Doing Without School!

Spaces become places?

Adolescent identity through engagement.
Storyscape:

a thesis about adolescent identity, engagement and education.

By Margaret T Milne

M.Ed. (Lang & Lit); M.A. (Chn Lit); Grad. Dip. (Lang & Lit); THTC (Rem Edn); TPTC.

Storyscape is dedicated to TashaB [BBus(Accy) CA, charted accountant extraordinaire], the student players in Storyscape, and others like them who left the confining restrictions of secondary school to pursue their education on other paths.
I am the author of the thesis entitled

Doing Without School!
Spaces become places?
Adolescent identity through engagement.

submitted for the degree of PhD (Education)

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Abstract

**Storyscape** is a finely crafted thesis about adolescent identity, engagement and education wherein narratives, writing, textual forms and visual images are interwoven. It reports my investigation around the case study research I conducted at an educational institution, which I call Neatsville Academy of Community Education (NACE). During my time there I witnessed and heard about dramas in the educational experiences and out-of-school lives of the students and teachers. This led to my incorporating some drama related terms in Storyscape, for example calling the participants **players**, and the vignettes **frieze frames**. Storyscape, in examining the conditions and circumstances surrounding the seven adolescent students, investigates some of the experiences and overt and tacit conditions that affected their functioning at NACE, and also those that led to each of them exiting their secondary schools. Interwoven in Storyscape are examples, exploits and endeavours of the students, some humorous, some inspiring, some sad, but all of them challenging.

Storyscape presents **space** as a confining arena where opportunities for adolescent engagement and learning don’t eventuate, whereas student learning is an outcome of engagement in **places**. When enrolling at NACE, each of the student players clearly identified their goals and ambitions, including improving their educational outcomes and employability, yet during my time at NACE dwindling attendances by 6 of the students indicated that the threads connecting their studies to themselves were unravelling. Disenchanted and disengaged they preferred activities other than their educational studies.

The term **Storyscape** encompasses the study, but also reflects the selective, partial and sculptured nature of communication, stories and visual forms as part of life, and also as part of this thesis as I investigate what it is that the adolescents are indicating through their clothing, accessories, narratives, behaviour and actions. I draw on theories of social practice, new literacy studies, sociology, geosemiotics and multimodal communication to contextualise the contested landscape of education in general, and the players’ education in particular. My research identifies the closely intertwined connections of identities, engagement, literacy and learning in the lives and educational experiences of the players. Storyscape incorporates examples of these facets, however for easy of discussion the facets are separated in chapters 4 to 8.

Identity emerged as a significant issue for the players, and is situated as an evolving process, adapting to the social contexts in which a person lives, and exhibited through a variety of performances, artefacts and narratives. Identity formation and enactment are considered as **identity in practice** which Holland et al. (1998) established, consisting of four parts: figured worlds, positional identities, self-authoring and moving to new figured worlds. While the process above may appear smooth it is not always so, and in Storyscape some incongruities in student behaviours or narratives are discussed as **Frozen Moments**. Their impact on me was such that they were frozen in my memory,
demanding attention. But they are also moments which seem frozen within the inner world of the players concerned, and affect their perceptions.

One section in particular pays attention is to **literacy**, which is considered as a social practice situated in cultural arenas in which processes and texts differ with social contexts. In considering literacy and other educational experiences of each of the players in schools and at NACE, it became apparent that the prevalent **cultural model of education** featured strongly. The educational model was implicitly foundational for much of the curriculum and courses, many administrative decisions and some pedagogy used at NACE and the secondary schools the players attended. The **assumptions** upon which this model is based privilege certain styles of english usage and literacies, learning styles and educational procedures such as timetables. While these conditions may suit many students, the adolescent players did not have the **cultural capital** necessary for such a model to be effective for them. Through the **hidden curriculum** the government covertly educates students in a particular style of ‘student-hood’ and citizenship, with the expectation that students be silent, submissive and standardised in particular areas. The term ‘at-risk’ was rejected for its judgmental expectation for conformity to a cultural model that is rejected by the student players. The term ‘disengaged’ was also rejected as the players were engaged and connected to a range of activities, most of which were not incorporated in their studies. The research indicated that these were the areas which typically presented problematic for the players, where their cultural values and expectations were intrinsically different from those prevalent at their schools and at NACE. The emphasis on academic work, and courses designed for employment did not serve the players well. They suffered from boredom and a lack of relevance, and so looked elsewhere for meaningful education.

**Storyscape** highlights the plight of students who are disadvantaged by the inequality of educational opportunities and the crucial need for educational reforms to address the foundational assumptions and injustices in the current cultural model operating in mainstream education.
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Foreword

**Storyscape** has evolved as a multimodal communication where its presentation utilises multimodal ‘text’ to assist with efficiently contextualising the research, to do justice to the narratives and lives of the Storyscape players while at the same time meeting the criterion of a PhD thesis submitted for examination.

Some sections do not follow a traditional format. The participants are referred to as **players**, and need to be introduced at the beginning as they are referred to in all sections, and it’s beneficial to understand a little of their cultural lives and educational experiences. To facilitate the introduction of the players a **Prelude** section was necessary. However to contextualise some of the educational aspects of the players, an introduction to Neatsville and the Neatsville Academy of Community Education was necessary so **Interlude 1** developed. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 follow a traditional style of an academic introduction, discussion of the theoretical underpinnings and the methodologies. **Interlude 2** introduces the focused discussion of the analysis in chapters 4 through to 8. Then I wondered what to call a section about one of the players that required special consideration, and as I looked at my ‘production’ list **Endlude** sat nicely with prelude and interludes:

- **Foreword:**
- **Prelude:** The Players
- **Ch 1** Sunrise on Storyscape an introduction
- **Interlude 1** Tracks Around Neatsville
- **Ch 2** Theoretical Terrains
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  - **Luke’s Ligature**
- **Ch 9** Conclusion
Language is living, vibrant, and evolving, so why not use it? Colour coding was an essential strategy in my writing; green signified informal, while blue the academic sections, and I retained those codes in this text.

The text too evolved. There wasn’t a conscious decision to write in a narrative style. I drafted many sections before I found a ‘voice’ that suited my practice as a researcher. I bolded key words to assist me find my way through lengthy texts and discussions. The feature was so effective I retained it.

An evolving practice with written language conventions is the use, or absence, of capital letters. In contemporary texts school subjects do not require capital letters; science is recorded as ‘science’. In Storyscape English, as the school subject, has no capital letter. Similarly with writing ‘air force’; where Luke discusses wanting to be pilot in an air force, or the Australian air force, no capital letters are used. However if reference is made to the Royal Australian Air Force, as a particular place where some pilots are trained, then capital letters are used.

Central to Storyscape are the players, the seven students and two teachers who shared my time at Neatsville Academy of Community Education, and it’s to them my attention now turns.
Prelude: Me, Myself, and Others

Let me introduce you to Storyscape and its main players. Me is myself as an interested person; Myself is the neophyte researcher conducting, participating in, and recording this Storyscape, and Others are the players; seven students and two teachers. In Storyscape the participants are called players as there are constant dramas in their education, and they are crucial in the dramas presented throughout the thesis. I also picture this manuscript as a story-drama in its process and production. Storyscape also acknowledges how stories are partial, selective and sculptured, as is discussed in the beginning of Chapter 3.
Me: background and interests

I trained as a primary and special needs teacher, and as a classroom teacher worked most effectively in the literacy area. Very early on I realised that successful learning was very closely tied to students’ interests and what was familiar to them. While teaching in a remote rural area of Queensland I continued my studies in language and literacy acquisition. Eventually curriculum and administrative restrictions led me to leave full-time employment for alternative teaching opportunities.

A local business employed me to teach adult literacy and mathematics three mornings and one evening a week. A disused office area in the centre of town became my classroom. The new, well equipped local library was only two minutes away and was an integral part of lessons as suitable resources were limited where I worked. With few administrative restrictions, and no curriculum ones, I was free to improvise. Word spread about the classes and the local secondary school started sending down students who were struggling with conventional classroom approaches. The students intermingled with the adults and provided lively discussions, learnt tolerance and enjoyed the less restrictive environment than school. I didn’t have to worry if shirts were not tucked in, or if caps were worn in class. If a student was hungry I wasn’t restricted by administrative timetables which stipulated when and where students could eat. I found myself working with adolescents who were bright, eager to learn, responsive to challenges, innovative and hard-working, but who hated school. Assistance with school assignments was always offered to them; however they preferred the topics which came out of our discussions and they valued the experiences that the adult learners shared. But more than that they loved reading and writing. Continually I watched these students, constantly assessing their needs, learning, frustrations and successes. I could suggest books and magazines to match interests of each student; I was passionate about fiction for adolescents and supplemented the local library resources with my own. Often the students assisted me in choosing books to purchase. These students relished having the freedom to present information and express
their ideas in a variety of ways. There were rap songs, letters to the editor of the local paper, complaints and compliments to local businesses, personal plans and journals. These disengaged students from the secondary school assumed responsible learning with a vitality the secondary teachers had found lacking in them.

My family move to a southern state brought me new employment opportunities, still with adolescent students not coping with secondary school. Here I observed the same traits; students had the same grumbles and questions and were rebelling against the same authoritative demands by schools. My life took a new direction when presented with the opportunity to do a PhD research study into adolescent students not fitting into mainstream schooling.

**Myself, the neophyte researcher**

Professionally I have worked and studied simultaneously for many years always seeking to improve my teaching through further practically based teaching courses. My Master of Arts investigated themes in adolescent fiction works including social and mental health issues.

My Master of Education built on this interest and developed my academic research skills investigating adolescent literature, comparing the themes and language used in fiction books with the interests, lives and language of the adolescents with whom I work. In my teaching experiences I have always been drawn to those students for whom formal schooling has presented difficulties. This doctoral study grew out of my desire to understand more about these students and their struggles; why they engaged with some books and not with others. However the research took on a life of its own as I realised that the non-engagement in reading was symptomatic of deeper issues around education as a whole. My research questions changed during this evolution and are discussed in Chapter 3. While a more detailed explanation of the research impetus, project and processes are included in *Chapter 1 Sunrise on Storyscape*, an introduction to Neatsville and its
Academy of Community Education (NACE) are contained in Interlude 1 Tracks around Neatsville.

Others: the seven student and two teacher players

My research centred on the student players as it was their stories and perspectives I was interested in. However it was impossible to contextualise the educational experiences without including the two teachers, and they provided some insightful incidents. Without them this research would have been incomplete, but the focus was, and remains, the students. So here they are; the students first, not in any particular order, then the teachers.

Suzie: At the time of the data collection she was 15 years old and dressed in clean modern clothes with her make-up very attractive. She always carried a modern school bag and was well prepared with stationery and books. For the first half of the term her attendance was regular, and she said that since coming to NACE her confidence and her reading and writing had improved. At the time of the data collection she could not read the local newspaper without significant help and was embarrassed that she could not spell and write independently. Her altered Three Pigs story is mentioned in Chapter 3 where situated meanings (Gee 1999) are discussed, and consequently is included as Appendix 1.

Suzie’s attended lots of different primary schools; however there had been a stable period of nearly 3 years when she attended Convenience Cove Secondary. Here Suzie experienced a mixture of positive, happy experiences and frustrating ones. In Year seven she enjoyed the practical classes where there was little reading and writing and where she was with friends. In Year 8 students struggling with literacy were put in a special class; she was aware of her literacy problems but she didn’t get much help.

Friends were a big part of Suzie’s reason for going to school, and her learning. They assisted her with her school work. When she didn’t have friends in a class she often didn’t attend, for example when she was the only
girl with 16 boys in year 8 english; she didn’t enjoy the class and stopped going. However literacy problems and being separated from friends were not the only problems that she encountered. She was teased and bullied and felt the teachers didn’t care enough to intervene in any meaningful way. It was easier not to attend.

During these years Suzie lived with her father in rented accommodation close enough to Convenience Cove for Suzie to enjoy the company of her friends. Then she and her father unexpectedly moved from Convenience Cove to a rented house in a more distant rural area and life changed for Suzie. During these years Suzie’s mother lived in a village about 30 kilometres away and Suzie usually saw her once a week. Her father drove her to NACE three times a week for classes. He worked casually in the building industry.

The classes that Suzie was enrolled in at NACE were Vocational and Pre-work Training, Multi-media I and communication skills, all taught by Janice on Monday and Tuesday mornings. These were classes in which I was a participant-observer. Suzie also did a reading and writing class on a Wednesday morning. In the classes I observed Suzie did not participate in any discussions; she listened and knew Janice’s instructions and had opinions but did not freely volunteer them. She was not often asked a direct question but would always answer politely when it happened. Suzie was an eager and compliant student. Several times she smiled spontaneously when her efforts or work were praised. She completed her work within her capabilities, and did assignments at home. She disliked not having friends at NACE, but said she enjoyed the classes.

Luke: was a loner who turned 16 during the data collection time. My introduction to him was informal when one freezing morning he arrived without a jacket or jumper and locked his bike to a seat in courtyard. He then looked for a warm room where he could wait. His shirt and jeans were clean, though not modern; his shoes sturdy and his cap moulded to sit
snugly on his head with little hair showing. He lived in Neatsville with his mother and younger sister. Luke tells me that he attended two schools while doing Year 7; he was in foster care and attended a different school for Year 8, then attended two other secondary schools for part of Year 9. His time at the local secondary school (about a year) was, by his accounts, particularly unhappy, and certainly his behaviours seemed to support this. He actively avoided any contact with other adolescents. During his first interview Luke didn’t make much eye contact, sitting with his head down and a cap covering his head and forehead. He answered in short, clipped, monotone sentences and single words. As my time at NACE progressed he got used to my being around and became quite talkative, although was more comfortable with informal chats than in an interview situation.

He was an active participant in the NACE english classes, although the teachers, Janice and Rosemary, were quick to point out that this was a gradual development during the past twelve months. The Herald-Sun and The Age newspapers were available for students each day. Luke got used to my presence in this class and began chatting to me, showing me things from the Herald-Sun, and asking questions. He especially enjoyed tricking me when my ignorance about scorpions was surpassed by his knowledge (the other students enjoyed this also). The standard of his work in this class varied with the activity. He seemed to read the newspaper with understanding when an article interested him, but didn’t bother at other times. For class activities he just answered the questions as quickly as he could using photos or students’ comments as clues whether they were related or not. While I was there he never re-read his work. He wrote in simple sentences preferring to meet the minimal requirements for any written activity.

Luke had not completed Year 9 schooling and wanted to be a pilot in the RAAF; he could name and detail many aircraft. He frequently corrected Janice, the teacher, for incorrect usage of words; for example when she referred to Paris Hilton as an ‘heir’ he was quick to point out she should have said ‘heiress’. He also often corrected her misreading of newspaper
passages. It was done in a friendly way, without malice, and Janice and the other students accepted this as a normal part of the class interaction. Luke also had a keen sense of humour and frequently interrupted a class discussion with his well-meaning play on words or ideas. Initially I thought that many of his comments revealed a limited understanding of some concepts and some seemed inappropriate for a lad his age. During one class he asked me the meaning of bifocal; he didn’t know what a comparison was, and used punctual when he meant attendance. But after much analysis and pondering I now am wondering if there are other factors involved. But here I’m only introducing Luke, and I discuss more about him and his education in Endlude: Luke’s Ligature.

Luke was keen to learn and had a large folder in which he compiled his independent research work, which I termed his Personal Portfolio. He was very proud to show me these works which mainly were printed copies of information and web sites related to the air force and war planes. While I was at NACE he started to compile an historical scrap-book of things which interested him in the newspaper; he intended to keep it to show his children in the future. He was enrolled in a mathematics class but didn’t do any of the work; he said he didn’t understand it. He enjoyed attending NACE Men’s Shed one day a week, where he learned hands-on wood working and gardening skills with a group of eight men, the eldest of whom was 82 and the youngest, excepting Luke, was about 50. He often spent lunchtime at a computer or riding his bike. The only friends he talked about were his fellow students from the Convenience Cove school he attended when in foster care two years previous.

Luke lived in Neatsville with his mother and a younger sister; details about his father are not clear. Luke’s literacies feature in Chapter 4; his self-authoring indicators are discussed in Chapter 6; an identity artefact of his and a political comment are investigated in Chapter 7 where Frozen Moments are considered.
**Bethany and Yvette:** Bethany, a mixed race heritage student who at the time was 17 years old. Her mother was Indigenous Australian and living in a rural district about 25 minutes drive from Neatsville. Her father was from an island Pacific country but lived on a farm near a remote town interstate. Bethany spent some of her secondary schooling years living with her father, some with her grandparents as part of the island community, some in a large northern town, and some at Neatsville.

Bethany, a tall, well built girl, generally wore clean, fashionable clothes. She had a high level of literacy, was computer literate and could easily manage most of the assignments and work that she was given at NACE. She often read the newspaper, or did puzzles when she had finished the required work or if an activity didn’t interest her. She received special funding to attend NACE classes aimed at improving her skills and employability.

She attended four different secondary schools, starting secondary school while living with her father. During an interview she explained:

*Dad’s on a farm. There were only three classrooms in the school nearby. All the classes were together, but divided into kindy, primary and secondary. Up there they’re not that bright. I was in year 7 and I was brighter than the year 12s and all that. I never really learnt much there.*

Her secondary school experiences in the island community were very different. She had lived on the island with her grandparents for a while when she was younger, and returned as an adolescent. During the interview she elaborated:

*I travelled by bus to school. The school I went to was the best on the island. All the schools over there are pretty much religious schools – all different religions. Each religion would do a school based on that religion. It’s a Latter Day Saints school. It was big, and there were two middle schools. Over there they have forms… Forms 1 2 3 4 5 6. That’s the High School….I was in Forms 2 and*
It was very well equipped, and had a good library. It was clean, really clean. You know how some schools have graffiti everywhere and stuff, well there was none of that. Everything was real clean, white and beautiful green grass. Have you ever seen the Mormon Temple? Well it was just like that. Everyone loves their school and is really proud of the school they go to. Dad has a tattoo of the school on his chest. They are proud of the school they went to. Lots of people have tattoos. Heaps of people my age had tattoos. I loved it.

