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Editorial

LARISSA MCLEAN DAVIES AND LUCY BUZACOTT

The work that English teachers do in their classrooms is varied, changeable and multifaceted. English teaching, by its very nature, requires complex negotiation of not only the teacher's personal and professional identity and motivation, but a wide variety of internal and external forces, priorities and challenges. While some of the complexities of 21st century teaching have always been part of a curriculum area that is 'not quite a subject in the usual sense' (Medway 1990, p. 1), one that is 'socially and historically situated, and riven with contestation from the start' (Locke 2007, p. 7), the long shadow of neoliberalism has dramatically changed the nature of English teaching. We can see this when we reflect on the changed working conditions for English teachers across the Anglophone world particularly since the turn of the 21st century. This becomes especially apparent when we compare contemporary accounts of teacher work, such as are explored in this edition of English in Australia, with earlier stories of practice.

In a keynote address given in 1984 at the USA National Council for the Teaching of English (NCTE), Garth Boomer, famous Australian educationalist, English curriculum innovator and teacher educator, recounted his experience observing the classes of an English teacher whom he called Mrs Bell. In this talk, Boomer attempts to capture the sophistication and complexity of her practice, that he has observed while watching her teach a unit of work. He concludes that Mrs Bell is

> a da Vinci and a Galileo. In order to practice her craft at Timbertown High School…she needs brilliant generic promiscuity. She must mix psychology, history, literature, politics, sociology, linguistics, economics, art, science, philosophy, poetics and aesthetics with passion and dispassion, with pragmatism and vision (Boomer 1998).

In order to describe Mrs Bell's practice, 'complex work that looks deceptively simple' (Grossman et al. 2009, p. 273), Boomer uses a variety of 'lenses' including 'Coach/Demonstrator/Teacher', 'Metaphysicist/ Illuminator/Commentator' and 'Controller/Shaper/ Sculptor'. Arguably, these categories and ways of understanding teachers' work in the English classroom continue to resonate with contemporary expressions of the subject. Yet, Boomer's account, written thirty-five years ago, also shows us the significant ways in which the material and political conditions of teaching English have changed. Boomer notes that, as well as the many creative resources, perspectives and dispositions Mrs Bell brings to the classroom, she must also be the 'Politician/Battler', working 'against the grain' of her school administration which seeks to instil quiet, controlled classrooms (Boomer, 1998). The identity of 'Politician/Battler', while a relatively brief section in Boomer's account of Mrs Bell's sophisticated teaching practice has arguably become a dominant aspect of 21st century English teaching, as teachers face increased bureaucracy and workload as a result of questions around teacher quality and professionalism (Appel, 2018; Biesta, 2008, 2015). Moreover, the nature of the subject as it emerges from, and intersects with, these debates, and others, has significant impact on teachers themselves and the 'complex emotional work' (Eee, Loh & Liew 2016) required in the contemporary English classroom.

This edition of *English in Australia* takes up questions of the ways in which teachers negotiate, speak back about, and understand their work, in a period which Andy Goodwyn has described as 'building the Panopticon, the coming of control, conformity and self-regulation' (Goodwyn, 2018). The articles in this edition are concerned with how myriad and complex internal and external forces shape the work English teachers do and the texts that are experienced and produced in contemporary classrooms. The authors in this edition explore, in various ways, the emotional work required in subject English, and offer insights into the ways teachers identify and sustain a generative vision of practice, amidst the current climate of high-stakes testing and increased surveillance and accountability cultures. Reporting on a study of over 200 secondary English teachers, Jackie Manuel, Janet Dutton and Don Carter consider the role of motivation

in sustaining experienced teachers' work and identify the key role of intrinsic and altruistic motivation for English teachers. Recognising that discussions of motivation are rarely part of conversations about quality teaching, the authors encourage new thinking about ways of retaining teachers in a profession which increasingly calls on them to undertake high-load administrative labour and other activities which sit in tension with what has drawn them into English teaching in the first place.

Also engaging with how English teachers' work and the forces that shape the profession is Ceridwen Owen's article 'Early career English teachers' work: tactics of the everyday'. Owen considers the strategies that early career English teachers' use in their classrooms to engage with and question external policy and school environments, and to sustain them in their initial years of teaching. This article provides us with a nuanced account of the complexity facing early career teachers in contemporary classrooms.

Sarah McDonald's article takes a different approach to analysing the external ideological forces which shape English teachers' work. In 'Constructing the "Literate Boy": analysing masculinities on websites created in response to the boys' literacy "crisis."', McDonald investigates the ways online sites dedicated to boys' literacy and reading engagement contribute to and perpetuate constructions of hegemonic masculinities. The timely and significant issues McDonald's piece raises encourage us to consider who is being served, and who is being marginalised, by dominant policy initiatives.

A number of articles in this issue also more specifically address the role of assessment and standards within a contemporary neoliberal context both for the work of English teachers and for the discipline more broadly. In 'Teaching writing in the NAPLAN era: the experiences of secondary English teachers' Susanne Gannon considers the extended writing component of NAPLAN. Drawing on a survey of secondary English teachers, Gannon reports on teachers' experiences of NAPLAN in their schools, their own writing practices, their knowledge and beliefs about writing, and their professional networks and training related to writing. The role of assessment in teaching is also the focus of Arlene Roberts' article, 'Two case studies of English leadership, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English and professional standards in a performative context'. Roberts mobilises Foucault's conceptualisation of subjectivity to explore the work of English leaders in two Victorian government high schools. The accounts of teachers' institutional negotiations which Roberts offers in this article give us a deep insight into the forces that are shaping their practices in different school contexts.

Roberts' engagement with VCE and its impacts links to this edition's 'Perspectives from the Past' which is also concerned with teacher professional identity and assessment. Helen Howells' 'Teacher professionalism and curriculum power: a cautionary tale' was originally published in *English in Australia* in 2003 and reflects on the process of curriculum development as it relates to the VCE Study Design. This piece, along with the author's new introduction, prompts teachers and researchers to revisit and rethink how curriculum, assessment and teacher identity and professionalism are shaped. What are the forces that impact on these and how can we develop and renew English in the 21st century?

Of course, it is in this spirit of hope and renewal, with a deep commitment to students and the ways in which we collectively make meaning through and with texts, that we go forward as a profession. In *The Future of English Teaching Worldwide*, Goodwyn suggests that we are moving beyond the phase of the Panopticon, and towards a period of 'emancipation, agency and social justice' (2018). Each of the articles in this edition identifies, in different ways, this as the core business of English teaching and teachers' work, and it is these threads that can be seen to be powerfully informing and drawing together Boomer's account of Mrs Bell's practice. We hope the articles included in this edition of English in Australia encourage you to think through both the challenges and possibilities for English teaching in this historical moment, and to raise questions about the present and the future of subject English locally and globally.

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Sustaining Motivation

'The Dream and Aspirations of Teaching': English Teachers' Perspectives on Sustaining the Motivation to Teach

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Abstract: This paper reports on selected findings from a research study with 211 secondary school English teachers in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. A questionnaire was utilised to gather evidence of teachers' perspectives on teaching, including the continued salience of their initial motivations for entering the teaching profession and their career intentions. The relationship between the durability of initial intrinsic and altruistic motivations to teach and teachers' commitment to the profession over time has been implicated in career foreclosure and teacher turnover. This research investigated the relationship between teacher motivation, levels of satisfaction with teaching and career intentions for 'invested teachers' (Glazer, 2017) with ten or more years of service. The findings confirmed the predominance of altruistic and intrinsic motivations in the initial decision to become a teacher. One third of experienced teachers had not maintained their original motivations. More than one third were 'unsure', 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with teaching. Twenty per cent reported that they would only be teaching for another one to five years. The findings identify a range of extrinsic factors influencing declining teacher motivation, wellbeing, perceived self-efficacy, job satisfaction and early exit career intentions. The data point to flagging levels of motivation as risk indicators for teachers' decision-making about their future in the profession.

Introduction

For teachers of secondary school English, the most consistently reported motivations for choosing to teach are intrinsic and altruistic, and include a passion for the subject; a love of literature; a desire to 'make a difference'; working with young people; and the pursuit of a dream, vocation or calling (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011; Dutton, 2017; Goodwyn, 2004, 2012; Hansen, 1995; Manuel & Brindley, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2007). When aspiring secondary English teachers speak of their motivations, their discourse is characteristically inflected with allusions to the affective dimensions of human experience such as 'passion', 'love', 'desire', 'dreams' and their imagined identity and agency as a teacher (see Brock, 1996; Dutton, 2017; Goodwyn, 2004, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2007, 2016). As one prospective teacher put it, 'I have decided to become an English teacher because I love English and I love working with people, so I can't imagine a better profession' (Dutton, 2017, p. 45).

For many, the initial motivation to teach is inextricably bound up with their values, beliefs

and subjectivities (see Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011; Day, 2017; Goodwyn, 2012; Hong, 2010; Kelchtermans, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2007, 2016; Yee, 1990), underscoring Palmer's (1998) notion that we are drawn to teach a certain subject because 'it sheds light on our identity as well as on the world' (p. 25). While the initial motivation to teach 'emerges from one's inwardness' (p. 2), this original motivation does not necessarily remain immutable over the span of a teaching career.

Just as a teacher's professional identity is complex, dynamic and evolving (Kelchtermans, 2009; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994), so is a teacher's motivation subject to the influence of personal, organisational and other contextual variables experienced during the course of a career (see Borman & Dowling, 2008; Day, 2012; Glazer, 2018; Gore, Holmes, Smith & Fray, 2016; Hellsten & Prytula, 2011; Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2017). As Guerriero (2015) argues, a teacher's level of motivation at any point throughout their working life has far-reaching implications for their 'wellbeing, intention to persist in teaching, and ultimately teachers' professional success' (p. 7). The nature of teachers' initial motivation, however, is seen to be 'substantially influential in the subsequent development of students and, eventually, when they become teachers' (Heinz, 2015, p. 259). In fact, Heinz (2015) has proposed that 'the factors that attract individuals to teaching … may, in turn, influence how long they may remain in their teaching role' (p. 2).

For these reasons, teacher motivation continues to be a focal point in studies concerned with teacher professional identity development, effectiveness and resilience (Day et al., 2006; Day, 2017) and patterns of teacher recruitment, retention and attrition evident in many countries around the world (Craig, 2017; Day, 2017; Glazer, 2018; Gore et al., 2016; Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016; Mason & Matas, 2015; OECD, 2005, 2018; Serow, 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2017; Gallant & Riley, 2014, 2017). For many decades, considerable attention has been appropriately directed to understanding the motivations that attract individuals to teaching and the role of these motivations in mediating the pre-service and early-career stages (Gore et al., 2016; Mansfield, Wosnitza & Beltman, 2012; Sinclair, 2008).

This attention has been expanded in recent research through heightened interest in the association between the durability of initial motivation and a teacher's commitment and effectiveness – not only in the pre-service and early years but across the 'professional life phases' (Day et al., 2006, p. vi). In relation to questions of teacher retention and attrition, Schaefer, Long and Clandinin (2012) propose that the decision to leave the profession is not necessarily a sudden phenomenon: rather, it can be understood as the culmination of a sometimes protracted process of managing the tensions that arise between a teacher's professional identity and the contextual forces that may challenge and disrupt this.

Our purpose in this paper is to shed further light on in-service teachers' motivation. We report here on the relevant findings of a study with a group of Australian secondary school English teachers across the spectrum of 'professional life phases' (Day et al., 2006, p. vi). As part of a larger study, we sought to gather teachers' perspectives on questions pertaining to the continued strength and relevance of their initial motivations; the factors and conditions that may nourish or put at risk these motivations; and any perceived links between self-reported levels of motivation and a teacher's intentions for remaining in the profession.

Initially, the paper situates the study through a discussion of the relevant international and Australian research literature on teacher motivation, with an emphasis on qualitative studies and studies with secondary English teachers in particular. It then addresses the aim, purpose, research design, methodology and theoretical and conceptual framework informing the study. The methods of data collection and analysis are explained, with a descriptive overview of the sample and participants. The remainder of the paper explores the results. We conclude with a synthesis of the findings and recommendations for addressing a number of key matters and implications arising from these.

An explicit goal of this study has been to represent the views and voices of teachers themselves. Although it was more than 30 years ago that Goodson (1991) advocated for the need to 'know more about teachers' lives' and to 'assure that the teacher's 'voice' is heard, heard loudly, heard articulately' (p. 36), teachers' voices continue to be peripheral in the literature on motivation. If the most salient influence on the learning and achievement of students is the teacher (OECD, 2018), then it is necessary to more fully understand the factors that motivate them to 'teach to their best and well' (Day, 2017, p. xiii).

Research on teacher motivation
In a recent review of the research literature in the

field, Guerriero (2015) makes a case that 'from the perspective of educational policy, teacher motivation is not only a means towards improving educational outcomes but is also in and of itself a valuable education outcome' (p. 7). Teacher motivation is directly implicated in teachers' professional and psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction; decision-making and instructional practices; willingness to engage in professional development; and in students' motivation and performance (p. 7).

In this sense, teacher motivation – understood as the energy, desire and intent that drives behaviour and actions – functions as a mainstay of professional identity, shaping a teacher's decision-making, effectiveness, satisfaction and commitment (Day et al., 2006; Hellsten & Prytula, 2011; Kitching, Morgan & O'Leary, 2009; Day, 2012; Guerriero, 2015; Day & Gu, 2010, 2014; Gu & Day, 2007, 2013; Heinz, 2015; Kelchtermans, 2009; Nias, 1989; Yee, 1990). Motivation is not only about the reasons why individuals choose to teach: it also plays a crucial role in how long and with what degree of intensity they pursue their goals (Day et al., 2006).

Research in the field has sought to further understand both the nature and the implications of teacher motivation by investigating the factors influencing the initial motivation to teach; associations between teacher motivation and teacher effectiveness; the relationship between teacher motivation, student motivation and student learning; the socio-cultural and other contextual forces that shape motivation; and the influence of motivation on teachers' affective orientation to their work (Gore et al., 2016; Guerriero, 2015).

In each of these strands of research there has been a predominance of large-scale quantitative studies utilising survey and questionnaire instruments to capture patterns and trends in self-reported motivation, mostly with samples of prospective, pre-service and early-career teachers (Gore et al., 2016). The studies generally adapt one or more constructs of teacher motivation, including constructs based on theories of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 2006; OECD, 2014; Vieluf, Kaplan, Klieme & Bayer, 2012); expectancy and values (Richardson & Watt, 2006, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008); achievement and goals (Butler, 2007); and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In a review of the literature published between 2005 and 2015, Gore et al. (2016) observe that much of this recent quantitative research has been based on the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) survey (Richardson & Watt, 2006, 2014) 'which includes a specific set of pre-defined motivational influences that survey respondents rank' (p. 29). While these studies provide extensive evidence of the reasons why individuals choose to *enter* teaching, it is necessary to extend this research focus to the relationship between initial motivations and subsequent career outcomes.

Other studies, including the present study, have examined teacher motivation within social-constructivist traditions of research (Day et al., 2006; Day, 2012; Kitching, Morgan & O'Leary, 2009; Pillen, Beijaard & den Brok, 2013; Schaefer, 2013; Schaefer, Long & Clandinin, 2012). A number of these studies have explored the role of motivation by theorising it as inseparable from teacher identity and therefore susceptible to the effects of multifarious, protean and nuanced personal and contextual factors over the span of a teacher's career. Qualitative studies in this vein are often concerned with representing individual teacher's perspectives, recognising the heterogenous nature of lived experiences of the self-in-context (Mason & Matas, 2015) and human emotion as 'an important source of influence' (Seo, Barrett & Bartunek, 2004, p. 424) on motivation.

In their study with 300 primary and secondary school teachers in England, for example, Day et al. (2006) explored the influences on teachers' work and lives, including influences on their motivation. In this longitudinal inquiry, reported in *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness* (VITAE) (Day et al., 2006), the influences on teachers' work and effectiveness was theorised in terms of the interactions of three dimensions of teachers' professional identity as it is shaped by 'combinations of factors embedded in the individual, relational and organisational conditions in which they work and live' (Gu & Day, 2013, p. 29). The study found that professional identity was 'a composite of the interaction in different work scenarios between socio-cultural/policy, workplace, and personal dimensions and that it was not always stable or positive' (Day, 2012, p. 15).

In an earlier study of the factors and the conditions that impact teachers' initial and ensuing career decisions, Yee (1990) identified two broad categories of 'good-fit' and 'weak-fit' teachers based on their initial motivations. 'Good-fit' teachers were those who chose to teach for mainly intrinsic and altruistic reasons, including a sense of vocation or calling, and tended to remain committed as 'good-fit stayers'

if workplace conditions continued to nourish their initial motivations. When conditions or other forces challenged these motivations, the 'good-fit' teacher was susceptible to becoming a 'a good-fit undecided' or a 'good-fit leaver'. In contrast, those who entered teaching for mainly extrinsic reasons or as a fall-back or temporary career were more prone to attrition. This category of 'weak-fit' teachers could become either 'weak-fit leavers' or 'weak-fit stayers' (Yee, 1990, p. 90) depending on the extent to which the extrinsic rewards of teaching and, for the latter, collegial support, were apparent. Yee's emergent typology of 'good-fit' and 'weak-fit' teachers was developed in large part from interviews with 44 then current and 15 former American secondary school teachers.

In their thematic content analysis of Australian research on the predictors of teacher attrition and retention, Mason and Matas (2015) note that 'eliciting the perspectives of current teachers, former teachers, or both' (p. 49) is a common method of investigating teachers' commitment and career intentions. They also draw attention to the scarcity of 'discipline-specific' (p. 51) studies designed to account for the potential variations in teachers' perspectives that may be attributable to the distinctive disciplinary, pedagogical, socio-political and historical facets of a particular curriculum subject area.

Research on secondary English teacher motivation

Historically, relatively few studies have explored the motivation and career decisions of secondary English teachers. Of these, a majority have been concerned with understanding the initial motivations for choosing to teach and are typically undertaken with pre-service teachers (PSTs)prior to, at the commencement of an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program, or soon thereafter (Goodwyn, 2004, 2012; Manuel & Brindley, 2005; Manuel & Carter, 2016). Because of the 'moment-in-time' nature of this research focus, it precludes attention to questions of 'if, how and why' initial motivations shift over time as a consequence of, for instance, the ITE program and early and longer-term career experience. Nevertheless, these research studies have contributed consistent evidence of the primacy of intrinsic and altruistic motivations for those attracted to teach secondary English.

Goodwyn's (2012) studies with successive cohorts of pre-service English teachers in England, for instance, report these top-ranked motivations:
  1. love of /enthusiasm for/passion for the subject;

  2. working with young people;
  3. love of literature/reading;
  4. being good at the subject. (p. 219)

Similarly, a comparative study with pre-service English teachers in Australia and England (Manuel & Brindley, 2005) found that the following reasons were the most frequently cited reasons for choosing to teach:
  1. personal fulfilment /fulfilment of a dream;
  2. enjoyment/love of/passion for English/literature
  3. working with young people;
  4. desire to contribute to society. (p. 42)

Immediately noticeable is the strong convergence of intrinsic and altruistic motivations of pre-service English teachers, not only from different geographical contexts, but also from two distinct time periods, with Goodwyn's findings echoing those of Manuel and Brindley (2005) a decade earlier. Equally prominent are motivations that can be understood as 'discipline-specific': there is explicit reference to the distinctive features of English as a subject, and in particular to a 'love of literature', reflecting the significance of the affective dimensions of identity and personal biography in the decision to teach.

A more recent study with pre-service secondary English teachers in Australia builds on the existing research into initial motivation by closely examining PSTs' professional identity development, levels of motivation, and strength of commitment to teaching over the course of a graduate-entry ITE program (Dutton, 2017). This study, utilising recursive and self-annotated PST narratives to gather data, offers important insights into the role of motivation prior to and during the pre-service teacher education phase. The findings highlight the ways in which personal, contextual and extrinsic forces can influence the motivation to teach, over time. The research reveals that while pre-service secondary English teachers' initial intrinsic and altruistic motivations were sustained over time, these motivations were variously challenged, strengthened, refined, or modulated in response to their ITE experiences, including their dialogic engagement with theory, peers, teachers, students and academics; professional in-school teaching experiences; and a number of unanticipated personal and situated factors.

Conceptualising teacher motivation

A point of commonality in studies of secondary English teacher motivation (and teacher motivation more generally) is the conceptualisation and theorising of motivation in terms of its provenance: that is,

identifying motivation according to its predominantly intrinsic, altruistic or extrinsic source (see De Cooman et al., 2007; Gore et al., 2016; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Lortie, 1975/2002; Sinclair, 2008; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Yee, 1990). Intrinsic motivations encompass an individual's

- intellectual, emotional and even spiritual attachment to the inherent value of a subject as a 'way of naming and framing the world' (Palmer, 1998, p. 25) and shaping one's identity;
- belief that teaching is a natural fit for their abilities, dispositions and personality traits (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011; Yee, 1990);
- internalised 'epistemic assumptions' (Reid, 1996, p. 32) and core beliefs about the affordances of the subject and teaching, formed in part through their own schooling and the personal rewards they attribute to their schooling experiences; and
- a desire to maintain an ongoing engagement with the subject (see Davies, 1996; Heinz, 2015; Manuel & Brindley, 2006).

Altruistic motivation is often co-extensive and consonant with intrinsic motivation, although the former is more directed to horizons and ideations beyond the immediacy of the self. Lortie (1975/2002) saw this kind of motivation in terms of the 'service' and 'interpersonal' themes (pp. 27–32) that have strong historical associations with nineteenth century notions of 'teaching as a special mission' (p. 29). Altruistic motivation is often expressed as

- the ambition to 'make a difference' by contributing to the betterment of individual lives and society more broadly (cf. Lortie, 1975/2002; Sinclair, 2008; Yee, 1990);
- enhancing social equity; and
- forging a life path centred on working with young people (Heinz, 2015; Manuel & Brindley, 2005; Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Yee, 1990).

With some culturally-based exceptions (see Gao & Trent, 2009), extrinsic motivations are less dominant in individuals' reported reasons for choosing to teach. Extrinsic factors include

- 'material benefits' and 'time compatibility' (Lortie, 1975/2002, p. 31);
- the portability or transferability of qualifications;
- working conditions, the status of the profession,

and job security (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Goodwyn, 2012; Gore et al., 2016; Guerriero, 2015; Heinz, 2015; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Lortie, 1975/2002; Manuel & Brindley, 2005; Manuel & Hughes, 2006).

Some research studies suggest that extrinsic motivations may assume more significance the longer a teacher has been in the profession (Heinz, 2015; Hellsten & Prytula, 2011). This hierarchy of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivations, however, has remained relatively stable in the findings of both large-scale quantitative cross-cultural studies (OECD, 2014; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Vieluf, Kaplan, Klieme, & Bayer, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2008) and qualitative studies, and with prospective, pre-service and early-career teachers across the range of secondary school subject specialisations (Gore et al., 2016; Guerriero, 2015; Heinz, 2015).

The present study draws on the established conceptualisation of motivation as intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic (Gore et al., 2016; Guerriero, 2015; Heinz, 2015), and understands motivation as fluid and context-contingent. In order to theorise the potential fluctuations and shifts in motivation, the study utilises the theoretical framework developed by Day et al. (2006) in the VITAE project in conjunction with Yee's typology of teachers to interpret the factors and conditions that may influence teacher motivation over time. This theoretical framework will be further explicated in the discussion of the methodology that follows.

The study

Aim and purpose
The aim of the study was to gather data on secondary English teachers' perspectives on their working lives, including their beliefs, values, motivations and aspirations; workload; work satisfaction; perceived self-efficacy; levels of wellbeing; views on current curricula and policy reforms; and career intentions. The focus of this paper is teacher motivation. The purpose of gathering teachers' perspectives on their motivation was two-fold:

- to further understand in-service teacher motivation in relation to initial motivation and the factors that enable or impede teachers' motivation to persist in teaching; and

- to contribute additional evidence to current research, theory and policy debates about teacher recruitment, retention and attrition.

Research design

Research questions were generated and then refined from a critical review of the relevant literature. The synthesis of elements of suitable methodologies and findings from validated prior research instruments informed the initial development of the questionnaire protocol for the study. Consistent with our ontological and epistemological preferences, we sought to collect data 'with strong potential for revealing complexity … [with] 'thick descriptions' … that are vivid, nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has a strong impact on the reader' (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 11). The intention to 'understand rather than reduce complexity' (Day et al., 2006, p. 11) led to the development of a conceptual framework and the application of methods that allowed for an inductive, iterative and recursive process of making meaning from the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Methodology

Guiding the research design was an interpretivist paradigm based on constructivist-subjectivist presuppositions (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This paradigm embraces the concept of multiple realities that are made and remade through subjective, language-based, context-bound and temporal constructions of meaning. Since the study is located in the tradition of phenomenological research, we were therefore concerned with representing the multiple realities of participants through the inclusion of the voices of the teachers themselves communicated through written responses (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Theoretical and conceptual framework

In designing the study, we looked to the theoretical and conceptual framework developed by Day et al. (2006) in the *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness* – VITAE – project. The study found that a teacher's effectiveness and commitment was enabled or hindered by three dimensions of their work: professional, situated and personal (p. xiii). The first of these dimensions is the *professional* dimension which encompasses the influence of external systems; social and policy expectations of the 'quality teacher'; a teacher's ideals, values and motivations; and

professional life phases. The professional dimension 'is open to the influence of long-term policy and social trends as to what constitutes a good teacher' (Day et al., 2006, p. 147). The second – *situated* – dimension includes the myriad of context-specific and inter-relational factors affecting a teacher's work such as, for example, students and student behaviour; school socio-economic factors; workload and working conditions; levels of support, including systemic support manifested locally; and the nature and quality of leadership and collegial relationships. The third dimension is the *personal* that comprises life outside of school, family and social roles, life events and circumstances, and individual personality (Day et al., 2006; Day, 2017).

According to this model, 'teachers' capacities to manage their professional lives and identities are mediated positively or negatively' (Day et al., 2006, p. 20) by the dynamic interplay of these three dimensions and by the extent to which the dimensions are in balance or, alternatively, out of balance at a particular time due to the predominance of or tensions between one or more of the dimensions (p. 20). For the purposes of the study of secondary English teachers' motivation, the VITAE model thus provided an appropriate theoretical and conceptual basis to inform the research design and data analysis. The theoretical and conceptual framework of the VITAE study was then supplemented by the use of Yee's (1990) typology of 'good-fit' and 'weak-fit' teachers as an additional discursive lens to bring to the interpretation of the data.

To date, neither the VITAE model (2006) or Yee's typology have been utilised in research (separately or in combination) with secondary English teachers. The present study therefore potentially extends the theoretical understandings of teacher motivation in a discipline-specific context.

Methods

Data collection

The initial phase of the study involved the development of a questionnaire containing 28 items. During 2017, secondary English teachers in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, were invited to participate in the study on a voluntary, anonymous basis by completing the online structured questionnaire accessed through the state English Teachers' Association's closed social media group. Participants in the study represent a

non-random, convenience sample (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

The first nine items of the questionnaire sought demographic and profiling information about the participant's gender, age, length of service, current role, school location, employment status, subjects taught and highest qualification. The remainder of the questionnaire contained items organised according to broad themes derived from the model of teachers' work theorised by Day et al. (2006):

1. self-efficacy, agency, motivation, professional beliefs and values;
2. workload and working conditions;
3. curriculum reforms, policy changes and regulatory requirements;
4. wellbeing, satisfaction with teaching, and career intentions.

Half of the total remaining items were multiple choice questions that allowed for internal multiple responses. Most of these question types were based on a Likert rating scale, with the option of 'other' responses and an open field for comment. The other half of the items were open-ended questions or statements inviting written comments that were not word-limited. The collection of quantitative and qualitative data was considered to be productive for the exploratory, inductive nature of the research, since 'numbers and words are *both* needed if we are to understand the world' (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 42) of teachers' work motivation and the ways in which they make sense of their lived experiences. Phase Two of the study has been designed to build on Phase One by gathering further qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The findings of this second phase will be reported on separately, at a later date.

Sample and participants

In the research sample of 211 secondary school English teachers from 191 schools across NSW, 181 participants were female, 29 were male and one identified as gender fluid. Twenty-six per cent of the participants can be categorised as early-career teachers with teaching experience of up to five years. Teachers with more than five years' teaching experience made up 70 per cent of the sample. The average age of the group was 47 years, with an average length of time teaching of 18 years. Of the 211 participants,

- 64 per cent were current classroom English teachers (85 per cent full-time and 11 per cent part-time) in a secondary school;
- 30 per cent were current Heads of Department of English;
- 18 per cent were from non-metropolitan schools;
- 2.8 per cent were casual teachers;
- the remaining number of participants were either retired, or in school-based leadership, co-ordination or other executive roles; and
- 60 per cent of the sample held a double degree, Honours, Masters or PhD.

Given the compulsory status of English in the curriculum in NSW – from Kindergarten to Year 12[1] – secondary English teachers constitute the largest cohort of secondary teaching specialists. They carry a significant responsibility for preparing *all* students for national and state-based literacy tests and high-stakes external examinations, particularly in the final year of schooling. In this regard, the unique scope of their responsibility means they may experience the pressures of performativity (Ball, 2003) and accountability expectations in more intense and persistent ways that may, in turn, influence their views of teaching.

Data analysis

In keeping with the research design, theoretical and conceptual framework, and methodology, qualitative data in the form of participants' written comments were analysed inductively, iteratively and recursively. An average of more than two-thirds of participants provided written comments in questions containing an open field, and some of these comments were extensive. The volume of written responses can be taken as an indicator of teachers' engagement with the issues raised in the questionnaire and their interest in voicing their perspectives.

The initial coding and preliminary semiotic analysis of responses from teachers evinced a number of themes and sub-themes (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 10). Hermeneutic textual analysis of written responses enabled a multiplicity of 'readings' and the subsequent identification of categories and sub-categories, and some patterns of meaning emerging from teachers' situated perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). When the coding, analysis and interpretation were conducted on each item with an open field, a range of written comments in each category and sub-category was selected as illustrative of the emerging themes. Responses to quantitative items in the questionnaire were analysed for general

trends and descriptive participant profile information. Where appropriate, quantitative results are provided in order to indicate the proportion of teachers who chose to provide written comments.

Findings

The following sections focus on the responses of participants to questionnaire items designed to elicit data on initial motivations to enter teaching; current levels of motivation; factors perceived to influence motivation; and career intentions.

Motivations to enter teaching

Item 13 in the questionnaire asked participants to rate the motivational factors that influenced their initial decision to become a teacher, specialising in secondary English. The question listed 13 statements about motivation and included an open field of 'other' for those whose motivation was not – or not adequately – identified. The statements were a randomly listed combination of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic factors. Each statement was rated on a scale from 'very important', 'important', 'somewhat important', 'not sure', and 'not important'. All statements required a rated response. The motivational factors rated as 'very important' and 'important' are shown in descending order in columns A and B in Table 1 below. Combined totals of the number of teachers rating statements as 'very important' and 'important' are given in column C. The item was completed by 184 teachers.

The five motivations rated as 'very important' by more than 100 teachers are intrinsic and altruistic. The ratings were consistent across categories of gender, employment status and location. Slightly more teachers with greater than 10 years of teaching experience rated a 'love of literature' and a 'love of English as a subject' as 'very important'. Both intrinsic and altruistic factors are intermingled in the top-rated motivations, reinforcing the view that the decision to teach is typically driven by an individual's subjectivities, values and beliefs coupled with 'a distinctive and deep service ethic' (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011, p. 128). The high rating of the intentions of 'making a difference in people's lives' and 'addressing issues of social and other disadvantage' signals the enduring cogency of the interpersonal, service, and social justice themes (Lortie, 1975/2002, pp. 27–32) and the 'good-fit' (Yee, 1990) characteristics of teachers in the study.

