faced her. She attended university and later became a famous author and lecturer.

Orientation
- Name
- Dates
- The reason for her fam

Helen Keller was born in the state of Alabama, USA in 1880. When she was nineteen months old, she became very ill and as a result, she became blind, deaf and unable to speak. Under the instruction of her teacher, she learned sign language and to read Braille. She also learned to use a special typewriter. By 1890 Helen had learned to speak. Later she was able to attend university.

List of important events in her life

After university she became an author and wrote her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, which became a best-seller. Later she needed to make money to support herself, so she conducted lecture tours, wrote several books and made a movie based on her life.

Achievements

She was not just concerned with her own circumstances; she also supported other disabled people. She gave talks to people about how they could help themselves and her books made others aware of the needs of disabled people.

Achievements

Helen Keller died in 1968. During her life she showed amazing courage by overcoming huge difficulties. Her ability to face challenges is still a great example to us all.

Re orientation
- Death
- The reason: for her fam
- The effect of her life o people toda

Appendix L - Maths work program extract

Rationale >>>>> indicates where deletions occur to maintain privacy
Bold is where the researcher has indicated examples of words linked to literacy

Mathematics is the discovery of the patterns found in God's creation.

Students' lives are enriched as Mathematics is studied and the patterns in creation are **recognized** and hence discovered.

>>>>> Mathematics Curriculum provides students with essential mathematical skills and knowledge in *number and algebra*, *measurement and geometry*, and *statistics and probability*. It enables students to become numerate citizens, by developing the numeracy capabilities that are needed in their personal, work and civic life, and provides the fundamentals on which mathematical specialties and professional applications of mathematics are built.

Mathematics has its own value and beauty and the >>>>Mathematics Curriculum aims to instil in students an appreciation of the elegance and power of mathematical **reasoning**. Mathematical ideas have developed across all cultures over thousands of years, and are constantly developing. Digital technologies are facilitating this expansion of ideas and providing access to new tools for continuing mathematical **exploration** and discovery. The curriculum focuses on developing increasingly sophisticated and refined mathematical understanding, fluency, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. These proficiencies enable students to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations by employing mathematical strategies to make informed decisions and solve problems efficiently.

The <<<< Mathematics Curriculum is designed to ensure that the dominion mandate given in Genesis is able to be fulfilled by linking the various components of Mathematics, as well as the relationship between Mathematics and other disciplines. Mathematics is composed of multiple but interrelated and interdependent concepts and systems which students apply beyond the mathematics classroom. In Science, for example, understanding sources of error and their impact on the confidence of conclusions is vital, as is the use of mathematical models in other disciplines. In Geography, **interpretation** of data underpins the study of human populations and their physical environments; in History, students need to be able to imagine timelines and time frames to reconcile related events; and in English, deriving quantitative and spatial information is an important aspect of making meaning of texts.

All students should benefit from access to the power of mathematical reasoning and learn to **apply** their mathematical understanding creatively and efficiently. Students should become self-motivated, confident learners through inquiry and active participation in challenging and engaging experiences throughout their study of Mathematics.

http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/mathematics/rationale

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

The following general capabilities are used extensively and consistently throughout the Year 7 Mathematics Course:

Literacy (LIT)

1 listen and respond to learning area texts
2 read and view learning area texts
3 interpret and analyse learning area texts
4 compose spoken, written, visual and multimodal learning area texts
5 understand how visual elements create meaning
6 deliver presentations
7 use knowledge of text structures
8 use knowledge of text cohesion
9 use knowledge of sentence structures
10 use knowledge of words and word groups
11 express opinion and point of view
12 understand learning area vocabulary
13 use spelling knowledge
14 use language to interact with others

Only Literacy Capability has been included in this extract

MATHEMATICS TERMINOLOGY
YEAR 7

TERM	WEEK	TERMINOLOGY
1	1	fluency, reasoning, infographic, variables
	2	statistics, data, classify, numerical, primary, secondary, sources, stem-and-leaf plot, dot plot,
	3	mean, median, mode, range, measures of centre, measures of spread, graph, represent,
	4	compare
	5	numeracy, calculator
	6	adding, subtracting, positive, negative, zero, integers, multiply, divide, long division, order, operations, associative, commutative, distributive, computation
	7	factors, multiples, estimation, LCM, highest, lowest
	8	
	9	prime, composite, squares, square roots, index, notation, product, powers, perfect squares,
2	1	
	2	place value, decimals, fractions, percentages, conversions,
	3	rounding, repeating, decimal places,
	4	measurement, units, converting, scales, length, perimeter,
	5	
	6	area, shapes, volume, capacity, formula, rectangles, triangles, parallelograms, prisms, rectangular prisms,
	7	angles, side, properties, quadrilaterals,
	8	
	9	constructing, protractor,
	10	parallel, perpendicular, lines, angle sum, corresponding, alternate, co-interior, straight, transversal, demonstrate,

		degrees,
3	1	
	2	amount, quantities, digital technology,
	3	rational, mixed numbers, improper fractions, denominator, numerator, viniculum,
	4	ratios, strategies,
	5	
	6	money, best buys,
	7	variables, rules, substitution, algebra, algebraic, expressions, evaluate, value,
	8	maths report,
	9	terms, equations,
	10	chance, sample space, probability, experiments, outcomes, events,
4	1	review
	2	integers, number line, number plane,
	3	
	4	alphanumeric, grid, references, investigate, interpret, analyse, authentic,
	5	Cartesian plane, plotting, linear, relationships, coordinates, points,
	6	
	7	3D shapes, views, solids, translation, reflection, rotations, symmetry, 2D, equivalent, equivalence,
	8	

Appendix M - Photograph of PBL room furniture

Appendix N – Transcription Conventions

... Pause of about 3 seconds

Underline Marks emphatic stress

/?/ Unable to transcribe

( ) used to add details such as body language or laughing or comments from class

[ ] used to provide context where required in extracts

_____ is used to denote where names have been omitted to protect privacy

Please note:

Where portions from an extract used in this thesis have been deleted from the full, original transcript because of a lack of relevance to the finding being presented, then /// is used to indicate the place of deletion