She attended two different secondary schools in Victoria and found them to be similar. In Years 7 and 8 Bethany and her friends did not borrow books from the school library, but, she continued during the interview,

We went to the town library where they had better books and we could borrow more. My friend would borrow 15-20 books; she’d borrow heaps, and we’d share the books. I enjoyed the scary ones.

The english classes were organised so all the bright students were together and Bethany was in the top class. All the students read the same books. She enjoyed reading but didn’t remember the books that they studied in class.

For the first part of the term Bethany’s attendance was regular and she was punctual. Her mother drove into town for work each day and brought Bethany with her. Bethany was shy and didn’t initiate any interactions with other students. She had completed Year 10; it seems she finished the year but didn’t pass enough subjects to gain a certificate. She seemed bored with a lot of the work. She had no ambitions for employment. In the middle of the term she brought a friend Yvette to enrol.

Yvette was of mixed Maori–European descent, moving from New Zealand as a child. She lived most of her life in a northern town where she and Bethany became friends. She was very capable with a computer, had high literacy skills, a good memory and her interest in current affairs was reflected in a few discussions at NACE. She had come to live with Bethany
and her mother ‘for a while’, and when she started was excited about coming to NACE with Bethany.

Bethany and Yvette talked, smiled and laughed together as they worked that week. Bethany was more confident and much happier with Yvette at NACE. However this was short-lived so Bethany was on her own again. Their friendships, and the change in Bethany when Yvette was gone, form part of my discussion in Chapter 8 when I investigate some of the conditions students have for staying or exiting educational facilities. Bethany attended three sessions during the fortnight after Yvette’s withdrawal.

**Nathan:** Nathan turned 17 towards the end of my time with the players. He was usually very clean, well mannered, thoughtful, alert and articulate. He was very self-conscious about his voice problem. It is unclear whether it’s a voice or a projection difficulty, but he was adamant that I wouldn’t record his voice. At our first meeting he wouldn’t even say ‘NO’, just sat there, head down, shaking his head. Once the recorder was off he was a different lad. Much of his information has come through informal discussions when travelling to excursions and sitting in the office discussion area. He was articulate when relaxed and confident with people. It took me a couple of conversations to understand his speech and not to ask him to repeat what he was saying.

On June 7th he and I spent some time together checking the details of his interviews. By this time I had altered my procedures a little and had a laptop ready for the students to use as we chatted. I had offered to sit next to him so he could read through the transcripts, but he preferred to sit opposite. He opened the computer and played ‘patience’ as we spoke, stopping every now and then to check things with me.

A couple of years ago Nathan shifted from Convenience Cove to Neatsville. He had lived in youth housing accommodation during the last couple of
years but now lives in a community housing unit nearby. He’s very fond of Bundy Rum, smokes cigarettes when he gets freebies or can afford them. When invited to be part of the research he was very thoughtful, and then hesitant and asked if Mick could be part of it too. Once he knew that Mick was also welcome Nathan was fine. I saw Nathan wear only one set of clothes; a stained but presentable Bundy Rum yellow shirt, jeans and on cold mornings a light-weight brown jacket with Red Hot Chillies across the back. His hair was short and kept covered by his old Bundy Rum cap that’s well moulded to his head shape. His sneakers were well worn.

Nathan’s attendance was irregular and he was not punctual; he said he’d like to change both these things. Sometimes he had problems with his flat mate; routines were disrupted by friends, music and ‘partying’. On May 24th Nathan did not arrive until nearly eleven o’clock. He was bleary-eyed, his speech and comprehension were slow. He acknowledged that he had a problem as his government payments were tied into his attendance. About this time Terry moved into the youth accommodation opposite Nathan’s unit and for a while Nathan’s attendance and punctuality improved as he and Terry came together.

Nathan read well, and read the relevant sections of the video camera handbook to find how to use an external microphone, and how to alter the volume. He enjoyed fiction and non-fiction reading, but wouldn’t let reading get in the way of having a good time with his friends. He said he still had all his childhood books; a big bookshelf-full at his mother’s, something which interested me and is discussed in Chapter 7, Frozen Moments. Nathan did Year 9 and some of Year10 at NACE secondary school. He did not like the authoritarian attitude that many of the teachers had, and commented that they were worse than Janice when she ‘cracked it’ about his and Mick’s non-attendance. He also didn’t like the bullying, put-downs and fights that were frequent among the boys. He preferred the hands-on subjects, although he said he managed the other subjects OK. While in the youth accommodation he had the opportunity for assistance with homework but rarely sought it.
When Nathan left the secondary school he tried Borderland, the off-school-campus VCAL program which operated close to NACE. He transferred to NACE because he didn’t like the way property was disrespected at Borderland, and the way the staff put-down students. He has set himself the goal of getting through ½ Year 10 and all Year 11 in 18 months.

It’s about four years since Nathan has seen his mother. He hasn’t seen his dad for 3 to 4 years. He usually didn’t spend more than 1 year at any one school, although he did grades 1 to 5 at one primary school. Nathan explained that he had attended 13 schools in one year in Melbourne while living with his mother, brother and 2 sisters. On one excursion he commented that going to lots of schools had its advantages as he made lots of friends all over Melbourne. He was very proud of starting his own little family, and delighted that his six month old daughter, Alice Mercedes, smiles when she recognises him. He used to see her about once a week, but she was recently moved to a town about an hour away.

When I first met Nathan, Mick was with him and they seemed to share an affinity with each other. They ‘spoke the same language’, moved the same way and seemed to know what each other was going to say next. I wondered how Nathan would function without Mick, especially when he was hesitant to be part of the research without Mick. When Mick was around, Nathan and he struggled with attendance and punctuality. Then for a couple of weeks Mick wasn’t around but Nathan continued to struggle. Then Terry arrived. He was new to town and a bit younger than Mick and Nathan, but he and Nathan became friends straight away. They bantered, annoyed and affirmed each other, respected and cared for each other, and knew what the other was thinking just as Mick and Nathan had done.

Mick: is one of the boys affectionately referred to as ‘the lads’ when I first arrived at NACE. Nathan is another; the third did not attend during my time there. Mick only attended twice and was very late both times. He was 17 and had his car Learner’s Permit, enabling him to drive with a supervised
driver. In contrast to Nathan, Mick’s clothes were dirty; his jeans were torn at the knees and along the bottoms where they dragged on the ground. His hair was untidy. He was a heavy smoker and drank Coke for breakfast both times I saw him. He was particularly smelly on the second visit.

Mick previously attended Neatsville secondary school, not completing Year 10. He would have liked to have done the ‘auto’ (car mechanics) course but there were too many students for him to get into the class. He also would prefer not to do competitive work. Mick felt that the teachers at the school were too strict and that as students they had no real choices about what, when and how to work and study. He did not like the bullying that went on by staff and students. He had tried Borderlands VCAL, the same as Nathan, but didn’t like the values there. He felt the teachers’ bullying was nearly as bad as the teachers at Neatsville Secondary school; that the teachers had favourites and that truth and honesty were not respected in assessment outcomes.

Mick’s concentration varied with topics. He intently watched videos about road construction and a locally produced video on driving safely and the dangers of driving too soon after consuming alcohol. He preferred a hands-on approach to learning, a feature Rosemary catered for. Prior to giving Mick and Nathan the video camera she explained to them about the recording, and the computer program for editing. Mick seemed to take no notice, and said he couldn’t read and write. My journal shows I wondered if it were true or a convenience tactic for not having to do that type of work. When questioned about the use of the equipment Mick explained the processes in very different terms from what Rosemary used. His subsequent use of the camera and computer indicated that his knowledge was correct.

Mick had no visible means of financial income; he was staying at a mate’s house. He didn’t get government financial assistance as his father earned too much. He took a copy of the car video that he and Nathan made to view on a computer at his dad’s place. In the past he would have liked to become a mechanic but at the time of the data collection had no ambitions. He
wasn’t at NACE long during my time there, arriving late both mornings he attended; however he provided informative insights into some the causes for adolescents leaving educational facilities without gaining formal qualifications. He is the focus of my discussion in Chapter 5; he and Nathan feature for their making of a video at NACE (Chapter 6); and Mick again is seen in Chapter 8 as he faces a quandary about staying at NACE.

**Terry:** at 15, came to NACE in week 5 of the 8 week term. He had not completed any year-level of secondary schooling. He’d just moved into the area, and was staying at government supervised accommodation opposite Nathan’s unit. It seemed they had quickly become friends. He had a good clear voice, was confident, and articulated his answers well during his initial interview with Janice. He was very witty, and did lively, easily recognisable impersonations of television characters. Terry’s short, dark curly hair was always clean and neat, as were his clothes. He had a variety of shirts and pants, but they were always baggy; he frequently had to haul up his pants so could walk properly. He was polite and well mannered and he delighted in bantering with everyone; it went on incessantly. One morning still photos were needed for the class video; Terry took my camera, and my digital journal shows that straight away:

*Terry’s off taking photos. Takes one of Stretch (Nathan). Nathan was not very happy about it; his voice aggressive, serious. Said he would kill Terry. I said not to worry as I could delete it. Nathan repeated that he would kill Terry.*

But it wasn’t just with students that Terry operated this way. He was in particularly good form on June 5th as this next journal entry shows. It’s an example of what we came to accept as ‘normal’ for Terry.

*So after the birthday cake Nathan and Terry were going out for a smoke and Terry asked Rosemary if she had a lighter, which*
she passed over. They disappeared rather nosily, outside. They took only one to share, saving the other for later.

They came back and ... Terry decided to open the lap-top and was doing something on it, again I was opposite and couldn’t see what actually he was doing. Later I took a look and he was playing Patience.

Perhaps 15 minutes after they had been back in, when Terry was working on the laptop, talking to me and playing around with Nathan, Rosemary came in and asked Terry for her lighter. Not Me. I have not got it, he said. Rosemary has this wonderful play way of dealing with these students and kept on asking and kidding around at the same time. Janice had by then come in, and said Ok Nathan, give Rosemary the lighter. I haven’t got it. She looked at both boys and then went silent. After a couple more tries, Rosemary then suggested that she would frisk Terry. All this while Terry was playing on the computer, NOT mucking about with Nathan and looking as innocent as a baby. He was quietly and firmly insistent that he did not have the lighter. Meanwhile Rosemary’s wanting a smoke! He didn’t blink an eyelid at the frisking suggestion, but kept playing. Then when it suited him... perhaps at least two minutes later, he pushed back his chair, stood up, with his hands up saying OK then frisk me. He had no problems with that, in fact he was enjoying the whole episode.

So Rosemary then admitted that she wasn’t into frisking teenage boys; it wasn’t her thing. After some more bantering and requests for the lighter, he pulled it out of his left hand pocket and immediately sat down & got on with what he was doing.

Coping with Terry’s constant talking and movement in an interview situation is, however, very different from coping with him in a class, no matter how small, informal and hands-on the class is. Terry is a quick learner, thinker and problem solver. He discusses history like a prize-winning secondary school student, and exhibits a good general knowledge.
He hates being told or shown how things operate. This next example is
typical of what I saw during the short time I observed him. Terry needed a
different video format to go through the computer; my field notes indicated:

Rosemary commenting that it will be on computer format, so she talks
with Terry while he tries to find a way to make it a different format on the
computer so it will show on DVD. He tries by himself, ignoring all
Rosemary’s suggestions, ignore ignore IGNORE
Terry ‘Shhhh I’m learning…’
Rosemary ‘I’m trying to help’
Terry: ‘I don’t need any help’
All the while fingers constantly moving, no break for thoughts, just do,
do, do...
Rosemary: ‘If you would listen to me them you’d see what to do.’
Terry: ‘No, I just want to work it out.’
Rosemary: ‘See you’ve now got two copies of…’
Terry : ’Yeah well I can get rid of one. How do I..

But there’s another side to Terry. He has not completed any year of
secondary school. In an interview he explained:

\[
\begin{quote}
I have trouble with school, like, I don’t really get along with people my age.
And I have difficulty with authority and people telling me what to do. ...
I didn’t like teachers, students, authority ...
I can’t concentrate for long. I get bored easily, like I start doing my work
and then I get bored and start talking to everybody and just wouldn’t do it
no more. ... I’ve been at about 10 schools.
\end{quote}
\]

It was after he left school that he got in trouble with the police.

Terry has had no contact with his dad for 3 or 4 years and says his father
doesn’t count. His younger brother and two younger sisters lived with his
mother a couple of hours away in Hicksville; they were much younger than
Terry. He talked about his extended family that lived near his mother. His
supervisors arranged for him to see his family when he wanted to see them. Terry’s literacies are the basis for some of the discussion in Chapter 4; his concepts of home are considered in Chapter 7 among other Frozen Moments, and he again features in Chapter 8 Going Places.

Janice: frequently in the Tuesday class Janice spoke about her teenage children who attended Neatsville Secondary. Her son was a bit older than Luke and one day she brought in some of her son’s discarded tee-shirts for him. Luke was delighted to get some ‘cool’ contemporary shirts and wore one the next day. When the class were on an excursion to the second-hand shop Janice bought Luke a warm jacket. Janice and her family lived in a rural area of Neatsville; her husband flew helicopters. Before coming to NACE Janice worked as a florist for many years, and also for a while in a retail outlet. She has completed Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. She has worked in the youth section of NACE for about five years, taking over the management of the program a while before I came to NACE.

Rosemary: as the technology teacher, works to support Janice when she is available. She has completed Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment, and teaches computing and technology related courses at NACE. She is a little younger than Janice and lives in Neatsville. She has done many IT and media courses. She and Janice have been collaborating on the youth program at NACE for about four years. The freezing morning that Luke arrived without a jumper or jacket Rosemary went home and got a jumper to loan him.

Having introduced the players in Storyscape, the next chapter, Chapter 1 Sunrise on Story, formally introduces the academic scope, style and aspects of Storyscape.
'From the standpoint of the child the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside of the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school'

(Dewey, 1897, pp. 76-77).

The Prelude section of Storyscape situated the players and myself in this research project. This Chapter 1 introduces the scope and style of the thesis, the type of writing implemented in the presentation of Storyscape, and the lay-out of the text.
An implicit question in Storyscape, and one that sometimes presents overtly, is: ‘what is education all about?’ The prevalent model of education assumes, among other things, that education happens at school and only through schooling (Levinson & Holland 1996). It also assumes that students all progress at the same rate along the same developmental line which can be measured by standardized testing. However an education system that assumes the ‘logic of one-size-fits-all school[ing]’ (Waff 2006, p. 255) is not serving all students positively. Terms like ‘at-risk’, and ‘early school leaving’ emanate from this model because these terms set the students against culturally determined and expected norms which the students are at variance with. The students are at risk of not staying, or may leave school before the set age or level that the culture has determined that ALL students should stay until or achieve.

The **conditions** that cause **students to exit** from secondary schooling without formal qualifications are many and varied, and happen as a result of the interweaving of complex factors in the lives of the exiting students (Smyth & Hattam 2004). **Storyscape is limited** in the scope of the research covered both with the data collected from the players and with the accompanying academic analysis and theoretical investigations. That it not to assume that other conditions don’t exist or that these conditions don’t impact on the lives of the students, and therefore on their educational experiences. Practical housing, limited financial resources, lack of suitable support, welfare and mental health issues are just the start of important considerations with young people, and especially those for whom traditional secondary schooling is impractical. These form part of the complexities that should be considered, but the limitations of Storyscape mean that, while they can be acknowledged, they are not included in this research. In developing and framing Storyscape I drew on theories from a range of approaches including educational, anthropological, sociological, geosemiotics, and multimodal communication.

**In the beginning** Storyscape did not exist. The original aim was to investigate reading interests and engagement of at-risk adolescents.
However during the course of the investigation the term ‘at-risk’ was rejected as it emphasised the part of the adolescents deflecting attention away from the social, educational and emotional factors which have served to create this ‘at-risk’ category of student; the term ‘at-risk’ seriously misrepresents the position of students ill-served by their schooling (Thomson 2002). The term also ‘reflects and contributes to a politics by which disinherited and disenfranchised individuals are identified as the disabled, and thereby made responsible for their plight’ (Lave 1996, p. 149). Additionally stereotyping 'early school leavers' and 'drop outs' indicates value judgments reflective of inequalities within an educational system (Fine 1991, 1996; Smyth & Hattam 2004), and too has been discarded. Students are being rationalised by these terms in ways that take the onus away from their plight and the failure of schooling to be equitable.

There are cultural, political and social causes for student non-attendance at school, and terms like ‘at-risk’ and ‘early school leaver’ focused on students’ deficits, detracted from the causes and ignore the conditions that have positioned them in particular ways (Cummins 2002). The traditional view of schools as nurturing and supportive environments is disrupted by the experiences and narratives of the adolescent players (O'Brien, Springs & Stith 2001).