Intrinsic motivations that cohere around teachers' affective and intellectual attachment to the disciplinary norms of English as a subject are clearly prominent. Notably, when the ratings of 'very important' and 'important' are combined, the altruistic motivation of 'making a difference in people's lives' marginally outweighs the intrinsic 'love of literature'. These findings correspond with those of previous studies of secondary English teachers' initial teacher motivation (Dutton, 2017; Goodwyn, 2004, 2012; Manuel & Brindley, 2005).

Also consistent with the evidence from similar

Table 1. Factors influencing the decision to teach, rated as 'very important' and 'important'

Factor influencing the initial decision to teach: (I) = Intrinsic (A) = Altruistic (E) = Extrinsic	Column A: Number of 'very important' ratings (n=184)	Column B: Number of 'important' ratings (n=184)	Column C: Combined 'very important' and 'important' ratings (n=184)
Love of literature (I)	133	40	173
Making a difference in people's lives (A)	128	47	175
Love of English as a subject (I)	125	40	165
Love of a wide range of texts (I)	125	44	169
Working with young people (A)	105	61	166
Personal goal/dream (I)	57	71	138
Address issues of social and other disadvantage (A)	54	57	111
Quality of professional life (I/A)	31	72	103
Collaborating with colleagues (I/A)	30	63	93
Further career opportunities in the teaching profession (E)	22	45	67
Looking for a career change (E)	15	24	39
Portability of degree and skills for other kinds of work (E)	13	40	53
Salary and working conditions (E)	11	44	55

Australian and international studies, extrinsic factors – such as material rewards, working conditions and qualification portability – were ranked as the least important set of initial motivations to teach (Goodwyn, 2004, 2012; Guerriero, 2015; Heinz, 2015; Manuel, 2003; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2012). Although teachers reported extrinsic motivations as less influential in their *initial* decision to teach, some more experienced teachers provided written comments in a later item about their 'naivety' in not adequately considering certain extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions when they originally chose to teach.

Many decades ago, Lortie recognised that teachers who enter the profession may initially 'underplay the role of material rewards as a result of normative pressures, which require teachers to emphasise more their dedication and service role' (1975/2002, p. 30). Such normative pressures have a deep historical and culturally-contingent source: teaching is typically constructed as a giving, 'knowing and caring profession' (Delors et al., 1996, p. 4), attracting people who are assumed to be driven by altruism, a willingness to make sacrifices, and elevated ideals that do not easily tally with more material, financial and self-interested motivations. This constructed paradigm of teaching as a service-oriented profession can, however, militate against teachers' prioritising of extrinsic motivational factors: a pattern repeatedly reflected in the research literature on the 'pull' factors of teaching. It is a pattern that can also function to morally and ethically constrain teachers in demanding greater material benefits and improved working conditions (Lortie, 1975/2002).

Further reinforcing the minimal influence of extrinsic factors in the initial decision to teach, the following table presents the number of teachers who rated each motivation as 'not important'.

While these responses are not unexpected, they tend to suggest that for a majority in this sample, teaching was not a 'fall-back' career or a change of career. The number of teachers indicating that the 'portability of degree and skills for other kinds of work' was 'not important' also hints at the initial ideation of teaching as a longer-term career, with little consideration given at the time to the utility of qualifications for future types of employment. No teacher regarded a 'love of English as a subject' and 'working with young people' as 'not important', further illustrating the powerful and catalytic sway of these twin motivations

Table 2. Factors influencing the decision to teach, rated as 'not important'

Factor influencing the initial decision to teach: I = Intrinsic A = Altruistic E = Extrinsic	Column A: Number of responses rated as 'not important' (n=184)
Looking for a career change	121
Portability of degree and skills for other kinds of work	79
Salary and working conditions	49
Further career opportunities in the teaching profession	47
Collaborating with colleagues	22
Quality of professional life	21
Address issues of social and other disadvantage	17
Personal goal/dream	12
Making a difference in people's lives	3
Love of a wide range of texts	2
Love of literature	1
Love of English as a subject	0
Working with young people	0

to teach. The dominant status of intrinsic and altruistic motivation also implies an expectation of a certain level of autonomy, agency and intellectual authority together with the central focus on students and their learning. Teachers do not typically report that they are attracted to teaching because it offers them a career in administration, compliance and data management.

The current status and relevance of initial motivations to teach

Item 14 in the questionnaire asked teachers about the extent to which their initial motivation to teach had been maintained. They responded with 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to the statement, 'I have maintained my original motivations that led me to choose teaching as a career'. A total of 184 participants completed this item, with 110 adding written comments that elaborated the reasons for their response. Two main categories of responses emerged from the written comments: teachers who have maintained their original motivations to teach; and those who have not. Within these broad categories, a number of sub-categories were apparent.

Teachers who have maintained their original motivations to teach

A strong majority of teachers (74 per cent) reported that they 'strongly agreed' (59 teachers) or 'agreed' (74 teachers) that they had maintained their original motivations. An analysis of 51 positive written comments from teachers within this category revealed two main sub-categories:

- teachers whose initial motivation had been maintained or strengthened;
- teachers who had held on to their initial motivation but qualified their response by identifying risks and challenges to its durability.

Initial motivation maintained

Of the 110 teachers who provided a written response to this item, 23 teachers supported their agreement by expressing the resilience of their love of literature, the subject, and in each case, the inter-relational dimensions of working with students. Teachers who affirmed their motivations were from diverse professional life phases (Day et al., 2006). A beginning teacher, for example, offered a pithy summation of her intrinsic and altruistic motivations, underpinned by a clear epistemology and moral purpose:

> I enjoy learning with students and believe in life-long learning. I am new to the profession in a new and developing school. I believe in education and self-efficacy, individual strengths and constructive feedback. I believe relationships are the key to teaching and I hope I can guide the students I work with to find and know their strengths to be active participants in our community. (F, 1)

Highly invested teachers, with more than 20 years' experience, articulated their views in discourse capturing the vitality of their affectively-driven commitment to the subject, students and student learning: 'I am still passionate about literature and learning and thinking, and hope to pass that on to students' (F, 26); 'I am passionate about what I am doing and most importantly enjoy teaching young people' (F, 28); 'I love teaching and watching students delight in their growing abilities' (F, 40); and 'I have not lost the love of teaching wonderful texts and watching those light bulb moments when students 'get it'' (F, 35). The synthesis of intrinsic and altruistic motivation was lucidly conveyed by a long-term teacher who stated that

> [t]eaching English is never ever boring. It is a constant love of the beauty of language with which I hope to inspire as many students as possible. Regardless of perceptions about kids not being 'smart enough' to do a course I always encourage students to strive – to open their hearts to the truth in so many stories, ideas and the power of words which lie in the crevices of life. (F, 30+)

For these teachers, their motivation has been sustained by passion, love, enjoyment, hope and, for many, the implicit sense of self-efficacy and agency in inspiring, witnessing and contributing to students' growth. Teachers in this sub-category can be characterised in terms of what Yee (1990) described as 'good-fit stayers' (p. 109): they exhibited 'positive attitudes to their work' and were 'more apt to say such things as 'I love my students' or 'the kids are great' and to view their students as a source of fun, stimulation, and appreciation' (p. 95).

The affirmations here also underscore the powerful role of emotions in teaching (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 316): in these examples, positive and generative emotions nourish the teacher's professional identity and foster what Hargreaves (1998, p. 315) termed 'discretionary commitment'. This kind of commitment

> is found where teachers are positively engaged with their work. It is a predominantly emotional phenomenon in terms of the passion that teachers have for their work and in terms of the importance they attach to establishing and developing emotional bonds with students, parents and one another as a basis for teaching and learning. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 315)

A small number of teachers reported that their motivation had increased over the duration of their career: 'It has increased as I have been exposed to certain populations. For example, in my studies on both gifted students and special needs students' (F, 10+). One experienced teacher wrote that her initial altruistic motivation

> has become much more important. 40 years ago I didn't know anything about social disadvantage or the significance of collaboration. I loved English and History and teaching was a good career once you had kids. It is a vocation for me. I love it and I know it's what I'm meant to be doing. (F, 33)

This teacher was one of a number who used the term 'vocation' or 'calling' in their comments, and in this instance, drew attention to the longevity of her commitment, her stable professional identity, and her enduring personal and professional fulfilment.

Some teachers offered insights into the enabling *professional*, *situated* and *personal* (Day et al., 2006) factors

sustaining their motivation: 'I have been fortunate to work in an intellectually stimulating environment with a diverse range of students – because this environment has been supportive, I feel that I have been able to live up to my goals' (F, 10). Similarly, other teachers attributed their sustained intrinsic and altruistic motivation to productive collegial relationships; the quality of leadership; and a sense of purpose, meaning and agency in pursuing a larger, shared educational vision:

> I have worked with supportive and caring staff who have a strong vision. The schools also had strong vision and leadership that supported teachers. I have weathered the highs and lows of teaching because of these and the feeling that I am making a difference in the lives of some of my students. (F, 30+)

Based on their research with 300 teachers in the VITAE project, Day et al. (2006) constructed four 'Scenarios' (p. xiii) that were 'identified by the degree of dominance' that each of the 'professional, situated and personal dimensions' of their work 'had on aspects of a teacher's life at a given time' (p. 150):

1. dimensions in relative balance (for over a third of teachers in the study);
2. one dominant dimension (for more than 44 per cent of teachers in the study);
3. two dominant dimensions, impacting on the third dimension (for more than 15 per cent of teachers in the study); and
4. three conflicting dimensions (for 6 per cent of teachers in the study). (Day et al., 2006, p. 153)

Teachers experiencing Scenarios 2, 3 and 4 were found to be most at risk in terms of their commitment, motivation, resilience and wellbeing (Day et al., 2006, p. xiii). In the present study, the teachers reporting that they had maintained their original motivations to teach can be described in terms of Scenario 1: the three dimensions of their work appear to be in 'relative balance'. The most frequently cited reasons for the durability of intrinsic and altruistic motivation for this group were favourable *professional* and *situated* dimensions (a supportive collegial environment, effective leadership, intellectual reward and students).

Initial motivation sustained but tested

The second sub-category of positive responses (28 teachers) diverged from those in the first sub-category in that they qualified the status of initial motivation by identifying actual and potential de-motivating factors:

> These [motivations] have never faltered. I have always believed that teaching is a wonderful responsibility but I have to fight disillusionment every day and remind myself why I became a teacher and what my core business is. (F, 40)
>
> I've always wanted to help people and to share my love of learning. I have several times considered leaving the profession due to the extremely heavy workload, additional administration and other non-teaching hours, and the bureaucracy of the system, however I had stayed in the job due to my original passion and determination. (F, 8)

In both comments there is tacit evidence of the resilience of the teacher's personal values, passion and idealism that remediate the negative professional and situated forces they have encountered. Along similar lines, a number of teachers agreed that their initial motivation had prevailed despite being tested by, for example, 'the level of administration work and increasing workload' (F, 3). The recurrent theme in comments from teachers in this sub-category was the impact of perceived adverse contextual forces on maintaining their level of motivation:

> Maintaining motivation about teaching has been difficult. I still love teaching teenagers and enjoy my subject; however, I do feel overwhelmed. My work-life balance is terrible. I let my own children down all the time and often prioritise my students. I have become cynical about examinations and structures, believing that it is impossible to teach well in our current policy-driven environment. (F, 25)
>
> Despite the realisation that my time to be an inspiring and dedicated teacher is consistently overtaken by my completion of administration, I still love it and have high expectations of myself and my colleagues to be wonderful teachers who make a difference. (F, 7)
>
> The changing nature of the job makes me constantly reconsider why I'm still doing it. The opportunity to bring a love of literature and the world to kids still exists, but I feel that external factors are making it harder and harder. (F, 10+)
>
> When I am teaching Shakespeare or poetry or film and am immersed in that, engaging students – I love teaching. I really love it. When I am dragging them through HSC essay prep and NAPLAN prep, when I am implementing yet another literacy-focus or skills homework program, I am drained and unhappy. The kids hate it and I hate it, and we get stuck in this unhappy cycle. (F, 10+)

Each of these perspectives discloses a tension between the desire to sustain their professional identity – shaped by their initial motivation – and the need to manage *situated* or external factors that have challenged this professional identity, including

their 'love' of teaching. The 'good-fit' teachers in this sub-category are therefore potentially at risk of becoming 'good-fit undecided' or 'good-fit leavers' (Yee, 1990). A number of 'good-fit' teachers pinpointed the extrinsic factors of salary and working conditions as significant dampening influences on their motivation:

> Most [motivations] have stayed the same but salary and working conditions and working with colleagues mean more to me now than the naive 21 yr old me! (F, 10+)
>
> I think I was naive to not consider salary and working conditions. Working as an English teacher certainly affects your whole life. It is a lifestyle that requires you to work on weekends otherwise you simply wouldn't get the job done. I was not aware of this when I began teaching. And over the years it's just something you do. You love the job and your students. But it shouldn't be this way. (F, 10+)

The experiences of teachers in this sub-category can be understood in terms of Scenarios 2 and 3 (Day et al., 2006): in the former, one dimension of their work (negative *professional* or *situated* factors) dominates, impacting on the other two; and in the latter Scenario, two dimensions dominate (negative *professional* and *situated* factors), impacting on the third, *personal* dimension. Day et al. (2006) described teachers in these Scenarios as managing influences 'which sometimes threaten to de-stabilise their positive identities, commitment and capacity to be effective, pursue their original call to teach and sustain commitment in the profession' (p. xx).

Teachers who have not maintained their original motivations to teach

Of the 184 teachers who responded to the statement that they had maintained their initial motivation, 16 reported that they were 'not sure'; 25 'disagreed'; and 10 'strongly disagreed'. Taken together, these responses suggest that more than one-quarter of teachers in the sample were either uncertain about having maintained their initial motivation or felt that their initial motivation had all but disappeared: 'It has been beaten out of me. Too many cynical cost-cutting management choices by Department of Education over the years' (M, 10+).

One teacher encapsulated a number of the key themes evident in comments about waning motivation – also identified by others – when she wrote that

> [t]eachers seem to be seen as the ones who are responsible for curing society's ills … We are time poor, overwhelmed by the external pressures attached to our

roles, and are frustrated by the lack of resources, lack of support from parents in general, many of whom do not value education at all, as well as the erosion of our status in society. The money doesn't matter. Most teachers just want to feel respected for their efforts in trying to make differences in their students' lives. (F)

The cataloguing of negative *professional* and *situated* factors here highlights the role of socio-cultural/ policy influences – such as declining respect for and valuing of teachers' work and at the same time, increasing expectations – as causal factors in eroding the motivation to teach.

A conspicuous but not unexpected feature of many comments in this category was the expression of what Hargreaves (1998, p. 319) termed the 'emotional labour' of teaching. Almost three decades ago, he warned of the damaging consequences of ignoring the emotions of teaching:

> [I]t is exceptionally important to acknowledge and honour the emotions of teaching … and to cultivate their active development as an essential aspect of developing higher quality in education. If we ignore the emotions of education, we not only miss this opportunity but we also allow emotion to enter the world of teaching and leading by the back door, in damaging ways, when hyper-rational policies and initiatives alienate, anger, frustrate or sadden those who are obliged to implement them. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 316)

Teachers who reported that their initial motivation had not been maintained described the emotions of alienation, disenchantment, anger, frustration, and sadness that Hargreaves predicted: 'I still love it [teaching] but the admin and expectations make me sad' (F, 33). Others also revealed the extent to which the emotions of hope, optimism and desire that characterised their initial motivation had not been 'honoured':

> I no longer feel I can make a difference. I no longer feel my passion and commitment to my subject areas, the way I conduct my professional life, or the depth of knowledge I can provide are valued or respected by my 'leaders'. (F, 30)

> I love teaching but it is overwhelming and it has affected my mental health … Every year the workload increases, the behaviour worsens and the support diminishes. I am giving myself another two years and then I think I'll be out. I love it … I'm a smart professional who is successful at my job, and I deserve to be taken seriously and I deserve to be adequately compensated for my time. (F, 4)

The dream and aspirations of teaching versus the

reality differ greatly. Between juggling the ever-daunting administration duties in conjunction with the polymathic demands of the profession and the act of delivering and planning content, there is no time to breathe. We're drowning. (M, 3)

However, despite the burden of externally-generated pressures, around half of the teachers in this category still expressed their reluctance to relinquish their attachment to students and student learning: 'I stay because of the students, not the shifting climate' (F, 8); and from another, '… I'm dissatisfied with the external issues. I have considered leaving, but the kids keep me coming back' (F, 10+). These teachers' perspectives accord with Yee's category of 'good-fit leavers' (1990): they disclosed a strong personal connection to classroom teaching and students, but their intrinsic and altruistic motivation had been impaired over time by adverse working conditions that had rendered precarious their professional identity and capacity to persist.

The responses of this group of teachers support the view of Schaefer et al. (2012) that the seeds of attrition are evident long before a teacher may actually resign. The range of comments intimate that teaching has become a site of struggle and instability, with each of the three dimensions of influence on the teacher's identity in conflict. Day et al. (2006) described this as Scenario 4, in which teachers experience 'fluctuations' that are 'able/not able to be managed depending on the strength of support from internal and/or external factors' (p. 152).

The main negative sources of influence on teachers' reported levels of motivation resonate with findings in the research literature that have identified workload and time pressures; the pace and volume of reform; excessive administration; poor working conditions; a lack of leadership and support; fatigue; reduced autonomy and agency; flagging levels of self-esteem; and inadequate recognition of the importance of the affective aspects of their work as risk markers for the decision to leave the profession (see Day, 2012, 2017; Day et al., 2006; Glazer, 2018; Heinz, 2015; Huberman, 1995; Kyriacou, 2000, 2001; Macdonald, 1999; Mason & Matas, 2015; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Weldon & Ingvarson, 2016; Yee, 1990). Since findings from previous studies have drawn attention to the link between declining levels of motivation and the risk of attrition outcomes (Guerriero, 2015; Heinz, 2015; Hellsten & Prytula, 2011; Yee, 1990), the questionnaire also invited participants to respond to a series of statements about their work satisfaction and career intentions.

Work satisfaction and career intentions

Item 24 of the questionnaire asked teachers about their current level of satisfaction with their career. Of the 172 teachers who responded, 16 were 'very satisfied'; 64 were 'satisfied'; 17 were 'not sure'; 38 were 'unsatisfied'; and six were 'very unsatisfied'. Comments rather than a rating were provided by an additional 31 teachers. The proportion of teachers reporting their satisfaction with teaching aligns with the proportion of teachers who had earlier affirmed that their initial motivation to enter the profession had been maintained or had been maintained despite being tested. This category of 'good-fit stayers' (Yee, 1990) were also the teachers who indicated that they intended to remain in the profession.

One quarter of teachers, however, conveyed that they were either 'very unsatisfied' or 'unsatisfied' with teaching. When this number is combined with those who expressed ambivalence (17 who were 'not sure'), the findings point to more than one third of the teachers who were either equivocal about or dissatisfied with their current role. The teachers who reported dissatisfaction were also those who were uncertain about their commitment or signalled their intention to leave the profession prematurely if viable alternatives for employment arose.

For some, financial obligations operated to restrict their choices for alternative employment: '[I stay] for financial reasons predominantly. I would love to go back to just teaching with paperwork in the background' (F, 10+); 'If another job came up that paid the same money and didn't drain my life … I'd take it' (F, 10+); and 'I'll stay until I can find other work' (F, 10+). Likewise, the limited employment options for older teachers and doubts about employability in other fields emerged as a strong theme in the comments: 'I can't see what else I'll do' (F, 10+); 'I just need to find a way out because, at my age, I feel I have no future in this job and it has not been for lack of trying to build a career over the last 28 years' (F, 28). In other words, a quarter to one third of the sample voiced perspectives consonant with those of 'good-fit leavers' (Yee, 1990).

Synthesis of findings

In line with previous studies of secondary English teacher initial motivation, the findings from this study reinforce the overwhelming influence of intrinsic and altruistic reasons for choosing to teach. Remarkably, the top-ranked motivations of 'making a difference in people's lives', a 'love of literature', and a 'love

of English as a subject' were identified as such by teachers across the 'professional life phases' (Day et al., 2006, p. vi). The research sample included teachers with between one year and more than 40 years of experience. This finding not only provides evidence of a cross-generational stability in the initial motivation to teach English, but it also suggests a powerful 'cycle of influence' (Manuel, 2003) at play whereby English teachers' work has a far-reaching ripple effect on the career choices of their students who, in turn, decide to teach English for the same reasons.

Initial motivation maintained

Based on the self-reported reasons for choosing to teach, all teachers who responded to this item (184) were a 'good-fit' (Yee, 1990) for teaching. This finding may be explained by the non-random convenience sample: teachers who participated in the study were members of a subject-based professional association and therefore more likely to be invested in teaching and more likely to contribute their views to a research study seeing their views. However, when asked about the extent to which their initial motivation had been sustained, amplified, modified or diminished, and the implications of this, the responses revealed two main categories of teacher, and within the first category, two sub-categories. The categories and sub-categories differentiated teachers' 'good-fit' status. In the second of these categories, a proportion of dissatisfied teachers, despite being a 'good-fit' in terms of their initial motivations, saw the study as an opportunity to register their discontent and voice their concerns about the pressures they were experiencing.

The first category comprised more than 70 per cent of the 184 teachers who responded to this question about maintaining their initial motivation. Within this category, there were two sub-categories:

- those who had maintained their initial motivation ('good-fit stayers'); and
- those whose initial motivation had been tested but had prevailed ('good-fit stayers' at risk of becoming 'good-fit undecided' or 'good-fit leavers'). (Yee, 1990).

Teachers in the first sub-category who provided comments about maintaining their initial motivation (23 teachers) commonly described this in terms of their affective experience – their love and passion for and enjoyment of teaching – and did so in a high-modality discourse that conveyed their sense of agency,

self-efficacy and stable professional identity. A number of these teachers alluded to the professional and situated influences of strong collegial relationships; rewarding engagement with students; and fulfilment derived from an enduring intellectual connection with literature. Teachers in this category reported high levels of satisfaction with teaching and their intention to remain in the profession. Interestingly, a majority of teachers in this category were middle and later career teachers with more than 10 years of service.

A small number of teachers (three) in this first sub-category reported that their initial motivation had increased over the course of their career. These teachers were in the later professional career phase. Their written comments captured a *joie de vivre* suggesting the resilience of their individual attributes coupled with positive contextual factors that served to nourish and support their professional identity, values and beliefs. Lindqvist and Nordanger (2016) propose that 'a professional career can … be seen as a process in which individual choices are the results of the interaction between individual dispositions and the social, cultural and economic context over time' (p. 90). Similar to that developed by Day et al. (2006) in the VITAE study, this theory resists the assumption that motivation and commitment are attributable to *either* personal *or* contextual variables. Instead, motivation and commitment are conceptualised as part of a teacher's 'identity-making process in which individual and contextual factors are integrated and negotiated' (Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016, p. 90).

In the second sub-category, 28 teachers elaborated on the status of their initial motivation by identifying how it had been challenged. Almost universally, teachers in this group described the external pressures associated with increased administrative demands and workload; performance and accountability structures; and heightened expectations as the negative sources of influence on their motivation. Despite these contextual threats and periods of fluctuating motivation levels, each worked to maintain their original motivation and professional identity and registered their intention to continue to teach.

Initial motivation not maintained

The second main category included more than one quarter of teachers who had not maintained their original motivation. The most commonly cited reasons for declining motivation were *professional* and *situated* factors associated with 'changes in teachers' working

conditions, workload and roles caused by the demands of new public management and policy-led reforms that challenge traditional notions of teacher professionalism' (Day & Hong, 2016, p. 115). These teachers described the de-motivating impact of negative *professional* and *situated* factors, such as

- disillusionment with 'systems', and a diminished sense of agency and authority due to institutional, curricular and policy reforms, including the pace and volume of change;
- salary and working conditions that do not compensate adequately for the workload and expectations of teachers;
- the 'emotional labour' (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 319) of their work; and
- a lack of respect for and support and acknowledgement of the teacher as a professional.

Responses from teachers in this category revealed an association between impaired motivation, low levels of work satisfaction and the intention of leaving the profession prematurely. They frequently articulated a compromised sense of authority, disempowerment and disenchantment. There was strong evidence, however, that teachers' commitment to their students was the single most influential factor in remediating or staving off attrition outcomes for those teachers who reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction with and ambivalence about their career.

Concluding thoughts

The teachers' perspectives reported here support and extend Australian and international research studies that posit a relationship between the durability of initial motivation, work satisfaction, and the intention to continue to teach (see Day & Gu, 2010, 2014; Heinz, 2015; Hellsten & Prytula, 2011; Huberman, 1995; Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler, 2005). Because the teachers in this study represent a convenience sample from members of a professional English teachers' association, the findings are not generalisable to a wider English teacher population that includes those who are not members of a professional association. The research does, however, contribute to existing understandings of the complex nature of in-service secondary English teacher motivation and the implications for teacher professional identity, retention and attrition.

Although limited in its scope, the study reinforces the need for further research with in-service teachers that is longitudinal both within and also across the subject areas, in order to inform and reorient policy to address the contextual and systemic forces that can jeopardise a significant number of experienced 'good-fit' (Yee, 1990) teachers' continued investment in the profession. In addition, it is necessary to conduct further research into the durability of initial motivation across the 'professional life phases' (Day et al., 2006) to more fully understand its role in relation to 'why some teachers remain committed … why others do not, why some teachers stay, and why others leave' (Day, 2017, p. 62).

The hegemonic discourses inscribed in current policy, accountability and regulatory frameworks of quality teaching and professional standards assume that quality teachers are determinant in students' motivation, engagement, learning, and achievement (see AITSL, 2012, 2016, 2017). The plethora of documentation associated with these policies and frameworks, however, is silent on matters of teacher motivation. Instead, they are often driven by the assumption that quality teaching is synonymous with the *personal* qualities of the teacher that exist in isolation from the *professional* and *situated* dimensions of their work. Yet teachers in this study consistently identified negative *professional* and *situated* factors as the main source of tension and challenge to their *personal* commitment.

There seems to be scant recognition that individuals are attracted to teaching for reasons that have little if anything to do with a desire to be administrators or to have their expertise standardised, regulated and persistently measured. Likewise, there is little formalised acknowledgement that 'the dream and aspirations of teaching' (M, 3) are driven by affective intrinsic and altruistic motivations that not only attract individuals to teach, but also, if recognised, valued and fostered, can potentially sustain their commitment to teaching well beyond the early-career phase. The goals of quality teaching, teacher retention and raising all students' educational achievement form part of why individuals choose to teach. Addressing these worthy goals requires government policies to 'honour the deepest values of teachers and speak to their greatest strengths as people responsible for caring for the young' (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011, p. 137) – and to do so by respecting and hearing the wisdom of teachers' voices.

Note

1 Kindergarten is the equivalent of Foundation or the first year of primary school. Year 12 is the equivalent of the final year of secondary school.

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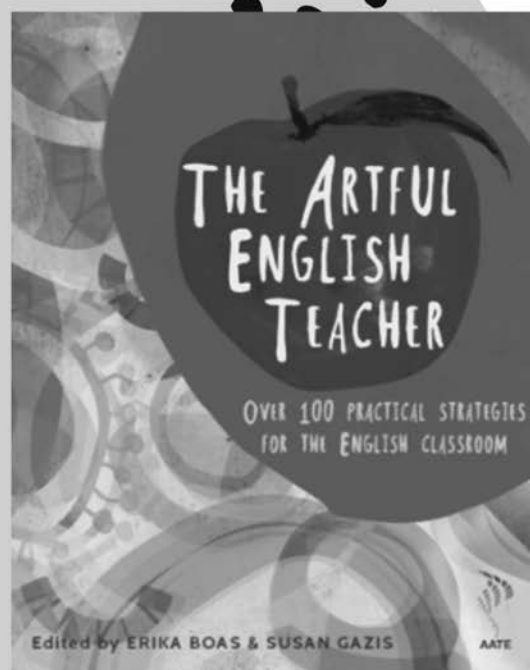
Speaking Back

Early Career English Teachers' Everyday Work: Speaking Back to Standards-based Reforms

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Abstract: Neoliberal approaches to education policy have led to increases in teacher and student accountability, a preference for evidence-informed measurable outcomes and the standardisation of teaching and learning. Judgements of quality teaching and teacher practice are increasingly focused narrowly on students' testable knowledge and skills. This is redefining the work of English teachers and their development. Increased regulation threatens English teachers' agency and professionalism, possibly resulting in feelings of despondency and demoralisation. This is particularly poignant for early career English teachers (those in their first five years of teaching), as they begin work in a system that is systematically debasing their professionalism in favour of managerial practices that focus on outcomes, efficiency and performance. This article reports on the ways one early career English teacher is working in her classroom to speak back to the structures and systems of governments and schools to teach her way.

Introduction

Around the world over the last three decades, neoliberal approaches to education policy have led to standards-based reforms and an increased focus on accountability (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013). Schools, teachers and students are held accountable to generic standards, and there is a narrow focus on 'evidence-informed' (Lewis & Lingard, 2015, p. 621) practices and measurable outcomes. Educational outcomes that are visible and measurable are valued, while the practices of teaching and learning that are not measurable are delegitimised (Biesta, 2015b; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2011).

In Australia, a neoliberal approach to education has resulted in policy makers that are 'only interested in 'objective', 'scientific' evidence that demonstrates continuing and measurable improvement' in learning outcomes (Parr, Doecke, & Bulfin, 2015, p. 137). Two examples of this neoliberal approach are the Australian Curriculum and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The Australian Curriculum 'sets the goal for what students should learn as they progress though their school life' (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA, 2017a). This is determined by policy makers that are removed from localised school contexts and, by their own admission, cannot take into account localised needs or circumstances. NAPLAN, which is an annual testing regime for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 'provides the measure through which governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not young Australians are meeting important education outcomes' (ACARA, 2016). The measure, again, does not take into account localised school contexts or students' circumstances. The NAPLAN is an objective measure that can be used to rank schools, students and teachers.

In response to this context, and the changing nature of English teaching and learning in a standards-based education environment, this article argues that there needs to be a refocusing on the purpose of education and schooling that is not only about measurable and

visible outcomes, but the teaching and learning that occurs in classrooms between teachers and students. While it is difficult to argue against accountability as it has always been a part of teachers' work (Ball, 2016; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013), this article establishes that, alongside accountability recordings of teachers' work, there is a need to recognise and understand other dimensions of their practice. These dimensions are the difficult-to-measure parts of teaching and learning, such as teachers' professionalism and agency, and their moral obligations and responsibilities to respond to students' needs within a localised school context. To do so, drawing from a study of nine early career English teachers in Victoria, this article focuses on one teacher's approach to teaching and learning, and the ways that she speaks back to standards-based reforms that attempt to remove her agency and professionalism through dictating what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and how it is to be assessed.

English teaching within a high-stakes context: impacts on teachers

Within the Australian neoliberal context, teaching is increasingly moving from a social profession to being about outcomes, effectiveness and performance (Kostogriz, 2012). Government and school performativity and accountability mechanisms are tightening control over the work that teachers undertake, and the criteria used to measure teachers', and students', value. These mechanisms have resulted in a 'visible shift' from a belief in the value of teachers' professional autonomy to 'test-based accountability systems' (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013, p. 90). This shift in conditions has resulted in teachers being solely responsible for student achievement that is measurable and objective. Schools and teachers are increasingly being reduced to assessment factories, where students are viewed narrowly through their testable knowledge and skills (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2011). For example, alongside external measurements such as NAPLAN, in many schools, student success is based on Common Assessment Tasks (CATs), which are standardised assessment tasks completed at the end of units of work where classes and teachers are compared and ranked.

The redefining of education to measurable products and processes has led to many teachers feeling that they are being 'taken away from their core business of teaching and caring for young people' (te Riele, Mills, McGregor, & Baroutsis, 2017, p. 56). Increasingly, accountability measures are becoming 'proxies for

student learning and ability, as well as teacher quality and performance' (Lingard, Sellar, & Lewis, 2017, p. 3). Kostogriz and Doecke (2013) comment that professionalism is commonly understood in terms of accountability or responsibility. Managerial forms of professionalism are concerned with accountability, while moral approaches are more concerned with responsibility. The difference is that accountability places emphasis on teachers' alignment with structures and systems, while responsibility emphasises the relationship between teachers and students, and teachers' moral responsibility to their students. Another approach to professionalism includes teachers' agency and responsibility but does not ignore the role of systems and structures (Kostogriz, 2012). Recognising teachers as moral agents enables professionalism to include relationships, affect labours and agency, alongside performative accountability. It enables a recognition of the 'intimate relationships between human practices, such as teaching and learning, and their embeddedness within the larger system of social relations' (Kostogriz, 2012, p. 399). This approach recognises the complexity of teachers' work and professionalism rather than attempting to limit and narrow how teachers are understood and valued.

Within a notion of professionalism that includes responsibility, caring for students is one of the many products and processes of teachers' work that are 'notoriously difficult to measure' (Connell, 1985, p. 70). These are the labour products and processes of human interaction and contact, and the teaching and learning of knowledge, moral knowledge and cognitive ability. These labour processes and products include the exchange of information and knowledge, as well as affective labours (Hardt, 1999). These are the everyday sociocultural practices of human contact and interaction that are 'deeply relational, affective, and ethical' (Kostogriz, 2012, p. 399) and include teacher judgement around effective education (Biesta, 2015b). These are the parts of professionalism that often go unaccounted for in education policy as they are driven by teachers' moral, social and professional commitments to teaching and learning (Kemmis et al., 2014). With an increasing focus on performance standards and measurement, it is difficult, if not 'impossible' (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013, p. 92), for teachers to engage in discussions about professional ethics and pedagogy, as these are not valued or recognised.

Teachers of English are increasingly finding

themselves negotiating the tensions between standards-based reforms and accountability measures, and their sense of responsibility towards their students (Allard & Doecke, 2014; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013; Parr et al., 2015). With external authorities narrowing teachers' work to outcomes and assessment, teachers begin to question their values and teaching practice. The work of Bulfin and Mathews (2003) captures this tension: 'I love talking to kids … but I am left wondering. Do my students actually do anything at all and why aren't I giving them more essays … Am I doing too many 'soft' activities? Not enough 'real work'?' (pp. 47–48). The neoliberal education context is causing teachers to doubt and question their professional identity and understandings of English (Allard & Doecke, 2014).

The study

This paper draws from critical ethnographic case study data generated as part of a doctorate study involving nine English teachers in their first five years of teaching in Victorian secondary schools conducted over one year. The central aim of the study was to investigate early career English teachers' development and work, as mediated by education discourses, policies and localised school contexts. The study was in response to the documented challenges facing early career English teachers, as they move from initial teacher education to work, and the continued need to develop localised understandings of these experiences (Allard & Doecke, 2014; Bulfin & Mathews, 2003; Johnson et al., 2016; Parr, Turvey, Lloyd, & Castaldi, 2014).

The participants worked in schools located in a range of social, cultural and economic communities and included all educational sectors (State, Catholic and Independent). Eight schools were located within greater metropolitan Melbourne, with one being in rural eastern Victoria. A range of data was generated: interview and focus group recordings and transcripts; field and observation notes and photographs from school visits; and other documents and artefacts, including online data (emails, Facebook and Twitter posts and feeds, Messenger conversations) and student management data. Using a combination of discourse analysis and narrative inquiry, I explored the experiences and stories of teachers to develop an understanding of the nature of early career English teachers' everyday professional experiences within contexts of standards-based reforms, and the forms of becoming and praxis that are evident/possible within these contexts.

The focus in the study was the various discourses that mediate early career English teachers' experiences of work. From the sociological perspective of the everyday, the study considers the personal experience of teachers within the public context of schools (Benjamin, 1968/2007; de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1971). Understanding the everyday of teachers' work can position the narratives of teachers alongside the narratives of institutions producing a fuller, multidimensional, understanding of schooling and education (Pereira & Doecke, 2016). Rather than teaching and learning being reduced to visible and standardised outcomes, the everyday enables an understanding that is contextual, multidimensional and negotiated. The sociological concept of the everyday enables questions about how social structures, settings and arrangements shape, influence, and constrain individual action (Selwyn, Nemorin, Bulfin, & Johnson, 2018).

While the study focuses broadly on early career English teachers' work across nine case studies, in this article I focus on the experience of one teacher, Jane, speaking back to the standards-based reform agenda imposed on her by governments and her school. For Jane, speaking back to reforms did not involve insolence or refusal to work with the structures imposed on her – rather, she was able to use the structures to her advantage. She was able to use the procedures, structures and systems imposed on her in creative ways. De Certeau (1984) refers to the manipulation of institutional systems, structures and procedures as the *'ways* of using' that which is imposed (p. 35, emphasis in original). These are the ways individuals are able to act with agency within systems that attempt to remove choice. These 'ways of using' are often dependent on circumstance, rather than being pre-planned; they do not always result in outward, observable actions, but rather include the ways individuals consider, reflect, debate, reject, accept and modify discourses, policies and structures imposed on them. The focus is not just on actions but experience, which includes an individual's actions and process of making sense of institutional structures, procedures and policies in relation to their ideologies (Benjamin, 1968/2007).

Through examining one early career English teacher's experience, I explore how it is possible for teachers to respond to government and school-imposed reforms and policies. I argue that, while Jane's agency was threatened by accountability and standardisation measures, there was still space for her

to teach and assess according to her ideology. To do so, I begin by discussing the development of Jane's confidence as an English teacher, and her ideology about English education. I then discuss two incidents that occurred in Jane's first semester of teaching. These incidents were selected as they are everyday examples of Jane's work. They are representative of the negotiations that Jane undertook regularly with her colleagues and students. The first incident relates to Jane's approach to her students, which is less formal and strict in comparison to many of her colleagues and the general culture of the school. It is an example of how Jane was able to negotiate the responses of both students and colleagues, to continue to teach morally and from her ideological stance that learning is about relationships and that learning cannot occur when students are not comfortable. The second incident occurred between Jane and the Head of Year 9 English. Jane opposed the reduction of assessment to an end-of-unit Common Assessment Task (CAT), which is school policy. The incident was selected as an example of Jane speaking back to a policy that attempted to reduce student learning to measurable and de-contextualised outcomes.

Case study: Jane

Jane was a graduate teacher who had completed her first semester working as an English and Legal Studies teacher in a state secondary school in the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne. During her education degree at a prominent university, Jane was confident and successful. This confidence was due to the environment at university, but also her experience on teaching rounds where her mentor treated her as a fellow teacher rather than a student. She had settled comfortably into her first year of teaching in the school and was liked by many of her colleagues. The Principal recognised her dedication to her job, commenting in a conversation that she was valued in the school and they had heard about the great things she was doing. This encouraging environment contributed to Jane's sense of belonging at the school and her sense of professionalism, where she felt she was able to work in and around school policy her way.

Becoming a confident English teacher

Through discussions with Jane, and observing her at work, I was able to identify various influences that contributed to her sense of being an English teacher and having confidence in that identity. Focusing on her professional experience, this section highlights three areas of influence: (1) the English method unit, which was part of her Bachelor of Education degree; (2) the reflective practices that were part of her everyday work; and (3) the school environment where she worked.

During our conversations, Jane regularly touched on her experience at university. Specifically, in relation to her English method, she discussed the way she learnt not to expect to be 'spoon-fed' in the teaching profession. She felt that university was realistic in presenting options of what could happen in schools but that it was her responsibility to understand the social, cultural and financial limitations and opportunities in her specific school. She spoke of the way the knowledge and understanding gained in her degree had become the foundation for her teaching and prepared her for the profession. She found beginning her career 'easy' because she was 'teaching the methods [she] studied at uni'. Due to her studies, she felt that, in relation to content, she knew 'exactly what [she was] doing'. She discussed the encouraging relationship she had with many of her lecturers who treated her as a 'teacher developing [her] practice' rather than a student. She reflected that her university experience prepared her for teaching, and that meant that, rather than being unsure and nervous on her first day, she was just 'really really excited'.

Another key aspect of Jane's ongoing development is the reflective practices she undertook as part of her everyday work. Jane regularly referred to her reflective recordings in discussions. After each lesson she wrote a short reflection. In doing so, Jane found that she did not need to be continually asking for assistance from her mentor or colleagues, as she was able to work things through on her own. She was able to 'reflect' and 'solve a lot of [her] issues'. Her ability to work through difficulties on her own enabled her to develop a sense of agency in her work and gave her a sense of herself as a competent English teacher. Jane did not refer to herself as a new teacher and despised it when others used the term 'grad' in reference to her. Her position as a competent and confident English teacher was reinforced by interactions with colleagues, particularly her mentor, Sarah. Jane discussed the way that comments by her mentor reassured her. Sarah commented to her, 'Sometimes I don't even feel like I'm your mentor because you're not asking me for help'. Jane felt that Sarah viewed her as more competent than a graduate teacher. Jane did not view herself as a beginning teacher, 'a grad'; despite her inexperience

in years, she felt confident in her profession and in her knowledge of what it is to be an English teacher.

Alongside these regular reflections and conversations with her mentor, Jane was able to identify the benefit of a supportive work environment in encouraging and impacting her development process. She discussed that the teachers were generally quite young and collaborative; she felt that she was part of the English faculty, as she was often being asked for resources. While she was aware that 'to some extent' her colleagues were using her for her 'new resources … new ideas and stuff', she didn't mind because she was able to produce and use resources that were valuable to her.

This collaborative practice is part of the school culture that I observed while undertaking school visits. Teachers shared resources and were still able to have some autonomy and control over their curriculum and classes. Jane's perspective was that the school's focus was on the final assessment: 'That's all they care about. The end assessment has to be done the same way.' But, how teachers reached that assessment was not mandated or controlled: '[The assessment] is what we are all working towards but how you want to get there is completely up to you.' This, for Jane, had enabled her to work with her students and design tasks, curriculum and assessment that suited her students, her ideology of the teaching and learning of English, as well as the requirements of the state curriculum and school expectations.

Jane felt that despite some of the limitations, such as students being subjected to mandated CATs, she was able to enact and develop her professionalism in and around the classroom. This sense of professionalism assisted Jane in feeling she was able to speak back when policy was imposed on her with which she did not agree.

Speaking back – 'tricky Jane comes into play'

The '*ways* of using' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 35, emphasis in original) the structures and systems that attempt to control teachers and their work involves teachers critically considering the discourses that they encounter. It involves teachers reflecting, rejecting, accepting and modifying discourses, policies and structures. The result of this consideration is sometimes outward and observable, while at other times the result is inner decision, where teachers consider their understandings of their work and professionalism. The two examples provided here show the way Jane was using the systems and structures in her everyday work her way, sometimes through outward negotiation and modification of policy and structures, as well as the more subtle approach of speaking back to the educational discourse in the school.

The discourse within the school, as reported by Jane, was that teachers, particularly young, inexperienced teachers, needed to take a strict approach with their students. Jane's colleagues often commented to her that she needed to adopt a 'don't smile until Easter' approach with her classes. Jane reported that when some colleagues heard about her friendly disposition with classes, they would comment that it was a 'rooky mistake', that she was going to 'burn out very quickly' and her students would 'use it against [her]'. The discourse was not limited to teachers – Jane also heard it from her students. When she approached her Year 9 class with the statement that it was a 'fresh new start for [them]', the students 'were quite shocked at how friendly [she was]'. Questions were raised about why she wasn't 'telling [them] that [they're] wrong', and that she was 'the teacher' and therefore was 'always right'.

Jane found the authoritative approach to classrooms appeared to be unquestioned amongst staff. But rather than aligning with it, she continued to approach her classes her way. She even responded to staff that predicted her 'burn out' with the comment, 'Ah, I highly doubt that'. She felt that she understood her capability as a teacher, and she could 'support' her friendly and democratic approach to her classes. This is an example of Jane's ability to speak back to this commonly held educational discourse, to enact a different way of doing things. It is not large-scale and does not outwardly oppose an imposed directive, policy or curriculum. Rather, it is a choice that she made in her everyday work, based on her ideology of teaching. Jane was unwilling to compromise her ideology to fit into the discourse and expectations of others.

The following example is an incident that resulted in Jane speaking outwardly against a school policy. It was first term and the first unit for Year 9 was Narrative. Jane reported that, while not openly acknowledged by the principal team, the decision to begin the term with a narrative unit was because it was the writing component of NAPLAN. The CAT required students to complete a narrative over three lessons. The mark for the CAT would appear on their end of semester report.

Jane, however, refused to have her students receive a mark for one assessment on their report when they had spent a number of weeks writing, drafting and revising various narrative pieces. So, in defiance of the

policy, Jane told her class that their final mark would be a combination of their CAT and all the other pieces they had written across the unit. She took this to the Head of Year 9 English. At first, while not oppositional, the Head of Year 9 questioned Jane, asking, 'Why did you do this?' and 'What was your overall aim?' Jane explicitly spoke to her purpose: she understood that in NAPLAN students only receive one mark, but she didn't want to 'turn off kids from creative writing by just saying 'all this hard work, I'm going to ignore this and I'm only going to focus on your end result'. She argued that the 'focus' of Year 9 should be the 'building of skills', not the end result. Jane felt that reducing students' achievement to one mark told them that 'all [their] previous results don't matter', but she strongly believed that they should value the 'steps and the progress getting there'. The meeting lasted an hour, and eventually the Head of Year 9 'turned around and she was like, "we're doing this next year"'. Jane was able to not only question a procedure but was also able to speak up and back. She responded to a procedure that she felt was an injustice for her students and the work they had undertaken through the term by gathering evidence and a clear and focused argument for her course of action. Jane was tactical about how she approached the process, which was enabled because she was confident in her ability and knowledge as an English teacher. The confidence Jane had was due to a number of mediating influences. Partially, her personal confidence was developed across her life, but her confidence as an English teacher was developed by her sense of self through her university degree where she was treated as a teacher not a student, as well as the response she received from colleagues in her school, where they did not treat her like a 'grad', but rather saw her as a colleague, and a competent teacher that they could turn to for resources. Even though some colleagues questioned her friendly demeanour with her classes, this was outweighed by the opinion of her mentor and her Principal.

Discussion and conclusion

The government education discourse is one of measurability and standardisation (Australian Government: Department of Education and Training, 2016; Department of Education and Training, 2017; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013; Lewis & Lingard, 2015; Lingard et al., 2017). This discourse does not often take into account aspects of teaching and learning that are difficult to measure, such as affect labours (Biesta,

2015a; Connell, 2009; Hardt, 1999). Yet, despite the lack of recognition in the government education discourse about these aspects of teaching, Jane was engaging in these discussions with colleagues, but also through her daily written reflections of each class. Jane is continually making 'judgements' (Biesta, 2015a, p. 75) about what she believes good education is, and the process and product of teaching and learning. This shows that, while there is a lack of emphasis and space provided for pedagogical conversations, these are not 'impossible' (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013, p. 92), and for Jane, they are an essential part of her professionalism. Jane is negotiating the balance between accountability and responsibility (Kostogriz, 2012).

The current imperative for schools is to perform, as results from mandated testing regimes are published and are regularly subjected to scrutiny (ACARA, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). This positions schools to work as performance factories, where curriculum within classrooms is narrowed to testable skills and knowledge (Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013; Lewis & Lingard, 2015). Within Jane's school there is emphasis on what Jane describes as 'not authentic' CATs that relate to external testing regimes such as NAPLAN. This is juxtaposed with Jane's experiences of encouragement from the school for the work she is undertaking in her classrooms that does not necessarily align with these CATs, such as the Head of Year 9's willingness to alter the assessment procedure for the Narrative unit. This suggests that there is tension at an institutional level about what English teaching and learning should look like. This tension means that the school has imposed standardised CATs, but still enables teachers the autonomy to design and implement their classroom curriculum. This allowed space for Jane to teach her way. She was able to approach her English teaching according to her ideology, even when it opposed the dominant discourse in the school. In addition, while she was not able to alter the CAT, standardisation remains, and she was able to shift somewhat how teachers, students and families understand the process – the next time the narrative unit was taught, students would no longer be assessed solely on one task.

The literature raises the concern that teachers are questioning their ideology and changing their practice when faced with English education discourses and policies that appear to reduce teaching to measurable outputs (Allard & Doecke, 2014; Bulfin & Mathews, 2003). For Jane, this had not yet occurred in any substantial way. She was aware of the discourses that

opposed her ideology, but she was not yet questioning her practice and everyday work. This may be due to a number of factors. Jane spoke of the space the school provided for teachers' professionalism – their classrooms are spaces where they can teach with a reasonable amount of autonomy. She also spoke of a confidence in her knowledge and skill as an English teacher. This had developed, and continued to develop, because of her experience during her education degree, the daily reflective practices she engaged, and the support and collaboration that occurs in her everyday experience. Jane's inexperience may also have contributed to her confidence in her ideology in regard to English teaching and learning. She had been in the school for less than a year, and possibly this meant that she had not been immersed in the system long enough for her to question the legitimacy of her values and approach. The discourses presented at university were possibly still more influential than the government education discourse and her local school policies and discourse.

Often, the discourse that is critical of standards-based reforms emphasises the way teachers are able to negotiate the tensions to continue to develop professional knowledge (Allard & Doecke, 2014; Ball, 2016; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2011). Jane's experience mirrors much of this discourse. As an early career English teacher, Jane's work was clearly being impacted by standards-based reforms, particularly in relation to assessment. Yet, Jane's everyday experience showed the way that she was able to continue to develop her professionalism, and to have responsibility and autonomy in and around her classroom. This did not mean that she did not comply and conform to policies and structures that were imposed on her, as she did undertake the assessment that was required and teach according to the curriculum in collaboration with colleagues, but she was also able to work with and within these policies and structures to ensure that her work was valuable for her and her students. She was able to do this because of the confidence she felt as an English teacher, the support the school had given her, as well as the space the school provided for her to select and organise her classroom activities.

The next question to be asked is how long Jane, and teachers like Jane, will be able to continue to do this. If regulation continues to increase, will there reach a point where teachers are not able to find the space to work their way?

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Analysing Masculinities

Constructing the 'Literate Boy':
Analysing Masculinities on Websites Created in Response to the Boys' Literacy 'Crisis'

Sarah McDonald, University of South Australia

Abstract: Boys have long been positioned as marginalised participants in the education system, where categorical notions of boys as failing and girls as achieving persist. These ideas have played out strongly in western societies in the areas of literacy and reading, with a convergence of boys and literacy 'crises'. While it has been documented that some boys underperform in reading ability when compared to some girls, essentialist notions of gender fail to consider the way achievement is not simply based on sex. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, specifically a literate habitus (Carrington & Luke, 1997), this article analyses two websites created to promote reading for middle-school boys. It considers how these sites contribute to and perpetuate constructions of hegemonic masculinities. Focusing on the websites as promoting 'boy-friendly' literacy interventions, the text-based analysis considers the ways particular constructions of masculinity are represented and why this may be problematic in terms of our work with middle-school boys.

Introduction

This research examines how websites created to promote reading for middle-school boys (11–14 years old) contribute to and perpetuate constructions of a hegemonic masculinity. Historical and current gendered debates concerning the 'literacy wars' (Snyder, 2008) have been played out across education in the West. In exploring how the authors of the websites represent middle-school boys' masculinities, I focus on how conceptions of middle-school boyhood are perpetuated through the promotion of specific interventions into boys' literacy. The article adopts an innovative approach to text-based analysis, drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) concept of identity formation as habitus in order to examine the ways literacy may be enacted relationally to understandings of masculinities. I use Carrington and Luke's (1997) concept of a literate habitus to capture the way literacy practices take on multiple forms of cultural capital and symbolic significance in wider society, and use Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2015; Gee, 2015) to situate the websites in a social context of 'common-sense' theories and shared knowledge in order to analyse specific language use. It is important here to acknowledge how Bourdieu's tools have been widely critiqued for a problematic binary and implicitly stable framing of gender (Adkins, 2004; Mottier, 2002). However, there is scope to use habitus as a conceptual tool for understanding the way some interventions normalise gendered ways of being. In the second half of the paper, analysis moves toward a critique of the two websites' common themes, and the implications these have for understandings of masculinity.

Before I present the research and main findings, it is important to highlight my

positionality as both an educator and researcher. As an English teacher, I was involved in 'constructing a world of gender relations' (Connell, 1995, p. 86) and, like many English teachers, I often chose classroom texts which were designed to engage boys. In using search engines to discover new class novels and later to search for information on the boys' literacy crisis, I became aware of the various websites that had been created to provide information to educators and parents on engaging boys in reading – specifically, the reading of novels. As I viewed these public resources, I became concerned with the assumptions about boys and masculinities which underpinned these sites as well as the understandings that may be generated and perpetuated. Thomson (2002) argues that some boys and girls do fall behind when it comes to literacy and reading, but that to focus solely on gender is simplistic. She suggests that, instead, 'more nuanced, gender- and class-aware, situated interventions might be more productive' (p. 176). It is within this context that the research explores the way websites created to promote reading for middle-school boys engage with and perpetuate hegemonic constructions of masculinity.

Masculinity and boys' literacy interventions

In the 'literacy crisis', interventions within schools are often underpinned by essentialist ideas and theories of categorical sex differences (Gill & Tranter, 2014). Mills and Keddie (2010) add that the 'dominance of neo-liberal discourses in education has also impacted upon the ways in which boys are often now viewed as a problem for school' (p. 407), and that while there is a diversity of boys, 'all such boys are liable to be subject to homogenising discourses which construct all such boys as the same' (p. 407). Furthermore, Mills and Keddie (2010) state,

> Projects have tended to homogenise boys' interests and learning styles along stereotypical gender binary lines reflecting more broadly what Lingard (2003) has referred to as a 'recuperative masculinity politics' where there is a focus on recapturing a sense of masculinity lost in the now 'overly' feminised spaces of the school and beyond. (p. 408)

Theories underpinned by 'recuperative masculinity politics' are problematic because they are based on the premise that gender is fixed and irrevocably tied to sex (Gill & Tranter, 2014), with masculinity discussed as a single state of being rather than acknowledging the existence of a diversity of masculinities which can be performed by both males and females (Connell, 1995).

As well as this, research on masculinity points to a lack of focus in many schools on encouraging young men to develop a broader definition about what it means to be male. There exists longstanding research that has documented how a narrow and often problematic version of masculinity is promoted, both explicitly and implicitly (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Martino & Palotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Weaver-Hightower, 2003).

In Australia, the *Boys: Getting it Right* policy report (House of Representatives, 2002) advocated for an increased focus on the learning styles of boys, suggesting a change to schooling and literacy practices to meet their needs. Contemporary approaches to promoting reading in middle-school boys have often focused on presenting literacy as more masculine (Martino, 2008). Booth (2002) and Millard (1997) suggest boys learn to associate literacy with females from a young age, resulting in either rejection as 'a feminised activity' (Booth 2002, p. 20), or a reluctance to admit to an enjoyment of reading if they believe it will affect their ability to fit in with their peers. Suggested literacy interventions tend to shift the 'blame for boys' schooling underperformance away from boys' (Mills & Keddie, 2010, p. 410) and onto female teachers and feminine ways of teaching. For example, popular parenting experts, such as Steve Biddulph (2010), often suggest that male students fare better with male teachers. Of course, teachers play an important role in the classroom, but greater attention should be paid to the resources that teachers, both male and female, are using in their practice. The ease with which teachers and parents can access web-based resources, and the potential impact of these resources on pedagogic approaches used in contemporary classrooms and homes warrants the close analysis of such resources.

Connell (1995) argues that gender is the main determinant of our collective fate, intersecting with both class and race. Bourdieu (1984) would further contend that culture plays a central role. Gender as a social construct presupposes that gender in our society is based on reproduction and bodies, but not on our biological being (Connell, 1995). In this way, gender is a determining social structure, where humans are categorised into parts, with gender as a starting point. Gender determinants form our identity, discourse and culture, and state, community, workplace and school (Connell, 1995). It is how we understand ourselves as beings, and as performers in the world, or as Gee (2015) would contend, as more or less 'right'. It begins

at birth and is pervasive across all fields. Connell (1995) argues for the existence of hegemony within this social structure, where 'at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted' (p. 76). Therefore, hegemonic masculinities and marginalised masculinities are not fixed character types but are 'configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships' (Connell, 1995, p. 81). Carrington and Luke (1997) suggest that within a Bourdieusian analysis, it is important to tease out which masculinity is hegemonic within any one site. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity (1995) can be used to explain how individuals and groups will discard practices which are not valued within the context of the construction of hegemonic masculinity, when they are not deemed to create access to social power. Based on this argument, it becomes clear how the idea of authoritative understandings of self are crucial to narrative formations, and why it is difficult to contest the way education has taken up masculinity relationally to reading.

A literate habitus

Bourdieu's notion of habitus has been used to explore classed and gendered experiences of schooling (Archer, Halsall & Hollingworth, 2007; Bowers-Brown, 2015; McLeod, 2000; Stahl, 2014). More specifically, it has been mobilised to explore literacy and literate practices (Albright & Luke, 2010; Carrington & Luke, 1997; Comber 2005; Grenfell et al., 2013; Luke 1992, 1995; Luke & Carrington, 2003). A Bourdieusian approach recognises that an individual's choices can be restricted by social structures – in other words, by the lived experience of and movement through various and particular social fields (Bourdieu, 1984; 1991). The way that individuals move through these social fields will depend on both their accumulations of capital and crucially, whether that capital is recognised as such by others in authority. Carrington and Luke (1997) define literacy as a social practice and the literate person as a social construct and argue that literate practices reflect cultural and social capital and thus contribute to the development of an individual's habitus and subsequent life trajectory. They refer to this process as the creation across fields of a literate habitus. Invoking literate habitus as a key component of a broader framing of education as cultural capital gives scope for understanding the ways in which literacy takes on a symbolic significance within wider society, acting as

an indicator of status and depending on authoritative recognition within particular fields. As Carrington and Luke (1997) suggest, 'In the public gaze, literacy is frequently defined as a neutral, identifiable package of skills, or alternatively, as a set of moral traits or features, the acquisition of which are seen to ensure social access and success' (p. 97). Carrington and Luke further (1997) contend that there is danger in unproblematically equating certain types of literacy practice, such as reading and school-acquired literacy, with forms of cultural capital. They speak to the 'literacy myth', suggesting common linkages of early knowledge and understanding of reading to increased self-esteem and school achievement as causal (Carrington & Luke, 1997). These deficit assumptions – Carrington and Luke (1997) refer to them as 'folk-theories' – work toward defining access and participation to social and institutional fields, where only certain types of literacies are valued. So, in understanding habitus as the internalisation of life experiences which form an individual disposition, and a way of perceiving and participating in the world, we can see how the way in which individuals incorporate and discard different literacy practices can create a particular literate being or 'literate habitus' (Carrington & Luke, 1997). In building from this concept, it can be argued that a literate habitus, like other forms of habitus (Bourdieu, 2001), can be gendered.

While not specifically referring to a gendered literate habitus, Rowan, Knobel, Bigum and Lankshear (2002) show how disengagement from traditional literacy classrooms and practice may be the consequences of 'narrative and restrictive' understandings of masculinities for some boys (p. 4). Martino (2008) suggests that a framework for understanding masculinity should involve 'challenging social expectations about what it means to be male and understanding how these expectations impact on boys' participation in schooling' (para. 5). As students move through various social fields, one of which is literacy in school, multiple literate and identity practices are required (Carrington & Luke, 1997). Arguably, these practices are incorporated into their habitus and enacted in their life path within the specific fields where they are needed, depending on their value within those fields.

Exploring the habitus that is implied by the websites chosen for analysis offers an understanding of the way 'common-sense' and gendered interventions normalise ways of being. This research conceptualises the two

websites – which are available in the public domain and have been created, or feature pages within the site, with the primary aim of promoting reading in middle-school boys – as part of the social field of literacy, where the websites are indicative of a social practice because they are created, continually updated and rely on social engagement in order to function. Furthermore, Bourdieu's key theories of habitus, capital and field offer a lens through which to view a specific type of text-based gender construction as constituting a particular kind of habitus.

Methodology

The two websites 'Ideas for Getting Boys into Reading' (James Moloney) and 'Guys Read' were chosen for analysis because their content is predominantly about boys and reading, and they appear on the first page of web searches using the Google search engine. The following key search phrases were used: 'boys and books', 'books for middle school boys', 'boys and reading', 'getting boys to read', 'middle school boys and reading'. The analysis focuses firstly on the way masculinities are constituted in the texts, and, secondly, explores the way these constructions may reinforce or challenge particular aspects of literate habitus.

The first layer of analysis takes place using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Gee, 2015; Fairclough, 2015). By placing the websites within a context of 'common-sense theories' and 'shared knowledge' (Gee, 2015), analysis of the specific language used shows how the consumers of the websites are positioned to respond. It is important here to note that CDA has been critiqued for being either too broad or not broad enough so that analysis becomes decontextualised (Rogers & Schaenen, 2014). However, Rogers and Schaenen (2014) argue that because multiple contexts will have the potential to exist within any one domain, the 'analysis itself creates a context with its own history of discourse practices' (p. 124). Furthermore, texts can have a variety of meanings depending on the historical and political life experiences, and ways of knowing, of both author and reader. In light of this, I am aware that I position the reader to view the findings I present through my particular lens. I come to this research understanding that my interpretation is 'partial and governed by the discourse of my time and place' (Britzman, 2000, p. 32). While intending to be faithful to what I see represented in the data, it is with an understanding that 'one's historical realities, identities,

and experiences shape what one sees and doesn't see' (Brisolara, 2014, p. 24).

Bourdieu's theory offers a lens for viewing normalised social structures that work to maintain the status-quo within and across social fields. Reay (2004) argues for the use of habitus as a conceptual tool, as 'a means of viewing structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activity within large scale settings' (p. 440). In this way, habitus is used conceptually as a way of interrogating the websites rather than as an explanation for why the websites exist. I use Bourdieu's tools of habitus, cultural capital and field to explore the potential ways that the websites illustrate understandings of masculinities – specifically a masculine literate habitus – as well as the way they invite consumers to take up particular positions. In using this approach, emerging themes are identified with an emphasis on language while also describing, interpreting and explaining how the websites created to promote reading for middle-school boys are constructed within a specific political time and context. By using Bourdieu's tools of habitus, capital and field as a tool for understanding, I view the websites as sites to be examined for how they represent identity, particularly concerning the masculine literate middle-school boy.