In Chapter 3 there is discussion about the original research questions, and the evolutionary aspects of the research. As the research progressed the emphasis and direction changed, for it became apparent that the reading and narrative interests of the players were only symptoms of deeper issues that the students regularly faced at secondary school. Storyscape investigates what it was about secondary schooling that caused several adolescents to exit from the schools, and how the conditions at a community educational facility they all enrolled at impacted on their goals and aspirations to further their education.
Narratives and identity have been two recurring themes from the conception of this research; however the focus of both has changed and also, in the early stages, there was a growing awareness of the connectedness of these two. I’ll come to identity next, but start with narratives. Initially my interest in narratives was as a reading aspect of literacy, but as the research progressed so my ideas developed, and narratives became central to the data collected. Alongside that emerged a new appreciation of narratives as partial, selective, and sculptured (something I discuss in detail at the beginning of Chapter 3), but it altered the perspectives of the narratives the players shared with me.

Identity, as the second aspect of the original research, is regarded as an evolving state of ‘becoming somebody’ (Hattam, Smyth & Lawson 1998; Wexler 1992; Wortham 2001), not a static achievable state. Identities within a person are usually multiple, overlapping, constantly adapting and reforming and may be conflictual. Students, by their actions and words tell themselves and others ‘this is what we do and this is how we do it because this is who we are’ (Fishman 1991, p. 16.). Storyscape’s exploration centres the identity or identities that the students adopt or reject, how these identities reflect their behaviours, clothing and accessories, the language they use and their interests. In Storyscape the participants are referred to as players. The players in Storyscape enact the selves they want to display through or in activities and relationships that occur within particular figured worlds and at particular points in time (Moje 2004; Wortham 2006). The processes of identity formation and work are examined through the ‘identity in practice’ process (Holland et. al. 1998). This four part system of figured worlds, positional identities, self-authoring, and moving to or creating new figured worlds, facilitated the investigation of identity and provided a systematic approach for the research.

Identities are affected by positions within figured worlds, some of which are overt, some covert, but all affect how power operates. At secondary school and NACE the players encountered authoritative positions where teachers imposed their identities of power on students whom they expected to be
silent, submissive and ‘standardised’ that is to conform to certain identities. How teachers’ operated in their classrooms, how they positioned artefacts such as whiteboards, furniture and student seating, and how they themselves were physically positioned, all reflect their identities. The word TEACHER is used in Storyscape to indicate this authoritative position, while student is used to indicate the student identity preferred by the prevalent cultural model and the authoritative teachers operating within the model. These TEACHER and student identities are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 Positioning Coordinates. Storyscape highlights some informative sessions at NACE where students responded to an authoritative position of a teacher. Important aspects of identity enactments are improvisations and artefacts, especially as they are used in agency work. Storyscape contextualizes these identity activities within the educational experiences of the players. Players’ narratives and experiences are interwoven through each of the four ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et. al. 1998) stages, and there are four chapter devoted to exploring some of these identity enactments in greater detail (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8). It was more effectual to write this thesis within the identity structure than attempt a chronological order.

The research data for Storyscape were collected at NACE where I was a ‘participant observer’ for a term. Most NACE classes had volunteer tutors in them and I slotted in as an adult observer without any abnormality or cause for concern from the teachers or students. There I met the seven student players and two teacher players. In Storyscape the difference between space and place is significant, and I elaborate on this aspect early in Chapter two. In summary, space is a figured world or an arena of possibilities and opportunities for student learning and engagement; however it is only when opportunities become significant worlds for student engagement and learning that place is evoked. Space is also implicated in the cultural signifying practices that occur in educational facilities.

Literacy, in Storyscape, is understood as more than a set of technical skills. Rather literacy encompasses a range of sociocultural discourses involving
social practices imbued with ideologies; these discourses are ‘carried’ through texts. Text is used in a contemporary sense and taken to include a wide range of communication modes including print, digital, pictorial, oral and icons. The meanings in language are recognised as interwoven within cultural practices, and so will vary with cultural conditions. This results in the importance of situated meanings (Gee 1999) to determine exact meanings of the language and specific words. Also implicated in literacy and education in general is the **cultural capital** that forms the basis of the prevalent cultural model of education. The challenging economic and material conditions of some minority groups, sometimes called poverty, not only reflects and shapes disadvantage, but also creates further disadvantage (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995). Schools and students with natural or easy access to the mainstream cultural capital are privileged, while students with other cultural models are severely disadvantaged by political and administrative decisions, curriculum and pedagogical practices, standardised testing and other educational practices assumed as ‘normal’, ‘usual’ and ‘right’. ‘The production and reproduction of educational advantage is complex. It is embedded in everyday micro-transactions in the classroom and the school yard...’ (Thomson 2002, p. 9). The mismatch between the home cultures of students compared to the culture of schools affects basic communication and language function of these disadvantaged students, alongside a range of other learning situations (Luke & Freebody 1999). Throughout Storyscape are players’ narratives and examples of how their education was disrupted and hampered by many of these practices.

The plights of the players in secondary school and at NACE have been affected by several mitigating circumstances, not least the effects of the hidden curriculum (Connelly & Clandinin 1988; Fine & Rosenberg 1983) and interactive troubles (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Smyth & Hattam 2004). In Storyscape these conditions create spaces for adolescents where engagement doesn’t occur, and they feature in Chapter two discussions, and then directly or implicitly in examples in other chapters. In contrast to the constrictions of space, places occur at NACE where engagement leads to
learning in a natural way, and the conditions for effectual learning are considered.

Following this first chapter is **Interlude 1 Tracks Around Neatsville**, an informal introduction to Neatsville and NACE an educational provider.

Then follow:

**Chapter 2 Theoretical Terrains**, an academic style,

**Chapter 3 Mapping Methodologies**, an academic style.

**Interlude 2 Explorations in Identity Enactment**; an introduction to chapters 4 through to 8 where an informal narrative style is used.

**Ch 4 Literacy Spaces and Places** Literacies in figured worlds; where seven frieze frames are used to compare and contrast school literacies with everyday literacies of Luke and Terry.

**Ch 5 Positional Coordinates** is where Mick’s student role and Janice’s teacher role at NACE are discussed through four frieze frames.

**Ch 6 Making One’s Way** Identity, Self-authoring and narratives; where Luke is presented in three frieze frames concerning self-authoring, while in another three frieze frames Mick is witnessed in narrative and artefact uses for identity work.

**Ch 7 Frozen Moments Anomalies in figured worlds** contains four frieze frames where anomalies from their lives or narratives are put into perspective.

**Ch 8 Going Places** Creating or moving to new figured worlds; in four frieze frames the learning conditions affecting the players’ attendance at NACE are examined.

**Endlude: Luke’s Ligature** is an informal discussion of pertinent issues about Luke’s education, aspects of which pertain to all the players.

**Chapter 9 Evening Falls on Storyscape** the final chapter where a summing up of central findings and issues are discussed in an academic style.

References are included following Chapter 9, and then Appendices.
The two videos produced at NACE during my time there are not available for privacy and copyright reasons. Storyscape now turns to introducing NACE in Interlude 1.

This chapter has presented an overview of Storyscape, and the next section, Interlude 1 Tracks Around Neatsville, introduces Neatsville and Neatsville Academy for Community Education (NACE), before proceeding to consider the theoretical approaches utilised in Storyscape.
Previously in *Prelude* the players were introduced. Storyscape now situates the learning environment which the players encountered at NACE. The contextualisation of this environment is important in understanding the physical and material conditions which the students and teachers encountered on a day-today basis at NACE.
Neatsville, a small rural city in Australia, is surrounded by small villages and farms set among the local hills and valleys. It has a wide range of commercial, medical and professional support services that sustain a large rural area and population. It’s a few hours from Big Smoke City and a train service regularly commutes people between Neatsville and Big Smoke. It has areas of expensive housing, others of moderate, and some which are appropriate for people on limited finances. As well as state primary schools, and a secondary school, there are Catholic schools, a private school and two religious schools. Two post-secondary educational facilities operate; one facility concentrates on technical education, the other on vocational and community education. This second facility, Neatsville Academy for Community Education, is where the research project was conducted. In Storyscape I use NACE when referring to Neatsville Academy for Community Education.

NACE operates in buildings that used to be a secondary school. There’s plenty of parking available in the street outside NACE. The large, prominent notice board at the front of NACE did little to welcome or inform me; it’s tatty, faded text hard to read. NACE, which was established just over twenty years ago, operates in buildings that used to be the State secondary school. The main building, built during the 1940s, house some staff offices and classrooms. Other buildings, constructed during the 60s and 70s, house additional classrooms and the administrative offices.

When I first visited NACE I was surprised by the run-down, tired appearance of the buildings. Until recently the tenure of the buildings remained with the Victorian State Education Department with little maintenance, minimal alterations and no renovations. Externally the dirty, discoloured paint surfaces were peeling, the gardens unkempt and the pathways tempered with terse weeds and torrid overgrowth. But, like the staff and students, I soon got used to the appearance. With the change of tenure to NACE being finalised around the data collection period, refurbishing started as I was finishing my time there.
When I arrive on my first day the place is hauntingly quiet; no staff or students coming or going. I don’t wear a watch, but the time is on my audio recorder if it’s needed. I am expected. Classes start in 30 minutes. I lock my purse and personal items in the car; there’s no need for risks or distractions. My note book, pens, digital recorder and camera are in the casual bag which I sling over my shoulder. Later I’m surprised as every staff person walks around with a neck or belt toggle for their keys. I learn very quickly not to arrive before the teachers because I won’t get in anywhere. I try to be helpful during my stay at NACE. I offer to do some photocopying for Janice who, in the middle of a lesson, discovers she hasn’t enough copies of lesson material. I borrow her keys. She tells me which ones to use. I get confused. I try several keys and then find the right one. Then I fumble some more to get through into the next section. Someone who recognises me as ‘familiar and OK’ helps me. When I arrive at the photocopier I don’t have a code. Being helpful has its limitations; I’m not one of the selected ones with keys and codes. I can’t operate the phone, and even the students have the code for that! But they don’t have their numbers in the ‘pre-set numbers’, they use their mobile phones to get the numbers they want.

I can use the toilets without a key, and use the main door into the ‘Information’ section. Thankfully Sarah, the information receptionist, knows about my being at NACE and is very helpful. Janice tells me to use the ‘interview room’, but forgets to tell me where the key is. Do I interrupt her class? Would Rosemary know? Will I go and see Sarah? I stand outside looking bewildered, but I have been at NACE for a few days now and another person recognises me as ‘familiar and OK’, and unlocks the door to Janice’s office, and gets the key. The kitchen is locked; the students are ‘insiders’ and have free access to the key. I never find where it is kept; I’m ‘familiar and OK’, but not an ‘insider’. Every door is locked when classes are not inside. All staff members are vigilant about that. NACE is a short distance from the main shopping precinct. There are other educational providers and welfare groups very close to NACE.
Janice’s office was the first place where I ‘touched base’ each morning. Her small office was in the oldest, red-brick building, where a large room had been divided. The ceilings were high. Five staff had an office in the room; each had access to a computer, printer and the internet. In the room were also an administrative section, a storeroom, and a central discussion/planning area. This common area became a focal part of my interactions with staff and students. There was a large table with chairs around it, notice boards on two sides and a whiteboard at one end. The whiteboard was flanked by a stately chair, officially labelled the ‘whinge chair’. Most of the table was covered with a clutter of papers. On my first day I hesitated to shift the papers, but by the second week I stacked them tidily to allow some space. This is where Nathan, when he came early, read the Herald Sun paper while he had breakfast, and where I filled in time, made notes, read the newspaper and meet staff and students. I wasn’t offered access to a computer. This is where students collected and meet with staff before class. The Age and the Herald Sun were available for staff or students to read, or for class work.

Along the verandah from this office/common area room was the ‘interview room’. It was dank, dusty, dismal, not really big enough for a table and two chairs, really an excuse for a room; a converted passage-way. I remember, as I write, that I should be objective. It may be improved now, but back then ... truth is relative. How did Linden (1993) describe it? ‘Truth is rarely singular or absolute. There are only truths: relative, changing, emergent ...’ (p. ix). I’m used to fresh air, natural light, space ... but even allowing for this, the room seemed inadequate for my purposes. The globe in the light didn’t work. The dust wiped off the table as my handkerchief became a rag (all in a good cause though). It was an early May morning, the room was cold. But wait ... there’s more.

A helpful person brought a heater so Luke and I wouldn’t freeze. The warmth was comforting, but then got distorted by the smell of dust burning. The noise made it hard for Luke and I to hear each other. He offered to go and get a lap-top, a disk and his folder so he could show me his work form
Convenience Cove. This was a good idea. We shuffled chairs, we shifted the table; we turned a chair over to make space for the door to open... perhaps it wasn’t a good idea. Later I interview Bethany in the same room. She went to lean back on the chair; to move back ...I interpreted this as her desire for some personal space. But alas the wall is in the way. I couldn’t more any further the other way... the table won’t fit out the doorway ... Ho hum.

When the idea for doing my research at NACE first came up, I was assured there was everything I needed, including a quiet, private interview room. Was this the one they intended? I wasn’t the only one reacting to the obtuse, blank walls. Bethany, until now so quiet and shy she wouldn’t frighten any bugs away, offered to bring in some posters and paint. There had to be somewhere more suitable for interviews.

Near the interview room was a large classroom; at each end of this double room was a stage area where most tables and chairs were stacked. The huge space was ideal for dancing and yoga classes; however the dark, worn carpet was not inviting. On one side was a mobile video player stack, neatly stored in a space between the brick wall-supports. The windows on both sides were distorted by old, partly hung curtains, needing repairs and rehanging.

On my first day in this room Rosemary and I shifted two tables and a few chairs closer to the heater. I couldn’t follow her verbal instructions to get the heater going; she was going for lap-top computers and the video camera. I fussed and fumbled, then opened the door and tried to follow the instructions. My best learning isn’t by auditory or visual means; the knobs on the heater didn’t match the diagram. The switch was in a different place. Ho hum. Sarah wandered in to give Janice a message. ‘Oh, this lights this way’ she said. She, as an insider, knew the secrets of lighting this heater without blowing up the building.
Now I belong to a generation prior to generation X or Y and had not easily made the transition to the ‘just try something’ philosophy. But slowly the philosophy was rubbing off on me. So the next time I was faced with lighting this heater I only had a vague idea of what Sarah had done. But I was, by then, feeling a bit more adventuresome and I cautiously moved knobs and switches and got the heater alight without singeing my hair. The applause from the players was a boost to our relationship and my confidence.

But for now let us return to my first day in the room. It was the second week of the data collection, and time for Janice’s class, supported by Rosemary. But Janice was needed elsewhere for another class on another campus … ‘You’ll be right,’ she assures Rosemary, as she let Rosemary with the class, ‘You have Margaret with you. And ‘the lads’ won’t turn up anyway.’ My protests get stuck before the words get to my throat. This was not the first quandary I had in this research, but at the moment I wonder how to deal with the situation; how to manage participant observation and my wanting to be separate from the NACE teaching staff, and the implications of being associated with such a position. As my silence folds around me, it’s already five minutes past the time for the class to start. Bethany and Suzie are the only students there.

For this class Rosemary was comfortable with the students, and familiar with their video work from the previous week. The students, Suzie and Bethany, sat at tables as far apart from each other as possible, and the four of us seem to lose significance in such a large space. There are low-hanging fluorescent lights making work easy to see. The students seem oblivious to the movements around them as non-teaching staff move in and out and around the room. Soon there is to be a public major display in the room and the staff is intent on getting the curtains down to wash. Their ladder is too short, so are their skirts, and they decide to go for help. Luke, lost for something to do on Monday mornings, returns with them; then disappears. He returned with a very long ladder, and had difficulty manoeuvring it. He was intent on getting it near the curtain railing and avoiding the low lights,
but it was too long to easily get it where he wanted it. It totters and sways. The staff lifted their hands protectively, but I saw its proximity to Suzie and my impassioned observer status broke into a concerned cry. I wondered about the implications for OH&S training and application for the staff and the students. This incident breaks Bethany’s and Suzie’s concentration; then two of the lads, Mick and Nathan, arrived.

Along the verandah to the other side of the large office / common area room was the kitchen then another classroom. To enter this room an external door needs unlocking. This allows access to a storeroom on the right, and the classroom on the left. The door to the storeroom is frequently opened, the shelves and floor a muddle of unfinished art projects, old collage materials and problematic art tools. There is a screen door and a solid door to unlock, both with separate keys. The blackboard is hidden by an old whiteboard, and a new expensive high-tech whiteboard. Janice teaches in this room Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. She tried unsuccessfully to use the new board; she had received no instruction on its use and can’t find the instruction book. Luke professed to know how to use it but only managed to get the screen moving from front to back, and vice-versa.

Some of the tables and chairs were haphazardly arranged in front of the boards. Most are stacked near the external windows overlooking a car park (which at this stage I didn’t even know existed). Some of the stacked chairs are screened off by the whiteboard. On the back wall a notice-board goes the length of the room, partly covered by an old dark brown bookcase. On the shelves old dictionaries, atlases, rolls of yellowing paper. There’s a clock above the blackboard; it was fifteen minutes past the time for class to start but Janice hadn’t arrived yet. Near the door was a garden trolley stacked with lap-tops, video equipment, leads... an indicator that Rosemary, Janice’s technical support person for the lesson, had been and gone. Newspapers from the previous day were scattered on tables. The rubbish bin was overflowing with discarded art-materials. A large out-of-date map of the world on the notice board was partly covered by photos and personal introductory information. These pages were curling with lack of pins and
the affect of the heat. As the weeks passed, when a class wanted to display their art work, they placed it on top of other papers and displays. Part of the notice board was clear but unreachable because of the stack of chairs.