Guys Read – John Scieszka

Jon Scieszka is an American children's author. His website, Guys Read, is presented to the audience as a 'web-based literacy program for boys' (Scieszka, 2016). It is evident through multiple references on the website, where words like 'boys' and 'guys' are used interchangeably, that the consistent use of the word 'guys' refers to middle-school boys. For example,

> Welcome to Guys Read, a web-based literacy program for boys founded by author and First National Ambassador of Young People's Literature Jon Scieszka;
>
> Our mission is to help boys become self-motivated, lifelong readers;
>
> And please help guys out by recommending more of your guy-favorites; …

The denotative language use of the word 'guys' in this instance suggests that the term is understood as a casual reference to boys and is typical of the conversational style used on the website. There is a familiarity which aims to connect with the audience on a personal level, and while initially it may suggest that the intended audience is middle-school boys, there are clues to suggest the audience is made up of

Figure 1. Homepage from Guys Read, by J. Scieszka, 2016 (www.guysread.com).

parents and teachers of middle-school boys. The use of the words 'our mission is to help boys' speaks to adults who will guide them, positioning the boys as passive and adults as the active audience. The short sentence is also a literary technique used to persuade, by making a statement of apparent 'truth' that is difficult to contest. The inclusive pronoun 'our' at the beginning of the sentence is an appeal to the audience; it calls to them to be part of the solution through their visit to the website, while the word 'mission' has connotations of the types of books suggested as those middle-school boys will enjoy.

The combination of white background with bright red and blue font colours and the use of stars in title banners evokes the American flag and positions the audience to draw on normalised understandings of an 'all-American boy' on Jon Scieszka's website. The main image on the top of the page changes each time the page is reloaded. The majority of the images feature boys playing sports or in urban settings – two images feature books, but boys are noticeably absent from these. The only images featuring males are the sports images, where the boys are physical and active in their involvement. The image featured in Figure 1 is of boys doing tricks on skateboards. This image reinforces essentialist ideas linking traditional masculinity with sport and risk-taking behaviour (Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, 2007). Furthermore, socially normalised constructions of boys serve to constitute a particular kind of learner habitus (Bourdieu 1984) which is gendered, where incorporating a particular view of the world into ways of being and participating in the

world renders specific actions necessary in order to signal membership *in* that world (Bourdieu, 1984). In considering both the audience and purpose of the text, it is interesting that none of the rotating images feature 'guys read'-ing.

A particular type of gender construction (Connell, 1995) is visible on Scieszka's site, which is underpinned by a socially normalised idea that boys struggle with – and do not enjoy – reading because they are physically born that way. Scieszka's predominant message is that all boys are 'naturally' inclined away from reading, speaking to Mills and Keddie's (2010) gender justice argument that homogenising discourses construct *all* boys as problematic. This narrative is 'thickened' (Wortham, 2004) relationally to identity when Scieszka selectively uses research showing 'that boys are having trouble reading, and that boys are getting worse at reading'. Scieszka offers further suggestions: 'Some of the reasons are biological. Some of the reasons are sociological.' The effect of the short sentences in this quote is powerful. The sentences are presented as statements of fact and signal completion which, in turn, is reinforced when there are no immediate links to the research Scieszka is referencing. His statements are presented as 'common-sense' claims that are not open for questioning. Scieszka furthers these claims with a discussion on a separate webpage about why boys might be 'having trouble' with ideas that are sex-role oriented and common-sense notions presented as fact. On these pages, the term *biologically* denotes a narrative supported by biological essentialism (Wadham, Pudsy & Boyd, 2007), where all boys are portrayed as having been born with particular attributes in relation to reading. Scieszka's narrative, coupled with the initial assertion that 'some reasons are sociological', underlines his own beliefs that boys are biologically born with a particular deficit when it comes to literacy, while also pointing to sex-role socialisation as a strategy. For example, Scieszka claims that 'boys are slower to develop than girls and often struggle with reading and writing skills early on' while the 'action-oriented, competitive learning style of many boys works against them learning to read and write'. Wadham, Pudsey and Boyd (2007) assert an essentialist view of gender and education as dominant and socially normalised, making it difficult to contest in the context of Scieszka's website. Operationalising habitus, we see how there is an emphasis on 'the enduring influence of a range of contexts, familial, peer group, institutional and class culture, and their subtle,

often indirect, but still pervasive influence on choices' (Reay, David, & Ball, 2005, p. 27). Therefore, if boys, and those in charge of educating boys, believe they are born with a biological resistance to reading, then for some boys a rejection of reading becomes necessary in order to signal one's identity and membership as a boy.

Scieszka suggests middle-school boys are not motivated to read because the books offered are not appealing, stating that part of his intention is to 'help boys become readers by helping them find texts they want to read'. The insinuation here is that finding a book a middle-school boy would want to read is a difficult task, furthering a narrative where boys are being marginalised by not having access to books that will appeal to them. Scieszka promotes agency for boys to choose their own books through the use of 'Guys Read' branded bookmarks, book plates, and book and spine labels which can be downloaded and printed from his site (Figure 2).

The labels are to be used to give middle-school boys the opportunity to physically mark books in the school library they enjoy reading, signposting this information for other boys. These labels illustrate an authoritative recognition (Bourdieu 1984) within the field of boys' literacy: Scieszka indicates that boys will pick up and read a certain book if they are positioned to view that book as approved of by another boy. The presence of the label gives middle-school boys the authority to read the book through a cycle of acknowledging and accepting some books as being specifically intended for boys. This 'authorial voice' is difficult to destabilise and is continually reinforced because someone in authority, another middle-school boy, reinforces it.
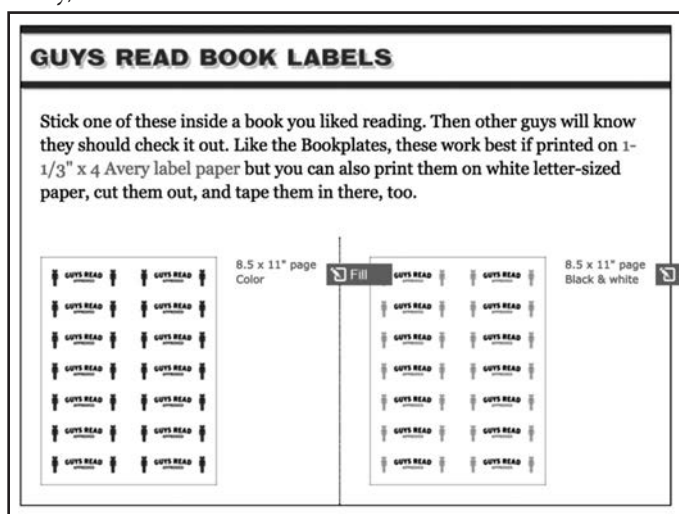

Figure 2. Guys Read Book Labels. Guys Read, by J. Scieszka, 2016 (www.guysread.com).

Ideas for Getting Boys into Reading – James Moloney

James Moloney is an Australian author. The specific page for analysis within his website has been constructed to share his thoughts on how to get boys to read more. This page is titled, 'Ideas for Getting Boys into Reading', and is based on his book, which is currently out of print, *Boys and Books: Building a Culture of Reading Around Our Boys* (2002).
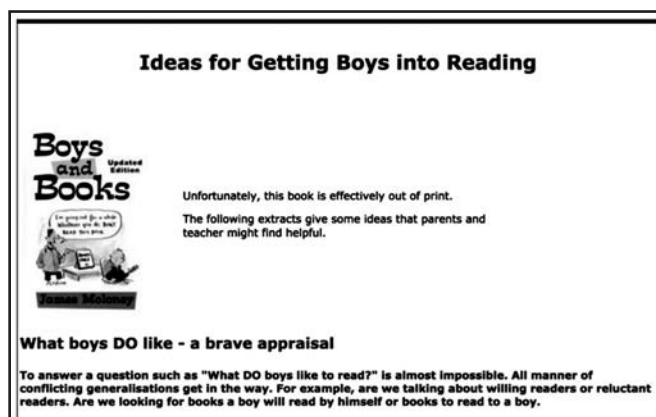

Figure 3. Ideas for Getting Boys into Reading, by James Moloney (www.jamesmoloney.com.au/Ideas_for_Getting_Boys_into_Reading.htm).

While the overall presentation of the website may be described as dated due to the large chunks of text, few images and links to other pages, the texts listed in a bibliography on a separate page include Moloney's most recent publications, suggesting the website is up to date. The single image on the page is the front cover of Moloney's book (see Figure 3). It features a cartoon of a boy sitting on a couch with a remote control, suggesting he is watching television. Behind him is a book with the words 'Adults Only' emblazoned on the cover. A male stands behind the book and there is a speech bubble attributed to him which says, 'I'm going out for a while. Whatever you do, DON'T READ THIS BOOK.' This highlights an emerging theme of subversion – in this case, it is on the part of both father and child, where the boy is being 'tricked' to engage with reading by a male role model.

Moloney builds a picture of a specific type of middle-school male habitus using persuasive literary techniques. To begin with, he acknowledges differences between the reading habits of middle-school boys, differentiating between boys who are 'willing readers' and those who are 'reluctant readers'. Following this, boys are essentialised as one group who, Moloney insists, need to see themselves represented in the

books they read. Moloney suggests that often boys 'are lost when the story does not go where they want it to go which is in a direction close to their own personal experience', invoking a literate habitus which is structured by an unwillingness to move outside of what is normalised and known. Multiple references on the website to representation, personal experience and phrases like 'want it to go' form a narrative where boys need to feel in control of and represented by a text if it is to engage them. This narrative speaks to the emerging masculinity of Moloney's site, which he refers to as 'boyishness'.

Moloney describes boyishness as an understanding by middle-school boys of what it is that makes up the 'quintessential boy'. Underpinning this is Moloney's belief about middle-school boys' self-image, where they see themselves as, or strive to be, a quintessential boy. Boyishness is presented as fun, messy, boisterous, and entailing a kind of harmless naughtiness and 'madcap mayhem'. Use of the word 'mayhem' takes on significance in further descriptions of boys as subversive of authority, where 'boys love poking fun at others, especially adults'. In this way, it appears that subversive forms of harassment constitute 'fun' within the narrative of boyishness. There are long descriptions of boys as naturally wanting to subvert authority, as well as descriptions of the way society continually attempts to control boys:

> Boys continually find themselves told to behave, to be tidier and less boisterous so books where the characters triumphantly break out of these restrictions are greatly prized.

> Boys have an image of themselves as anarchic beings bringing chaos to stultifying order, even when they are the gentlest and more amenable lambs you would hope to have in the house.

Moloney juxtaposes this image with the claim that boys have a strong sense of right and wrong, describing them as 'oddly true to a sense of justice and right'. Moloney contends that he may appear to be 'defending oafish behaviour' in the way he describes boys, but tempers this by explaining how, in describing boyishness, he is referring to 'that innocuous immaturity best described by the old expression, "frogs and snails and puppy dog tails"'. Here, Moloney is referencing the traditional 'boys will be boys' understanding of gender as binary and fixed.

Moloney's website suggests that middle-school boys will prefer an action novel because 'boys enjoy books which place action ahead of emotion and where

what the characters do is more important than what the characters think or feel'. Moloney goes on to compare this preference with some adults' preferences for detective or thriller genres, making the point that if we can accept that adults may have preferences for particular genres, then we should accept the same for middle-school boys. However, Moloney's claims that all boys prefer action novels is problematic. It essentialises boys' reading habits and centres a particular type of masculinity. It marginalises boy readers who enjoy different types of books, particularly ones where emotion might come before action.

Moloney suggests that books about sport are gateways into reading for middle-school boys. The assumption here is that middle-school boys play and therefore want to read about sport, positioning those who do not as on the outside of a boyish masculinity, in turn constructing a particular type of learner habitus which is masculinised. It speaks to normalised ideas of adolescence where sport is presented as a naturally occurring interest for boys (Lesko, 2005). Further contributing to the boyishness narrative, there is a repetition on Moloney's site of words such as 'gross', 'dirty' and 'creepy' to describe books middle-school boys *do* enjoy that are not related to sport. As a result of this language, Moloney paints a picture of middle-school boys as also 'gross' and 'disgusting' when adults are not around, furthering his renderings of middle-school boys as subversive. It sets up the potential for a particular gendered literate habitus for some middle-school boys who will make choices about reading with an understanding of what is and is not culturally acceptable. Yet in society, we see a variety of boys with different interests.

Discussion

Like many text types, the websites can be viewed as a dialogue which relies upon both an author and an audience to produce meaning. The audience acts as active participants in navigating the websites, in that they make choices about various pages and links to visit as part of their experience. I recognise that the keywords used to arrive at the sites – boys, books, middle-school, reading – signal assumptions being made by the audience of the websites where beliefs about the reading abilities of boys, as well as the types of books boys enjoy, are homogenised and underpinned by categorical differences between middle-school girls and boys (Gill & Tranter, 2014). Furthermore, in conducting the searches in the first

place, the audience is expecting information that will support their views rather than challenge them, rendering the understandings underpinning the websites, along with the understandings brought to the sites by the audience, as a shared knowledge (Gee, 2015) and discourse. This 'shared knowledge' speaks to the idea that the authors of the websites produce meaning while at the same time relying on the common understandings of the audience (Hodge & Kress, 1988). The authors expect their audience to draw upon and make 'intertextual and historical links with prior texts or text types within their experience' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 78).

The websites have similar thematic elements, contributing to a particular kind of narrative around middle-school boys and their reading skills. The dominant masculinity illustrated across the websites follows a naturalised and often incontestable understanding of middle-school boys as messy, adventurous, courageous and harmlessly naughty. Through these texts, middle-school boys are essentialised, and rendered dominant, controlling, competitive and subversive. They are situated as being unwilling to engage with texts that do not present middle-school boys with an image of themselves.

The overwhelming and explicit assertion of the authors of the websites is that *all* boys are marginalised participants in the field of reading because they are not given agency in choosing books or offered books which appeal to them. A restrictive narrative is created (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum & Lankshear, 2002) around middle-school boys which may be used to understand, and carve out, their place in reading discourse. Rowan et al. (2002) argue that for some boys, these narrow understandings of masculinities in relation to reading create an alienation from traditional literacy classrooms and practices. They set up some boys as 'other' if their reading practices do not fit within the narrative. Determinist theories, and an implicit shared knowledge about masculinity, underpin the websites, where Moloney and Scieszka contribute to, and render notions of, a particular hegemonic masculinity within a discourse of boys and reading. So while they purport to turn boys into lifelong readers, by attributing these masculine identities to middle-school boys as 'right' within the field, they contribute to what Zipin (2009) refers to as 'culturally inherited ways of knowing' (p. 317): while the audience of the websites is not middle-school boys, the authors contribute to the learner habitus middle-school boys are subjected to

through an authoritative discourse around masculinity which has been constructed and accepted by society. In contributing to a discourse in which hegemonic masculinity is rendered fundamentally opposed to reading, an opposition to reading signifies identification with particular gender configurations.

The aim of this paper was to examine the ways two websites created to promote reading for middle-school boys contribute to and perpetuate constructions of a hegemonic masculinity. The theoretical framework is informed primarily by the theories of Bourdieu and CDA, where I have appropriated habitus and field as a conceptual tool for understanding how the social world speaks to the potential production and reproduction of particular kinds of learner habitus. By invoking Carrington & Luke's concept of literate habitus (1997), I have attempted to explain the way in which a gendered literate habitus is potentially reinforced through the language and images of the websites.

Conclusion

The authors of the websites considered in this paper do not address the many reasons why reading is problematic for some middle-school boys, such as socioeconomic status, which remains the most significant indicator of reading achievement (OECD, 2011). It could be that some middle-school boys are disadvantaged precisely *by* reading interventions which focus on a single version of masculinity as a starting point. In thinking about the ways in which middle-school boys may work to construct their identities, we can see how being repeatedly presented with an image of a boy who performs a 'boy-ish' hegemonic masculinity potentially perpetuates this image as 'right'. The implication here is that an authority is created within the field of reading, and middle-school boys are positioned to accept this narrative, or parts of it. This presents an obstacle for some middle-school boys who may be inclined *away* from reading in order to signal their membership within particular gender constructions. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinities necessitate marginalised masculinities, and in this case, middle-school boys who do not fit within the 'boy-ish' masculinity presented on the websites are discarded. The websites are two examples of a larger authoritative understanding of the boys' literacy crisis, suggesting that a rethinking of the boys' literacy crisis is needed. We need to see the intersectionality of the problem, where education is far more complex than

gender binaries and is complicated by combinations of class, race and gender. The needs of all students should be at the centre of discussions about educational provisions – not only the needs of those who fit within very specific and dominant gender ideologies. The path forward necessitates an illumination of the harm of dominant gender structures, in order to begin deconstructing gender relationally to reading.

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Teaching writing in the NAPLAN era: The experiences of secondary English teachers

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Abstract: While there have been various investigations into the impact of standardised testing in Australian schools over the decade since the introduction of NAPLAN testing, few of these have focused on the extended writing component in particular or on the experiences of secondary English teachers. These teachers are of interest because, despite cross-curricular claims for NAPLAN, they are the teachers most often identified within secondary schools as having responsibility for teaching writing. This paper reports the results of a survey of secondary English teachers piloted in two Australian states in late 2018. As well as their experiences of NAPLAN in their schools, teachers reported on their own writing practices, their knowledge and beliefs about writing, their professional networks and training related to writing, and how they taught writing within a selected class and unit of work. This paper concentrates on what the teachers had to say about their experiences of NAPLAN in their schools, and the extent to which NAPLAN results are reshaping their work.

Introduction

This paper reports findings from a pilot project that aimed to map current writing pedagogies and practices in secondary English classrooms in two states. The research takes place at a crucial moment when the teaching of writing in secondary schools is cast as being in crisis, with stagnant or falling National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) writing results deployed as evidence of neglect or ineptitude (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). However, evidence also suggests that through the last decade of 'the NAPLAN era', schools and teachers have taken up the challenges of a data-driven system to revise their teaching of literacy related skills as defined by NAPLAN. The anniversary of the NAPLAN decade in Australia has been noted by other scholars, particularly Rose, Low-Choy, Singh and Vasco, whose systematic review (2018) concluded that during this decade, large-scale high-stakes testing had reconstituted the purpose of education in Australia, teachers' professional identities and practices, and the engagement of students and parents in school education. The decade of NAPLAN has been characterised by 'miscommunications, misunderstandings and misinterpretations' across all stakeholder groups (Rose et al., 2018, p. 12).

Although NAPLAN was initially positioned as not tied to any curriculum area, it has been English teachers who have taken on major responsibility for it in secondary schools. At the same time, national curriculum reforms have reorganised teachers' work and recalibrated their focus. Lack of alignment between NAPLAN and English curriculum has increased tensions for teachers trying to meet conflicting agendas. Therefore, the project responded to a need identified by English teachers to better understand what is good practice in the teaching of writing in English classrooms, and how this is understood and impacted by current policy levers. Data collected through a survey developed in consultation with state-based English Teacher Associations (ETAs) and case studies in selected schools is intended to provide preliminary insights into current writing pedagogies, the extent to which these have changed

over time, and the impacts of NAPLAN and curriculum reforms on schools and teachers of English.

This is of course not the first survey that researchers have conducted about the effects of NAPLAN. Four years after its implementation, Thompson undertook a survey of primary and secondary teachers across all curriculum areas, recruiting teachers (n=961) in Western Australia and South Australia. However, more than 700 of the respondents were primary teachers (2012). Questions asked in this survey focused on the impact of NAPLAN on teaching and classroom environments, and on teacher stress and self-efficacy. The 'curriculum and pedagogy' items were generic rather than concerned with discipline-specific knowledge or skills, e.g. 'classroom conversations that lead to sustained dialogue' (Thompson, 2012). As the survey was inclusive of all levels of school education, questions were about NAPLAN literacy and numeracy generally rather than as a component of the testing regime (i.e. writing). At around the same time, the Whitlam Institute at Western Sydney University commissioned telephone polling of teachers and parents (n=8300), finding that numerous unintended consequences had followed the introduction of NAPLAN (Dulfer, Polesel & Rice, 2012; Polesel, Dulfer & Turnbull, 2012; Polesel, Rice & Dulfer, 2014). A subsequent qualitative study examined effects on students in terms of health and well-being, behaviour, quality of teaching and learning, and perceptions of the value of the test, concluding that overall, 'NAPLAN was not in the best interests of young Australians' (Wyn, Turnbull & Grimshaw, 2014, p. 6). Howell (2015) also explored children's perspectives on NAPLAN through qualitative methods. A recent survey of Western Australian Independent primary school students (n=465), teachers (n=40) and parents (n=345) focused on emotional distress and found that that NAPLAN produced only minimal impacts for most participants in all these groups (Rogers, Barblett, & Robinson 2016, 2018). However, teachers reported that NAPLAN data tended not to be useful for identifying student weaknesses or for evaluating their own teaching (2018). The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) edited volume on national testing in schools (Lingard, Thompson & Sellar, 2015) brought together much of this work into a sustained argument about the accumulating negative effects of testing regimes. However, none of the chapters specifically addressed the extended writing component or the perspectives of English teachers as a distinct group of stakeholders.

While previous survey-based studies have examined various aspects of the effects of NAPLAN, few studies have focused specifically on teaching writing in the NAPLAN era. Those few that have also recruited their participants (as I did for this study) through their local English teachers' professional associations. Although our surveys were independently developed, and therefore are not directly comparable, they each contribute to a growing pool of knowledge about the NAPLAN effect in English. In New South Wales, Carter, Manuel and Dutton (2018) distributed a questionnaire through the New South Wales ETA focusing on how English teachers assess NAPLAN writing. Participating teachers (n=211) reported consistent 'antipathy to and robust criticisms of' the NAPLAN tests, and identified 'detrimental consequences for teachers, students, school culture and the integrity of the subject, English' (2018, 151). In Queensland, an online survey was distributed by the English Teachers' Association of Queensland (ETAQ) to its members (Simpson Reeves, Exley & Dillon-Wallace, 2018; Simpson Reeves, Dillon-Wallace & Exley 2019). Quantitative data (n=34) suggested that teachers reported 'lack of control, lack of time and a lack of statistical literacy' (Simpson Reeves et al., 2019, p. 66). Open-text responses from 30 teachers in the same study, analysed through Bernstein's notion of classification to examine connections between literacy in NAPLAN and English curriculum and pedagogy, found widely disparate relations, concluding that 'the English learning area is a space of competing agendas', including NAPLAN effects which sometimes limit pedagogic practices (Simpson Reeves et al., 2018, p. 30). All these authors call for further research. Ironically, it appears that many of us have been doing this research – identifying similar issues, using roughly equivalent methods and varied original instruments for our 'pilot' studies, and sometimes using the same routes to potential participants, without being aware of each other's work until afterwards. This was compounded during the period of my study with the distribution in Queensland of a survey on writing (entitled the Australian Writing Survey). This had been commissioned by DEC NSW, piloted with New South Wales teachers who received professional learning credit for completing the survey, and then circulated to Queensland teachers through ETAQ during the same month that my survey was open (NESA, 2019). As yet, no findings appear to have been published from this well-funded study (ILSTE, 2019). It is fair to conclude that teachers may be suffering survey fatigue.

Further, they may be perplexed or frustrated at the lack of consequences or leverage of multiple surveys (as evidence) that might logically be expected to lead to changes in practices or policy.

International survey-based research into the teaching of writing is dominated by research in primary schools and cross-curricular secondary contexts. The national testing context that has created a sense of urgency in the Australian studies is not as apparent. Experts in writing, including Cremin, Myhill, Wyse and others, have conducted surveys for evaluative and exploratory purposes focusing on writing pedagogies in the UK. The survey-based evaluations of *Every child a writer* (n=<300) (Fisher, Myhill & Twist, 2011) and *Big writing* (n=21 pre/ post) (Harland, Lynn & Sainsbury, 2014) demonstrated ambivalent results for government-funded initiatives on writing pedagogies. A recent UK primary school survey (n=88) claimed that no research has 'systematically asked teachers about their teaching of writing' (Dockrell, Marshall & Wyse, 2016, p. 414), finding that the complex cognitive procedures of planning, reviewing and revising were the least common features of primary school writing pedagogies. In the USA, national surveys on the teaching of writing across disciplines have a long history, with key researchers such as Applebee, Langer, Graham and others, who come from educational psychology as well as English curriculum and literacy studies, shaping the field. Seminal work by Applebee and Langer incorporated mixed methods, complementing national surveys with longitudinal case studies of exemplary schools (2011a, 2011b). Survey-based studies in high schools (n=361) (Kiuhara, Graham & Hawken, 2009) and middle schools (n=118) (Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert & Morphy, 2014) focused on writing frequency and use of evidence-based instructional strategies, identified by Graham in earlier research (Graham & Perin, 2007). Although national testing has not been the primary driver of this work, there is some evidence from large-scale surveys that negative impacts of standardised testing are also apparent in US contexts (Sundeen, 2015). To varying degrees, these studies have influenced the design of my survey, as outlined later in this paper.

In Australia, studies into the teaching of writing during the NAPLAN era have tended to be ethnographic case studies. Some of these are framed in terms of educational leadership, policy mediation and equity (Comber & Cormack, 2011) and the restructuring of teachers' work within local policy imperatives (Spina,

2017). The identification of students 'at risk' via NAPLAN testing has been a focus of recent localised analysis (Mayes & Howell, 2018), as has the affective damage of testing (Swain, Pendergast & Cumming, 2018). As I have noted, few studies have focused on secondary schools, or English classrooms. Nevertheless, accounts suggest that NAPLAN is 'changing the rules of the game' by narrowing and modifying writing pedagogies to favour the 'genre' approach that is privileged in the tests (Frawley & McLean Davies, 2015, 89). This reduces attention to and opportunity for creative and imaginative writing (Frawley, 2014; Gannon, 2011, 2014), and for powerful literate practices that connect to students' life-worlds (Comber, 2016). Despite the predominance of case studies, they tend to provide minimal detail on pedagogical practice, and small numbers do not enable cross-case analysis.

Many researchers have questioned the accuracy and appropriateness of NAPLAN assessment. Marking rubrics have led to inconsistency and 'misdirection' of teachers and students about the qualities of effective narrative writing (Caldwell & White, 2017). Inadequate benchmarking of exemplars and disconnections between NAPLAN and curriculum have contributed to teacher confusion about writing quality and 'accelerating negative change' in student writing (Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2016). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) expressed intention to introduce automated marking of the writing tasks has exacerbated the impacts of such discrepancies, and the limits of machine marking have been documented (McCurry, 2010; Perelman, 2017). Finally, further aspects of writing that impact on the effectiveness of writing pedagogies demand attention in Australian secondary school English. These include writing identities (Cremin & Myhill, 2012; Dove & Gannon, 2017) and the affective dimensions of writing (Gannon & Davies, 2007). To varying degrees, these elements have influenced my study.

It is my contention, and that of many researchers cited earlier in this paper, that over the decade of NAPLAN, the accountability processes to which it has been tied at state, system and individual school level mean that the dominance of national testing has become the new normal in Australian schools. Therefore, it is important to examine teachers' perceptions and experiences while there are still significant numbers of teachers in the profession who remember times pre-NAPLAN. There is no evidence that NAPLAN has improved the teaching of writing in Australian schools, despite

its heft as a policy lever. The apparent plateauing of writing, particularly in secondary schools, has been a concern for state and federal governments for some years, reinforced by widespread media-driven panic, with politicians typically blaming teachers and schools (e.g. Birmingham, 2016).

This paper reports on the specific section of the survey that focused directly on NAPLAN and its effects as perceived and experienced by English teachers. Before moving to the design of the survey and the analysis via descriptive statistics of the results of key questions, the following section introduces readers to the participants and their contexts.

Participating teacher and school profiles

Teachers were invited to participate in the study via email and newsletter invitations from their state-based secondary ETAs, ETAQ and the Tasmanian Association for the Teaching of English (TATE). They were directed to the online survey, hosted on Qualtrics.[1] Members who received the invitation were encouraged to share the link with colleagues in their staffrooms or networks; therefore, purposive sampling incorporated a snowball strategy to increase responses (67% were ETA members). During the month that the survey was open, from mid-October to mid-November 2018, 223 participants began the five-part survey. Skip logic in the survey design meant that different parts of the survey opened for different groups, as not all components of the survey were relevant to all participants. Several exit points were designed into the survey, including that participants were 'current English teachers', defined as having taught English in a secondary school during the 12 months prior to completing the survey, and being teachers in either Queensland or Tasmania. The total number of participants who fulfilled the current teaching requirement across both states was 181.

Demographic data in Part 1, 'You as a teacher', confirmed that participants were a representative sample of the secondary English teaching specialisation across sectors, regions, school Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) values, ages and years of experience. Queensland teachers totalled 125 (69%) and Tasmanian teachers totalled 55 (31%), reflecting the relative size of the profession in each state. This compares well with the scope of previous surveys. For example, Thompson's survey in 2012, distributed to teachers in primary and secondary schools in Western Australia and South Australia, elicited 233 responses from secondary teachers across

all subject areas. So the current survey, restricted to a smaller pool of English teachers in two different states, yielded an adequate sample from which to begin to draw conclusions. Results are reported as aggregates, as comparison between sectors and jurisdictions was not allowed under the conditions of the Queensland Education Department's ethics approval.

Responses that focused on the profiles of schools, rather than teachers, also suggested wide distribution. Of the 172 responses to questions about their schools, the largest participant group came from teachers working in state schools (64%), followed by similar percentages of teachers from the Catholic (19%) and Independent sectors (17%). These are very close to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics report that 65.6% of students attended public schools, 19.9 % Catholic schools, and 14.5% Independent schools (ABS, 2018). Also reflecting school distribution patterns, most schools were urban (60%), followed by regional schools (38%). The smallest group consisted of 3 remote schools (3%). Reflecting well-established patterns of geographic disadvantage, the remote schools also had the lowest ICSEA scores, while almost half the urban schools (49%) had ICSEA scores of over 1000 (the statistical mean for the ICSEA for Australian schools, developed for NAPLAN). Further, relative advantage between school systems was as expected, with Independent schools having the highest ICSEA profiles (24 schools were over 1000 ICSEA vs 5 below 1000), and state schools having the lowest ICSEA profiles (31 schools over 1000 ICSEA vs 77 below). Participating Catholic schools were predominantly above 1000 ICSEA (25 schools vs 9 below).

School sizes were well distributed, with a skew to larger schools as would be expected in secondary schools. The largest group of respondents was in the range 500–999 students (33%), followed by 1000–1499 (29%). In most systems, these schools would have an English specialist faculty with a designated English Head of Department. Smaller schools in the range 100–499 (16%) and very large schools (12%) were also represented. ICSEA values followed a similar spread, with the largest group being 900–999 (36%), followed by 1000–1099 (35%). Overall, the majority of responses came from schools just above or just below the ICSEA mean of 1000. However, a small number of schools (2.9%, n=4) had ICSEA values of less than 700, indicating significant disadvantage, and a small number (1.7%, n=3) were above 1200, suggesting significant advantage.

The teachers who participated in this survey were broadly representative across a range of demographic factors. Respondents reflected the age profile of the profession in that the largest group was 30–39 years of age (29%), followed by 40–49 (26%), then 50–59 (18%), with the smallest groups at either end of the range comprising young teachers aged 20–29 (18%) and close-to-retirement teachers aged 60–69 (9%). Reflecting changing degree structures for secondary teaching over time, their initial teacher education degrees comprised Graduate Diplomas (38%), double degrees at Bachelor level (29%), or Bachelor degrees (29%). Fewer participants held the Masters degrees that have become more common routes into teaching (11%). The majority of participants (85%) had been trained as secondary specialists, and had studied secondary English teaching methods (73%). In terms of length of service, these tended to be highly experienced teachers. The largest groups were 20% (33) who had taught for 6–10 years, 18% (n=30) who had taught for 11–15 years, and 16% (27) who had taught for 3–5 years. Teachers with more than 15 years' experience included those who had taught for 16–20 years (13%, n=22), those who had taught for 21–30 years (14%, n= 24), 31–40 years (7%, n=12), and more than 41+ years (2%, n=4). The least experienced respondents included those who had taught for 1–2 years (5%), for between 6 months and 1 year (4%) and for less than 6 months (1%). In the context of this study, a combined percentage of 55% respondents had begun their teaching careers in English prior to the introduction of NAPLAN testing, while 45% had begun teaching after the introduction of NAPLAN in 2008. For the most experienced group in particular, it is fair to assume that they have reconciled themselves to multiple state and federally mandated changes to English curriculum throughout their careers. In Queensland these have included the radical reform of the New Basics curriculum (see Mills & McGregor, 2016), as well as more recent local reforms that have moved Year 7 into secondary schools and reintroduced external examinations in Year 12. Both Queensland and Tasmania were early adopters of the ACARA-developed national Australian Curriculum (K–10, from 2012), and have recently adopted versions of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. The participants were predominantly in secure permanent employment (87%), with a small group (9%) employed on contracts greater than six months. These are the teachers who have implemented these curriculum changes, and often led change within their schools.

While the study was interested in teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the teaching of writing, it also focused on the intimate pedagogical practices of the secondary classroom, where teaching and learning within a discipline are orchestrated by the expert teacher in a specific milieu. Therefore, Part 2 of the survey, 'Your English class', invited participants to select one class and recall the last unit of work they had taught to that class, and to report on the writing pedagogies and assessment components of that unit. The total number of participants who provided details of the last unit they had taught was 114. These results will be reported elsewhere. Another qualitative component of the study to be reported in other publications entailed case studies of pedagogical practice in situ in particular schools. As noted, this paper focuses on the survey items directly related to NAPLAN. Results from these items are reported and discussed in the remainder of the paper.

Design and structure of the survey
The online survey had five parts. As well as Part 1, 'You as a teacher', and Part 2, 'Your English class', the survey continued with Part 3, 'Writing in your school', and Part 4, 'Your networks and resources', while the brief Part 5, 'Conclusion', invited final thoughts on the teaching of writing and on the pilot survey. The NAPLAN effect featured mainly in Part 3, where teachers reported on their experience of NAPLAN inside their school. The survey was lengthy but gathered considerable information on domains of practice. Despite its length (123 questions in total, though not all questions were available to all participants), only one of the open-ended comment responses (n=23) to the final question, which requested feedback on survey items and design, identified its length as a problem. However, there was some attrition through the survey, with Part 2 completed by 166 respondents, Part 3 by 136, and Part 4 by 133. Forced responses were not demanded. This was a design feature that had been negotiated with expert panels as being more respectful of teachers' time and autonomy. The design and reporting of the survey did not require extensive data matching, so I have included all responses that were submitted between the opening and closing dates, regardless of whether or not a respondent answered every question.

Different sections of the survey were informed by previous research. For example, the large-scale surveys of writing pedagogies undertaken in the USA by Applebee and Langer (2011b) were reviewed for their

relevance to Australian contexts. Part 2 was inspired by Graham et al. (2007, 2014), who asked teachers to nominate one class and reflect on their teaching of writing. In this survey, teachers were invited to select an English class from Years 7–10 and to report on the last unit of work they had completed with that class. Among the questions in that section was one that asked teachers to rank-order evidence-based instructional strategies for improving writing that they had used in that unit. I extracted these strategies from Graham and Perin (2007), adjusting the language where necessary to make it consistent with Australian contexts. Further, my own extensive experience as an English teacher, curriculum adviser, ordinary and executive member of English teachers' professional associations, and a researcher and teacher educator contributed to the wording of questions. I drew on Australian research and professional resources including textbooks written for the profession (e.g. Boas & Gazis, 2016; Gannon, Howie & Sawyer, 2009).

The draft survey was piloted with Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) national executive members, state executive members of ETAQ and TATE, and a sample of current English teachers in New South Wales. All expert advice was adopted in subsequent drafts of the survey. The process also incorporated cognitive testing of a paper copy of the survey via a think-aloud protocol in which a current English teacher spoke aloud as she answered each question to identify ambiguities or unintended effects. Two quantitative survey design experts in my workplace were consulted on the draft and their suggestions were incorporated. Finally, the survey was submitted and approved by the university ethics committee. State-based education department approvals were also sought for the study. The online survey was constructed and retested by AATE and state ETA executives. The survey went live on 14 October 2018, with invitations distributed via ETAQ and TATE email member lists. Reminders were sent after a fortnight, and during the week prior to the close of the survey. The survey was closed just over one month later (16 November 2018) to allow for weekend completion, as these had been the most fruitful times for teachers to respond.

Findings: Writing in your school

Part 3 of the survey, 'Writing in your school', comprised questions that required teachers to move their gaze from the ecology of their own classroom to that of their school as a whole. They included closed-choice and open-text questions, and in this section, I approach them chronologically, as they appeared in the survey. Eight questions specifically named NAPLAN, while a further question asked teachers about evidence they have found useful in teaching writing. Respondents who were currently working in schools and who chose to complete this section numbered 136; some participants did not respond because they do not have Year 9 at their school (e.g. Tasmania's senior colleges). In reporting these results, I have foregrounded teachers' voices in the open-ended responses and considered what stories the statistical results seem to suggest. However, it is important to note that this is a descriptive study, which does not claim causal or other powerful statistical relationships.

Perceptions and judgements

Questions asked respondents to make judgements about NAPLAN effects and qualities, including the sorts of comparisons that are enabled by the My School algorithms for 'like' schools. The first question in this section asked: '*What is your perception of the sustained writing component of NAPLAN testing*?' with three sections referencing Year 9 student results at their school. Using a 5-point Likert scale that used the same descriptors as ACARA (substantially above/above/close to/below/substantially below), teachers indicated how the Year 9 writing results at their school '*(i) compared to schools with similar students, (ii) compared to schools in their state, (iii) compared to schools in Australia'*. Importantly, in an earlier question on ICSEA value, the survey had included a live hyperlink to the My School website so that respondents could be precise in their answers. It is therefore logical to assume that many respondents would have refreshed their knowledge of writing results by the time they reached this section of the survey. In order to ensure anonymity of sites, broad descriptors of bands rather than numbers were reported. Further, in this discussion, I have rounded up and down to full numbers rather than fractions.

Comparisons – against means, other students, other schools, other year levels and other states, and between sectors – have become the *raison d'etre* of NAPLAN (particularly as results are displayed on the My School website). In the survey, therefore, the question of comparison was of crucial importance. It is notable, but unsurprising, that the largest response for all items (47%, n=57) was that of 'close to' for (i) 'Writing result compared to schools with similar students'. But in looking at numbers and the stories they can tell, I also

wanted to retain some sense of the mutability of the numbers and their scope for multiple interpretations. Overall, at first glance these English teachers seem to be more positive about achievements in writing in Year 9 than negative. When results indicating 'close to' are read as 'positive' and included with the 'above' and 'significantly above' responses, then comparison to schools with similar students is most positive (77%), followed by comparison across the state (67%), and across the nation (61%). However, if 'close to' is interpreted as negative, or as a concern about the writing results – and that depends on discourses within schools and governments around continuous improvement, on the strategies that are promoted to achieve this, and on the indicators that are used to measure success – then the order changes. If 'close to' is understood as meaning not good enough and is bundled into a negativity grouping with 'below' and 'significantly below', then 74% are concerned about comparisons with the whole country, 70% are concerned about comparisons with schools with similar students, and 65% with comparisons with the state.[2]

Put this way, it is possible to read into these numbers an underlying state of anxiety about writing that is most intense at the furthest distance. That is, in a figurative sense, the looming and amorphous shadow of 'all Australian schools' impacts at the specific points that are individual schools and the teachers working within them. It may seem unfair – at least unorthodox, at worst heresy – to bundle statistics in this way, but as I have argued elsewhere (Gannon, 2013), numbers can also be pressed into narrative modes. In a more straightforward reading, it is interesting to note the very small percentage of schools where Year 9 results are 'substantially above' those of similar students (2%), the state (3%), or the nation (3%). The results for 'substantially below' are more than double these (similar students 4%, state 8%, nation 10%). By considering ICSEA values from an earlier question, alongside teachers' perceptions of writing results, it is clear that *all* of the responses that exhibit concern about writing results are from teachers in schools below 1000 ICSEA. These results are not surprising, given that so much research has been done in Australia linking entrenched disadvantage to learning outcomes within the context of NAPLAN (e.g. Lingard et al., 2015).

Trends and rationales

The next set of questions focused on the directionality of NAPLAN writing results. Teachers were asked,

'*What is the trend in the quality of writing in Year 9 at your school in NAPLAN?*' Three closed-choice options invited them to indicate whether the writing results had *increased, decreased* or remained *flat* over the last two testing points (2017, 2018). For the respondents to this question (n=111), distribution was relatively even, with a slight inclination towards improvement: increased 35%, flat 34%, decreased 31%. When this was considered alongside ICSEA values, it became evident that for those schools with an ICSEA value of less than 1000, the trend is more likely to be downward (42%) than to remain flat (36%) or to increase (23%). What has happened inside those schools that have increased writing results is of particular interest.

The more interesting analysis that was enabled by this set of questions was the reasons to which participants ascribed this trend. Therefore, the follow-up question comprised an open-ended text question asking '*How do you explain the results in writing in Year 9 at your school?*' There were 108 responses overall; however, I treated them by forming two groups. I isolated the comments from those who indicated *increased* NAPLAN results in the preceding question into one group, and the comments from those who indicated *decreased* NAPLAN results into another group. Then I approached these groups of comments separately in order to identify whether patterns were apparent that I could organise into themes within the groups and then compare between the groups to examine the extent to which they differed. I was interested in how teachers think about success and lack of success, and how they explain this. That is, what relationships did teachers see between school strategies and milieu, what teachers and students do in classrooms, and writing quality as measured by NAPLAN?

Of the teachers who had reported an *increase* in writing quality and who keyed in a comment to explain this trend (n=26), half (n=13) explained the result in terms of a *school-wide focus* on literacy, writing or reading. These responses varied in wording and emphasis: for example, 'Writing is a targeted focus for all staff at our school, and writing practice is meant to be embedded into all lessons' and 'We have had a very specific, targeted program of teaching writing across all subject areas in our school. All teachers see themselves as being responsible for the teaching of writing'. A longer response along these lines was 'We have had a great literacy, and particularly in writing, focus the last few years. We've exposed students to a variety of text types, taught using the 6 Traits of Writing, and this

focus is not just in the English classroom but extends to all subject areas'. As well as the '6 Traits of Writing' program mentioned in this answer, other specific packaged approaches that were named as part of whole-school approaches were 'Reading to Learn' and the 'Collins Writing Program'. A small number (n=3) included explanations that indicated teaching explicitly to the NAPLAN test. For example, 'Two [Year 8] classes taught by an experienced NAPLAN marker; teacher wove aspects of NAPLAN into every lesson' and 'A lot more teaching to the elements of NAPLAN, integrated into curriculum aspects of NAPLAN, repetition, practice etc built into planners and work for English units within our school'. A counter-response appeared to be offered in one comment from a teacher who had led programs within the school: 'We do not teach to NAPLAN, rather [we] use the NAPLAN writing criteria to set specific writing goals for students and ensure teachers understand what these writing skills entail and have the pedagogies to effectively teach them'. Reorganisation within schools was also mentioned by several respondents: for example, 'The school moved to providing English classes (as opposed to Humanities integration)', 'The school has employed a teacher librarian and the benefits of this reading and writing focus are beginning to be seen', and 'commitment to getting students writing every day'. Focus on students' diverse needs was mentioned in one response as 'remedial intervention for students who struggle'. Another respondent explained that improvement was due to 'increased awareness and focus about data'. Many of the responses referenced the professional learning and pedagogical changes that teachers had undertaken or led. One response explained succinctly that the increase in writing results was due to 'hard working teachers'. Overall, improvement, as it was explained by these teachers, could be summed up as being the result of sustained, systematic pedagogical attention to writing across school and faculties.

Conversely, it was important to ascertain the reasons that teachers gave for *decreases* in writing quality. Of the 32 responses in this category, close to half (n=14) described *characteristics of students* as the reason for poorer results. These included attitudinal, emotional and demographic factors. These qualities manifested in ways that students interacted with the test itself, or in their perceived abilities. Most often named was a version of 'lack of engagement': for example, 'Weak Year 9 cohort and lack of student engagement. Multiple students either refused to write in NAPLAN,

or wrote very little'. This attitudinal explanation was evident in numerous answers, for example 'Students are disengaged in writing. Year 9 students are 'over' NAPLAN, they don't value it'. However, lack of interest was also seen as a logical response: 'students are not enjoying the prompts and the artificial nature of the test. Writing under 'test conditions' on topics/ prompts that they are not invested in has had an impact'. Poignantly, one respondent noted that 'Year 9 students seem to develop emotional and anxiety issues'. Particular issues were identified for students from English as a Second Language and Indigenous backgrounds: for example, 'A large EAL and NESB population' and 'the 2018 stimulus (speculating about future technology) was very challenging for students like ours, most of whom are from remote Indigenous communities, and do not have the cultural knowledge to explore relevant ideas'. Qualities of the test were identified as reasons for decrease, including where careful preparation for the test had gone awry: 'Students relied on the top level structure of for and against, whereas the question asked for students to account for advantages of recently invented products'. The poor result was also linked by one teacher to the online trial. Pedagogical approaches directed explicitly towards NAPLAN were seen as problematic when there is excessive 'preoccupation with explicit teaching and direct instruction' and 'students are being scaffolded more and are not able to write without scaffolding'. As well as noting students who lacked confidence, skills and independence, the next most common theme (n=8) referred to a lack of coherence or commitment across the school: 'Lack of whole school vision/goals around writing', 'Inconsistent practice in junior secondary', 'Not enough people following known structures and template or providing students with the answer (rubrics, models) prior to writing tasks', and 'No school wide writing plan; writing is seen as the job of English teachers'. This is summed up by the comment 'Coordination of the whole school writing program needs reinforcing and teacher uptake/training'. One respondent commented succinctly, 'I don't care. It's a stupid test'.

While explanations for decreasing scores varied, it is important to note their pedagogical implications. If teachers think that the 'fault' lies primarily with the nature or behaviours of the students, then strategies may focus on 'changing' the students where that might be possible (e.g. anxiety reduction or behaviour modification). In other words, explanations and strategies will focus on deficits within the students,

whereas in contrast, when school-wide pedagogical factors are the primary explanation, then consistent whole-school pedagogical reform around the teaching of writing, supported by targeted professional learning, seems feasible and purposive. Further, if the results improve in subsequent years as a result of whole-school pedagogical reform, then 'change' in students' skills and capacities in writing would also have been secured.

NAPLAN time

NAPLAN's impact on schools has also been described in previous studies in terms of how much time and attention is diverted to NAPLAN preparation. This survey asked teachers to consider '*How does the school as a whole prepare students in Years 7 and 9 for NAPLAN testing?*' To answer this question they could select items from a drop-down menu of nine items (allowing selection of multiple items, including 'other'). The most common selection was 'practicing NAPLAN tests in class' (27%, n=77), followed by 'a redesigned English program' (18%, n=51). If NAPLAN has become a default curriculum, at least for some of the time and for some of the students and teachers in a school, then this may not be seen as problematic. If, however, NAPLAN test practice takes time from other important learning opportunities, or if NAPLAN has precipitated English curriculum redesign by stealth, then this might be of concern. A 'whole-school focus' (14%, n=39) was the third most popular selection, followed by a disavowal of the question premise in 'it does not prepare students specifically for NAPLAN' (12%, n=33). These items carried over into the following question, which focused directly on temporality.

The question asking '*What percentage of time in Year 7 and 9 English classes is spent on NAPLAN preparation prior to the tests in May?*' was open-ended. It presented a quantitative veneer (i.e. an estimate of percentage) over what is likely to be a more subjectively experienced dimension of English (i.e. 'How much time do I feel is given over to NAPLAN prep in English classes?'). Therefore, the survey provided a text box for responses so that their diversity, including affective dimensions that would be overlooked in a numerical approach, could be captured. In total, there were 126 responses, including 10 that gave no answer but noted 'unsure', 'don't know', or 'n/a' in the text box. Only 45% (n=52) of the total remaining responses (n=116) provided a direct answer to the question in the requested form of a definitive indication of percentage. Of those responses,

17% (n=9) said 0 (also expressed in words as 'none', or 'zero'), while 12% (n=6) said 100% (including two 'all' responses). A further 15% (n=8) gave a percentage between 50% and 90% of time in English spent on NAPLAN preparation prior to the test. Additional qualitative responses of 'too much/ a lot' (4%, n=5) seemed to represent similar dissatisfaction. Further responses came in the form of temporal units of time specific to schools – terms or weeks, for example '10 weeks', 'Term 1, Year 9', or 'we do a NAPLAN unit for Term 2' to indicate large quantities of dedicated time.

Conversely, other respondents minimised the NAPLAN effect in their schools. At the lower end of the temporal scale, as well as those who said 0 or none, were 7% of responses (n=8) which indicated that '5%' of class time was dedicated to NAPLAN preparation, and 10% (n=11) which indicated '10%' of time, while 15% (n=17) indicated comparable perceptions through qualitative comments such 'not much', 'very little' and 'a couple of lessons'. Responses included philosophical defences for the approaches taken within the school: 'we simply teach for life, not the test', 'better value in continuing with a rigorous teaching and learning program' and 'None specifically. We believe that teaching English is the focus we should have and if we do that well then we should be providing students with the skills and knowledge that will be tested by NAPLAN'. These responses could be continuations of thinking patterns from the previous question. Two responses stated that students were taken out across the school for preparation, rather than it being the responsibility of English. Three mentioned dedicated weekly 'skills' lessons structured into English, while another said that English assessment tasks had been realigned to NAPLAN. Mobilising and perhaps transcending the temporality of NAPLAN, one response said that 'NAPLAN preparation begins with good explicit teaching in June of the previous year!'

The complexities entailed in reading this question might be seen as problematic in a quantitative sense. However, it touches on a deep binary in how teaching and learning in English are seen by teachers to be in opposition to NAPLAN (i.e. competing for time, attention and pedagogical interest), or to have potential for complementing each other. One of the responses to this question introduced curriculum as a factor: 'Tasks throughout the year which align to the curriculum but prepare students well for NAPLAN requirements'. Roughly, the responses could be classified as around 48% indicating that NAPLAN had an excessive influence

on English, while around 34% indicated that NAPLAN was not a primary driver of what happens in English classrooms in Years 7 and 9. Therefore it appears fair to conclude from the responses to this question that the current situation in schools is widely varied. For this group of respondents across two states, dissatisfaction is more evident than not. Since 2016, ACARA has been more explicit about intentions to align English curriculum and NAPLAN assessment (NAP, 2019), but insists, perhaps disingenuously, that 'teaching the curriculum' is the best preparation. It seems that how schools are taking up this advice is erratic and may indicate greater awareness of consequences than ACARA has acknowledged.

Consequences

NAPLAN has become a powerful policy lever for changing practices in schools, for example when funding has been tied to testing results (e.g. Morrison, 2017), and is generally understood by researchers and schools, if not by ACARA, as 'high stakes' (Lingard et al., 2015). It is important therefore to ask teachers about the local consequences for their schools. While the survey did not ask for precise detail, thus preserving the anonymity of sites, it did ask directly and in a readily measurable manner what those consequences had been. In one question, teachers were asked to consider whether '*In your view, has your school experienced any of the following consequences from NAPLAN*' in terms of *school funding* (increased/no change/decreased) and *enrolments* (increased/no change/ decreased). And in the subsequent question they evaluated consequences in terms of *media attention* (positive/negative), *changes to teaching and learning* (positive/ negative), and *changes to curriculum* (positive/ negative). Responses to these questions indicated that there had been no change in school funding for 88% of respondents (n=106), while for 12% (n=15) there had been an increase in funding. No schools reported loss of funding as a result of NAPLAN results. Cross-referenced to school systems and ICSEA, it is clear that 13 of the schools that had received an increase in funding were state schools, and 2 were Catholic schools. However, only 11 of the schools that had received increased funding (all of them state schools) were in ICSEA bands below 1000. Shifts in enrolments had been slight, with 7% of respondents (n=9) reporting an increase in enrolments and 2% (n=3) reporting a decrease in enrolments, while the large majority at 90% (n=110) reported no change.

The next question was '*In your view, has your school experienced any of the following consequences from NAPLAN?*' (*media attention/ changes to teaching and learning/changes to curriculum*). Respondents chose either 'positive' or 'negative'. Only 34 respondents noted that their school had received *media attention* for their NAPLAN results, with exactly the same numbers of respondents (50%, n=17) reporting positive and negative media attention. Larger numbers (n=88) of respondents reported on changes to *teaching and learning* as positive (61%, n=64) or negative (39%, n=34). Perhaps the broadly positive evaluation of teaching and learning effects might indicate that issues of perennial importance to English teachers (i.e. literacy, fluency of expressive writing) were now elevated in importance and attention in their school, or it may reflect an impression that practices within English classrooms had become more purposeful and explicit, even if NAPLAN had been the vehicle. Given the levels of experience among this cohort of teachers, without doubt many of them would have been leading change in teaching and learning within the school and may consequently have had an additional sense of investment, including pride when results improved. This resonates with the notion of 'horizontal accountability' as is it mobilised by Simpson Reeves et al. (2019), where commitment is to peers and the local context rather than to more distant influences. The third item, *changes in curriculum*, would tend to point outside the school, to the new curriculum that teachers have been required to operationalise within the school. For *changes to curriculum*, responses (n=77) are close to evenly split between positive (52%, n=40) and negative (48%, n=37). This seems to reinforce the finding of 'disparate responses' of Simpson Reeves et al. (2018). However, it does not provide direction for further potential reform.

Responsibilities and consequences

The next set of questions turned to perceptions about who bears responsibility for NAPLAN in the school, which was the initial impetus for the study's focus on English teachers. Therefore, the next question simply asked, '*Does NAPLAN have different consequences for English teachers than it has for other teachers at your school?*' As might be expected, more respondents answered 'yes' (n=78, 62%) than 'no' (n=48, 38%). How 'consequences' was interpreted became evident in responses (n=77) to the subsequent question: '*If yes, please explain*'. Although the question did not demand negative consequences

(for example, increased resources for English would be a feasible response to the question), the answers were almost all about negative impacts – with only 4 that could be considered relatively neutral or that endeavoured to put a useful spin on it (e.g. 'Yes, BUT it is mediated through the leadership of the HOD and understanding by the team around what NAPLAN is, and what it does').

The negative responses fell under several interrelated themes. The largest group of responses (n=20, 26%) explicitly noted that there was increased 'responsibility' or 'accountability' for English teachers, while others implied this without using these words directly, e.g. 'when admin discuss data, finger is always pointed initially at English', or the rhetorical question 'Why don't they know how?' which seems to imply the same sentiment. Another group (n=12, 16%) explicitly used the words 'pressure', 'load' or 'burden' in an even stronger indication of the effects of NAPLAN on English teachers. Other responses elaborated on the premise of the question by explaining in more detail how English was different from other subject areas, with several indicating dissonance between school policy or rhetoric, and actual practice – with material impacts: for example, 'English teachers are always the first to roll something new out, and sometimes the only ones who roll out a particular pedagogy or program (even though it is maintained that it is school-wide practice)', 'If results increase, we're celebrated, but if results drop, it's seen as a problem with our teaching', and similarly, 'If writing NAPLAN results are poor, the responsibility rests with the English staff'.

Consequences were also described in terms of reorganisation within the school. For example, 'Loss of ENG lessons on timetable due to no increase in results' and 'Year 7 students spend two 70 minutes per week in a subject we call 'Grammar Time' … in Year 8 and 9, one lesson a week is devoted to teaching grammar, writing and reading (taken from Humanities time)'. Many responses referenced issues that had been addressed earlier in the survey, such as time redirected to NAPLAN preparation so that it 'eats into our curriculum time' and realignment of in-school assessment tasks to mimic NAPLAN. Broad frustration was evident in other responses, such as 'We get stuck with the stupid task of teaching to a dumb test', and the disinterest of other teachers: 'There are many, many teachers on staff here that would never have seen a NAPLAN test'. Overall, the nature of the subject as it is perceived by others means that 'literacy

is the job of English teachers' or 'viewed as an English 'thing' rather than a school 'thing''. Although some responses acknowledged that Maths teachers were also impacted, English teachers were differently burdened because 'English is subjective and not a question of right or wrong hence it is harder to gain outstanding results or 10/10 that can be more easily achieved in maths'. The stakes are higher in naming and shaming for English teachers: 'I don't remember any specific mention of numeracy in staff meetings the way I have of literacy'. Many of the responses identified the need for authentic whole-school support and responsibility, and frustration that this had not been realised.

As NAPLAN is defended through the discourses of evidence-based practice, it was important to ask how useful the evidence that it provides is for teachers in informing the teaching and learning of writing. Therefore, the final question in this section asked teachers to rank-order different types of evidence: *'Which evidence has been most useful to you this year in your teaching of writing? Please order from 1 (most useful) – 8 (least useful)'*. For this question, relative significance is best represented by the mean for each item, with the lowest mean indicating highest importance. Most useful for teachers was 'non-assessed writing (e.g. notebooks, drafts, journals, etc)' (mean =2.57), suggesting that formative means of assessing student progress remain most useful, followed by 'summative writing assignments' (m=2.63), and 'discussions with students about their writing' (m=2.77). These are familiar and perennial in-class assessment practices in English classrooms that develop and draw upon the professional judgements of teachers. Much further down in usefulness came 'in-class tests' (m=4.29), and then NAPLAN results in fifth place (m=4.91). All of the remaining items came much later. External commercial writing test packages produced by ACER follow as 'commercial tests', e.g. PAT (Progressive Assessment Test) (m=5.54) and e-Write (m= 6.80), while the undifferentiated 'other' option also comes towards the end of the list (m=6.47). It seems that although NAPLAN has become part of the evidence apparatus that informs their work, it has not replaced *any* of the in-class assessment mechanisms that have always been used by English teachers. While NAPLAN may be important, it is not as useful as any of these for refining the teaching of writing. These results parallel the views of teachers in New South Wales, the majority of whom expressed antipathy to the notion that NAPLAN provided English teachers with important

information about literacy skills (Carter et al., 2018). Given that NAPLAN's expressed intentions include that it 'gives teachers information about their students' skills and understandings' to assist 'teachers to reflect on the construction and delivery of their learning programs' (ACARA, 2017, p. 4), it seems to be failing even in its own terms.

Conclusion

The results of this pilot study are provisional and limited by factors such as sample size, availability of resources, risks of potential 'halo effect' from the researcher's previous critique of NAPLAN, and survey design considerations. However, I have done my best to ensure that the survey was fit for its purpose and could elicit useful information about the effects of NAPLAN on secondary English teachers, and that it was able to produce reliable, valid and interesting results. The process of testing drafts of the survey with various experts in the English teaching profession, and with quantitative research design experts, assisted with this. I hope that its results can contribute to further understanding the consequences for schools and teachers of the NAPLAN era.

This project began with the concern that English teachers were a group within secondary schools whose work and reputation had been most impacted by the high-stakes testing of NAPLAN. The results from the survey, conducted with a representative sample of English teachers across sectors and locations in Queensland and Tasmania, add to the growing and unequivocal evidence from teachers in other states questioning 'the premise, validity and purpose' of NAPLAN testing (e.g. Carter et al., 2018, p. 145). Further, it begins to document the impacts in a key secondary curriculum area of pedagogical practices skewing towards NAPLAN test-taking.

As ACARA has control of both NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum, the guise of alignment has recently been claimed by that authority (e.g. ACARA, 2017). However, detail of this alignment has remained thin, pointing broadly to NAPLAN genres of 'imaginative', 'persuasive' and 'informative' texts and the same rubrics that predated this announcement (ACARA, 2017, pp. 14–16). Nevertheless, as other researchers have found, English teachers express widely divergent views and considerable ambivalence about NAPLAN. As one of the anonymous reviewers of this article pointed out, teachers always find ways of reconciling themselves to reforms. The survey does

suggest that while they continue, as far as they can, to incorporate good practice in writing as they understand it and to exercise professional judgement in pedagogical design, English teachers have simultaneously been working hard to meet the demands of NAPLAN. These are sometimes seen to be at odds with good pedagogy in writing. However, to the extent that NAPLAN has drawn attention to literacy and language, and the explicit teaching of these – including across the curriculum – English teachers may be feeling vindicated about the importance of their subject. In school, English teachers are often charged with the responsibility for improving NAPLAN results and they have risen to the occasion, despite lingering concerns about NAPLAN effects and uneven implications for English teachers. While it is difficult to see a resolution to the current impasse, which sees the nation addicted to high-stakes testing and statistical data produced by NAPLAN and displayed on the My School website, it is heartening to be reminded of the hard work and commitment of English teachers to their students and their subject.

Notes

1　Although the exact ratio to population cannot be confidently ascertained, it is important to note that in 2018 ETA Presidents estimated populations as follows. ETAQ sends out 2200 newsletters, which includes faculty memberships as well as individual, retired, university-based and casual or pre-service teacher members who may not be attached to a particular school. TATE has 210 memberships, including faculty memberships of up to 15 individuals.

2　Please contact the author for a supplementary file of tables displaying these statistics.

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Two case studies of English leadership, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English and professional standards in a performative context: A Foucauldian perspective

Arlene Roberts

Abstract: This article draws on Foucault's work on subjectivity (Foucault, 2000), which has been furthered by Keddie and Niesche's (2017) interpretation of Foucault's work on ethics to explore English leaders' work in two government high schools in Victoria, Australia. A review of the educational literature shows that Foucauldian research in the UK (Gillies, 2008, 2013) and in Australia (Heffernan, 2018; Niesche, 2013) focuses on principals as school leaders. Middle level leadership, which is the leadership space occupied by most English leaders, is yet to be fully explored using a Foucauldian paradigm. Similar to global (Holloway & Brass, 2017) and national trends (Gannon, 2012), English leaders in Victoria work in a performative context (Doecke, 2007; Manuel, Carter, & Dutton, 2018). However, this study shows that despite the performative context, two middle level leaders employ leadership practices that are based on an ethical framework (Foucault, 2002, 2003) revealing different views and practices of leadership, data and performance standards from what is intended by the performativity culture in high schools in Victoria.

Introduction

Similar to global and national trends, leaders of subject English, as middle level leaders in high schools in Victoria, Australia, have particular struggles and challenges. Their work includes teaching a number of classes, as well as leading a team of English teachers in the construction and implementation of the school's English curriculum and supporting a diverse group of students who are undertaking one or more of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Englishes.[1] At least one English subject is compulsory for students in their final year of school undertaking the VCE and aiming for an Australian Tertiary Achievement Rank (ATAR) for tertiary study.

The study that informs this paper explores the work of English leaders by drawing on the practices and views of Anna and James who are experienced English leaders at Sandy Heights Secondary College and Newtown Secondary College respectively. The specific purpose of this paper is to show the usefulness of a Foucauldian lens (Foucault, 2000, 2002, 2003; Keddie & Niesche, 2017) to analyse English leaders' responses to leadership, data and the professional standards which are current features of the performative context (Ball, 2003) in Victorian government schools. The Foucauldian lens provides insights into the responses of the two

leaders, who experience moral and ethical pressures when working in a performative context.