The other classroom of significance for my being at NACE was around the corner; an old fibro building. The high dirty windows were all covered with mesh, spider webs and trapped dead leaves. When, in the third week, I was sent to open this room I had previously learnt my lesson and so went via Sarah at the information desk. I had two doors to unlock; one to the foyer area, one to the classroom on the left. I had four keys. I smiled as the first door unlocked, but the smile faded as the second lock failed to respond to any of the keys. I put my bag down so I could twist and shake the knob as I turned the key; my frown deepened; then became a sneer. Wandering back to Sarah I realised that I would never receive an Academy certificate for opening doors successfully. Sarah was most apologetic; she had given me the wrong keys. When I go back to the room Janice had the door unlocked and wondered aloud ‘Where the hell were you, and why isn’t the bloody door unlocked?’ My words of explanation froze with the chill factor in Janice’s voice. Obviously the day hadn’t started well for her. I breathe deeply as I returned the keys, and wonder what the morning class would bring for the students.

The room was big, dim and cold. By the time I returned Janice had put on two small wall heaters but the effect was minimal in such a large room. Janice put on a warm scarf and buttoned up her coat. I wondered if I should have brought a coat. There were about ten tables set in a rectangle in the centre of the room. The dark carpet was well worn and badly stained. The white board, at the end opposite to the door, had notes on it from a previous class. To the left were two stainless steel sinks and a deep tub, all marked with glue, paint, wax and other indescribables. There was a large notice board on the left wall, completely covered by a textile piece made four years ago. Rosemary arrived with Bethany and Suzie. So for this class there were two teachers, two students and myself. Janice suggested shifting a couple of tables together. Rosemary nodded to me, and indicated the table
next to me. She lifted one end; I lifted the other, and the top came away from the legs. We burst out laughing and the tension was broken. ‘Well, maybe not this one,’ Rosemary said. Janice switched on the lights; the improvement is minimal. She explained that there was no other room available, and she really needed more people for the game she wanted to use. The class was scheduled to start at 9.30; it was now 9.50 if the clock above the white board was correct.

There were other buildings and facilities at NACE. Rosemary’s office housed a range of technology equipment, so it was in the administration building, the most secure of the buildings at NACE. Outside the Youth Program, where I’m doing my data collection, are courses for pre-employment skills training, such as Aged Care training, Retail Operations, Civil Construction. There are other ventures such as ‘Work for the Dole’, and adult classes in a variety of craft and life-style options such as yoga, photography, and computers.

**Adolescent students** attending NACE were offered a variety of study options. Each student’s program was set for them on the basis of their individual needs. The students attending the NACE youth program were between 15 and 17 years old. Each of them had been through a time of disengagement and truancy at secondary school; some at Neatsville secondary, others at other regional schools. Most of them wanted to build their educational levels, their skills and improve their prospects of future employment. Some classes were specifically organised for the youth, like the Monday and Wednesday morning classes that Janice taught. On a **Monday** the focus was Certificate I Vocational Preparation, and Certificate I or Certificate II Information Technology, and so Rosemary had been timetabled to assist for the term. The class was not timetabled in a specific room; Janice had to find an empty room each week. This is why the common area was so vital for the students to find out where they should be.

The class orientation on a **Wednesday** was very different as the content focuses on Certificate I or Certificate II Multimedia. The program was
designed for the students to create their own narrative using contemporary
digital technology. Janice and Rosemary ran the program jointly. In the first
week of the program Janice was concerned that the students wouldn’t cope
with the project and decided that a co-operative production of one narrative
would be more appropriate. During my time at NACE the teachers attended
training programs in Melbourne specifically designed for video narrative
editing, voice-overs. They come back excited, but awed; they attempted to
do in 10 weeks what usually takes 10 – 12 months. They aimed to produce a
short video story incorporating digital videoing, cartooning, music mixing
and texting.

Government funding for the youth programs at NACE was very specific.
The adolescent students had to have been disengaged from secondary
schooling, and the funding was tied to outcomes designed to get the
adolescents re-engaged with traditional education and then into the
workforce. There appeared to be no allowance for improving literacy or
mathematic levels for students such as Suzie and Luke; any improvement
was incidental to the real work of employment skills. However Janice was
able to direct students to community classes or organise tutoring to assist
their learning in these areas.

The beginning of term two for the NACE youth program was disrupted by a
number of incidents. At NACE, there was an accepted practice of class
dates being regulated by school terms. In the year of the data collection, the
regular dates for school holidays were changed by the State Government
because of international sporting competitions; the NACE term was
adjusted accordingly. There was illness and staff training, so what would
normally have been a 10 or 11 week term was, in this case, reduced to eight
weeks. Another widely-held informal practice that flows from secondary
schools to other educational institutions is the expectation that no
constructive work is done during the last week, and at NACE there was no
exception to this. In the last week Monday was a public holiday; Luke and
another student were the only students who attended on Tuesday, and no
students arrived on Wednesday. Some notes about the NACE program for the student players, and the classes they were enrolled in:

**Luke**’s negative experiences with students at the local secondary school left him very wary of adolescent students, and his program was designed around this, and also to strengthen his literacy skills. On Tuesday mornings he attended the ‘Pre-employment and Vocational Training’ classes which Janice conducted. Suzie was also enrolled in this class, and there were a few other adult members. My data collection in this class went for 6 weeks; Luke attended every class, and was punctual every day.

**Suzie**’s program was designed to assist her poor literacy skills, and develop employment skills. She was enrolled in classes three mornings a week, although only two of these were part of the data collection process. She attended four out of a possible seven classes, and on Tuesdays attended two out of a possible six classes. She was punctual to all these classes.

**Bethany**’s program was designed to enhance her employment opportunities. She was enrolled in Pre-employment and Vocational Training, Information Technology, and Multi-media classes which were conducted on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Janice and Rosemary jointly conducted these programs. Bethany attended four out of a possible seven Monday classes, and five out of a possible eight Wednesday classes. She was punctual to the classes she attended.

**Yvette** arrived in week three and was enrolled in the same program as Bethany. She attended the Monday and Wednesday classes that week and was punctual both times, but lack of funding meant she attended no other classes at NACE that term.

**Mick**’s program was designed to develop skills to enhance his employment possibilities. He was enrolled to attend the Pre-employment and Vocational Training, Information Technology, and Multi-media classes which were conducted on Monday and Wednesday mornings. He attended one Monday
out of a possible seven, and one Wednesday out of a possible eight. The classes were scheduled to commence at 9.30; he arrived just after 10.30 on both occasions.

Nathan’s program was the same as Mick’s. He attended the same days and times as Mick. However on the Monday in week five he arrived very late, bringing with him a new student Terry. Terry was residing temporarily across the road from Nathan and Nathan’s attendance improved as a result of their often coming together. He attended three out of a possible seven Mondays, and four out of a possible eight Wednesdays. He was often late, and twice very late. Twice he was on time with Terry, and twice he claimed reasonable excuses for being late.

Terry was also enrolled in the Monday and Wednesday classes; he attended two out of a possible three Mondays, and two out of a possible four Wednesdays. Twice he was on time with Nathan, and twice he claimed reasonable excuses for being late.

This section of Storyscape, Interlude 1 Tracks Around Neatsville, complements the Prelude in introducing the players and the NACE learning environment. Storyscape now proceeds to Chapter 2 Theoretical Terrains, where the theoretical approaches utilised in Storyscape are discussed.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Terrains

‘Scotty was also having trouble at school. He wasn’t stupid or backward; in fact he was bright and even clever in his solemn way, but school had nothing to offer him at the moment’

(Aldridge 1975, p.54).

‘Education to Lilli had always been a secret process. She was too bright to be ignorant, but refused to co-operate with the teachers ... she was simply left alone and ignored, so nobody really knew how much Lilli was taking in’

(Aldridge 1984, p. 48).

Storyscape, while written in a narrative style, has a broad theoretical foundation to the research, discussions and investigation. It encapsulates the research into the educational conditions of several adolescent students at Neatsville Academy for Community Education (NACE). In the previous sections of Storyscape the seven student and two teacher players have been introduced, along with the physical conditions at NACE. A general introduction to the academic foundations for the research and its data collection, analysis and reporting have been presented. This chapter presents in detail and contextualises the academic foundations for Storyscape; theories considered came from a broad range of disciplines including educational, anthropological, sociological, geosemiotics and multimodal communication. Interwoven in the text are examples from the players.
Narratives are significant in human life for providing threads of continuity allowing for personal connections from the past and cohesion to the future (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a), for their centrality to memory (Eubanks 2004), and for their implications in identity formation and practice (Holland et al. 1998; Wortham 2001). People don’t just communicate through narratives but live their lives on storied landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a). However, people’s narratives are selective (Richardson 1997), partial (Fivush & Reese 1992), sculptured (Barclay & Smith 1992), culturally contextualised (Richardson 2000) and intricately involved in identity work (Brodkey 1996a). I coined the term ‘storyscape’ to encapsulate all these aspects of my research, and elaborate on these aspects in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

**Storyscape** is an account of the narratives by several adolescents about the conditions of their educational ambitions and experiences, and my observations of them at NACE. While these experiences happened in or near Neatsville, they could easily have happened in any number of places in Australia, or indeed other places in the world. Storyscape considers implicit and explicit cultural conditions working to create the social practices that offered educational opportunities for the players, but were rejected as places for engagement and learning. Which begs the question ‘WHY?’ six of the seven players left secondary school without any formal qualifications? They were not unique in walking or being pushed out (Thomson 2002; Smyth et al. 2000). They commenced at NACE with educational dreams and ambitions, but their attendances in term 2 belie their words. For me the ‘whys?’ intensified.

The players’ lives revolved around a variety of social and other spaces in and out of NACE. These ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al. 1998) often involve physical places, for example in classrooms and local food halls which afforded them social interactions, but figured worlds may also be conceptual or non-material worlds. Figured worlds are conceived of as the social spaces that people occupy in different realms of life. Within such spaces are interwoven multifaceted dimensions of discourses, relationships,
social practices and artefacts which all combine in lived-in personal worlds, established within the framework of implicit cultural models. Family associations, religious affiliations or sporting memberships may introduce children into particular figured worlds in a natural way. People may elect to join or leave such groups. In the case of education, adolescents are compelled to be part of a large figured world, usually school, and smaller figured worlds such as classes, sporting or other groups. Not all figured worlds are physical, and the players had virtual spaces via computers, mental places to revisit interesting ideas, and conceptual space to organise challenges, knowledge and activities. Identities are fashioned with these figured worlds. When the players found themselves challenged by certain identities required in specified spaces, for example ‘student’ in secondary school, they evaluated their positions and sometimes chose to leave a particular figured space rather than conform to an identity they were not comfortable with.

In Storyscape the difference between space and place is significant; the terms are not coterminous (Sheehy & Leander 2004), although a dialectic relationship exists between them (Sheehy 2004). Spaces afford opportunities for engagement and in Storyscape also for learning.

‘Physically, a place is a space which is invested with understandings of behavioural appropriateness, cultural expectations, and so forth. We are located in ‘space’, but we act in ‘place’…places are spaces that are value’ (Harrison & Dourish 1996, p. 3 emphasis in original).

While secondary students are often expected to be passive and compliant (Kenway 1998), place is where the players engage meaningfully in the space and people within. They inhabit and appropriate the space (Hornecker 2005) using their creativity, agency and discernment enabling it to be a ‘lived’ area (Leander 2002c). Place is where motivated actions transform space and used it purposefully (Saint-Georges 2004), so that mediating discourses (Scollon 2001) result in ‘deep’ learning (Gee 2003a). In ‘place’ identities are strengthened and work-out in activities within the particular figured world.
Spaces are bounded and determined by cultural constraints and practices. Imperatively, discourses have a dialectic relationship with spaces (Saint-Georges 2004), and the shape of the space is affected by who is felt to belong and not to belong (Sibley 1995). Secondary school and NACE, for the players, provided opportunities for formal education; spaces where they could engage in academic and practical learning. When each of the players enrolled at NACE they had ambitions, dreams and expectations for personal, meaningful educational achievements. Each had a different goal from the others, but they all had clearly identifiable goals, and by the middle of the year, when my time with them concluded and their attendances were waning, it was obvious that none of the goals would be achieved. There was a difference between what was being taught, and what the players, from their perspective, were learning and went to NACE to learn (Lave 1996). For six of them their lack of attendance to classes indicated that the possibilities within the educational spaces had not become places for them.

Alongside space and place time too is significant in Storyscape. While the majority of references are within chronological time, some do not sit within this frame. I noticed this first while the players told some of their narratives; I was puzzled by incongruities. In Storyscape there is allowance for narrative or experiential time (Mishler 2006), where memory, perceptions and interpretations are affected as ‘the meaning of events and experiences is constantly being reframed within the contexts of our current and ongoing lives’ (Mishler 2006, p. 36.). There was also a need to allow for ‘social time’ as a shifting time of human experience (Tusting 2000) which may not align with a linear or chronological time. I coined the term ‘Frozen Moments’ for these incidents as it seemed that something was frozen in time for each of the players, and also it became a moment in time that remained frozen in my psyche as I sought to understand these episodes relative to their lives. While these incidents relate to identity improvisations discussed later in this chapter, several of them are presented more thoroughly in Chapter 7, Frozen Moments.
In this Chapter 3 I explore the theoretical issues, and implicit and explicit processes involved in the failure of the spaces to become places of significant educational achievements for any of the players. First I will discuss the cultural positioning with the space – place relationship, and communication, then move into considering the educational perspectives and implications, with particular attention to literacy. I then address significant issues about identity. Intertwoven in the text are examples and references to the players’ lives, experiences, and narratives.

Spaces, paralleled also as spatial practice, operate in social areas evidenced in physical, emotional, material, cultural and other ways. Implicitly or explicitly each reflects and represents the values, practices and aims of the group (Lefebvre 1974; Saint-Georges 2004), with a multiplicity of discourses operating in them. I refer to the smaller ones as ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al. 1998) and the larger ones as cultural models. Spaces, as socially produced arenas, are politically charged areas (Leander 2004b) where power structures of domination (Hornecker 2005; Sheehy & Leander 2004) or submissiveness operate. Not that these are always consciously recognised positions. Practices of domination through monopoly of spaces and exclusionary practices often are seen as the ‘natural’ way of things and go unquestioned (Sibley 1995; Smyth & Hattam 2004). ‘Those who control schools, the media, and other cultural institutions are generally skilled in establishing their view of reality as superior to alternative interpretations’ (Collins 1995, p. 527). The system is perpetuated by the largely unquestioned normality of the system. Spatial practices also operate on an informal level in such places as peer friendships. Terry’s vivacious personality affected spatial practices adapting its form wherever he went within the Storyscape domain. When he and Nathan were travelling in my car on a NACE excursion, Terry jumped in the front even though Nathan was bigger than Terry, his long legs needing more space than Terry’s, leaving Nathan to manoeuvre his legs into a much tighter area. Then to stamp his own positional authority on the car space he pushed and turned
buttons and immediately got the radio working. The car nearly collapsed in fright never having heard the radio before!

How practices within social spaces are seen depends on the position of the people (Moje 2004) within the space, and how they view the world (Smyth et al. 2000). Exclusionary practices imbue educational spaces (Sibley 1995) and are implicit in language, literacy, curriculum and administrative areas, alongside other arenas. The position of a teacher has strong cultural implications and implied authority with knowledge, relationships with students and lesson programming. The players generally spoke of their secondary teachers as authoritarian, and sometimes bullies; Nathan, Mick, Terry and Luke all spoke disparagingly about their experiences with teachers in their secondary schooling. Mick and Nathan had complimentary comments about one teacher, but the others had nothing positive to recall. The players found literacy practices in secondary schools limited by a traditional definition of literacy, and bounded by lessons designed for passing academic grades. Schools spaces are premised on inequitable power relations (Shor 1996; Smyth et al. 2000) where the privileged status of the mainstream majority is accepted as the way things should be (Li 2006; Sheehy & Leander 2004). Sometimes those dominated are content to accept their positions; they find value in sacrificing a position for another position (Sheehy 2004), or by ‘passing’, by adopting an illegitimate identity to achieve an educational goal (Fordham 1993; Holland et al. 1998), or by accepting ‘silencing’ to be recognised as a ‘good’ student (Walkerdine 1990). Storyscape records some of the struggles the players experienced as they each chose not to accept the cultural roles and education that was offered them. The exclusion of the players from secondary schools, and for some of them also NACE, happened gradually and was the result of multiple mitigating issues that are discussed in Chapter 8, Going Places.

The complexities of spatial practices are interwoven with the use of representations of space (Lefebvre 1974), where the placement of signs and the use of objects may be part of a ‘territorial placement system’ (Saint-
These representations are not limited to physical spaces, but include abstract arenas such as policies, education, and literacy. Academic results and the display of diplomas form part of the educational representations of space; physical, academic – educational and mental. However building designs, external and interior, are also representations of social configurations, and can affect people’s interactions within the space, promoting or discouraging collaboration (Hornecker 2005). They can be a ‘landscape of domination’ (Sibley 1995) by the powerful majority intent on maintaining their position. Schools in particular are ‘architecturally designed for surveillance’ (Smyth et al. 2000) and controlled by clock and content (Moje 2000). I witnessed spatial representations of domination at NACE where the placement of classroom furniture gave the teacher a dominating position at the front of the room. Janice usually conducted her classes standing out the front, using the whiteboard to impose her demands or expectations for each lesson; I would suggest unconscious stances to strengthen her authoritative teacher position. In contrast Rosemary usually sat among the students and rarely used the white board. Within representations of space the face or voice of a teacher can confirm their domination, or ‘reflect enabling possibilities’ (Hattam, Smyth & Lawson 1998, p. 33.) for the students.

Another dimension to spatial practices complexities is the role of representational space (Lefebvre 1974), where ideology implicitly works its strongest, usually in assumed, unrecognised ways (Sheehy 2004) through symbolic means such as gestures, and material signs. Early in my time at NACE students’ representations of space occurred when Mick and Nathan rushed into the classroom well after class started, hastily tossing their mobile phones on a table near Rosemary, saying as they rushed out the door, ‘We’ll be back soon’; their phones representing their being ‘in the space’. Mick and Nathan’s video, discussed in Chapter 6, was made in a defined physical area that was representational space as Rosemary set the boundaries through her authoritative position.
**Culture is implicated in spaces**, as it sets the borders, discourses and practices. Place too is affected by cultural practices and processes. The discourses within a space determine whether a person is able or willing to participate in the spatial practices thus transforming the space into place. Culture is the very heart and essence of Storyscape; at every turn the players contest, adapt, or reject the educational spaces of the mainstream culture. Janice’s worksheets form part of her representations of space in her lessons. Luke completes these assignments in his own way without any regard for the requirements; because his work is only checked for completion and not content his adaptation is successful, forming part of his representations of his space within the class. Terry actively avoids handwriting, talking his way out of any requirements, until he discovers my (expensive) pen that writes smoothly and easily. Nathan, when he does write, writes with one hand while playing a computer game with the other; similarly Bethany writes with one hand while texting (unnoticed by the teacher) with the other. Often Suzie lets the volunteer tutor write for her. And Mick? Well, in the end he’s too discouraged to care. If culture is so influential, then what actually is it?

In Storyscape **culture** is determined as those things that are distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of a people, community, nation, or social group; the shared values and sets of practices; the production and exchange of meanings (Hall 1997a). It is identified by sameness, and allows for difference from other peoples or groups. Culture defines the way people live their lives; the clothes they wear to different places, ways they shop and use credit cards, the transport they use, how they educate their children, and a myriad other things. However culture also infiltrates the invisible facets of social worlds; the way people think, their values, attitudes and ambitions, the implicit rules that govern.

Culture enables participants in a community to interpret meaningfully, in broadly similar ways, what is happening around them, ‘making sense’ of the world. Within any culture ideologies, values, beliefs are represented through meaningful associations in common practices, narratives and artefacts.
involving feelings, attachments and emotions, concepts, and identities. Because people in the same culture interpret the world in roughly the same way, they can express their thoughts and feelings in ways that will be understood by each other. It impacts on all facets of social and personal lives; however I’m concentrating on the educational issues that have impacted on the lives of the players in this research.

**Cultural models** (Gee 1996a, 1999; Holland et al. 1998; Quinn and Holland 1987) provided theoretical framing to facilitate my consideration of culture, in investigating the cultural effects and significances of social institutions and related practices. Cultural models are a way of defining and explaining some of the order-ness in people’s worlds within specific social areas; the discourses or shared cultural knowledge (Kiesling 2006), including abstract notions such as individualism or group allegiance, success and independence (Gee 1999). This order-ness allows people to communicate in meaningful ways as language, ideas and social practices have common meanings and values to people within those social worlds, possible because people have common assumed understandings. However cultural models will differ between socio-economic groups and social classes (Gee 1999). Quinn and Holland (1987) detail how

‘cultural models are pre-supposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behaviour in it’ (p. 3).

Within cultural models there are assumptions about the significance of values and behaviours, for example what ‘home’ is, the form that ‘school’ should take, and what ‘education’ is. A particular cultural model provides the grooves in which life is conducted (Kress 2003b). These grooves of natural, taken-for-granted assumptions provide stability for a society as its members share the same meanings, values and assumptions. These ordinary understandings play an enormous role in peoples’ comprehension of that world and their behaviour in it. They also provide a frame for members of
the cultural group to relate to and, maybe unconsciously, to judge by. There are common meanings for what members recognise as a ‘good’ school, a ‘failing’ student, or a ‘competent’ teacher. A cultural model helps society members to determine what they want to do: For example a student has indicators to follow if they want to comply and be rewarded for being a ‘good’ student who speaks and acts in specific ways, or remains silent and who may have alternative behaviours; in short to take-on the identity of this a particular type of adolescent. However, simultaneously there is also a place for difference, and other ways of thinking, being, beliefs and values.

The narratives in Storyscape indicate that compulsory attendance gave the players no option but to be exposed to education that was based on assumptions that Western style schooling provided the best education for all students. The players felt that this style of education did not cater for them. What they expressed was that schooling had a privileged version of language and literacies that didn’t operate within their everyday lives (Gee 2004c; Levison & Holland 1996); that education was based on a limited definition of intelligence (Robinson 2006, 2009); that the demarcation of academic subjects (Lave & Wenger 1991) wasn’t natural, and that the emphasis on standardised testing (Kalantzis & Cope 2005) didn’t suit all students. Terry for example couldn’t be bothered even reading the tests and walked out. They felt teachers only taught in a way that suited them and not necessarily what suited the students (Kamler & Comber 2005) and that the curriculum was out-of-date and not set in reality (Cummins 2002). Not that the players used these academic terms, but their expression of frustrations amounted to these issues.

In Storyscape the term ‘cultural model’ refers to the larger social values, networks and worlds of peoples’ lives. Such models form the underpinning, invisible foundational fabric of a society, representing the ‘macro’ picture of established social understandings. They impinge on social spaces, and are reflected in the activities within particular spaces. Gee’s (1996a) Discourses, as language being used actively within a social world, form part
of the supporting fabric that enables cultural models to affect these social worlds in positive or negative ways. In educational cultural models these include formal political and funding policies, informal traditions of excellence and expectations, institutional patterns of social order and programs. I use ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al. 1998) to denote more specific or local, smaller social worlds, where the ‘micro’ situation can be examined for interactional relationships and social practices.

Assumptions are rarely challenged within cultural models for the naturalness of things being ‘just-so’, and the way they have always been, means that it is generally accepted that these assumptions are right. While cultural models may vary across differing cultural groups, and within particular cultural models (Gee 1999) there has been, within Australia, a broad cultural acceptance of an ‘educated’ person. While in other areas and cultures an ‘educated’ person is not necessarily one with successful school results (Levinson & Holland 1996), generally Australians equate education with successful academic schooling because the school system is dominated by a culturally specific curriculum (Cope & Kalantzis 1987). However defining ‘an educated person’ reflects culturally specific forms of training that are valued within that culture, and formal schooling may or may not coincide with this notion (Bartlett & Holland 2002). With the current policy emphasis on accountability, formal competitive assessments, rating and ranking, those schools generally considered ‘good’ usually are ones where students achieve well on standardised tests or in competitive examinations. In a cultural model with a different emphasis on qualities like ‘success’ students, teachers, and schools could be viewed differently. People’s perceptions of the same model may also differ according to their beliefs and perceptions. While, in this research, some of the players may describe Neatsville secondary as ‘not good’, teachers may describe it as ‘successful’ as it catered for those students supported by mainstream values and practices.

Mick and Nathan both attended Neatsville Secondary, and said that people thought it was a good school. However both lads thought it was only good
if people were interested in academic results and a student identity that complied with the school expectations in dress conformity, academic work and behaviour. Mick felt there was too much emphasis on the academic learning, and that it wasn’t a good school when social issues were considered; bullying by teachers and students were examples he talked passionately about. Nathan had more positive experiences and he believed he was a successful student as he didn’t need to ask teachers for assistance. He was evasive about his Year 9 results and hadn’t completed Year 10 before leaving. Luke attended the same school and described it as a bad school as it failed to provide assistance with his school work especially in English, and for the bullying tactics used by teachers and students, and because the school didn’t give him strategies for dealing with bullying.

During my time at NACE I was constantly wondering what the players were saying, not just through their narratives and informal conversations, but through their actions, dress and hair styles, their interactions, and their attitudes to the worlds in which they resided. Janice and Rosemary too, and indeed NACE itself, all were presenting images that said something. Entry spaces affect the perceptions of people arriving, and the social configurations of the spaces within (Hornecker 2005). The distorted, faded sign at the entrance to NACE may have had the letters W E L C O M E, but the sign itself bore no resemblance to the intention. My researcher journal records:

| The large, prominent notice board at the front of NACE did little to welcome or inform me, its tatty, faded text hard to read....I was surprised by the run-down, tired appearance of the buildings. Externally the dirty, discoloured paint surfaces were peeling, the gardens unkempt and the pathways tempered with terse weeds and torrid overgrowth. ... |

Communication involves the creation and reception of a wide range of mediums to convey messages, the interpretation dependant on common understandings within a particular cultural space. Language, as part of
communication, involves traditional semantic notions as well as a range of semiotic systems (Street 2001), where language is not restricted to spoken and written modes (Kress 2003). In Storyscape communication is multi-modal (Comber & Nixon 2008; Maney 2005; Saint-Georges 2004). The way that clothing and jewellery are worn (Scollon & Scollon 2003);

gestures, gazes, and positioning of the body (Norris 2004); signs and their positioning, along with icon and digital forms, all are part of composite contemporary communication, and the associated social practices. Reading words and images is allied to reading the world (Comber, Nixon & Ashmore 2005; Sheehy & Leander 2004; Smyth & Hattam 2004a) one inhabits. Just as the players read their worlds in order to make sense of them (Obidah & Marsh 2006), I too had to read their educational worlds, and within the context of what else had or was happening in their lives. Texts and cultural worlds can be read in a variety of ways (Moje 2000), so how was I to read all that was going on?

The meaning of words, visual signs, behaviours, images and other codes resides not in a medium, but in a multiplicity of interconnected media emanating from culturally situated contexts (Hodge & Kress 1988). ‘The meanings we ‘have’ come from the culture in which we are located. We are formed by cultural meanings and we are transmitters of culturally given meanings’ (Kress 2003, p. 13). Meanings are culturally situated and learned as there is an agreement within a culture that certain words or signs represent specific concepts. Meanings are situated in language as a primary means of expression between groups sharing common interests.
Understanding is constrained by the cultural groups who have developed the language (Griffiths 1995). Culture is learned covertly as neophytes are naturally ‘apprenticed’ into the discourses and practices of a culture (Gee 1996a; Holland at al 1998) within their homes and institutions within their communities. A common culture enables participants in a community to interpret meaningfully what is happening around them, ‘making sense’ of the world, and enabling effective communication. People learn not just a language but other visible and aural forms of communication.

While Kress (2009) believes that an essential part of communication is transparency enabling language used to be interpreted according to the sign maker’s intention, it is not always the case. Local discourses and cultural knowledge enables many signs to be effective. Take, for example the sign on the left. While it was in Neatsville, it could be from any city or town in Australia, and is a text within local discourses for parking that drivers generally learn to interpret correctly. The sign may be ambiguous for people wanting to be accurate or contrary. While it says ‘Coles customers…’ what it doesn’t say is that the car park is intended only for Coles customers. Shoppers for other retailers could rightfully argue that they could park there for an unlimited time. People in a culture learn to read signs like these correctly as they live in a community, and learn its implicit governances built into local discourses through social practices.

**Meanings** are inextricably linked to cultural practices as the participants in a culture give meaning to people, objects, and events. It is cultures

> ‘which carry meanings and value for us, which need to be meaningfully interpreted by others, or which depend on meaning for their effective operation. Culture, in this way, permeates all of society’ (Hall 1997a, p. 3; emphasis in original).

Most signs are read successfully by the people within the local culture as they are familiar with the discourses and social practices involved at a
particular historical time. Take, for example the following sign from a shop door in Neatsville. Taken literally it could mean that only staff is not permitted entry. However the goal of the sign is to direct people away; it is placed on an old shop next to a recently renovated shop and the locals, having specific cultural knowledge, know that this section of the shop is currently a storage area, so ‘STAFF ONLY’ means that only staff is allowed access. The meaning is constructed and exchanged through a social semiotic process (Hodge & Kress 1988; Scollon & Scollon 2003) in which discourse of local, cultural knowledge at a particular historic moment, ensure the sign is automatically interpreted correctly. I return to discuss more about signs in the identity section of this chapter, but for the moment I want to stay with contextualising meanings.

Language, being interwoven with culture (Gee 1996a, 2001, 2006; Heath 1978, 1983, 2002; Luke 2003a, 2003b, 2002), offers some stability of meanings within the same or similar cultures. It ‘... is the practice of linking signs, rules and patterns in agreed ways within larger shared and purposeful material practices’ (Lankshear 1997, p. 23, emphasis in original). There may be subtle language differences within different discourses, discourses being the contextual umbrellas that give specific meanings to signs, words, texts, behaviours, and values. So in the discourse of secondary school generally words retain a common meaning; student, class, book, timetable being but a few examples. However in administrative discourse ‘book’ may mean someone wants to reserve a classroom for a particular purpose. Language is tightly interwoven into the fabric of discourses, not being separable from relationships, social practices, values, assumptions, and beliefs.

Effective communication within any figured world depends on common meanings. Neophytes within a figured world learn more than words; they recognise the significance of a range of ‘interlinked communicative modes’
(Norris 2004, p.103) including gaze, posture, visual signs, facial features, body language, and voice inflections. They learn how identities are lived out, what clothes to wear in certain places, how implicit conditions define positional identities; whose messages hold ‘power’ over whom, and which messages have priority. There are often implicit signs indicating these things, as will be discussed in the identity section of this chapter. Words and phrases also implicitly carry a history of use and expectations. ‘Schooling’ has particular connotations; parents expect certain activities and outcomes from schools; teachers may have similar ideas, while those of the students may vary. While having some stability of meanings, language is also being modified. New and constantly evolving technologies have brought new discourses, necessitating new and changing forms within a language. But people by social agreements also bring changes, and for this reason situated meanings (Gee 1999, 2004a) are important in Storyscape. As with any form of communication, the meanings of any parts of language are situated in cultural contexts in a given historical moment.

‘Thinking and using language is an active matter of assembling the situated meanings that you need for action in the world. The assembly is always relative to your socioculturally-defined experiences in the world and, more or less, routinized (‘normed’) through cultural models and various social practices of the sociocultural groups to which you belong’ (Gee 1999, p. 49-50).

Within the figured world of a NACE language class there are different situated meanings being used and interpreted differently by participants, something I observed happening frequently in ordinary social practices within NACE. Janice would object to ‘the lads’ [Mick, Nathan and other young men who were enrolled in classes] ‘sitting ‘round doing nothing all day’, instead of coming to classes. She was a very caring teacher who wanted the best for her students, and the best, for her, was achieved through gaining educational certificates thus subsequently ensuring employment. Mick and Nathan didn’t agree that they sat around doing nothing. They were, among other things, fixing cars, helping mates, learning new driving skills, and dreaming which car to purchase in the future. In understanding
the situated meaning, even within the confines of a figured world, the particular perceptions of the persons at any given time were important to understanding the meaning of words, actions or signs. Janice’s role at NACE complied with the predominant cultural model of education. The players, on the other hand, didn’t share this view, and so their beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and resulting behaviours too were different.

One of Suzie’s stories provided another example of the importance of situating meanings to particular cultural concepts and historical moments. She was adapting the story of the three pigs, concentrating on one pig that always had to take a cool shower for otherwise he would ‘get cooked’ [with the hot water]. Here she uses ‘cool’ in the traditional sense of temperature. But after his shower the pig looks in the mirror and said ‘God! Look how Hot I look’. Here she uses the very contemporary meaning of ‘hot’ as sexy, attractive, good-looking and desirable to females [See Appendix 1].

While a cultural model ensures common meanings for crucial concepts, enabling continuity, it does not effectively serve all students. Educational discourses within a model operate from assumptions about schooling, knowledge and education that have resulted in the privileging of language, roles, pedagogies, curriculum and administrative procedures (Gee 1996a, 1999; Lather 1991a, 1991b; Levinson & Holland 1996; Street 2001; Weedon 1997) that serve to transmit predominant values and practices. Education of the young is not a neutral objective (Heath 1983). Institutional practices ensure that schools reproduce the types of students and citizens preferred by the predominant culture. Children from some sections of the community bring to school linguistic, language strategies and knowledges that predominate in the schooling system. At home they have been indoctrinated with the values and skills common to those homes and schools that result in a rich cultural capital able to be utilised easily at school.

**Cultural capital**, understood as an easy familiarity with and knowledge of the dominant social norms (Obidah & Marsh 2006) varies dependent upon the ideologies and beliefs wanting to be promoted, but invariably are those
of the dominant group, and consist of material or symbolic goods (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002) and attributes like prestige, status and authority (Bartholomaeus 2000). It is any resource that an institution, teacher or student may have (Hillier & Rooksby 2002) that provides a means of utilising the resource for positive outcomes for an individual or group, and may include success at literacy forms valued by the culture, academic success, status from a leadership position within an institution, or test results. The prevalent model privileges middle and upper class language and conditions against those of working class sectors (Gee 1999; Hicks 1996; Li 2008; Smyth 2003), and places science in a space of privileged knowledge (Aronowitz 1989).

Schooling presents a challenge for students where their home or community culture differs from that of dominant cultural model. The dialectical interactions between cultures, individuals and schools impact on schooling experiences (Heath 1983, 2002; Li 2006), sometimes in negative ways. Students may fail as they don’t possess the cultural capital of knowledges and skills needed to successfully navigate a system based on other practices (Jennings & Lynne 2005). Another condition of perceived failure is when student outcomes are weighed in traditional school processes and academic settings (Obidah & Marsh 2006). NACE, as an approved educational provider, was not immune from the associated discourses; they had funding policies to comply with, constraints for certificate requirements, and teachers with limited resources and training for adolescent education. On the other hand the players had educational goals and ambitions, and their accounts indicate that they were not necessarily given realistic ideas of what could be achieved educationally and personally.