There are three key elements to the performative context in Victorian government schools. The first element is leadership knowledge and training (Bastow, 2019; DETV, 2007), which can manoeuvre leaders to arrive at a position of 'responsibilisation' (Gobby, Keddie & Blackmore, 2018) and lead some English leaders to become 'enterprising sel(ves)' who are 'successful' within the system (Ball, 2003). Other leaders, however, may show some resistance to the leadership training in this performative context and may experience inner conflict and inauthenticity (Ball 2003). The second element is the release of myriad forms of data (particularly student achievement learning data in the current context) to monitor and compare schools, students, teachers and leaders, including English leaders. The third element is the professional standards developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and embedded in the Performance and Development process (PDP) that is used to monitor and judge the work of leaders and teachers.

Why Foucault?

The Victorian performative context is consistent with worldwide trends in other education contexts. Michel Foucault's writings and lectures (Foucault, 1982, 1991, 2000, 2002, 2003) have been utilised by many international and national educational researchers to draw attention to the usefulness of a Foucauldian lens for understanding the performative context of education within the UK, USA and Australia. Gillies (2008), using Foucault, has shown how education policy in the UK is based around standards, excellence and 'choice', which, he contends, are the elements of a performative context. Referencing Foucault, Holloway and Brass (2017) completed a comparative study of teachers in the USA to explain how teacher identity and practices have changed from 2005 to 2015. In Holloway and Brass's (2017) study of teacher identity undertaken in 2003–2005, teachers defined their professionalism in terms of their own professional knowledge and relationships with students; they defied standardisation, believing that 'achievement tests failed to measure learning' (p. 18). However, in their study undertaken in 2013–2015, Holloway and Brass (2017) show how teachers in the USA had become performative teachers, defined by targets and indicators. In Australia, Niesche's study (2011, 2015) of

school leaders in disadvantaged schools in Queensland reveals how principals 'are becoming perpetually assessable subjects' (p. 133) in an education system characterised by performativity. Heffernan (2016), in another Queensland study, has used Foucault to understand and theorise school leadership and data in a performative context governed by what she terms 'leadership by numbers' (p. 379).

Stephen Ball (2012) provides us with thoughtful reasoning about why Foucauldian thinking and writing are useful for understanding contemporary educational trends in performative contexts. Ball alerts us to the idea that educational researchers have mainly utilised the disciplinary aspects of Foucault's work. Ball (2012) wants to remind us, however, that while Foucault was throughout his writings 'profoundly and consistently interested in how human beings are made subjects' (p. 5), his later writings are particularly useful for understanding current educational trends in performative contexts. Foucault argues that we are both subject to others by control and dependence, and also tied to our own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge which can eventuate from our many selves, including our ethical selves. As Ball (2012) explains further, Foucault came to view a subject as both constituted and self-constituting, and in his later writings, Foucault's deep interest was in the 'self-constituting' part of ourselves which focused on freedom not just to resist, but to struggle against processes set up by authority.

English leaders might be constrained by the features of a performative context, but they also have the freedom to become subjects (Foucault, 2003) that engage in the leadership practices of truth-telling, advocacy and counter-conduct (Keddie & Niesche, 2017). Truth-telling involves questioning or criticising authority where there is an element of risk involved to the speaker. Advocacy is speaking on behalf of students and communities, and is a form of political subjectivity that is a typical element of the ethical self-formation of the leader. Counter-conduct is not just about resistance, but struggles against processes implemented for conducting others (Keddie & Niesche, 2017).

Practices of counter-conduct are necessary to disrupt the powerful discourses of the current performative context if government schools are to lead for social justice (Keddie & Niesche, 2017), which has been their obligation since the Education Act

was passed in the Victorian parliament in 1872: this historic moment set up the public school system for all Victorian students based on the principles of a 'free, secular and compulsory' education. Foucault's work on subjectivity (Foucault, 2000, 2002) opens up a space for us to recognise that English leaders, as middle level leaders, can have leadership views and practices that are leading for social justice because power relations between the state and the subject are mobile, reversible and unstable (Foucault, 2003). For example, Niesche's (2013) study of a Queensland principal in a low socio-economic status (SES) school shows how she utilises the discourse of silence to hide the poor learning data at her school, acting solely in the interests of her community. Her actions suggest that leaders have some power to take moral positions, making education department practices around performativity unstable.

English teacher academics have also used Foucault to understand the English curriculum and the work of English teachers. Thirty years ago, Ian Hunter (1988) and Annette Patterson (2000) utilised Foucault to provide us with a groundbreaking understanding of the cultural role of English in schools. More recently, Brass (2006) used the work of Foucault to first produce a genealogical history of English teaching (Brass, 2006) in U.S. secondary schools, and, second, to explain and analyse English teachers' work (Holloway & Brass, 2017). This article begins to further Brass's work by focusing on English leaders' work, rather than English teachers' work, within a performative context, arguing that political subjectivities (Foucault, 2002) are an important element to leading English.

Governmentality (Foucault, 1991), or the mentality of governments, is also useful to understand the performative context. Foucault (1991) leads us to an understanding of the 'mentality' of 'governments' within the modern state by suggesting that researchers examine specific practices. The practices of the Department of Education and Training (DETV) in Victoria, and indeed in Australia, are built around four elements: improving teacher quality through the implementation of professional standards (AITSL, 2019); improving leadership knowledge of a performative culture through training (Bastow, 2019); increasing accountability of English leaders through the release of numerous data sources; and making judgements about the work of English leaders through the professional standards embedded in the current PDP.

The case studies: Research method, schools and participants

Methodology
This research draws from a study undertaken over six months, in 2018: the study focused on English leadership and VCE English in a performative context. Two government schools were selected for the study.

Research question
How do English leaders in Victorian government schools respond to the performative context which is characterised by leadership knowledge and training, datafication and the performance standards?

Data generation
This qualitative study generated data from two English leaders in government schools. The data were generated through the use of semi-structured interviews. The questions were around four themes: leadership, English teaching and learning, data and the professional standards. The questions were sent to the participants the day prior to the interview, and the interviews were recorded and the transcripts were sent to the participants for clarification. There were follow-up emails with the participants to clarify any answers as needed. The schools and the participants have been de-identified and pseudonyms used to protect their privacy. School websites and publicly available data were used to understand each participant's context. The publicly available data from the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA), which administers the VCE, was also utilised. The schools also generously released select 2017 VCE data to me, including Report 17, their value-added data for that year.

How the schools were selected
Working from the belief that the school context, defined by SES, is an important factor, the schools were initially selected on the basis of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) used by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to identify educational advantage and, consequently, disadvantage. Schools are allocated a number based on a scale of educational advantage, with the allocated number representing the average student within the school. The index is publicly available and was designed to enable comparisons of schools across the nation. The intention of the score was to provide users with a range of data, which

includes learning data (NAPLAN, VCE), the school's location, the socio-economic background of students at the school, parental occupation and education and the percentage of students with Language Backgrounds Other than English, as well as the number of students who identify themselves as Indigenous.

The VCE median scores are a data source that is highlighted every year in the media to compare and judge schools, leaders and students. This data source is a feature of the performative context because its purpose is to highlight the success and failure of schools by publicly comparing the VCE median scores. The participating government schools are selected on the basis of their 'improving' VCE median scores, utilising data from 2013 to 2017. The VCAA website explains what median scores are:

> Achievement is assessed on a scale of 0 to 50 and in all studies the average study score across the state is 30. The median study score is the middle score when all the study scores obtained by students of the school are ranked from highest to lowest; so it represents a 'typical' level of achievement in the school (VCAA, 2019).

Both schools selected for this study are established government secondary colleges with relatively long histories (over 50 years). Sandy Heights is approximately 50 kilometres from the city of Melbourne and has a population of 1500 students, with growing Year 7 enrolments. Newtown Secondary College is 10 kilometres from the city of Melbourne with a population of approximately 2000 students, is strictly zoned, and has Year 7 applications that far exceed the available places.

The schools were selected on the basis of their ICSEA scores. The ICSEA score used by ACARA (2019) shows that Newtown Secondary College, with a score of 1121, is in an area of relative advantage, whereas Sandy Heights Secondary College, with a score of 985, is in an area of relative disadvantage. The average or benchmark school score is 1000.

The participating schools were also selected on the basis of their improving VCE median scores over the last five years. Assuming that this data is important in a performative context, the study was seeking to understand how English leaders responded to this type of datafication.

The participants in the case studies: English leaders

James, the English Coordinator at Newtown Secondary College, has been at the school for over twenty years and is a Leading Teacher. The principal of the school explains that the school's decision to have all their Faculty leaders in the Leading Teacher category shows that it values discipline knowledge, and all Faculty leaders have had Leading Teacher pay over the last decade. Is it possible that the positioning of Faculty leaders on the leadership team may have helped to bring about VCE median scores of 33 and 34? James affirms the Principal's view that discipline knowledge is very important at the school, and as a Leading Teacher, he is on the leadership team advocating strongly for English students, English teachers and the English curriculum. Advocacy is a necessary part of the ethical self when leading in a performative context (Keddie & Niesche, 2017).

Anna has been at Sandy Heights Secondary College for twenty-three years, and for a time, her role was at Leading Teacher level; however, when the current Principal was appointed in 2008, he removed the Leading Teacher tag (and pay) from that position, opting for a different leadership model. Anna believes that Faculty leaders are not really viewed as leaders within the hierarchy of her school, as they do not have Leading Teacher positions. The Faculty leader's position is a yearly appointment, with no training and a limited time allowance. It is not surprising, therefore, that the turnover is very high, and Anna continues, *'most Domain* [Anna refers to Faculty leaders as Domain] *leader positions are occupied by very young people who give up after a year or two'*. In order to combat the lack of leadership training offered through the school, Anna undertook a Masters in Literacy at university, in her own time and at her own cost, to further develop her knowledge and ability to lead English/Literacy, highlighting her commitment to her role as an English leader.

Table 1. VCE Median Scores for Newtown SC and Sandy Heights SC

Govt School	Median Scores 2017	Median Scores 2016	Median Scores 2015	Median Scores 2014	Median Scores 2013
Newtown SC	33	34	33	33	33
Sandy Heights SC	32	31	30	30	30

English leaders respond to the elements of the victorian performative context: Views and discussion

James and Anna: Views of leading English in a performative context

Keddie & Niesche (2017) explain that a Foucauldian ethical framework can be used to understand leadership practices and views in neo-liberal contexts. Ethics, they suggest, can be judged by leadership practices that are contingent on truth-telling, advocacy and counter-conduct. Ethical leaders, they continue, enable social justice outcomes by responding to the school context.

Both English leaders are working in a DETV context where government practices reveal the bureaucracy's commitment to producing leadership knowledge and training. For example, the DETV has commissioned research (Zbar, Kimber & Marshall, 2008) to identify the characteristics and behaviours of successful leaders in disadvantaged schools. In addition, Sergiovanni's leadership model, which is used to train school leaders (DETV, 2007), identifies the capabilities required of leaders. The DETV's leadership practices and policy discourses are premised on the view that if leaders are trained into particular capabilities and behaviours, then student learning outcomes will improve. To this end, in 2007, the DETV launched its own Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership to inculcate leadership knowledge that aligned with DETV's reform agenda. Bastow's mission is to 'implement the Education State's schools' reforms' (2019) and to build the capacity of school leaders. In a way, the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership can be viewed as a state apparatus, given its mission; then again, given some of its teachers are from universities, it is possible that a more holistic approach to leadership is embedded in some of its courses.

James and Anna did not recall Bastow, professional standards or Sergiovanni's leadership model when questions were asked around leadership views and practices. Anna's and James's leadership practices are prompted by their consciences or self-knowledges, which are based partly on their own schooling histories. Niesche (2011, 2013, 2015) explains Foucault's definition of ethics as the formation of oneself as a subject, which can be based on one's own experiences and one's own relations with one's self. Both English leaders emphasised the positive experiences of attending their local government schools when they were teenagers: they drew attention to the idea that they were the beneficiaries of a Victorian government school education that led them to be the '*first person*' from their families to attend university. Furthermore, they drew attention to some inspirational teachers who revealed a passion for their discipline and were supportive of them as students. James recalled '*inspirational English teachers*' who, to use the cliché in popular educational writing, 'made a difference'. Their political subjectivities as English leaders have been developed by their experiences as successful students from government high schools themselves.

James, certainly, sees advocacy for the subject English as an integral element of his role as a leader when he says, '*It is the number one subject here. I am always fighting for the curriculum. English has a very high profile at the school. I make it that way*'. James' advocacy here is a form of political subjectivity that constructs him as a subject who understands the need to be political in his role as English leader. James is committed to retaining all students at his school to the end of Year 12, and is therefore very supportive of the broad pathways program that gives students the choice of VCE, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Again, James' advocacy role is evident when he says of the diverse student population at his school, '*we need to get them all to Year 10 as it is really important, then they have choices*', and at his school with its large, diverse population the choices include mixed VCE packages for those students not seeking the academic VCE package. The effective value-added data at Newtown Secondary College indicate that offering students VCAL and VET choices does not impact negatively on their VCE median scores; furthermore, they also show that the VCE median scores may benefit from the English scores. James believes that the value-added data in the students' English scores are partly due to the English teachers at his schools using assessment processes that give students detailed feedback on their essays because '*marking and feedback are the most worthwhile in VCE English*'. However, he further argues that when students do not achieve their predicted scores, there could be a range of wellbeing issues that go beyond the teaching and learning, so he is, in a way, engaging in a form of counter-conduct struggling against the data processes.

While both English leaders are very student-focused, Anna, as an English leader, discussed with clarity the importance of students' growth and development through the study of VCE English: '*It gives students a chance to read, discuss and respond to literature in a*

supportive environment. They are exposed to texts that they may not otherwise encounter'. Further, she adds, 'it exposes students to a range of viewpoints and insights and allows them to participate in discussions with others to develop their listening and speaking skills and to have their own views challenged'. Anna's leadership is based on her knowledge of and engagement with the purpose and value of subject English – there is a truth-telling here that is a part of her ethical subjectivity. It seems to me, therefore, that this knowledge positions her to advocate on behalf of students, teachers and subject English, possibly at risk to career advancement and/or reappointment.

Anna is also very inclusive in her approach to teaching English, suggesting the benefits of the mixed ability English classes in her non-selective government high school: *'While we still have students who struggle and achieve low scores, they aren't completely lost and the mixed ability classroom allows the lower skilled students to gain from the higher ability students'*. Anna's comments here clearly demonstrate ethical leadership practices (Keddie & Niesche, 2017) in advocating for the weaker students in her mixed ability English classes. Advocacy leadership is 'inherently political and ideological in the pursuit of social justice outcomes' (Keddie & Niesche, 2017, p. 5). Anna is protective of the weaker students, believing in their right to be in the VCE English class, and in this instance, she is engaging in counter-conduct focusing on the discourse of opportunity for all students, rather than the discourse of outcomes which is embedded in the language of the DETV framework for student outcomes (DETV, 2007).

In schools, middle level leadership appointments can be used to divide people – what Foucault (2003) identifies as 'dividing practices', where the subject is either divided inside themselves or divided from others. Anna finds that *'there is a lack of collaboration between the Domain leaders'* and that it is a competitive environment. At Anna's school, Faculty leaders are classroom teachers on yearly appointments in an environment where she finds there is *'a deliberate measuring of Domains against each other to make the observation that one is performing better than another, one is considered effective and one is not'*. The Faculty leaders are not a united team, and she considers that the *'disruptive leadership style'* (a style she learnt to identify through her Masters degree) practised at the school does not *'in her view promote the best outcomes'.*

Advocacy for both Anna and James is an important element of their leadership practice. Leading teachers

of English is, for them, about building relationships between teachers in their Faculties and setting up processes for teachers to collaborate and program in a way that will lead to VCE retention and success. Anna states, *'I want effective teams and I want people to feel like they are part of something and supported. I don't want people to feel they are in competition with each other'*. James, as English leader, is aware of the performative context and therefore has limits on how he may be controlled or governed, fighting back with, *'I am sick and tired of the Administration saying "just delegate it"'*, but he refuses to give teachers more work to do because *'as the Leading Teacher, I get paid more and therefore I do more'*. Here again, James's ethical (Foucault, 2002; Keddie & Niesche, 2017) position emerges, and in this instance, he is engaging in counter-conduct by fighting against the established processes.

Leading English certainly has its tensions and challenges: one challenge is the ever-increasing workload, where leaders are rarely working to unionised conditions. English leaders in these schools have a 75% teaching load, and approximately 25% of their workload is allocated to run a number of leadership projects in relation to student development, staff development and school development. James works very long hours (*'I easily worked 70 hours last week and I was here 3 nights until 10 p.m. last week'*) and he appears to be overloaded with the regular night work (Open Night, VCE Information Night, Careers Night, school performances) where it is important for teachers to participate and be visible, not just on some nights but for most school events. This visibility could be another element of the performative context of government schools in Victoria. Whilst teachers, as a part of a school community, want to support students at school concerts and performances, it has until recently been optional, suggesting that there is a 'care' factor motivating teachers to give up their time to attend school events to support students. Now it appears to be obligatory for English leaders to attend most or all of the community events, increasing their workload to unsustainable levels, which leads to resentment and can remove the 'care' factor that is an essential element of the professionalism of the leader.

Anna, too, expressed frustration with her workload as a middle level leader, saying, *'we have to fight for everything from time to moderate our Year 12'* School Assessed Coursework tasks (SACs), run classes after school for students, support 23 teachers in her Faculty and oversee the teaching and learning programs. Anna

highlights both the limited time allowance of '*four periods a week*' and says she works '*every night. I did three hours last night and that was after having a meeting here*'.

The experiences of these English leaders suggest that the current workload for English leaders in a performative context could lead to 'burnout' (Manuel et al., 2018). In fact, one of the coordinators from this study has left the school, and possibly teaching, after twenty years of significant service to students, VCE Englishes and the public high school. This is, I believe, a loss to the government system.

Anna and James: views of data in a performative context

Heffernan (2016) and Niesche (2013, 2015), drawing on Foucault (1991, 1982), have theorised the impact of data through their case studies of principals in Queensland schools. Niesche (2015) argues that school leaders in disadvantaged schools can consciously use strategies such as 'a form of silenced discourse' (p. 155) to resist the influence of poor data. Heffernan (2016) makes the link between a performative context and data, arguing that 'in a climate of performativity, complex work undertaken in schools is reduced to quantifiable or measurable data sets, and judgements are made about the quality of the educator based on these data' (p. 379).

Anna and James are certainly working in school contexts where data practices are used to reward and sanction teachers. Data monitors teachers' work, and as in many schools, data at both schools is used to praise and reward VCE teachers with high-achieving student scores. Principals and leaders in one of these schools celebrate 'successful' (study scores over 40) achievement data for VCE teachers at the Christmas lunch. This principal justifies this celebratory practice by stating that they like to introduce competition into teachers' work. Consequently, teachers with poor data are potentially made to feel inadequate, which is a form of sanctioning in the performative context.

James and Anna, however, employ ethical leadership practices in relation to VCE data. Data are used selectively, with an awareness of the context of the school and a knowledge of the diverse student population, and therefore attention is paid to reports such as value-added data. The value-added data reveal a student's predicted score against their achieved score, and are therefore approached from knowing the student holistically. For instance, if a student's predicted score is higher than their achieved score, there could be, amongst many other reasons, a wellbeing story embedded in that student's performance. The improving median scores at these schools are not an opportunity to be complacent, and Anna and James did not present themselves as successful leaders who can be emulated in all contexts, which is the Departmental view of leadership and data, as evidenced by their commissioned research (Zbar, Kimber & Marshall, 2008).

James engages in a form of 'truth-telling'. He emphasises the importance of context. James, working in a government school that is in a relatively high socio-economic area, explains that there are other factors that are not realised via the 'successful' data and the VCE median scores. He calls it the '*parent care factor*', where '*here the parents are all invested in the kids and they all turn up to parent teacher evenings and they are on the email*', implying that this is another reason for the good VCE English scores which help to raise the VCE median scores. As middle level leaders, James and Anna refuse to be defined by simplistic numbers such as the VCE median scores. Instead they draw on their political subjectivities (Foucault, 1982) in their data narrative.

Anna, indeed, presents a complex view of data in this performative context: '*Like most teachers, I am really split on the intense focus on data*'. She believes in the usefulness of collecting and analysing data: '*I think data collection and analysis itself is a very useful thing. It is very interesting to see trends, strengths and weaknesses measured in a cohort and to use that data to inform teaching or identify areas to work on in teaching practice*'. Anna's view here shows that she recognises the importance of understanding data. However, she does not see data as just a measure of success or failure, praise or blame, which is the effect of datafication in a performative context.

Certainly, both leaders are very aware of data being used as a tool of surveillance (Foucault, 2003) in the current Victorian performative context. As Anna says,

> data is not used for good purposes by the Department of Education and Training (DETV) – it should be a signal to target resources to particular areas and to provide schools with more support but it is really just used as a stick to beat up struggling schools. Data is misused and misrepresented by the media and by DETV quite often. I think data collection and study is always tinged with the idea you'll be punished for something, which impedes it being understood and used as the useful tool it could be.

Anna's position on data conveys a moral objection to the way data is used by the DETV, highlighting her political subjectivity.

James and Anna: Views on the use of professional standards in schools

In 2011, AITSL launched the AITSL Standards, which have been adopted in Victorian schools as a DETV regulatory practice since 2012. At Leading Teacher level, there are seven generic standards that teachers must meet around the areas of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. English leaders are subject to an annual review against the standards: James is assessed against the Leading Teacher standard and Anna is assessed against the Classroom Teacher standard, even though their work appears to be somewhat similar.

Many Australian educational researchers have discussed and analysed the AITSL performance standards, finding them lacking in meaning for English teachers. Gannon's (2012) detailed study contrasts the AITSL Standards with STELLA (the standards developed by the English Teachers' Association) to highlight some of the limitations of AITSL when making judgements about English teachers' work. Further, the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English (VATE) has been responding to the AITSL Standards on behalf of English teachers (Doecke, Martin & Wagner, 2011). Additionally, many English teacher educators have been speaking back with conviction to standards-based reforms, arguing for the continued relevance of STELLA to understanding English teachers' work in a way that is meaningful to English teachers (Doecke, 2007). Parr and Bulfin (2015) challenge the 'standards-based reform policies that undermined English educators' agency and professionalism' (p. 157) through a writing project that highlights the craft and professional expertise of the current English educator, suggesting that teachers' professional identities matter.

Anna's and James's experiences of the professional standards appear to be consistent with the views advanced by the professional organisations that represent English teachers (AATE/VATE) and English teacher educators. James and Anna, during their interviews, engage in truth-telling by taking risks in providing different views of the standards from those of the education bureaucracy. They are negative about having to use the professional standards that are embedded in the PDP processes in their schools, because they claim it is time-consuming and irrelevant, and takes them away from their important work of teaching and learning: '*It's so irrelevant, I can't tell you. It is not useful work but we get it done. I review all my staff*'. The word 'irrelevant' highlights the leader's attitude to the integrity and value of the standards, but the speaker is also aware that they must 'get it done' and that it is a non-negotiable task. They are not in a position to refuse, but they reposition the standards via their tick-box approach to the PDPs. Similar comments were, '*In my honest opinion, a total and utter waste of time*', and when asked to comment on the AITSL Standards: '*I'm afraid the AITSL Standards seem a bit generic to most of my staff and, while we put them in the PDP, we don't spend a lot of time considering them a particularly useful guideline or measure*'.

One of the English leaders in this study admits to being '*a vocal opponent*' of the PDP process at the school level, but knows it is a DETV tool of surveillance: '*PDP requires evidence. I always insist that the job gets done. I tell staff do a survey of something you have done well. Peer observations are done every term. I am really practical and I help teachers to just get it done*'. The Performance and Development plans, drawn from the AITSL Standards, are completed in order to meet compliance requirements, and according to these leaders are not a meaningful measure of the work of teachers or leaders.

Conclusion

A Foucauldian lens (Ball, 2012; Foucault, 2002; Keddie & Niesche, 2017) is useful for explaining English leaders' responses to the elements of datafication, leadership and professional standards. It highlights for us the pressures that Anna and James, as middle level leaders, encounter in their work in terms of leadership, datafication and the performance standards. However, their responses, as experienced middle level leaders, show us that these elements of performativity can be reworked and repositioned according to their political subjectivities and moral frameworks.

James and Anna respond to performativity with courage when they engage in advocacy, truth-telling and counter-conduct. Both English leaders advocate for subject English and their teachers in the interests of offering a VCE English that is inclusive of students of all abilities in their mixed ability government schools. Their responses communicate alternate views of data, and their practices suggest that they see that data are far more complex than the numbers presented by the education bureaucracy. Anna and James resist understanding student or teacher success purely in terms of numbers. They examine the data that are relevant to understanding student learning outcomes in their respective schools, taking into consideration their moral obligations as middle level leaders in

government high schools. They are utilising their freedoms to constitute (Ball, 2013; Foucault, 1982b) a different view of data from that promulgated by DETV. Context, they suggest, matters. The parent factor matters. Student wellbeing matters.

Both Anna and James reject the professional standards embedded in the current Performance and Development processes by approaching those standards with a tick-box mindset rather than the DETV's view of judging and regulating teachers' work. In their responses to the performance standards, they are engaging in a form of counter-conduct (Keddie & Niesche, 2017). DETV intends PDP to be an accountability measure, making judgements about whether the teacher has met the standards. In stating their irrelevance and employing a 'just get it done' attitude, Anna and James have given us what I believe is a different version of the professional standards to the ones presented by the DETV or AITSL.

James and Anna have been positioned differently by their respective schools in terms of their leadership roles. James, employed at Leading Teacher level, is on the leadership team negotiating on behalf of English teachers, students and the curriculum, so advocacy is perhaps easier for him than for Anna. Anna, whose role was reduced from Leading Teacher to Classroom Teacher level, faces greater challenges than James, as she has to fight a school organisational model where Faculty leadership, from her perspective, is less valued, and she believes the culture for Faculty leaders is competitive and divisive. Nonetheless, both Anna and James strongly identify with English teachers and the teacher class, and as middle level leaders, occupy a unique leadership space in which leadership practices are drawn from their own ethical framework. This ethical framework is based on their experiences as academically successful students from the government sector and as teachers in government schools who are committed to student learning rather to than drawing on the bureaucratic knowledge and discourse of outcomes provided by the bureaucracy. As middle level leaders, Anna and James have utilised their freedom (Ball, 2012; Foucault, 1982, 2003; Keddie & Niesche, 2017) to employ leadership practices that involve advocacy, truth-telling and counter-conduct. They have chosen not to be separated from the teacher class, not to have their links with others broken (Foucault, 2000, 2002). When Anna and James engage in truth-telling, advocacy and counter-conduct, they are perhaps living up to Foucault's (2002) challenge that in a performative

context 'maybe the target is not to discover what we are but refuse what we are' (p. 336).

Notes

* Pseudonyms have been used.
1 VCE students have a choice of Englishes: English/EAL, English Language, Literature (VTAC, 2016).

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Perspectives from the Past

Introduction to Teacher Professionalism and Curriculum Power:
A Cautionary Tale

Helen Howells, October 2019

Reading over this 2003 article again I was struck by the significant presence of classroom English teachers in the design of the English Study which was accredited in 1990. They were a majority of members of the English Field of Study Committee, the group given the task of producing a new English Course of Study; they were members of the Course Writing Committees and Accreditation Committees and they were professional English teachers who provided information about several courses they had designed over the years to meet the needs of the variety of students in their classes.

Over time however the influence of the teachers was challenged and the need to be able to cope with the power of outside forces including the media, politicians and bureaucrats who saw the Year 12 subjects as simply a vehicle for tertiary entrance was the cautionary part of the tale. I suspect that there are elements of this tale that continue to apply since 2003 and that teachers are continuing to experience major challenges to their professional status.

Teacher Professionalism and Curriculum Power

A Cautionary Tale

Helen Howells

Having the responsibility to develop and implement curriculum is crucial to the professional identity of teachers. This article begins by making a case that teachers are currently marginalised in the curriculum development process then describes the opportunity presented to English teachers in Victoria in 1986 to develop a Study Design for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). The narrative of the four years it took to develop the Study is seen as a cautionary tale because it shows that teachers' professional responsibility for curriculum development can be circumscribed by political forces to the detriment of the teachers' professional identity and worthwhile curriculum innovation.

If it is true, as A.D. Hope claimed in his 1967 Presidential Address to the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, that the mark of a profession is that 'it is responsible, and is recognised as responsible, for itself as the body to which the community entrusts its interests in one particular field' (Hope 2001, p. 178), then you have to wonder what has happened to the profession in the Australian state of Victoria. Teachers are expected to implement curriculum and assess their students according to state-wide requirements, but they are currently being given little opportunity to say what that curriculum and assessment should be. It seems that no one is 'trusting' teachers in curriculum development, a vital element in education.

My claim is that it should be a mark of the teaching profession that teachers are 'responsible' for using their professional knowledge in curriculum development and that the community can confidently entrust this 'interest' to the teaching profession. This is not to suggest that curriculum development should be solely the responsibility of the teachers. In the development of a new certificate in Victoria between 1986 and 1990, teachers took part in curriculum development that involved extensive consultation with the wider community. However, the current situation does not promote curriculum development of this kind. Instead, it can be shown that teachers are at a distance from effective decision making and for this reason overcoming the current marginalisation of teachers is in the interest of the professional standing of teachers and with it good curriculum development.

It can be argued that the VCE English Study Design accredited in 1990 in Victoria embodied the best thinking in English curriculum and pedagogy, that it demonstrated what accomplished teachers at that time believed, knew and practised. A review of the development of the original Study Design shows a group of teachers in action developing a design and implementing it. It shows what teachers can do. This contrasts with our current situation in Victoria, where teachers have only a marginal role in developing curriculum and assessment models. They are expected to work with state-wide frameworks that spell out in increasingly reductive ways the outcomes they are required to achieve.

Marginalising teachers in the curriculum development process

The concern over the marginalisation of teachers is not new and it is not confined to Victoria or Australia. In 1999 Hargreaves, addressing the International Conference on Teacher Education in Hong Kong, claimed that the adoption of market principles by governments and the 'marketisation' of education had weakened the status and decision making opportunities of teachers. Hargreaves also pointed to the uncertainties of the postmodern age as another factor in the marginalisation of teachers in the education process. He claimed that when governments respond to the spread of uncertainty with recourse to assertion and authoritarian positions then it results in

> centralised curricula and testing regimes that have trimmed back the range and autonomy of teachers' classroom judgement, and a market-inspired application from the corporate sector, of systems of administration by performance management (through targets, standards, and paper trails of monitoring and accountability). (Hargreaves 1999, p. 9)

In the introduction to *Re-Viewing English* Little asserts that the changing economic and political climate in Australia since 1975 has meant for education, among other things, a resurgence of centralised control by governments.

> The rise of 'economic rationalism' in the governance of education … [has led to] a shift from 'management by objectives' to management by centralised prescription of 'outcomes', with little regard for inputs and processes. (Little 1998, p. xi)

Little goes on to discuss the initiatives aimed at national benchmarks and testing which have been attempted without due consultation (1998, p. xi). What

kind of professional autonomy can teachers exercise when their practice is constrained by the need to ensure that, above all, their students are performing at or above the appropriate benchmark?

The comments made by Little about education in Australia in general are certainly applicable to Victoria. The period of intense teacher participation in educational debate and ownership of educational decisions in Victoria in the seventies and eighties can be sharply contrasted with the current situation. Teachers have become 'functionaries' rather than professionals, they deliver a curriculum that they do not 'own'. In 'Putting the People Last', Seddon saw a 'wholesale redefining of the terms of the old educational partnership' in the model of educational governance implicit in the 'Schools of the Future' program (1996, p. 45). In this program parents are to be seen as 'consumers'. Schools are to be run as 'businesses', with the principal as its 'managing director'. The teachers are the 'workers', where 'workers' means that they are 'supposed to just do the work, provide the teaching' (Seddon 1996, pp. 44 -45).