The prevalent cultural model of education in Westernised nations operates from a limited definition of intelligence that has resulted in a system predicated on academic ability (Robinson 2009), with high academic attainment being a class-related phenomenon (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody 2001). The variety of resources available to students from homes with the same cultural capital as the predominant culture not only give them
an advantage, but those from non-mainstream sectors are disadvantaged at the same time, so the difference between those that have and those that have-not widens. The habitus of the mainstream group presents as the ‘normal’ criterion of scholastic success (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes 1990). Equality of education is politically promised and promoted; however, in reality it doesn’t exist as all students don’t have access to the same cultural capital for schooling or their lives. The dominant group has been able to establish their ideologies as a ‘norm’ to become the ‘official examinable culture’ of schooling (Lankshear 1997, p. 30). Those who control cultural institutions such as schools have established their view of reality as the right one to the exclusion of any alternative interpretations (Collins 1995).

**Three major prevailing assumptions** in the cultural model of education affected the players. **First** is that

> '[E]ducation’ has increasingly come to be equated with schooling, as the groups served by Western-style schools come to internalize the dominant meanings purveyed in formal curricula and school discourses’ (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 21).

The players, each in their own way, were actively involved in learning outside school and NACE; learning that was meaningful, interesting and therefore engaging to them. The **second** assumption is ‘the logic of one-size-fits-all’ (Waff 2006, p. 256), without regard for individual differences in learning styles, developmental progress, skills, interests or knowledges. Each of the players exhibited different operations of learning, and preferred modes and times, but the prevalent model of education takes no regard for this crucial aspect of students. The **third** assumption is ‘[E]ducation-as-usual assumes that kids are empty vessels who need to be sat down in a room and filled with curricular content...’ (Searls 2002 n.p.). However secondary students are not a passive audience; they possess agency, creativity and discernment about legitimate interests and concerns (Kenway & Fitzclarence 1998). Students are products of the social and educational figured worlds they have inhabited. They are, in part, the accumulation of their experiences and responses, and their use and adaptation of the culture and language. But at the same time they produce their own culture,
manipulating the language, texts, practices, and sometimes challenge the foundational values, beliefs and assumptions. In Neatsville the dominant view of education aligned with the cultural model covertly promoted by government policy and mainstream social practices (New London Group 2000; White & Wyn 1998). The associated institutional discourses generally are not flexible enough to allow for the differences in non-mainstream home and school cultures (Comber 1997; Hicks 2002; Li 2008), while associated academic insecurity leads to low schooling achievements (Tesse & Polesel 2003). Leander (2004a), acknowledging the affects of ideologies in educational areas, highlights the ‘space of privilege’ that operates advantaging mainstream students. The players, as contemporary young people, experienced difficulties with schooling that was based on outdated assumptions (Gee 2004c; Luke & Luke 2001).

The ideological foundations of cultural models reveal themselves through signifying practices (Hall 1997b; Walkerdine 1990) within social spaces, interwoven within educational practices and ‘lived out’ through practicalities in cultural spaces as people identify with a culture (Hall 1997a). These practices imbue daily life; some evidences in the educational world are academic titles and qualifications, school emblems, badges for student positions, the ceremony for their presentation, and the authoritative position the badges signify. Bethany had positive experiences of these when she was living with her grandparents on a Pacific island where she attended a religious secondary school for her early secondary schooling. Here each year level had its own signifying practices of hair styles, dress or shirt lengths and trims, and also tattoos for the senior boys. People may alter signifying practices to display their rejection of cultural practices. In a secondary student world hair styles and school uniforms provide easy targets for individual statements. While culturally the uniform is intended to display uniformity, conformity and cohesion, it is often a site for contestation for adolescents (Smyth & Hattam 2004) as they prefer to display signs of individual identity. The players generally spoke disparagingly about their school uniforms, and the lads in particular joked about their exploits in sabotaging its intentions in secondary school.
Through a cultural model of education signifying practices are assumed to be ‘right’ and ‘normal’, and often these practices continue unquestioned. Terry’s education had him believe that correct standard English spelling was essential to ensure the correct understanding of a written text. However he was startled one morning by what he read on a notice board in the common area. Nathan and I were reading newspapers, Janice has disappeared to see if any other students had arrived, Terry was flipping through an accumulation of notices on the board, some partly hidden.

Terry: *That’s amazing! That whole thing.* As he’s speaking he removes the paper from the board, letting the other papers fall to the floor. He waves the paper.

Me: *What does it say? I can’t read it from here?*

He walks around to where I’m seated.

Terry: *Isn’t that amazing! I just read the whole thing. I’ve always been told spelling is important. But I can read this.* [Part of the text is reproduced below. See Appendix 2 for full text.]

Me: That’s why I say spelling isn’t important. Getting the sense of what it’s about is more important.

    I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaomneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamntnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae.

The school uniform is only one of several signifying practices enmeshed in the hidden curriculum agenda within educational institutions (Connelly and Clandinin 1988; Manuel & Robinson 2003; Wells 1986), a curriculum that negatively impacts on several other areas of the lives of some students as values, attitudes and invisible qualities are implicitly taught as dominant cultural values and beliefs within a school or society and presented as ‘right’ (Cope & Kalantzis 1987; Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995). Hidden curriculum reproduces an hierarchical social structure that benefits students
with mainstream language and experiences at the expense of other students (Street 1994). Implicated within this hierarchical structure are also authoritative positions, where the heteroglossia of social languages will sometimes cause struggle or opposition as a voice of a dominant, authoritative and hegemonic group will suppress other voices (Morris 1994; Morson 1989, 2004; Morson & Emerson 1990). The players, in leaving secondary schooling, were rejecting the hidden curriculum with its ideological view of school and work, and the desire to maintain the training of students to accept the status quo of social positions (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983). Positional identities are often very strong in educational arenas, and the players all experienced negative aspects of these with teachers in their secondary schools and at NACE. In Chapter 5 Positioning Coordinates I evaluate an episode I witnessed of an authoritative institutional identity at work against the reciprocal student one.

In educational settings student voice and performance of non-mainstream groups is negatively impacted as they possess less power, prestige or authority (Fine 1991, 1996; Leander 2002a; Skinner, Valsiner and Holland 2001; Smyth & Hattam 2004). Through the hidden curriculum, with its emphasis on compliance, conformity and citizenship, students are coerced into unquestioningly accept the role of schools in their lives and society (Ehrenreich 1989), where a system of domination is enacted, maintained and reproduced as ‘the norm’. Well-defined hierarchies of authority, assessments and rewards ensure that students’ submissive roles are maintained (Dei 1996).

How certificates are presented, displayed and celebrated, signs and their placement, and the celebration of academic success, are further signifying practices promoting and reproducing dominant ideologies. Student voices on conditions, courses, curriculum, pedagogies and administrative procedures are silenced culturally (Fine 1991; Leander 2002a), through teachers’ authoritative words (Freedman & Ball 2004) facial and vocal expressions (Shor 1987), gazes (Norris 2004) and spatial arrangements that they establish in classrooms (Leander 2002a). Institutional structures
perpetuate a system where, in classrooms, students are rarely allowed meaningful participation as a teacher dominated, monologic form of communication exists, denying learners valid roles and voices (Greenleaf & Katz 2004). Sometimes the silencing of the players was through the demand and expectation of being a ‘good’ student when teachers in their authoritative positions silenced them as a form of regulation and control. As Mick put it, when a teacher gave him ‘the look’ it was no good arguing or speaking, a concept central to the discussion of positional identities in Chapter 5. All the players acknowledged that at their secondary schools they were silenced by looks, lack of opportunity, or by being misrepresented or misunderstood. Silence can present as form of being a ‘good’ student; after all children who say nothing, say nothing wrong (Walkerdine 1990; also Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001). Suzie’s silences at NACE may have been more than a ‘shy girl’; her behaviour indicating that she was a ‘good’ student. Bethany was silent except when answering direct questions and she too was considered a ‘good’ student. Luke was silenced in a different way; having found his voice and a place to speak his concerns, his requests were ignored several times while I was there, a situation he just accepted as normal. Mick, Nathan and Terry, however, felt that while ‘good’ (compliant) students were not silenced and ignored, others were, regardless of the thoughtfulness and legitimacy of their questions and comments (Moje 2000).

NACE, as an educational provider, was implicit in the continuance of this model and associated social practices; while the model sets what is normal and expected, in doing so it also sets a border for what is unacceptable (Gee 1996a; Li 2008). For the players the educational space at NACE had limitations that didn’t provide adequately for their needs. Educational providers, as social institutions, have histories of conventions and constraints (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006), but NACE also had current political funding and certifications. Rosemary explained the two difficulties she experiences within the IT (Information Technology) section relative to the youth program. The first was the course that any student was enrolled in; Rosemary could not alter that. The second difficulty was that, while she
personally had the qualifications or experience to take Bethany or Yvette to a higher IT certificate level, the scope of NACE’s registration meant that they can only provide up to level 2. Regardless of Bethany or Yvette’s prior experiences, knowledges and skills, they could proceed no further than level 2 at NACE. Janice could only enrol students in specified courses according to the funding provided, not the needs of the students.

The players experienced differences within the classroom figured worlds at NACE. While the policies for study courses, student behaviour and competency related documents were the same, the discourses in the classes varied. The **teaching spaces** provided by the two teachers, Janice and Rosemary, were very different, and so different discourses operated within the figured worlds. For Janice ‘hands on’ work meant reading and writing traditional paper-based educational texts from a ‘teaching curriculum’ (Lave & Wenger 1991) approach. She imposed her vision for the video narrative and how processes would work. For Terry, the natural actor, this was problematic, as is discussed in Chapters 4 and 8. In contrast Rosemary’s approach was from a student learning perspective where ‘hands on’ meant that students started with performing a technology related task, such as operating the video camera. This was the impetus for reading the manual, and then the instructions for downloading the recording to the computer, and transferring it to a disk. This was the approach used when Mick & Nathan made their car video discussed in the second part of Chapter 6. Generally the players preferred Rosemary’s approach and willingly worked on designated tasks.

One of the educational practices that affected some of the players adversely was that of **streaming** students according to the administrator’s or teachers’ perceptions of student intellectual capabilities, or lack of them (Connelly & Clandinin 1988; King & O’Brien 2002). Neither Bethany nor Suzie attended Neatsville Secondary, but both attended schools with similar assumptions resulting in grouping of students by their abilities and subject results. They discussed their experiences of streaming and, while their experiences were different, they both felt that the practice adversely
affected many students. Bethany, a bright, capable student, was separated from friends in English classes but she believed that her struggling friends would have learnt more from her had she been allowed to be in their class. Her friends were hesitant to ask the teacher for help, but would have liked to have worked with other students. Bethany was also sure her learning would not have been curtailed in being with her friends. Suzie, as a struggling student, was reliant on her friends for social support and learning help. When she was placed in an English class specifically designed for students struggling with literacy, the administrative assumption was that she would learn better. However being the only girl in a class of 16 she felt isolated and found the lessons didn’t interest her so she stopped attending the classes, and eventually school. While both students recognised the disadvantages of streaming they felt that students were powerless to change the arrangements and that it was useless to complain. While the players had lessons on the theory of democracy, it failed to operate in the schools they attended, and the students themselves didn’t have the resources or supports to enact change in positive ways (Smyth & Hattam 2004).

The players in Storyscape grumbled about subject, classes and timetable restrictions at their secondary schools and NACE that they felt were unreasonable. Luke and Terry wanted more time to study their own interests, and at their own level. Luke said he wanted formal certificates in English and mathematics to enable him to gain entry to the Australian air force. Other problems with this desire of Luke’s are discussed in Chapter 7. Mick and Nathan wanted to be included in the mechanics class to suit their interests, skills and learning style, Bethany wanted to study something meaningful towards employment, while Suzie wanted to be in classes with other girls, and get real help from teachers or other students. At NACE the courses offered them were very restricted; the lads’ knowledges and skills, their ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al. 1992), were subjugated to dominant discourses in official legitimate knowledge, language and experiences (hooks 2003; Smyth & Hattam 2004) through government regulated courses. There was no provision for their skills and cultural capital to be utilised (Levinson & Holland 1996; Obidah & Marsh 2006).
Educational institutions often have their own sets of **norms, rules and conditions** that are not always conducive to learning for all students (Moje 2000) with timetables generally regulated by discourses of the dominant cultural model. Students are controlled by routines and bells or sirens, where students move from classroom to classroom in buildings frequently designed for surveillance of the students (Smyth et al. 2000). The players all preferred more flexible times, and recognised that they generally didn’t work well early in the day. However their secondary schools and NACE had traditional timetables with classes starting at 9AM. Janice timetabled her classes to start at nine o’clock, and Monday morning was one preferred day. She would get agitated if students were not there on time, ready for her class. Rosemary, recognising the preferences of most adolescent students, was happy to have her classes later in the day and week. None of the players liked classes on Mondays; Luke and Suzie were happy with nine o’clock commencements, while the rest preferred to have later starting times.

Luke and Suzie were the two players who most eagerly took on the culturally and NACE approved **identity of ‘student’**. Initially they were both punctual, polite and prepared, coming to classes with books and pens. They carried their bags and books with prominence. As **signifying practices** these actions set them in accord with the preferred cultural model. In contrast the other players relied on teachers to have what was needed for lessons, frequently day-dreamed, grumbled and muttered while teachers were talking, paid little attention to instructions and preferred to discuss any topic rather than the one the class was doing. In out-of-class times they also had their own signifying actions (Geertz 1975), often refusing Janice’s offer of nutritious food preferring to sharing coke and a cigarette for morning tea, ignoring the ‘No Smoking’ and the ‘No Sitting on Tables’ signs.

Students who lack the cultural discourses incorporated in the prevalent educational model not only are disadvantaged, but, lacking background knowledges and skills, they frequently experience **interactive trouble** with styles, instructions, reasoning, organisational and pedagogical approaches
(Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995). An example of this is discussed in Chapter 4 with Terry’s literacy. What may present as a ‘literacy’ problem may, in fact, be relational difficulties to unfamiliar concepts and ideas (Hattam et al. 1999). Each day that I was in a class Suzie was in she struggled with reading the worksheets. On the day newspaper articles were used she couldn’t read the *Herald Sun* newspaper, and did not know how to tackle the activity. She had no idea of current news events and so did not easily recognise any news items. She illustrated Freebody Ludwig & Gunn’s (1995) **interactive trouble** with procedures, experiences, and reading with traditional educational literacies with which she was not familiar. She did, however, have good recall and understanding of the oral instructions and the newspaper articles read to her. Mainstream curriculum ideas that appear obvious and reasonable to some may present problems for other students with different cultural interests and knowledges. Students from subordinated or minority groups may perceive and interpret words, cues and reality differently from the dominant group (Collins 1995). Sometimes the interactive trouble may surface as a breakdown in communication (Smyth & Hattam 2004) as the young people don’t have the means to identify and express the underlying factions.

**Literacy**, in the experiences of the players at secondary schools and at NACE, evidenced as the traditional view of literacy with distinctive cognitive reading and writing skills that could be taught by discipline and rote independent of a social context. This view enabled literacy to be conceptualized in technical terms which legitimized large scale literacy testing and scaling of results (Fine 1991; Kalantzis & Cope 2005). The players were critical of the cultural model of education that they encountered where high-stakes testing was honoured, and where test-based accountability systems (Moore and Cunningham 2006) disadvantaged them. What this view did not allow for were the varying contextual elements in which the students learnt, and their knowledges and experiences, variances that affected their literacy competencies and test results.
The inherent social and educational problems related to this traditional model of literacy (Lankshear & Knobel 2007; Li 2006; Street 1984, 1995, 2003) resulted because literacy was intricately interwoven into the fabric of discourses, situated within social practices (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic 2000), and the domination of minority groups within the prevailing cultural model of education. The dominating implicit and explicit assumptions about literacy could not be isolated or treated as 'neutral' or merely technical as literacy was conceived as ‘an ideological practice, implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices’ (Street 1995, p.1). Students, when learning literacy, learn more than just reading and writing. They also learn discourses and relationships of power and knowledge, socialisation, cultural models of learning and identity, not just how to decode script or to write a particular way. While most mainstream students adopted this literacy model naturally, the players found themselves at variance with the literacies and related identities. Luke had a functional level of literacy that suited his interests, but it is doubtful that his literacy skills were sufficient to achieve a standard necessary for getting into the Australian air-force. It seems that Suzie had not been provided with a functional level of independent literacy, and it was uncertain what level Mick had achieved. Nathan, Terry, Bethany and Yvette were bored with the restrictive limitations of educational textual experiences. Bethany’s experiences form part of the discussion in Chapter 8.

The players spoke freely about their literacy experiences at secondary schools, and it was evident that the signifying practices of the ‘school literacy’ were not meaningful to them. Bethany, Yvette, Nathan and Terry were frustrated by the demand to write essays when they felt this skill wasn’t relevant to any future life or employment, and they couldn’t see the point of doing them just to pass a school subject. These practices, along with text book exercises and worksheets, form part of the social practices associated with schooling (Sheehy 2004) that the players didn’t see any point of. They form part of the ‘doing school’ routines, many of which are disassociated from skills needed in out-of-school lives and possible future occupations (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Knobel 1999). Some of the
players made fun of the school worksheets and joked about the strategies they used for getting them completed without doing any of the work. At NACE Janice frequently used worksheets in the classes that Luke & Suzie attended. Suzie often needed help to read, interpret and complete the work, while Luke completed his in the quickest way, using minimal words and not caring if the work was correct. He already knew that completion was the important thing, and that the work usually wouldn’t be checked for its value. The players, except for Suzie, enjoyed reading, but had no interest in the books that were required reading for secondary english as the books were ‘boring’ and of no interest to them. They also saw no point in doing reports, and re-writing drafts just to keep the teacher happy (Alvermann 2001), and generally avoided assignments.

An analysis of Luke and Terry’s literacy usage at NACE in and out of classes was interesting. Luke’s choice of personal reading occurred daily, covering 14 different types of texts from newspapers to cards, DVD covers and games. In class he deliberately avoided set reading tasks several times, and read 5 times during 6 sessions. He deliberately avoided set writing tasks twice, and completed 4 set tasks. However he used writing independently 4 times when it suited his own purposes, for example when making ‘car wash’ advertising when he wanted to earn some cash. Terry wrote minimally; only once in class, and twice for his own purposes, both with computer games. He twice read class work; however he read 19 different types of texts for his own purposes, none of them valued by the teachers. He was fascinated by interesting snippets on the notice boards and in newspapers. It seemed that his general knowledge was gained from computer games, and he accepted the information as ‘true’, absorbing messages like a sponge. One day Janice had an altercation with him in class; she found his vivaciousness difficult to deal with, and she was trying to concentrate on a challenging task within the classroom. The students (and I) were startled to hear her yell:

_Terry, be quiet for 5 minutes!_
Terry was somewhat overcome with surprise, looked directly at Janice, his words frozen without a chance at life.

Terry: Me? He was too stunned to move or say anything else.

Janice: Yes. I want you to be quiet for 5 minutes.

No-one moved or spoke; everyone’s eyes and ears on the unusual scene.

Terry: Quiet... He slowly moved from the art table to his chair, lowered himself into it and picked up the pen. ... for five minutes.

As he wrote couldn’t help himself. Nathan was next to him, and he leant across to the lap-top Nathan was using. His whispered to Nathan so quietly Janice couldn’t possibly hear him; he touched some keys. He wrote... he whispered... he tapped keys.

This busy sort-of-quietness continued for two minutes 35 seconds, before suddenly Terry erupted: That’s Nixon man, the worst president ever.

Everyone in the room heard it. Janice chose to ignore it. His frequent racist, sexist or politically biased comments reflected this absorption, but no one challenged him about them.

Terry was typical of the players; reading and viewing texts and images impacted on them as they unconsciously absorbed the messages. There seemed to be no awareness that each was just one point of view, and that alternative views and opinions were possible. What they hadn’t learnt at school were analytical skills enabling them to make critical appraisals of relationships, discourses, texts and practices they encounter in their everyday lives, and that they would encounter in the future. Knobel explains:

‘...being merely able to encode and decode texts is no longer a sufficient education goal. ...Indeed, students now need to learn ways of thinking analytically and critically about relationships among discourses, information, social actions, meaning-making as part of accessing worthwhile employment opportunities for becoming a full participant in a wealth of cultural and social activities’ (Knobel 1997, p. 3).

What the players were unaware of was how they were positioned as students, as readers of newspapers, magazines, web sites and games, and
positioned as citizens, and that alternative positions and ideas were available and possible (Alvermann et al. 2006; Moje 2000). New social and work conditions, inclusive of every-changing digital technologies, necessitated different skills and knowledges from previous conditions (New London Group 2000; Sheehy 2004) and years. Each of the players had financial challenges resulting in them not having their own digital equipment, nor access to them where they resided. At NACE the use of digital technologies in the youth program was minimal. Youth access was limited due to budget constraints or priorities. When they were used in classes in the youth program it was within the frame of traditional pedagogies. Neither Janice nor the students considered using computers for the writing process or work presentation. Paper dictionaries were used for checking spelling. Interaction with digital games involves more than literacy skills; identities and social relationships are enacted as games are played (Gee 2006). The players were once again disadvantaged by the ‘digital divide’ (Gee 2004b; Hull & Schultz 2002b; Lewis & Fabos 2005; Luke & Luke 2001) as they had limited access to contemporary communications through digital technologies, and their limited exposure meant they didn’t develop the skills necessary to easily utilise the tools (Alvermann 2002).

It seems that Terry’s pre-Neatsville participation in digital games was all-encompassing and strengthened the identities he chose to exhibit. Many adolescents fashion their identities outside school (Hattam et al. 1999) as popular culture and media offers the freedom and excitement they are naturally drawn to (Kenway 1998; New London Group 2000; Smyth & Hattam 2004). In Storyscape identity is treated as an enactment of the self (Moje 2004; Wortham 2006), the constant work of becoming somebody (Wexler 1992) within cultural boundaries (Blackburn 2002-3; Holland et al. 1998) that operate in and amongst social spaces of figured worlds.

Identity formation is understood as continuous and multifaceted, not a state that can be achieved and finalised; an ever-evolving process that fluctuates as a person participates in a range of figured worlds. Figured worlds provide
‘frames of meaning in which interpretations of human action are negotiated’ (Holland et al. 1998 p. 271), and so involve social encounters in which a variety of identities operate. While ‘identity’ is not a finalised state of being, when multiple resources are drawn upon for identity formation then a stable identity emerges (Wortham 2004) within a particular figured world. As multiple figured worlds are lived in multiple identities exist within each person. The players in storiescape displayed a variety of identities including formal and informal student, friend, and community member.

Overlapping identities occur naturally as people experience a variety of discourses and heteroglossic languages within their figured worlds (Collins and Blot 2003). Within this multiplicity of identities some will be harmonious, while others may be contradictory or conflictual (Hall 1996). One of Luke’s constant conflicts was between wanting to be ‘cool’ and wear clothes like other teenagers, yet at the same time not wanting to be like them in their speech and bullying behaviours. Another contradiction in his identities was his objection to violence, yet his altered traditional story reveals a very high level of it (Appendix 3). Suzie wanted to be confident like her friends, yet felt her failure at school prevented her being so. An emerging, possible self-image may surface only briefly and then subside, to reappear later or disappear. During my time at NACE Bethany was initially shy, quiet, compliant and very reserved. When Yvette came Bethany displayed different qualities; friendly, talkative, prepared to take risks with discreetly using her mobile phone during classes, and positively questioning teachers about activities.

Identities are **provisional** as they are constantly forming and evolving in accordance with current cultural experiences. For example any secondary student identity is provisional for several years, and when home, school, community and peer values and influences combine in positive ways then a stable identity can emerge for a time. Students

‘internalize various views of themselves from their interactions, they begin to compare, contrast, play with them, seizing
opportunities for combinations and modifications. They eventually take on and act out identities that position themselves in various ways’ (Moore and Cunningham 2006, p. 139).

The narratives the players told about their experiences in the figured worlds of classrooms provided insights into the identities they chose to exhibit and those they were not comfortable with. While at secondary school Nathan and Mick enjoyed a term of science classes where the teacher had the students involved in competitive hands-on construction of human-powered vehicles. They recalled positive experiences and learning and, it seems, easily identified as compliant students. They recalled nothing positive from other subjects and in those classes rejected the ‘compliant student’ identity. Luke had memories of positive experiences during his schooling at Convenience Cove, and being identified as a student presented no problem. In contrast his time at Neatsville secondary led him to reject not only the student identity but the schooling involved too.

People live their lives in a variety of ‘figured worlds’, the first of Holland et al.’s (1998) theoretical frame of ‘identity in practice’. People move within these small cultural worlds in everyday lives. They are specific areas of relationships bounded by formally or informal agreements. Figured worlds are significant because within them

‘[t]hinking, speaking, gesturing, cultural exchange are forms of social as well as cultural work. When we do these things we not only send messages (to ourselves and others) but also place “ourselves” in social fields, in degrees of relation to – affiliation with, opposition to, and distance from- identifiable others (Holland et al. 1998, p. 271).

Within each figured world participants have common ideas, interests and some shared values and beliefs, all of which are bounded by cultural restraints. They may be social, sporting, educational, or interest areas where people share common relationships. A NACE or school class, a social group or a family are examples of smaller figured worlds. The players moved within several figured worlds; the NACE classes, their friendship groups,
their residential places. Larger figured worlds may be a school or playground environment, a sporting club or work environment. While there are commonalities within a figured world, differences exist and not all participants share equally in roles and power arrangements, and positional identities play significant roles. Positional identities are the second aspect of ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998), and are discussed later on in this chapter, and further developed in an Explorations in Identity Enactment chapter, Chapter 5 Positioning Coordinates.

Within the social spaces of figured worlds individuals exhibit their responses to cultural concepts situated within these social spaces (Holland et al. 1998). These behaviour enactments and images are the results of ‘an interface between their inner life and the social context in which they live’ (Smyth & Hattam 2004, p. 69). Identity is understood to be a complex process in which young people are working on generating and maintaining a sense of meaning and self-worth, occurring within particular spaces (geographic, social, electronic, mental, and cultural) at particular points in time (Moje 2004). There are a variety of ways in which people ‘tell’ others about the identities that are significant to them (Holland et al. 1998). Through collective memory of culturally significant practices and symbols, people show their identification or rejection of social values (Bartlett & Holland 2002; Connery 2010) in ways that others can recognise and interpret. Broader social values are displayed through visual images, body language, facial expressions and the ways that clothing is worn (Kress 2003b), and may display rejection or agreement with the values (Kress 2003b). Significant to the players was what to wear and
how to wear it, who to hang out with, and how to think and act (Wexler 1992). The texts and images on clothing indicated drinking priorities of a couple of the players, a theme that featured in some of Mick, Nathan and Terry’s narratives.

Identity behaviours, signs and artefacts are evidences of workings within a person’s intimate life, where an orchestration of voices about self-understandings continually takes place. These *inner communications* are evidenced in identities being lived in, through and around cultural forms of social practices within figured worlds. These voices, as part of past histories, dialogue with new and emergent voices, form part of the *self-authoring* process, which Bakhtin refers to as self-fashioning. Self-authoring is the third of the ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) process. Part of a person’s mental process involves listening to and answering some of these inner voices (Morris 1994), a self-dialogue process that may involve struggle and conflict as internally persuasive voices and authoritative discourses can be challenged or negotiated (Morson & Emerson 1990), and deciding which messages to retain, and which to alter or remove. This is usually an unconscious process.

While all the players experienced these inner negotiations of voices it was Luke who most clearly exhibited and discussed his experiences of dealing with some of these voices. In the months prior to the data collection time he had worked at resolving some conflicting and authoritative inner voices from his experiences at Neatsville secondary. At the heart of his self-authoring were the emotional associations with past voices that presented as authoritative. He struggled to disassociate from the authoritative voices of bullies whom he believed for a long time. He constantly referred to the negative effects of these voices, how his thinking altered as a result of self-authoring and encouragement from within the NACE figured world, and to his subsequent behaviour changes. I witnessed Luke adapting his ways of thinking and his subsequent changes in identities, and these experiences of Luke’s self-authoring form part of the discussion in *Chapter 6 Making One’s Way*, identity, self-authoring and narratives. The inner dialogues that
he discussed illustrated some of the conflictual elements (Hall 1996) in his inner world, but perhaps the greatest contradiction was his inability to produce an image of his ambitions for the future. Luke frequently talked about his ambitions to become a pilot yet in class he was unable to represent his ambitions. While Luke’s ‘head talk’ is presented in detail in Chapter 6, this episode of Luke’s, and similar incongruities with some of the players, are the basis for the discussion in Chapter 7 where Frozen Moments are deliberated.

While any change in a person’s behaviour is pre-empted by inner dialogues, there are additional workings that operate in identity formation. Alongside inner conversations there is a **symbolic or social play** with ideas through imaginative discourses where new ways of being are worked out (Dyson 1997; Holland et al. 1998). During this ‘play’ remembered pasts are confronted alongside anticipated futures, and these are exhibited in present lives. Janice took the class to a second-hand clothing store one day and Luke was engrossed on trying out different outfits and playing the characters; a sports jacket for the teacher; a jacket, tie and brief case for a business man, and a casual shirt and 10-gallon hat for the cowboy. His facial expressions and actions were true to the characterizations he presented each time. Another time, back at NACE, Janice had the students depicting their career dreams in art works. When Janice left the room Luke got out his phone and started to gyrate to the music, while also pretending to play the drums. It was quite an extraordinary exhibition as Luke, until then, had shown no awareness of music or dance, or that he had a mobile phone. He quickly put his phone away as soon as Janice reappeared.

‘**Deep acting**’ (Holland and Leander 2004) works in the same way, where over time a person will mould themselves to walk, act, feel and think like a social persona, or a culturally imagined type of person. This acting develops a new inner sense of self, and may progress to a recognizable self-identity. Suzie exhibited this acting out when she practised using a video recorder with an impromptu commentary. Mick and Nathan exhibited the same play when making their car video. Bethany also exhibited outer signs of her
inner self-authoring and acting. Before classes, or when there were lulls in activities, she would wander a room practising various poses and ways of walking. She sometimes read a snippet of a newspaper, would pose and walk, then return to her reading. Then after a while she might do it again using another style. Digital worlds also offer places for symbolic or deep acting where a variety of identities move beyond the ‘play’ stage to enactment of the relationships (Gee 2006) that often carry over into the physical world. Terry’s involvement with on-line quest games was absolute, excluding the material world around him and the people in it. He was oblivious to me watching him and to my farewell comments. He claimed he didn’t watch much television, but ‘much’ is relative, and his impersonations of a famous TV doctor revealed intricate knowledge of, and much practiced, voice inflections, phrases, facial gestures, hand and arm movements and stage walks. He didn’t imitate, but took on the persona in a very convincing way. I guess this had something to do with what he did during the hours he wasn’t at school.

Along with symbolic acting, the creation of a text, narrative or artefact is also involved in identity formation and lamination, for the creative act produces not only a material product but simultaneously works in identity formation, stabilisation and expression. The expressive artefact or narrative provides a space for the mental and physical worlds to interact, ‘mediating between thought, action and interaction’ (Schultz & Hull 2002 p.16). The material object reflects an identity of the maker; however the production process can be accompanied by a transformation in an identity or identities of the maker (Kamler 2006; Rowsell and Pahl 2007). When Bethany produced the artefact on the left as she worked she spoke about her love of shopping and desire for nice jewellery and good eye make-up, and the difficulties of wanting expensive items on a limited budget, and how she
mentally calculated how to save for what she wanted, and also her love of parties and being popular. The narrative she told gave voice to identity emblems and signifying objects (Pahl 2004) associated with the art work production. Spaces for narrative or artefact production can become places for identity transformations when dialogical connections between physical and mental space provide opportunities for identity conflicts to be negotiated (Leander 2002c) and settled. Such work can display through artefacts or narratives, and assist in stabilizing a particular identity.

Artefacts or texts, as well as involved in identity work, can be imbued with memories so when revisited they have an emotional connection with the creator. If the experience is a positive one then this can assist to mediate a person’s sense of themselves, and these associations, when related and numerous, can ‘thicken’ and help stabilise a person’s particular identity (Holland and Leander 2004; Wortham 2004). Suzie’s identity as a student seemed to be positively reinforced when she was involved in activities she could work on successfully such as independent story writing. She was still quiet, but would smile, make positive comments about her work, and engage with other students who spoke to her. Positive comments from Janice about Suzie’s successfully completed homework also seemed to bring good feelings. However there were computer activities and class games she couldn’t succeed at, and during those times she refrained from interactions with staff or students, frowned often, looked uncomfortable and didn’t get work done. Luke’s digital record of his written work from Convenience Cove and his Personal Portfolio had positive memories for him. He would read and re-read parts of his portfolio over and over before and during classes. When asked to show someone his work he would first get this folio out and detail the parts that most interested him that day. Mick’s excitement at producing a video (Chapter 6) held not just a successful product, but also a memory of achievement and satisfaction as he raced away with a copy to show his father and friends.

Emblems, symbols, motifs and signs used in narratives and artefacts are not arbitrary as sign makers
'mediate their own social history, their present social position, their sense of their social environment in the process of communication, and this becomes tangible in the reshaping of the cultural resources used representation and communication' (Kress 2009, p. 69).

Cultural and historical circumstances affect what materiality is available for use in artefact production. Bethany’s artefact above represents not only her aspirations for the future, but also reflects her position culturally and materially. She was not confident enough with her drawing skills so used collage, and preferred not to use any digital technology. Towards the end of my time with the players Terry displayed an artefact that reflected his limited resources. He arrived late as he had gone to Nathan’s and had to wait for him to get ready. He seemed unsettled and verbally harassed Nathan more than usual. When he and I started to check my transcripts of his interviews, he turned the situation the way he wanted, taking the papers and leading the review. But after a few minutes he took off his jacket and he had biro-drawn symbols all along his right arm. He laughed the graffiti off as a stunt, but I wondered what the art-work signified; he wasn’t willing to discuss it. He didn’t settle to any class work that day and was allowed to go to the computer lab where he played an on-line game for the remainder of the morning.