The continued weakening of the status of teachers in Victoria is characteristic of the last decade. Doecke and Hayes describe educational policy and practice under the 1992 Coalition Government in Victoria and then assess the changes made since the election of the Labor Government in 1999 (Doecke and Hayes 2000). They discuss the Coalition 'gag' on teachers and educators which prevented them from speaking out on educational issues, the mandated curriculum of the revised VCE and the Curriculum and Standards Frameworks II (CSF II), and the inclusion of members of professional associations on reference groups rather than at the real decision making level.

While Doecke and Hayes acknowledge that changes introduced by the Labor government have ameliorated some of the worst effects of the previous Government's reforms, they do not see the marginalisation of the Coalition years being overcome quickly. They give as evidence of continued marginalisation the Labor government's endorsement of the revised VCE and the CSF II, the narrow version of literacy which is implicit in the on-going Early Years program and the retention of a statewide assessment system which consists of 'one shot pieces of writing under test conditions' (2000: 5-6).

Making the most of an opportunity

Yet there have been times when teachers were not

marginalised, when they had the opportunity to be involved in effective decision making in curriculum development. This happened in Victoria between 1986 and 1990. At this time teachers were at the centre of a major curriculum development exercise, working as professionals, being 'entrusted' with taking an active role in curriculum development. In his address 'Those Who Understand' Shulman describes the professional as one who 'not only holds knowledge of how ... but of what and why' (Shulman 1986: 13) and this knowledge characterised the work done by the teachers in developing a new curriculum for VCE English.

The opportunity had arisen when there was a change of government in Victoria in 1982 and the government that was elected was committed to a reform agenda for education (Minister of Education 1983, Paper 1, p. 3). In May 1985 a Ministerial Review Committee, established to review post-compulsory education, published its report. Known as the Blackburn Report, it claimed that there was a changing context for young Victorians which made a change to education policies an 'urgent' issue (Blackburn Report 1985, Vol. 1, p. 1). In the opinion of the Committee this called for a 'radical reshaping' of post-compulsory education. The reasons behind the recommendations emphasised the centrality of social concerns for the Committee. The effect of the recommendations was that 'the archaic tools of selection and segregation were thrown aside'. (Teese 2001, p. 43) Significantly the changes to English 'drew on the approaches that schools had developed independently of universities or of mainstream HSC [Higher School Certificate] English'. (Teese 2001, p. 43)

Following the Ministerial Review, all sectors involved in providing post-compulsory education in Victoria – the secondary schools, the technical schools, the colleges for Technical and Further Education (TAFE) – were to be brought into the one system, to be administered by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (VCAB). The students in all providers, whether government or non-government institutions, were to receive a common certificate that could be used as the credential for entry into tertiary study or the world of work. As far as English was concerned, the forty-four Englishes that were being offered in institutions throughout the State in post-compulsory education in 1986 were to be replaced in 1990 by a single study. All the 80,000 students expected to be enrolled each year in the full two-year Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) would take the common, compulsory study English (Blackburn Report 1985).

If the undertaking was breath-taking in its conception, so was the opportunity it presented to teachers. The process for developing the Certificate was characterised by the intention to have classroom teachers at the forefront of curriculum development for all the new studies in the new Certificate. Of the twenty members of the English Field of Study Committee (FOSC), the group that had responsibility for developing the English Study Design, fourteen were practising classroom teachers. The FOSC had representatives from the tertiary sector including TAFE, secondary schools, technical schools, the Tertiary Orientation Program, the Catholic Education Office, the Victorian Association of Teachers in Independent Schools, ESL teachers and the Ministry. There was a representative from one of the parents' groups and there was provision for an industry representative. This group was able to start from scratch in developing the Study and their brief stipulated wide-ranging consultation with the English teaching profession and other potential users of the new Certificate.

However, the opportunity to have an effective involvement in curriculum development was not without its difficulties. Should the members of the FOSC have been able to foresee the scale of the public debate over the new Certificate or the conflict over content and assessment in the English Study Design? In hindsight it is doubtful if any of the members of the FOSC could have predicted the range of interest groups that would present submissions, the correspondence in the state and local press that would have to be answered, and the increasing virulence of the media debate as a State election loomed and the differences of opinion about the kind of English to be taught became an election issue.

The Study Design for English was finally accredited in 1990. The record of the meetings of the FOSC over the first eighteen months of its deliberations shows that members were confident that the Committee could produce a worthwhile Study. There was a commitment to discussing the issues in detail, and the work was not delegated to others. The full Committee debated all aspects of the study – the aims and objectives, the areas of study, the work requirements and possible assessment models. The task was understood and accepted. There had to be a new certificate and it needed new courses and the English FOSC had been set up to develop the new English course. As far as I was concerned, as convener of the FOSC, I thought this representative committee of the English teaching community had been given the power to develop a new

senior English curriculum for schools across Victoria. But, a review of the four years it took to develop the Study Design shows just how complex bringing about system-wide change is, particularly for English.

The detailed description of the membership of the FOSC given earlier, shows that it was a professional group, which included academics, bureaucrats, classroom teachers, representatives of parents' groups and of the wider community. The members of the FOSC did not always agree, but they managed to find sufficient unity to endorse a Study Design. Classroom teachers were in the majority on the FOSC and decisions were influenced by their distinctive teacher knowledge. The Study Design itself should be celebrated as an embodiment of teacher knowledge at that time.

Jennifer Haynes, a former President of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), deputy Convener of the FOSC and one of its Study writers, recently described the way the members of the FOSC were able to reach the consensus needed if a Design was to be achieved. She comments that the agreement was more a result of a clear understanding about the value of co-operation than of philosophical unanimity:

> I have a strong recollection of solidarity between members of the FOSC about the direction and design of the English Study Design. Even now, the extent of the agreement causes me some surprise given their very varied teaching contexts and the variety of 'Englishes' in operation in Victoria at the time. There had been fierce battles in Victorian Association for the Teaching of English forums, for instance, about the issue of whether English should be a compulsory subject not long before. (Howells 2002)

The FOSC knew from the debates over English in a review that had taken place in 1986 (Issues Paper 1986) that there would be a variety of points of view about what constituted 'subject English', the English curriculum and good practice. There were 'lobby groups' among the teachers who were advocates for the work they had done in curriculum development and the changes they had made. English in courses like the Schools Year 12 and Tertiary Entrance Certificate, the Technical Year 12 Certificate, the Tertiary Orientation Program and Group 2 Englishes in the HSC were the result of teachers developing courses that provided real alternatives to the exam oriented Group 1 English in the HSC. They were not going to relinquish 'their' Englishes without a struggle.

Teachers in the thick of things

In one way the story of the writing of the English Study Design is as much about managing a political and public relations exercise, as it is a story about teachers using their professional knowledge to develop curriculum. It could also be seen as an account of bureaucratic regulation controlling curriculum development. However, when the FOSC started on the task in 1986 I doubt if the members saw it in political or public relations terms. Our attention was completely focused on what an English Study Design should look like, on the work students should engage in when in the English classroom.

We did not foresee the constraints that would be imposed by the needs of a highly centralised bureaucracy like the Board and its sub committees or the constraints that would come from the tightly structured certificate that the VCE became. We did not predict the implications of an assessment model that had to be uniform across all the Study Designs regardless of the nature of the curriculum deemed appropriate for individual studies.

Nor did we foresee the way in which those who were opposed to change would use the media to promote their views and involve the English FOSC in time consuming, and often fruitless, efforts to have its work and its case presented in the press.

English has always had a high profile in the Victorian community and English teachers on the FOSC were aware of the contested nature of the subject. But we had not reckoned on the need to have the political and public relations skills that were necessary to cope with a debate that has been described as 'at times a fierce and savage war' (Misson 1993, p. 5). In the last weeks of 1986 and the first weeks of 1987 when the task of the FOSC seemed to be related to curriculum development and good practice, none of this was on the agenda.

A curriculum project narrative

The story that follows is important in our curriculum history, for it shows teachers being involved at the outset of a curriculum development project, and it shows the complexity of the undertaking. It is a story that is a manifestation of the professional identity of teachers in that it shows teachers being responsible for designing an innovative English curriculum for post-compulsory education. It is also a story which implies that issues of teacher professionalism, teacher identity and curriculum responsibility have a political dimension.

What should be in an English Study Design?
The work of the FOSC started at the end of 1986 and for the first six months the FOSC was able to concentrate on the Study Design itself. However it soon became obvious that developing the Design was not going to be a straightforward task. It was not as if the members of the FOSC, the Study writers and the executive officer could simply decide on the elements of a good English course and the skills that needed to be taught, and then write up a course that would deliver them.

First, there were the Board processes that had to be followed for all the 42 Studies across the 13 Fields of Study. These required that studies had to be drafted, go to two rounds of community consultations, be approved by a number of Board committees, recommended for accreditation by an independent accreditation committee, provisionally accredited for use by trial schools, then accredited by the Board for a period of three years for use by all students undertaking a VCE. The Board also had requirements about study design structure and all studies had to conform to those requirements (VCAB 1986).

The opening debates were about the meaning of terms like 'common', 'compulsory', 'English', 'study structure' and issues like the place of Literature. The concept of 'standards' determining the outcomes of the course was challenged by the concept of individual achievement or 'distance travelled'. ESL was raised as a significant issue. There was the first of many discussions about the value of English for itself apart from the more 'instrumental expectations' of the literacy educators. It was not to be a 'service' subject (FOSC Minutes 13 November 1986).

All members of the FOSC presented individual statements about English at the second meeting and they indicated the range of views, including some contradictory opinions. Kay Arthur, from Diamond Creek Technical School, rejected what she called 'service skills'. Her view was that 'our students should be people who go away excited about learning and literature, who want to go on asking questions and go on working things through'. Ian Reid, School of Humanities, Deakin University, saw English needing

a generously inclusive conception of 'literature', which sees it as spread along a continuum; and it will see students' own writings, in their diversity, as belonging to that *same* continuum. This inclusiveness must apply *throughout the English field of study* – in the common study and in 'Literature'.

Bob King, Thomastown High School, wanted to

see students '*participate* in the course' because they 'would bring a diverse range of interests and abilities' and they would be 'seeking many different things' (FOSC Minutes 20 November 1986). Jill Anwyl, who was a member of the Participation and Equity Program, in the Ministry of Education, presented the view that 'assessment must encourage learning and be integral to the study' and her view that 'written exams are not appropriate' received strong endorsement. However, Ken Ruthven, from the English Department, University of Melbourne, put a different view about assessment, a view that was prophetic. He warned the FOSC that 'what we come up with will achieve credibility by means of its assessment system, because rightly or wrongly the community expects schools to assess and rank students' (FOSC Minutes 20 November 1986).

Since it had been decided by legislation that English would be compulsory, the initial decisions about English related to the number and types of English to be offered in the Certificate. By the end of the year the FOSC agreed that the Field of Study be known as English and that the studies in the field be the common and compulsory study English (including English as a Second Language), and a second study Literature. (FOSC Minutes 13, 20, 27 November 1986).

As the minutes of the first three meetings show, the FOSC settled quickly into discussion about what could be in the Design. This was a direct result of the years that had been spent on the development of alternative courses for a rapidly expanding post-compulsory school population. It meant that many of the problems in study design had already been looked at. The writers produced details of fourteen of the English courses that were currently being offered by institutions providing post-compulsory education in Victoria. The course descriptions were analysed and a list of types of units being offered was compiled. The list included oral projects, writing workshops, drama, single text studies, thematic studies and the study of argument, with examples of over fifty units being given (English FOSC VCAB 1987d).

It was a characteristic of the way the FOSC worked that the members kept in close touch with the English teaching community, with the profession. The process for the development of the new VCE required that there be widespread consultation (*VCAB Newsletter*, Nos 4, 5 and Special Edition). The English FOSC was keen to take up this aspect partly because the members saw themselves representing the sectors and partly because those interested in English had already started to

submit statements and publications for FOSC consideration (FOSC Minutes 20 November 1986).

One of the most significant consultations at this stage was the Mirrabooka seminar. There were three addresses: from Margaret Gill, President of AATE and lecturer at Victoria College – Rusden Campus, Graeme Withers, senior research officer, Australian Council for Educational Research, and Judith Brett, Editor of the literary magazine, *Meanjin*, and chairperson of the Literature Committee, Victorian Ministry of the Arts. The three speakers provided the visionary ideas for the discussion – Gill about a pedagogy for English teaching, Withers an understanding of the way the debate would develop and action that would be needed to support the FOSC's preferences for the studies, and Brett about the value of Australian literature and writing, the role of the imagination and the need to resist designing a course which concentrated on the vocational aspects of English (English FOSC VCAB 1987c).

Starting the assessment debate

The second phase of the development of the Study Design provides insight into the way in which professional power can be constrained and the way teachers can be marginalised in curriculum development decisions. The minutes record the increasing suspicion that the FOSC was not autonomous and the perception that assessment would be the critical issue on which FOSC autonomy would be challenged.

The issue of assessment was at the heart of the FOSC's understanding of good practice in the English classroom. It did not make good English curriculum sense to design a Study without being able, at the same time, to work on an assessment model. FOSC members had strong opinions about forms of assessment that were appropriate for English. It soon emerged that the majority did not advocate external assessment by written examination (FOSC Minutes 2 April 1987).

The FOSC reiterated its concerns about the effect of the assessment model on the Study Design and submitted a proposal for an assessment model consisting of Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) which grew out of work requirements and which could be externally moderated (English FOSC, VCAB 1987b). When the FOSC at its 9 April 1987 meeting discussed 'Assessment – a Discussion Paper,' written by FOSC Study Writer, Jan Osmotherly, the key item debated was the concept of the CATs (English FOSC, VCAB 1987a). The paper looked at the consequences for the Common

Study of competitive, graded assessment and particularly at the concern that Jan Osmotherly had for '*compelling* all students to do a course where for some, failure is inevitable' (English FOSC, VCAB 1987a).

That the matter of assessment was becoming more vexatious was signalled at this meeting and the questions in the minutes, 'Why grade at all?' and 'Can't the FOSC make its own decision based on what is good for English?', indicated the type of concern (FOSC Minutes 9 April 1987). The feeling in these questions was countered by comments that the writers were assuming that grading was unavoidable and the comment that it might be politic to go for the middle ground which could have more chance of being accepted rather than the extreme position which had no chance. By this stage in the development process the FOSC was starting to confront the necessity of making a choice between standing on principle and adopting a compromise position. The Study designers had to face the political realities of education reform.

The Study Writers put up a new set of options for assessment in English with interest focusing on the use of a profile, with descriptor items that could be used cumulatively to offer comparability and commonality of assessment. The discussion concentrated on satisfactory completion, the use of a profile of descriptors and the possible rejection of graded CATs. When the discussion turned to the use of a three point grading scale the possibility that English would not be used for tertiary entrance had to be faced (FOSC Minutes 8 May 1987). It led to the comment, 'This is primarily a political issue. Grading should be challenged. The issue of retention is central to this debate' (FOSC Minutes 18 June 1987).

At the same time as the FOSC was debating the assessment issue, work was proceeding in sub committees on the 'content' of the Study Design. The teacher voice can be clearly heard in the record of the debates. There were calls for flexibility – room for the one-off lesson, following up an issue or topic of interest, and there was general agreement for dropping the study of themes in literature in favour of the study of contemporary issues. The debates about language theory, oral work, reading and text study, workload, analysis of ideas, presentation of argument, workbook, production, writing folio and the writing of Course Development Support Material continued.

Were we ever autonomous?

A focus of this article has been the relationship between

professional identity on the one hand, and power in curriculum development on the other. The claim has been made that teachers should be 'trusted' with curriculum development, and the development of the VCE English Study Design is being used as an example of teachers having this trust. But it would not have been in the interest of teachers' professional credibility if the Design accredited in 1990 was not worthwhile as curriculum.

All studies for the new Certificate had to be evaluated by an accreditation advisory group. The evaluation of the English Study Design by the English Accreditation Advisory Group (AAG) is important because it shows that the Design developed by the FOSC could withstand independent expert review, that the concerns about assessment and the process of study design that had been signalled by the FOSC were concerns for others who had professional knowledge and experience in the field of English curriculum. The Board had established the AAG in September 1987. The AAG members for the English Field of Study were Margaret Gill, Victoria College, Rusden, Barry Carozzi, Principal of Broadmeadows Technical School, John Barnes of LaTrobe University's English Department and Alma Ryrie Jones from the General Studies Department, Preston College of TAFE (VCAB 1987a).

However, at the time that the AAG started its work the assessment model was not available, and this was a source of concern for the AAG, as it had been for the FOSC (AAG Minutes 27 November 1987). Both the FOSC and the members of the AAG saw the assessment procedures as an integral part of any study design. It was not possible to make valid judgements about a study if you could not judge if the assessment model was appropriate for it. In reviewing the Study Design in May and June the AAG indicated its continuing concern over the process of 'provisional accreditation', the changes to the process, and its unwillingness to make recommendations when the completed draft was not available. At its meeting in June the AAG had decided that it could not recommend accreditation in the terms set out in the guidelines and further meetings were held. The AAG members made their dissatisfaction with the process clear – the assessment model should have been available before the Areas of Study and Work Requirements were accredited. Provisional accreditation was recommended in July but the AAG required that a statement setting out their concerns be attached to the report (AAG Minutes 30 June and 11 July 1988).

One of the significant aspects of a curriculum project on the scale of the VCE was the difficulty of maintaining good communication with all those involved. In October 1987 the FOSC queried the decision-making processes of the Board and its sub committees, and the activities of Board consultants. It had been the initial perception of the FOSC that it was designing the Studies, but that view was no longer held confidently. Tensions were inevitable. The question was asked, 'Has the FOSC ever had an autonomous role?' (FOSC Minutes 22 October 1987).

In March 1988 the members of the FOSC decided to do something about the perceived lack of communication between the FOSC and the Board and approached the representatives of their constituencies on the Board and invited them to a FOSC meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to 'provide an opportunity for the Board members and the FOSC to discuss assessment in relation to the common and compulsory study of English' (FOSC Minutes 10 March 1988). The major concerns the FOSC wished to raise were the need to have assessment that arose out of the curriculum, the special situation of a Study that had to be common and compulsory, and the possibility of the assessment model having the effect of discouraging retention.

There was disquiet among some members of the Board at this development and the Executive of the Board decided to attend a FOSC meeting. The responses from the Executive were unequivocal and indicated that assessment had moved to the point where a uniform policy would be applied to all studies. Peter Hill, Chairperson of VCAB, stated that there was no choice on assessment. All work would be graded according to levels of performance and that in relation to external testing 'the community wants to know if students can write in time limit' and that public expectations of a test in English 'are a paramount consideration'. Other responses presented in the minutes of this meeting made it clear that reliability of assessment was more important than validity (English FOSC, VCAB 1988).

The FOSC was disappointed with the meeting, in that its point of view about good English practice had not prevailed. However, work continued and the Board provisionally accredited the Design in July 1988 (FOSC Minutes 21 April 1988). The attention of the FOSC now moved to the design of the CATs, the tasks that were to be used to assess student work.

We had the knowledge but not the power
After the areas of study and the work requirements for the four units of the Study were provisionally accred-

ited, the focus turned to the assessment model. The members of the FOSC had always argued that, whatever the assessment model was, it had to arise out of the Study Design. They knew from their experience that assessment could distort curriculum and, as described earlier in this article, they had the support of the independent review panel, the AAG, in this opinion. By June 1988 the FOSC had realised that the assessment model would not be one they would have wanted, but the members accepted the situation. The debates now concentrated on trying to develop a set of CATs that would best fit the Study Design. (FOSC Minutes 2 June, 10 June 1988).

By the end of 1988 the FOSC knew that there was some dissatisfaction with the way the Study Design was developing and with the proposals for CATs, both among its own members and among teachers in schools. David Endean had resigned from the FOSC in September 1988, citing his concern over the lack of special provision for ESL students in the Study Design and assessment (FOSC Minutes 15 September 1988). While the consultations on the CATs showed endorsement of the need for a test CAT, there was widespread criticism of the proposed set of CATs. The criticisms included: too much writing, the perceived disadvantages for ESL students, the need for more work on the Oral CAT, concern over literary criticism tasks in a common study, and the view that one of the proposed work requirements, the Investigative Report, was too long (FOSC Minutes 19 November 1988). In the end, the FOSC voted to accept the CATs for the trials in 1989 after a debate which made substantial changes to each one (FOSC Minutes 19 November 1988).

The minutes of the FOSC meetings show the way the attitude of the FOSC had changed. Much of the confidence and enthusiasm for the task, which had been so obvious in the 1987 minutes, had dissipated by the end of 1988. There had been so many unsuccessful attempts to have the experience of the classroom accepted as a critical influence in the decisions. There was also the sobering realisation that the power that people had assumed they had in 1986 and 1987 was not there.

By the beginning of 1989 the work of the FOSC had ceased to be focused merely on what should be in the Design. The Study Designs and the CATs still required adjustments; the Course Development Support Materials had to be completed and FOSC members were committed to taking part in a professional development program for teachers. But the FOSC

also had to debate the findings of the evaluation projects, meet the deadlines for the various groups involved in the final accreditation process, review the administration of procedures for verification of assessments, and respond to the growing press interest in the English Study Design. The events of 1989 are significant for showing the range of the issues that are raised in curriculum development on the scale of the VCE.

But the assessment decisions were the most urgent. A final set of CATs had to be available for accreditation by November for use in trial schools in 1990 (FOSC Minutes 7 September 1989). The timeline did not allow much time to carry out a proper analysis of the evaluation projects, trials and pilots that were under way in 1988 and 1989.

During the two meetings in November the FOSC reviewed Units 3 and 4 of the Study Design and the CATs, incorporating changes recommended by the AAG, the results of the trial program, the consultation reports, and the reports of various committees of the Board. Finally, Units 3 and 4 with the set of CATs was sent to the VCAB Studies Committee at the beginning of December (FOSC Minutes 16 November 1989). The Studies Committee changed the definition of 'finished work' from 'when the student and the teacher agree that the work represents the student's best efforts' to 'when the teacher after consultation with the student considers that it achieves its intended purpose'. This change, which was meant by the Studies Committee to more closely reflect the responsibility of teachers, undermined an objective of the Design, which was to encourage students as responsible and independent learners. It was met with a predictable protest (FOSC Minutes 7 December 1989).

Finally we had accreditation
For the six months before the Study Design was finally accredited in August 1990, the FOSC was not able to spend as much time on Design issues as it had in the previous year, although various alterations were being made as a result of the 1989 trials to the provisionally accredited Design and the CATs.

The story in 1990 concentrates on the format for the external test CAT, the increasing attention being given to the English Study Design in the press, and the attempt by the FOSC to gain sponsorship for an Oral Communication Project which would support the in-servicing of teachers in this part of the new Study. This made the timeline very tight.

Rules and regulations took over in the meetings as

VCAB committees and education researchers grappled with developing reliable tasks and reliable means of assessing those tasks. However, there were still those on the FOSC who urged the need for the FOSC to have a 'clear curriculum role and not be thought of merely as an administrative group' (FOSC Minutes 17 May 1990).

Over the six months that the FOSC was making the final adjustments to the Study Design and the CATs, there was a sense that the FOSC had to publicly defend both the Design and the assessment. The press campaign was under way and the FOSC was having difficulty, as were others, in presenting a positive case in any press forum apart from the occasional 'Letters to the Editor' columns (FOSC Minutes 3 May 1990).

Margaret Gill describes the press as shaping issues of public importance and in the case of English and the VCE using the 'master myth' of curriculum decline (Gill 1994, p. 111). The press 'conveyed the message that a preferred model of schooling and of English, and their accompanying social and academic values, was being displaced' (1994, p. 100).

The extent of the effort that is needed to support a curriculum innovation is clearly shown by the consequences of the decision to include oral communication as an assessment task in the Study Design. This had been one of the more exciting innovations and one of the more contentious. The FOSC and other teachers and educators associated with the FOSC were driven by a sense of the richness and complexity of language, which meant acknowledging the significance of oral work. But the requirement that the VCE be used for tertiary selection undermined the inclusion of oral communication as an assessment task. The challenges to the reliability of the assessment of oral work and the demand for 'fairness' were arguments that were used to oppose including oral work and, eventually, to have it removed.

The FOSC had established a special Oral Communication professional development project and gained the endorsement of the Institute of Engineers Australia, the Victorian Employers Federation, the Trades Hall Council, Monash University English Department, VATE and VCAB. However, the Oral Communication CAT continued to be undervalued because it was not subject to verification procedures, and some tertiary institutions were ambivalent about accepting it as part of the tertiary entrance score (FOSC Minutes 4 May 1990). The whole question of tertiary entrance was to become an issue later in the year when Melbourne University stated its intention to develop its

own tests in English (FOSC Minutes 10 August 1990).

As well as the attempt to gain support for the Study Design through endorsement the members of the FOSC had to be involved in a media campaign. There was a great deal of pressure on those who had to defend the Study Design and the assessment procedures. It was not a simple matter to explain a complex Design and assessment to those people who used the memories of their own schooling as a yardstick. The efforts of Margaret Ray, member of parliament for Box Hill, former HSC English teacher and member of VATE, to arrange meetings between members of the FOSC and successive Ministers of Education indicate the activities that were needed to support the curriculum work.

Finally, accreditation was achieved. In the Board Report No 47 on 15 August 1990, it was announced that English, Mathematics, Australian Studies and Geography 'were granted final accreditation by the Board' (VCAB 1990a). Looking back it is a story of compromise and defeat as well as achievement.

Professional knowledge

In my view, the accredited English Study Design was a good design, and its development was a significant part of curriculum history in Victoria. It is an example of teachers using widespread consultation and debate and their professional knowledge to develop a creative, innovative, sound curriculum. The Design received a considerable degree of support from those who conducted evaluations, and from teachers, students and parents (Northfield and Winter 1993, Ministerial Review Committee 1990). It embodied what accomplished teachers at that time believed, knew and practised, the best thinking in English curriculum and pedagogy.

The structure of the English Study was the same as the structure required for all the new VCE studies. There were areas of study, work requirements and an assessment program. English was a common study and it was compulsory for all students. It consisted of three Areas of Study – The Craft of Writing; Reading and the Study of Texts; and the Presentation of Issues and Argument. There was a set of work requirements for each unit and the satisfactory completion of these was needed to gain a credit for the unit. Assessment for graded results was by means of Common Assessment Tasks (CAT) to be completed in Units 3 and 4, which were the final units in the Study.

The Craft of Writing Area of Study was designed to 'extend students' capacities to communicate opinions,

ideas and feelings for a variety of purposes and audiences in a range of written forms' (VCAB 1990b, p. 6). The Study description discusses the relationship between the purpose, the audience and the form of a piece of writing and the skills of drafting and editing. Attention was drawn to the value of oral language activities in developing writing skills.

The second Area of Study was the Reading and the Study of Texts. The description of this Area of Study presents two reasons for its importance – first, because reading is a source of recreation and personal enjoyment and, secondly, because 'in order to function effectively in today's information-based society, people need to be able to read competently' (VCAB 1990b, p. 9). The description adds that reading will assist students to 'develop a critical comprehension and appreciation of their own culture, as well as the culture of others, past and present'. Students were expected to read 'a wide range of texts with comprehension, enjoyment and discrimination' (1990b, p. 2). There was a stipulation that at least one of the texts selected should be a text by an Australian or about Australians.

The Presentation of Issues and Argument was the third Area of Study. Study in this area was to be focused on 'the use of language for informative and persuasive purposes' (1990b, p. 2). It was intended that the work 'develop students' ability to evaluate information received, think critically, logically and creatively about a variety of issues' (1990b, p. 2) and 'present personal points of view effectively both in speaking and in writing' (1990b, p. 10).

The work requirements provided a structure through which the Areas of Study could be covered. There were four work requirements that were common to each two-year sequence. These were Text Response, Writing Folio, Communication Project and Workbook. A Response to Issues work requirement had to be completed in each of Units 1 and 2 and Presentation of an Issue had to be completed in Unit 3.

Assessment in all studies in Units 3 and 4 in the VCE was through the grading of Common Assessment Tasks (CATs). For the common, compulsory study English (including ESL) there were four CATs – Presentation of an Issue, Writing Folio, Oral Communication and Text Response. The first 3 CATs were assessed by the students' teachers, and two of these were verified by a local panel. The fourth CAT was set and marked externally and, in effect, was an exam.

The Study Design reflects the understanding the developers had of subject English, the significance of its Australian context, and the preferred pedagogy for the English classroom. The purpose of the Study was to assist students to become effective participants in Australian society:

> Effective participation in Australian society depends on an ability to understand the various uses of the English language and to employ them effectively for a range of purposes. (VCAB 1990b, p. 1)

The study of Australian texts was mandated. The Study Design was democratic in that it saw the student as an active participant in the learning process. Furthermore, being a common study English had the potential to provide the 'shared experience' that was 'a source of the democratic impulse' (Wheat 2001, p. 1). The accredited Study Design promoted the value of interactive classroom settings, involving group work and talk, as a condition for language learning – both learning about language and learning through language (VCAB 1990b).

Teaching VCE English using the Design meant that teaching was classroom centred. The aims and learning activities were those that teachers were used to. Students should read for enjoyment, understanding and to increase their knowledge and experience of others (VCAB 1990b, p. 31). There was concern for students as effective users of language. The Study Design promoted student writing that addressed real purposes and real audiences. The conventions of grammar and style were to be taught (1990b, p. 7).

The account of the development of the Study Design, which I have presented, arguably shows a professional community at work. The FOSC was representative of that community and the thorough-going consultation process and the number of submissions that it received, provided access to a wide range of teachers, educators and researchers whose expertise secured the merit of the Design. So what was the nature of the opposition that circumscribed the achievement?

Who really controls the curriculum?

Even though the Study Design was soundly based on the knowledge and experience of teachers and educators, it was contested throughout its development and it did not last in its accredited form for more than two years. If change to post-compulsory education in Victoria was needed in the 1980s (Blackburn 1985, Gill 1994) and if the Study Design was a good design, why was there so much dispute? Why were the changes to the new English curriculum rolled back so quickly?

What really were the forces that challenged and overwhelmed the teachers' and educators' professional responsibility and autonomy, and in the process diminished their professional identity? What professional knowledge do teachers need to successfully bring about curriculum reform?

These questions and the explanations that have already been offered need to be acknowledged here if only to the extent that they show where the debate about professional identity might go. The narrative of the development of VCE English by the FOSC has, after all, been presented as a cautionary tale.

The record shows that there was dissatisfaction with the Study Design on the part of people within the English teaching community. There were people on the FOSC who had been involved with the development of the STC and Group 2 Englishes and who regretted the loss of subjects that had non-competitive assessment. There were groups in the English teaching community who wanted more 'rigour' in the Design, more direction about the materials to be studied, more emphasis on the basics of English language learning. There was a strong opinion that the Design did not do justice to supporting our cultural heritage. There were people on the FOSC, and in particular community interest groups, who wanted a more specialised provision for ESL students. And the old exam system had plenty of supporters.

But this level of dissatisfaction does not seem to explain the strength of the challenges from the community, or the way the Study Design lasted for only two years in its accredited form. For that we have to go beyond the experience of the FOSC between 1986 and 1992 to the opinions of those who claim that curriculum change is influenced by a variety of social, political and academic forces that need to be seriously addressed if curriculum change is to be successful (Apple 1990, Fullan 1993, Gill 1994, Teese 2000).

A range of explanations might be given for the responses to the Study Design and for the failure of the VCE reforms. The story of the VCE certainly reveals 'the political nature of curriculum and teaching and of education in general' and the reality that education is 'caught up in the real world of shifting and unequal power relations' (Apple 1990, p. viii).

For Margaret Gill 'the VCE posed a challenge to particular privileged and entrenched interest groups'. She claims that

> these interest groups aligned with the electoral platform of a conservative political party awaiting election to

become the 'primary definers' of curriculum change, particularly in relation to English. (Gill 1994, p. 111)

Richard Teese's analysis is directed at the connection between post-compulsory education and tertiary education. His discussion of VCE English looks at the successes and failures of the Study Design, particularly the failure of the Design to deliver a better outcome for disadvantaged students, but allows that that was not an argument against the 'educational and pedagogical merits' of the reforms to the English curriculum.

> Transparency of learning criteria, robust design, greater pedagogical freedom, better links between assessment and teaching and greater breadth of assessment methodologies all made English more accessible, more amenable to teaching and learning. (Teese 2000, p. 51)

Teese discusses the powerful forces that were lined up against the Design. He argues that the universities had a power over the curriculum that teachers could not match, a power that the government did not challenge.

All these accounts of the failure of the VCE reforms to become stabilised suggest that managing educational change will need more than knowledge of teaching and learning strategies, subject matter and 'the wisdom of practice'. In the view of Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon, educational change is a 'complex and unpredictable business' and it will require

> both the knowledge and experiences that outsiders can bring, as well as the construction of understandings by those who are closest to the action and who best understand the context … School reform is too difficult and too important to rest within a single paradigm. (Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon 1996, p. 202)

A cautionary tale

Why is the story of the development of the English Study Design in Victoria a cautionary tale? What do English teachers have to learn from it? It obviously provides a lesson in the media's role in influencing issues of public importance (Gill 1994, p. 111), but there are other respects in which it is important to us.

The story is a cautionary tale for teachers because if one hallmark of their professional identity is having responsibility for curriculum development, then the story shows that even in the most promising circumstances, exercising that responsibility will be challenged. It will be challenged because teacher professionalism and political power meet in the area of curriculum control. The curriculum can be an area where the social values of a community are reinforced

or changed (Apple 1990, Teese 2000a). The introductory statement in the Study Design describes the role of students as active participants in society (VCAB 1990b, p. 1). There are significant implications of this statement for those who have a concern about the way in which social institutions are maintained. Controlling education has a central role (Apple 1990, Fullan 1993, Teese 2000).

The narrative of the development of the Study Design presented the range of stakeholders who were interested in the changes to the curriculum for post-compulsory education in 1986. There were parents, politicians and political parties, institutions like the universities, employer groups, unions, the bureaucracy, and the press. As well as the teachers there were curriculum theorists and the advocates of different schools of thought about the role of English and the teaching of English. But at a different level there were the reformers who wanted to take over control of the curriculum and the conservatives who did not want to give up the control they had. Controlling power and wealth in the community through education was the issue (Teese 2000).

These forces had greater power than the FOSC. The FOSC could decide on the Areas of Study and the use of a folio to assess writing. It could recognise the importance of oral communication by designing an Oral Communication Assessment Task and it could require that the VCE textlists include Australian titles. But the FOSC had believed that the assessment model would be the key to empowering students and it 'did not have the power' to gain acceptance of its preferred procedures.

Why should this story matter to us now? It matters because education and teaching are about change. It is hard to imagine that there will not be a time when the curriculum does not need to be changed to meet changing conditions in society. It is also hard to imagine that accomplished teachers will not have valuable professional knowledge arising from the experience of the classroom that would be important in the development of new curriculum initiatives. Being responsible for effectively using that professional knowledge to develop and effectively implement curriculum strengthens the status of teaching as a profession. But from this account of the development of the VCE English Study Design it would appear that teachers also need to understand the competing forces that influence effective curriculum change, and they may need to develop skill in knowing how to contend with those forces. For

teachers, the maintenance of their professional identity and the capacity to exercise curriculum power go hand in hand.

Acronymns

AAG Accreditation Advisory Group
AATE Australian Association for the Teaching of English
ACER Australian Council for Educational Research
ESL English as a Second Language
FOSC Field of Study Committee
HSC Higher School Certificate (It was replaced by the VCE.)
VATE Victorian Association for the Teaching of English
VCAB Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board
VCE Victorian Certificate of Education

Notes

1. COMMON ASSESSMENT TASKS
   Levels of performance in all VCE Studies for Units 3 and 4 were assessed by means of graded common assessment tasks(CATS). There were 4 CATS in English:
   1. Presentation of an Issue - required the student to produce a piece of writing in two sections. In the first section the student had to critically analyse the use of language in the presentation of an issue which that had appeared in the Australian media and in the second section present a point of view on the issue.
   2. Writing Folio –- required the student to present a folio of three pieces of writing which were written for different purposes and audiences.
   3. Oral Communication –- required the student to participate in three oral communication activities in at least two different audience settings and for at least two different purposes.
   4. Text Response –- required the student to complete one piece of sustained writing on one of the prescribed texts. The texts and topics were set by VCAB.

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Reading & Viewing

with Deb McPherson

When the NSW ETA English Conference, *Passion to Practice*, moved from November to May in 2019 my colleague, Jane Sherlock and I, had to do some rapid reading and viewing to present *Choices for English*, a session on texts that work in the classroom. The peerless Helen Sykes began this session many years ago and then Ernie Tucker joined her in talking to teachers about great texts for their students. I joined them in the 2000s and then Jane joined me in 2016. We try to provide a snapshot of what is new and interesting in the publishing and media world and how these new texts might be used in the classroom.

There were new faces in our session which prompted me to reflect on outstanding past texts that some teachers may not know. Looking back over the past few years provided a short list of texts for book rooms and book list consideration. You will find the list at the end of the column.

FICTION FOR STAGE 4

The Good Thieves Katherine Rundell (2019) Bloomsbury Children's Books 320 pp.

The Wolf Wilder Katherine Rundell (2015) Simon & Schuster 231 pp.

Young Vita Marlowe is out to right a wrong. In *The Good Thieves* her grandfather's home has been stolen and Vita is planning to get it back from the criminal con man, Victor Sorrotore who stole it. Along the way she gains the help of a pickpocket, a circus high flyer and a boy with a magic ability with animals. Silk, Arkady and Samuel are impressed with Vita's grit and planning and together they explore Manhattan as Vita devises a way to defeat Victor and regain her grandfather's home. Vita pushes through the pain of her polio-affected body to bring joy to her grandfather and the courage and loyalty of the group as they face danger is very moving.

Set in New York in Prohibition times, this fast moving and sometimes menacing adventure is a wonderful companion to *The Explorer*, Rundell's previous book about a group of children surviving in the Amazon (reviewed in *English in Australia* Volume 53 Number 2).

I enjoyed both these books about active and engaged children so much I sought out earlier works by Rundell and found *The Wolf Wilder*, set in Tsarist and pre-revolutionary Russia. Feo, and her mother, Marina, are wolf wilders. Wolves are a status symbol in aristocratic circles but as people grow tired of their pets they send them away and people like Feo and Marina teach them to be wolves again. Feo loves her harsh life and her friendship with the wolves that she helps to release back into the wild. That life is in danger when General Rakov turns up, demanding money with menace and determined to kill the wolves while falsely suspecting Feo and her mother of rebellion. When Marina is taken to prison Feo and her wolves set out to Saint Petersburg to free her. Along the way they fall in with villagers and the rescue becomes a revolution but it is the wolves that defend Feo in her final encounter with General Rakov. The General makes the mistake of trying to shoot Feo and forgetting that the wolves are wild.

Rundell's novels would make an excellent author study in Year 7 classrooms and provide many models of resilient, adventurous children with courage and conviction.
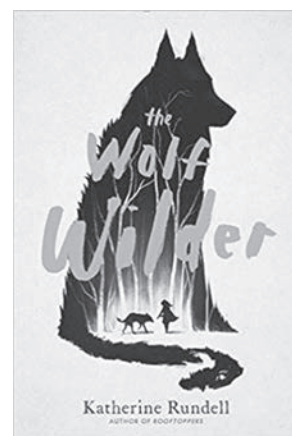
The Dog Runner Bren MacDibble (2019) Allen & Unwin 235 pp.

Bren MacDibble has created another feisty character in Ella, the ten-year-old girl, at the centre of this Australian ecological story. The world has come crashing to a halt as a red fungus has destroyed grasses and grains across the globe, causing an environmental disaster. Rations are in place, power is gone, people are scared and barricading themselves in their homes and violence is breaking out.

Ella's mum, a solar scientist, is on the other side of the city trying to get the power going again. Ella's dad has gone looking for her and not returned. Emery, Ella's fourteen-year-old brother, has gone to find their dad and Ella is left waiting for them with their three big dogs, Maroochy, Wolf and Bear. Emery's different mum and grandfather are First Nation people who live 'up country', and they have been saving the old grasses and Emery thinks life would be better there.

With Emery's return come danger from violent gangs who are breaking into people's homes. Emery and Ella and the dogs can't wait for their dad any longer and Emery plans to go 'mushing', using the dogs and a sled to make their way to his Indigenous home. Oyster and Squid, a friend's huskies, join them, so with five big dogs they set out on a journey to avoid trouble and make it home. Of course, trouble cannot be avoided and the menace that was evident in the early pages of the novel grows when Emery and Wolf are shot and injured by a pursuing gang. Ella shows an intelligence and tenacity far beyond her years and the reader is fully engrossed in her fightback and the vital roles played by the dogs and their individual temperaments and abilities. On a lighter side tinned sardines will never seem the same again after you see their importance in this journey.

There is a strong environmental consciousness in this novel coupled with an awareness of the role Indigenous people have played in using and preserving the landscape and flora of the country. The insights of Bruce Pascoe, in his book, *Dark Emu* about the value and importance of Indigenous agriculture and aquaculture, are reflected and acknowledged in the novel. The Cross-Curriculum Priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are well explored in this novel and it is a story

for today's adolescents, who in recent street protests have showed Australia they know they are living in the age of climate change and they want action to address it. Use this novel with students in Year 7 or 8 as part of an investigation into how climate change can be represented in literature.

FICTION FOR STAGE 5

Toffee Sarah Crossan (2019) Bloomsbury 400 pp.

Sarah Crossan is the answer to every teacher's prayer. *One*, *Moonrise* and *We Come Apart* are three verse novels that students can't put down; they deal with disadvantage, love, death and injustice and make for compelling reading. Now comes *Toffee* which adds mental health, identity and friendship into the mix. Once again Crossan has crafted a remarkable story.

Allison has run away from a controlling and violent father. His brutality becomes clearer as the novel progresses. Allison is trying to find his ex-partner, Kelly-Anne, who cared for her, but the search is fruitless. Homeless and desperate in Cornwall, she sleeps in an old barn.

Marla is an elderly woman who has a home but she also has dementia. She is confused and lonely, and mistakes Allison for an old friend from the past whom she called Toffee. Allison, with no food and little money, sees an opportunity to have a roof over her head and moves in. While Marla is losing her identity, Allison is struggling to find out who she really is.

> I am not who I say I am.
> Marla isn't who she thinks she is.
> I am a girl trying to forget.
> Marla is a woman trying to remember.
> Sometimes I am sad.
> Sometimes she is angry.
> And yet.
> Here in this house,
> I am so much happier
> than I have ever been. p. 3

Allison becomes Toffee and while she steals from Marla she also gives. In contrast to Donal, the son, who visits only occasionally and makes his mother miserable, she makes Marla's life better by listening and by dancing with her; she is attentive and caring.

False friendships with nearby school students lead to acts of betrayal and dent Allison's self-worth but Marla helps her to see, that she too, is loved.

Toffee is streaked with pain and crowded with life and offers hope of a better future for both Allison and Marla. Crossan's sparse poetry etches across the page leaving white space for thought as the poems build up a taut structure of the connections between these two fragile people.

Put all the wonderful Sarah Crossan verse novels together for students from Year 9 to 11 and offer students a choice. Then sit back and read with them. They will want to read them all.

Making Friends with Alice Dyson Poppy Nwosu (2019) Wakefield Press 262 pp.

Clever and conscientious Alice Dyson hasn't much else in her life but study, when a video clip of her dancing with a well know school troublemaker is circulated at school. Furious, Alice is keen to find out who was responsible. It was just a brief and spontaneous duet with Teddy Taualai after they got off the train, but now she is the centre of unwanted attention. What is more important is that she quite enjoyed the dancing. Teddy certainly did and he keeps bumping into Alice and demanding to be a friend.

Poppy Nwosu has created an intriguing character in Alice, as she ignores, connects and disconnects with Teddy and learns that reputations can be lost for no good reason. There are problems for Alice in being pulled out of her comfort zone, problems for May, her only friend, who struggles for acceptance from the social crowd, and problems for Teddy as his honesty, openness and intelligence don't protect him from stereotyping and misunderstanding. How Alice deals with the ups and downs of her relationships and how friendship with Teddy turns to love is deftly handed by Nwosu.

Reputation and stereotyping are part of the appeal of this entertaining novel, with bullying, identity and anxiety hovering in the wings. Many students will be engaged by this joyful love story and find pleasure in this well-crafted story. *Making Friends with Alice Dyson* would work very well in a relationship wide reading unit in Year 9 or 10.
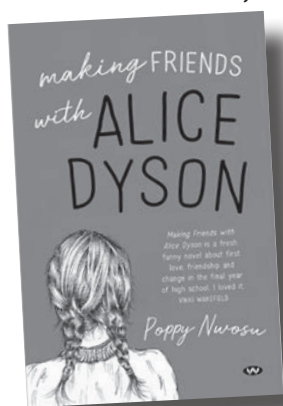
FICTION FOR STAGE 6

Land of Fences Mark Smith (2019) Text Publications 246 pp

The concluding novel in the *Road to Winter* trilogy is a very satisfying one. Finn and Kas are back on the coast at Angowrie with old timer, Ray, making and enjoying a life together. Surfing and swimming are entwined with food gathering but there is still unease and anxiety in their lives. At the end of *Wilder Country* (Book 2) the lights in the nearby town of Wentworth have come on and Kas, as an escaped Siley, or enslaved asylum seeker, is worried that her tracker, implanted in her skin will be re-activated and the Wilders will be coming for her again. She is right to be worried as the new authorities empower the murderous Wilders leader, Ben Rampage, as the Southwest Region Commissioner. Joined by other resisters, JT and Daymu, and dog Rowdy, Kas and Finn take off once again. When Kas and Daymu are captured Finn, with some unexpected help, must find a way to rescue them.

Danger and menace are inescapable in this future Australia where a virus has sent people back into survivor mode yet Finn recoils from gratuitous violence and earns the reader's admiration for his courage as he moves to free his friends, despite fear and deprivation. The book bursts into action and suspense and *Road to Winter*, *Wilder Country* and *Land of Fences* will be an asset in the classroom in attracting a variety of readers from Years 9 to 11. This trilogy charts a plausible yet terrifying future Australia in compelling tones, and the resistance and resilience of Finn, the central character of the trilogy should appeal to boys in particular.
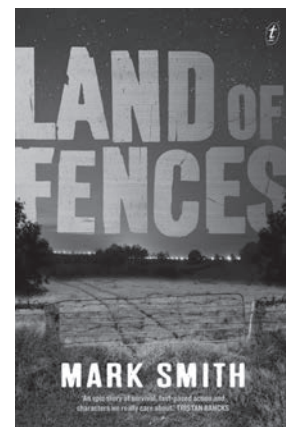
It Sounded Better in My Head Nina Kenwood (August 2019) Text Publishing pp292

Eighteen-year-old Natalie is an unforgettable character in this deeply funny and wonderful book about first love, friendship and the anxieties of life. Nina Kenwood describes her protagonist as hyper-analytical and insecure and so she is, endearingly so. Natalie is between high school and university and is rocked by the news her parents are splitting up; amicably splitting up, but still divorcing. Her best friends, Zach and Lucy,

have embarked on a relationship leaving her feeling left out of their previously close circle. Natalie has come through the acne wars and debilitating anxiety; some days at school it took considerable courage to face the world. Now she has to face more stress and tension than ever before.
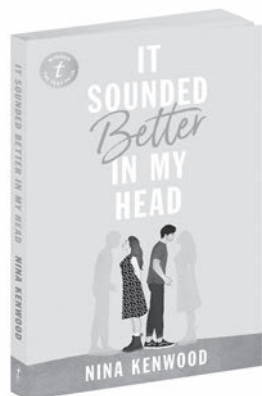
When Alex, Zach's older brother, has to share a bedroom with Natalie the pace of the novel picks up. The description of that encounter, how it came about and its consequences, is side splitting. Natalie's appraisal of their developing relationship is frank and often funny. The conversation about having sex is hilarious. Alex admits to having sex with about six people while Natalie says

'Um, not many.'
'How many is not many?'
'A very, very small amount.'
'How small?'
'A statistically insignificant amount.'
'Natalie.'
'None.' p. 234

What is engaging about this novel is the ease with which readers will find themselves in Natalie's world. It's her voice describing how she feels, her texts, her relationship with her parents, her friends and Alex and her honesty, anxiety and wry humour.

You know you are reading a good book when you laugh out loud but also appreciate the realities of life and love without sentimentality. Natalie is one very funny woman and many students will identify with and understand her journey. *It Sounded Better in My Head* was the winner of the 2018 Text Prize.

MULTIMODAL 7–12

Missing SBS https://www.sbs.com.au/missing/
Interactive website

Long Read/Digital Essay 'Missing: The Abduction of Wendy' Pfeiffer Kylie Bolton.
https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/feature/missing-abduction-wendy-pfeiffer

This quite mesmerising story of the abduction and attempted murder of eight-year-old Wendy Jane Pfeiffer is told in six chapters on the interactive website and in a long read digital essay, by Kylie Bolton. The essay provides images, maps, historical photographs, newspaper clippings, court reports, ABC film footage and a detailed account of what happened following interviews with the now 61-year-old Wendy and her family.

On Sunday 23 October 1966 Wendy had taken Bobbie, the family dog, for a walk down the dirt track when a white car pulled up. A stranger, pulled her into the car and stabbed her, then left her body in the bush at Mt Bold Reservoir reserve.

Wendy kept herself alive, despite being stabbed three times in the chest. Her survival skills were considerable. She woke from her faint and found herself in the bush. She began walking and became dehydrated but kept going towards the sound of water. She found and crossed a river and relieved her thirst, drinking from the one shoe she had. She ate grass, looked for blackberries and made a blanket out of branches and leaves for the night. She walked 12 kilometres in a 42-hour period.

Meanwhile the man who had stabbed her, in what may have been a psychotic episode, turned himself in to police and told them she was dead and took them to where he had left her body. But Wendy wasn't there. The police searched and failed to find her. They finally called in Jimmy James, an Indigenous tracker, and his relative Daniel Moodoo, who were able to make sense out of the muddled tracks and find the wounded child. She was very grateful to Jimmie and Daniel and thought she would have died if they had not been able to track her. Jimmy James worked for the SA police for over 40 years, tracking nearly 100 people who were lost or escaped prisoners. He learnt to track from his aunties, in Pitjantjatjara lands. Kylie Bolton spoke to his relatives while trying to fulfil Wendy's wish to honour Jimmy James and the men who saved her life. Kylie says in the essay:

Jimmy has come alive to me: his quiet way of working; his steely gaze; his photographic memory for tracks; his infectious laugh.

His nephew, David James said:

Uncle Jimmy just had it: a feeling and sense of belonging to the land. The skill of being able to observe, to notice what is missing and anything that is added.

Bolton comments on the irony that while Jimmy James was working to find Wendy and get her back to her family, the South Australian government was forcibly separating Indigenous children from their families and communities. Jimmy James was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1984.

Missing, the digital essay, is engrossing and an excellent example of a multimodal text with a variety of textual components and a fascinating narrative. *Missing*, the interactive website is a work of beauty. A young actor cast as Wendy moves through a series of mosaic-like screens and there are opportunities for viewers to interact with the story as they follow both Wendy and Jimmy James to the immensely satisfying conclusion.

Welcome to Night Vale
http://www.welcometonightvale.com

Podcasts are becoming an increasingly popular choice for teachers and students to use in the classroom. I'm grateful to Lucy Moore, a Year 10 student at Smith's Hill High School in NSW, for writing this review of *Welcome to Night Vale*, a podcast which is growing in popularity and influence.

Welcome to Night Vale (commonly abbreviated as WTNV) is a fiction podcast accessible through Spotify, YouTube, iTunes, and most podcast apps like Podbean. It's presented in the style of a community radio broadcast for the city of Night Vale, 'where every conspiracy theory is true', with thirty minutes per episode with a break for a music segment in the middle (introduced as the 'weather'). The show is hosted by Cecil Gershwin Palmer, the announcer for Night Vale Community Radio, and generally includes reports on whatever is happening in the town that day, with developments to the overarching plot of that particular arc (i.e. the mysterious tiny city under the bowling alley and the rise and fall of StrexCorp). The show also features dozens of recurring and beloved characters voiced by guest actors. My favourites are Carlos the Scientist (Cecil's husband) and The Faceless Old Woman Who Secretly Lives in Your Home (who was at one point a mayoral candidate).

I listened to the first episode of *Welcome to Night Vale* when I was cooking dinner the night before my family left for a holiday, and it unsettled me deeply and made the spaghetti bolognese I was making taste just *marginally* more eldritch. Naturally, I downloaded every episode to my Spotify and listened to the next twenty or so on the overnight flight to Amsterdam, and the experience was *so much better* when sleep-deprived and in the liminal space of a dark airplane. As I kept listening, what had so unnerved me when I began listening became comfortable and familiar, and I would grin uncontrollably when the opening theme played. This is the reason I fell in love with *Night Vale* – all of the weird, sinister Lovecraftian stuff that happened in this fictional little city in the American southwest moulded itself into a kind of story that, at that the time, I had never experienced. That, and my uncontrollable love for Khoshekh, possibly the best cat in fiction.

I'd recommend *Welcome to Night Vale* for Years 9-12, though anyone who's a fan of sci-fi or horror can enjoy it. Lucy Moore, Smith's Hill High School.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS FROM PREVIOUS NSW ETA *CHOICES FOR ENGLISH* SESSIONS (2011–2018)

FICTION STAGE 4

A Monster Calls Patrick Ness (2011) Walker Books 215 pp.

Angel: Through My Eyes Natural Disaster Zones Zoe Daniels (2108) Allen & Unwin 178 pp.

Blueback Tim Winton 2008 (1999) Penguin 168 pp.

Hatchet Gary Paulsen 2005 (1987) Pan 160 pp.

Holes Louis Sachar 1998 (2001) Laurel Leaf Library 256 pp.

Liquidator Andy Mulligan (2015) David Fickling Books 390 pp.

Moxie Jennifer Mathieu (2107) Hodder 344 pp.

Om Shanti Babe Helen Limon (2012) Frances Lincoln 192 pp.

Parvana Deborah Ellis (2002) Allen & Unwin 180 pp. (also in graphic novel form)

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes Eleanor Coerr 1999 (1977) Puffin 80 pp.

Sister Heart Sally Morgan (2015) Freemantle Press 251 pp.

Sold Patricia McCormick 2007 (2006) Allen & Unwin 288 pp.

The Explorer Katherine Rundell (2017) Bloomsbury 394 pp.

The River and the Book Alison Croggon (2015) Walker Books 144 pp.

the stars at oktober bend Glenda Millard (2016) Allen & Unwin 266 pp.

Trash Andy Mulligan (2010) David Fickling 211 pp.

When Friendship Followed Me Home Paul Griffin (2016) Text Publishing 247 pp.

FICTION STAGE 5

All I Ever Wanted Vikki Wakefield (2011) Text Publishing 208 pp.

Ballad for a Mad Girl Vikki Wakefield (2017) Text Publishing 309 pp.

Catching Teller Crow Ambelin Kwaymullina Ezekiel Kwaymullina (2018) Allen & Unwin 197 pp.

Chenxi and the Foreigner Sally Rippen 2008 (2002) Text Publishing 208 pp.

Feed M. T. Anderson (2003) Walker Books 320 pp.

In the Dark Spaces Cally Black (2107) Hardie grant 219 pp.

Into That Forest Louis Nowra (2012) Allen & Unwin 184 pp.

Jasper Jones Craig Silvey (2010) Allen & Unwin 408 pp.

Mallee Boys Charlie Archbold (2017) Wakefield Press 284 pp.

MARTians Blythe Woolston. (2015) Walker Books 223 pp.

One Sarah Crossan (2015) Bloomsbury 429 pp.

One Would Think the Deep Claire Zorn (2016) University of Queensland Press 320 pp.

Prince of Afghanistan Louis Nowra (2016) Allen & Unwin 184 pp.

The Drover's Wives Ryan O'Neill (2018) Brio 254 pp.

The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf Ambelin Kwaymullina (2012) Walker Books 400 pp.

The Secret River Kate Grenville 2006 (2005) Text Publishing Company 336 pp.

We Were Liars E. Lockhart (2014) Allen & Unwin 240 pp.

FICTION STAGE 6

Boy Swallows Universe Trent Dalton (2018) 4th Estate 471 pp.

Bro Helen Chebatte (2016) hardie grant 232 pp. (also Stage 5)

Exit West Mohsin Hamid (2017) Hamish Hamilton 229 pp.

Moonrise Sarah Crossan (2017) Bloomsbury 383 pp. (also Stage 5)

New Boy Tracy Chevalier (2017) Hogarth Press 188 pp.

Release Patrick Ness (2017) Walker Books 288 pp.

Station Eleven Emily St. John Mandel (2014) Picador 333 pp.

The Last Man in Europe Dennis Glover (2017) Black Inc 292 pp.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane Neil Gaiman (2014) Headline 219 pp.

The Road Cormac McCarthy 2007 (2006) Picador 256 pp.

The Road to Winter Mark Smith (2016) Text Publishing 230 pp.

The Shepherds' Hut Tim Winton (2018) Hamish Hamilton 267 pp.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts M.H. Kingston 1989 (1975) Picador 192 pp.

Warlight Michael Ondaatje (2108) Penguin Random House 290 pp.

We Come Apart Sarah Crossman and Brian Conahan (2017) Bloomsbury 326pp (also Stage 5)

MULTIMODAL 7-12
(including picture books, graphic novels, websites, apps, digital essays, films)

Australia to Z Armin Greder (2016) Allen & Unwin 29 pp.

Bran Nue Dae directed by Rachel Perkins (2009) PG

Cambridge Shakespeare app https://www.cambridge.edu.au/go/

Cicada Shaun Tan (2018) Lothian Children's Books 32pp (picture book)

Florence Ken Wong (2018) iTunes (app/game/graphic novel)

Illuminae Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff (2015) Allen & Unwin 608pp (graphic novel)

Inanimate Alice http://www.inanimatealice.com

Into the Wild directed by Sean Penn (2007) M

Maralinga, the Anangu Story Oak Valley and Yalata Communities with Christobel Mattingly (2009) Allen & Unwin.72 pp.

Mirror Jeannie Baker (2010) Walker Books 48 pp.

MY:24 app (available on Apple app store) Australian Children's Television Foundation (2104)

MY:24 Australian Children's Television Foundation (2104) Running time: 26x12 minutes. PG

Our Choice Al Gore. PushPop Press Publishing. App for iPad

Persepolis I and II by Marjane Satrapi (2003) 2008 Vintage 352 pp.

Rabbit Proof Fence directed by Phil Noyce. (2002) PG

Sabrina Nick Drnaso (2018) Granta Books 202 pp. (graphic novel)

Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek (2012) A *New York Times* journalism project December

Spirited Away directed by Hayao Miyazaki (2001) PG

Tales from the Inner City Shaun Tan (2018) Allen &Unwin 211 pp. (illustrated short stories)

The Arrival Shaun Tan (2006) Lothian Books, 128 pp.

The following SBS interactives can be found at http://www.sbs.com.au/features *The Boat, K'gari (Fraser Island), Exit Australia, Cronulla Riots*

The Dream of the Thylacine Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks (2011) Allen &Unwin 32 pp.

The Hunt for the Wilderpeople directed by Taika Waititi (2016) PG

The Invention of Hugo Cabret Brian Selznick (2007) Scholastic Press 533 pp.

The Island Amin Greder 2007 (2002) Allen & Unwin 32 pp.

The Rules of Summer Shaun Tan (2013) Hachette Australia 48 pp. (app and picture book)

The Sapphires directed by Wayne Blair (2012)

The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains Neil Gaiman (2014) Headline Publishing 80 pp.

To Kill a Mockingbird: A Graphic Novel Harper Lee, adapted and illustrated by Fred Fordham (2018) Heinemann (hardback) 273 pp.

UNICEF: Voices of Youth http://www.voicesofyouth.org

Wadjda directed by Haifaa Al-Mansour (2012) PG

Welcome to Country A Travel Guide to Indigenous Australia Marcia Langton (2018) hardi grant 234 pp.

æWhat They Took With Them – a List' Jenifer Toksvig (2016) at www.withrefugees.org and http://www.acompletelossforwords.com and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS-Q2sgNjl8 duration: 5 minutes 24 seconds

POETRY 9–11

A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry Czeslaw Milosz ed. (1996) Mariner Books 320 pp.

Antipodes: Poetic Responses Margaret Bradstock ed. (2011) Phoenix Education 163 pp.

Beowulf Gareth Hinds (2007) Candlewick Press 128 pp.

Brand New Ancients Kate Tempest (2013) Picador 47 pp.

Brand New Ancients Kate Tempest (2013) MacMillan Digital Audio 79 minutes

Ruby Moonlight Ali Cobby Eckermann (2011) Magabala Books 74 pp.

The Odyssey Homer translated by Emily Wilson (2018) Norton & Company 582 pp.

The Taste of River Water Cate Kennedy (2011) Scribe Publications 96 pp.

DRAMA

Behind the Beautiful Forevers David Hare (2014) Faber & Faber 144 pp.

Cyberbile Alana Valentine Currency Press (2013) 47 pp.

Jasper Jones adapted by Kate Mulvany from the novel by Craig Silvey (2016) Currency Press 79 pp.

Kindertransport Diane Samuels (2008) Nick Hern Books 120 pp.

Letters to Lindy Alana Valentine (2017) Currency Press 48 pp.

Patient 12 Kevin Summers (2014) Currency Press 36 pp.

Seventeen by Matthew Whittet (2015) Currency Press 54 pp.

Single Asian Female Michelle Law (2018) Currency Press 64 pp.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time Adapted by Simon Stephens from the novel by Mark Haddon (3013) Methuen 150 pp.

The Drover's Wife Leah Purcell (2017) Currency Press pp.

The Secret River Kate Grenville and Andrew Bovell (20130 Currency Press 89 pp.

Things I Know to be True Andrew Bovell (2017) Currency Press 68 pp.

Wasted Kate Tempest (2013) Methuen dram 57 pp.

NON-FICTION

Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia edited by Anita Heiss (2018) Black Inc 331 pp.

Growing Up Asian in Australia edited by Alice Pung (2008) Black Inc 288 pp.

Mao's Last Dancer: Young Readers Edition by Li Cunxin (2005) Puffin 320 pp.

Talking to My Country Stan Grant (2016) Harper Collins 224 pp. hardcover

The Happiest Refugee Anh Do (2010) Allen & Unwin 232 pp.

REFERENCE

Introducing Literature: A Practical Guide to literary Analysis, Criticism, and Theory Brian Moon (2016) Chalkface 222 pp.

The Artful English Teacher Erica Boas and Susan Gazis (eds.) (2016) AATE 312 pp.

The Literature Book Sam Atkinson (ed.) (2016) DK Penguin Random House 352 pp.

Happy reading and viewing until next time.

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