The players were typical of all story tellers who position themselves and others in particular ways in their narratives (Alvermann et al. 2006) characters and storylines. Whether the players wanted to emphasise their agency, elicit sympathy or confirm an identity, their narratives reflected their ideas and positions. Suzie was applauded as a great singer in her altered traditional story (Appendix 1); Luke was the hero annihilating his enemies in his (Appendix 13). Terry was the challenger constantly trying new ideas and making discoveries, while Nathan was centre of attention in a calm, quiet way. Not all the narratives the players told were recounted as complete episodes. Sometimes they would tell a story, and later mention something else about it that was remembered from a different context. Nathan told very little about his family in a formal interview, but when we were talking before classes, or when he was a passenger in my car, he
chatted about experiences with his father and his daughter in an easy manner. When he and I were reviewing the transcripts from the interviews he elaborated in a friendly way, and a composite picture emerged. Some of Luke and Terry’s narratives also appeared as composite tellings. What each telling revealed was a ‘remembered self’ (Barclay 1994), that is not the same as the historical self for a person takes the gist of their narrative as it exists in their memory, and it is a ‘perceived’ self (Schank & Abelson 1995). Its retrieval is affected by unconscious choices about the ‘self’ that is to be presented when particular attributes, such as agency or victimicy, want to be presented (Neisser 1994). The dilemmas I faced with composite narratives and perceptions are discussed in Chapter 3 where methodology is mapped out.

**Improvisation and fluidity** are other characteristics of identity (Merchant 2004) as people draw on available cultural resources to respond to a problem to which they have no set response (Bateson 1990; Clandinin & Connelly 2000a). Often improvisations are intuitive reactions to an uncertainty or new situation (Hillier & Rooksby 2002) and are displayed by behaviours, practices or ideas through a narrative or artefact production. Improvisations provide connections between the self, material spaces and social worlds, and are critical to identities being outworked in a physical world (Sibley 1995). At NACE the players provided day-to-day improvisations as they faced challenging situations in seeking to find meaningful learning. Bethany’s behaviours were regular and predictable when she attended. She always had a smart bag, was punctual and did the work required. However she didn’t come prepared with equipment and never cleaned up. After class she would leave her used disposable cup, scraps of paper, food wraps and other rubbish on the desk. If it was noticed by Janice or Rosemary it was after Bethany had left for the day. However on a Wednesday mid-way through my time at NACE Bethany cleaned up her area before the art activity was finished, and then she left early. After she had gone it was discovered that a purse was missing. Bethany was not seen at NACE again, and there were no messages about her non-attendance. No conclusion could be reached about her unusual behaviour that day.
About the same time Suzie too displayed some improvisations that were mystifying. She did not arrive one Monday, and on the Tuesday rang in to say she wouldn’t be in that day as she was sick. The next week no message was received and she didn’t attend NACE again that term. The educational space at NACE was challenging for the players, and, except for Luke, it reflected in their poor attendance, an issue that is developed in Chapter 8 Going Places.

**Improvisations** are used in other ways. People use *signifying practices*, artefacts and narratives as signs, displaying to the world the identity or identities they consciously or unconsciously wish to proclaim. Clothing was a big part of the players signifying practices, and Luke and Nathan generally wouldn’t be seen without their caps. Luke faced a dilemma one day when he inadvertently left his cap in a classroom. When he went to retrieve it other players were assembling there and Luke’s fears prevented him from going to get it. He paced up and down the verandah outside, his hands twitching and his head bent. Then he glanced up and saw me sitting in the outdoor area, so asked me if I would get it for him. He wasn’t prepared to come with me. Nathan’s life was resplendent with improvisations as he struggled with independent living from a young age and had limited financial resources. Mick was away the time of my second interview with Nathan, and he wasn’t comfortable until he reached over and opened a NACE laptop, and when I didn’t object, he proceeded to play a card game and was then more relaxed as we chatted.

It was in the players’ narratives about their relationships, experiences and lives that **improvisations** were, for me, most poignant and puzzling. While Luke’s narratives flowed most freely during classes and rarely involved details of his family, it was in interviews that he told me about his father who died when Luke was nine and was buried in Neatsville cemetery. Luke said his father’s work involved them shifting to different rural areas so he had attended several different primary schools. But later he explained that his father was in World War II. *'He was a front line soldier and then he got promoted to light horse. I don’t know what that is.* ... [Interview 1]. I was a
bit puzzled about the time frames for this; it seemed highly unlikely that Luke’s father was in World 1 when ‘light horsemen’ were used, and just as unlikely that he was in World War 11. During Terry’s weeks at NACE he delighted in amusing any audience with his tales of adventure that sometimes flowed like a fiction novel. However he was earnest in his assurance that they were all true. The following one he shared with me during our first interview:

‘I read a book once, had to start at the back and read forward. It had Japanese pictures in it. It was a Japanese book. I stole it from the school, then I lost it. Then I found it again. I spilt Jim Bean on it. I was a bit drunk at the time. Then I tried to dry it by the heater and it caught on fire. Then I put the Jim Beam on it to put the fire out, but it went BOOF! (uses hands to show the explosion. While talking continues to swing on chair, push Nathan, play with the piece of wood, the photos.) I was 14 years old at the time. It was Japanese but written in our language. You had to read it from the back forward’

Consistently there were anomalies in narratives, and not just in Luke and Terry’s. It was challenging for me to visualise in reality some of the incidents the players told in their narratives, and to contextualise them from the perspective of the players. In seeking to make sense of their stories about their experiences I needed to detach myself from clock and chronological time as it is conventionally used. Exploring experiential and narrative time (Mishler 2006) and ‘social time’ (Tusting 2000) provided new insights into circumstances and possible explanations for the players’ accounts. The term ‘Frozen Moments’ captures the essence, for in the same way that the incidents were frozen in the memories of the players, many of the incidents became frozen in my being, demanding attention and resolution. I share my exploration of some of these incidents in Chapter 7.

While narratives and artefacts displayed aspects of the working of identities, the players’ actions also bore hallmarks of their identities. The players faced the limitations of powerful institutional discourses that served the interests
of mainstream students and encouraged the performance of culturally preferred identities (Blackburn 2004), not necessarily the ones the players adopted. Relationships within educational figured worlds are reliant on an historical hierarchy of powerful positions. The working of these relationships is complex because of ‘positional identities’ (Leander 2002a; Holland et al. 1998) that exist formally and implicitly, resulting in inequitable power relations. These roles played a significant role in the players’ narratives about their secondary school experiences, and continued to operate on a daily basis at NACE. While working with the data so impressed was I with the impact of the positional identities I introduced the format **TEACHER** and **student** to signify the powerful and submissive states, a format I still retain. These categories involve public ‘identities’ of values and expectations as part of the social regulatory device of ‘school’ (Freebody & Herschell 2000). It’s not just through direct instruction that the roles within these identities are established, but in cultural practices and ideologies, home directives and expectations of what being a good teacher or student entail. These identities are central to the discussion in Chapter 5, where Mick varies his speech to the situations (Holland et al. 1998; Gee 1996a) that unfold one morning at NACE.

Foundational to Janice’s figured world of teaching is the cultural model of the teacher as a powerful, authoritarian instructor who can and should discipline recalcitrant students (Gee 2000-2001). Her **TEACHER** identity displayed many features of traditional modes of schooling, where ‘teachers as holders of personal practical knowledge, knowledge which is embodied, personal, moral, experiential, professional and cultural’ (Huber, Huber & Clandinin 2004, p. 182) were authoritative, and often absolute. It was evident from the stories that Janice told in classes that her teacher identity was shaped by her experiences as a student. She perceived educational success as an accumulation of certificates which would ensure worthwhile fulltime employment and the means of material possessions. Some students at NACE also held the same educational values, beliefs and aspirations, and when their figured world of student engaged with Janice’s there was little conflict or dissent. However many times the players were expected to
accept administrative decisions they disagreed with, and to be submissive
listeners in the classes, a position the players were sometimes not
comfortable with. Generally the players were looking for positive learning
experiences, and not to be faced with the boredom and inactivity that had
plagued them during much of their secondary schooling. While sometimes
they accepted the practices, Terry argued with Janice one day that he could
listen without looking at her face, and while doing something else. Nathan
was less demonstrative and just quietly ignored Janice’s instructions when
they didn’t suit him to keep playing a computer game.

**Agency**, identified as ‘the ability to exert power’ (Blackburn 2004, p. 103)
is another aspect of a person’s identity at work in ways that a person
chooses. It’s used by young people in everyday actions; it creates no
problems when there are no conflicts. However agency becomes an issue
when it intercepts with powerful social and institutional discourses (Webb,
Schirato & Danaher 2002), when adolescents, by their behaviours or
questions, object to or defy systemic assumptions about schooling and
education. Unwittingly, and uninvited, the habitus, in forms of culturally
acceptable ways of being and doing (Rowsell & Pahl 2007), had made
demands on the lives of the players. Through the habitus schooling
reproduced the culture of the dominant group and those who possessed that
cultural capital of the culture were favoured (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes
1990). By demanding conservatism and complicity the habitus choked the
players’ individuality, quashed their creativity and thwarted their skills,
allowing them no space for meaningful engagement.

The players exerted their agency through a variety of techniques,
highlighting their resistance to institutional discourses that prevailed
through the dominant cultural model of education (Hillier & Rooksby
2002). At times they cut classes, were disruptive or disregarded written
assignments, creating conflict with teachers and school administrations.
Luke struggled with written work in classes; the lack of assistance coupled
with bullying led him to not attend. The school, however, had a solution for
this. ‘They bribed me,’ was his explanation. ‘In return for attending classes
they organized a personal trainer for me at the gym.’ This failed to address the underlying issues, and Luke’s agency was to quietly withdraw.

While often figured worlds provide stability, there are times when participants become dissatisfied with beliefs, relationships or practices within particular figured worlds. While participants may initiate change, if the action is not successful then a person may become a non-participant, and eventually leave. Creating or moving to new figured worlds is the fourth process of ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998). Mick and Nathan’s erratic attendance at NACE were typical behaviours of people on the fringe of a figured world. They were particularly excited the day they made their video for Rosemary, discussed in Chapter 6. This success and interest, framed within a positive relationship, is indicative of what retains participants in any figured world. Mick was totally engrossed and engaged when watching a student produced video about safe driving, and again excited with the possibility of including a simulated car crash in the class video. However, when his idea was thwarted his staying within the NACE figured world was uncertain.

Ultimately, for any individual, it is what is persuasive to that person that determines the development of their ideologies, and it is through struggles that ideologies are personally developed (Freedman & Ball 2004). The players, each in their own ways, sought interest over boredom, doing instead of inactivity; free choices against bullying, and relevant learning. In rejecting the current educational model, the players opted to stand against dominating social practices and institutional discourses, exerting agency, determination and resistance in the face of opposition (Blackburn 2004). While the players didn’t consciously decide to challenge the underpinning ideologies, they did recognise where their beliefs differed from the social practices and institutional discourses; they wanted to retain their own interests, life-styles and identities (Collins and Blot 2003). They did not lack passion, but chose not to adopt the interests, identities and life-style required for successful schooling. They had neither the ambition nor the skills to use their agency and power in any other way than to walk away.
from school (Blackburn 2004; Moore & Cunningham 2006) in pursuit of, what seemed to them, a more rewarding life.

Educational institutions are landscapes of ideologically privileged activities and relationships impregnated with power, history and meanings that unobtrusively impact on students. Australian secondary schools generally privilege an education based on a cultural model where literacy, curriculum and administrative systems are designed to promote a certain type of academic success and particular identities. The players’ narratives of their experiences at secondary schools and NACE, and what I witnessed at NACE, encapsulate their struggles against covert coercion, boredom and irrelevance; a ‘constrained space’ (Leander 2002c, n.p.) instead of an educational place engaging their creativity and skills.

There is no doubt that Janice and Rosemary, supported by other NACE staff, provided caring relationships for many of the players. At times they went to extraordinary lengths to assist one or other of the players, extending beyond the role of ‘teacher’. While caring relationships are desirable in education institutions for adolescents, of themselves they are not enough to bring effective education.

If effective student learning is to be valued, and education spaces developed into places where student outcomes are correlated to their needs, new approaches need to be utilised in the secondary and post secondary education institutions. A learning curriculum (Lave & Wenger 1991), with a student-centred pedagogy (Shor 1990) to ensure active participation of students in their learning (Ladwig & Gore 1998; Smyth, Hattam & Lawson 1998), also described as ‘deep learning’ (Gee 2003a; Li 2006), needs to be practised as ‘normal’ education. In such a learning space curriculum objectives, incorporating critical and cultural dimensions of literacy, need to integrate operational learning (Lankshear, Snyder & Green, 2000) utilising student produced texts through which the students’ ‘significant investment’ ensures their skills develop (Kamler & Comber 2005, p. 11).
Learning both involves and requires participation in something. Learning is motivated, as Kress (2003) argued, by a need to understand something, whether an act, a word, a sensory experience. Learning, however, makes a mark or leaves a residue on each person as people bring their histories of participation to bear on each new act or moment of participation (Moje & Lewis 2007). Engagement and learning went hand-in-hand for the student players, but their engagement didn’t comply with the prevalent cultural model so schools became spaces for them, and they sought places elsewhere.

This chapter has discussed the theoretical under-pinning of Storyscape. The next chapter, Chapter 3 Mapping Methodologies, discusses the methods employed for data collection, analysis and reporting of the findings.
Chapter 3 Mapping Methodologies

‘Critical perspectives on social institutions are often best obtained from exiles, that is, persons who leave those institutions’

(Fine & Rosenberg 1983, p. 257).

‘If as a wider community we honestly want more young people to stay at school longer, then we need to listen to those who are finding school most unconvincing’

(Smyth & Hattam 2004, p. 193).

Earlier in Storyscape the players and Neatsville Academy for Community Education (NACE) have been introduced. The theoretical foundations for Storyscape were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter of Storyscape contextualises the methods used for data collection, analysis and reporting. Intermingled with the academic discussion are sections where my own developing identity as a researcher is presented in association with the evolution of the research from the original research questions to the final concepts.
Storyscape evolved as I conceptualised theories alongside the narratives I heard and the experiences I witnessed of several adolescent students during one term at Neatsville Academy for Community Education (NACE). An important aspect of Storyscape is that narratives are partial, selective and sculptured, whether it’s the narratives I heard from the players, the ones I read at NACE, or the ones I present in Storyscape. Indeed all narratives are bounded by these qualities and the theory of this perspective is presented in a short while. Equally important are the significances of place and time. In Storyscape space is regarded as a physical, social or other arena where social practices determine the discourses, interactions and relationships within the space; in Storyscape these places are usually referred to as ‘figured worlds’ (Holland et al. 1998). Personal connections and involvement, and learning applied to life transform space into place. Time too took on a different concept as experiential or narrative time created new understandings with some of the players’ narratives and memories. These conceptualisations of space and place, and experiential and chronological time have been detailed in Chapter 2.

In this chapter I discuss how the research project was conceived, the principles that guided the planning, why improvisations evolved, the data collection and analysis, and reporting. Understanding something of my journey across Storyscape’s terrain and the exploration techniques deployed will assist in appreciating its objectives, perspectives and findings. From the conception of this research narratives were a central consideration as I sought to find out more about adolescent reading. However as I listened to and reflected upon the stories I heard from the players, I realised that what was more significant was the narrative aspect of stories; that what happened, the story, was affected by the narrating, the way the stories were presented (Eubanks 2004). From then on narratives became more than an aspect of literacy.

Narratives provide threads of continuity in life as they allow the past to have connections on a personal level, and also provide cohesion to the future (Bateson 1990). Human memory is narrative in nature, and so many
recollections are structured through narrative (Eubanks 2004). Brodkey’s (1996a) carefully staged and packaged memory of a childhood event instigated my research into how ‘staged’ might have been the memories the players had narrated, and to recognised them as partial, selective and sculptured. Partial as they are affected by time and reflection; memory will smooth out details (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a), meaning of events change and narrative time can replace chronological (Mishler 2006), and prevailing discourses can alter interpretations (Richardson 2005). Selective as the players’ unconscious desire to present agency or victimicy determined which events would be retrieved from memory (Bruner 1994; Neisser 1994), as the narratives would be culturally based (Barclay 1994) in structure and content, and the chronological sequence may be altered for evaluative purposes (Fivush & Reese 1992). Narratives are also sculptured as memories are intimately interwoven with feelings and reflect in improvisations (Holland & Leander 2004) that can be agency work (Urrieta 2004), they can undergo exaggeration (Bruner 1994), and they can be calming or stimulating (Barclay & Smith 1992), and this will affect the memory or narrating.

At the same time I was recognising how narratives were involved in identity work as the players narrated their lives. Text production and identity work happen simultaneously (Kamler 2001); identities are performed or modified through narrative writing (Merchant 2004), and reading narratives brings new interpretations and possibilities, alongside identity positive reinforcing (Sumara 2000). Initially narrative inquiry wasn’t a consideration, but as I interwove theories of narratives with the narratives in the data, the scope of the research broadened to include narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a; Merriam 1998), with an emphasis on the contextualisation and perspectives of narratives (Chase 2005; Richardson 1997, 2000).

During my time at NACE I made a conscious decision that my thesis would focus on the players, their narratives and experiences, and that my experiences as a student, teacher and neophyte researcher did not support
my aims for the project. Let me acknowledge here that high ‘objective’
standards are to be applauded and originally I planned for that ideal. But as
I recently edited drafts of my chapters I recognised that my original
position, while altruistic and relevant to other research, was a position that I
couldn’t sustain in this type of study.

During my time with the players and through my initial analysis, I was
aware of the ‘objectivity’ aim and consciously fought to retain an objective
position. Memories of my own emotionally
challenging secondary schooling kept colliding with
my observations of the players’ experiences. For
example, one morning Mick took a paper clip from
the video table and started rearranging its shape.
Suddenly I was mentally transmitted back years to
where as a 14 year old I took one as I hid in an old large wardrobe. I pushed
aside such experiences to remain focused on the players and the task at
hand. While theoretically the research project was established to maximise
objectivity and detachment, when I returned to the project after a prolonged
major illness, what started as a theoretical research space had subtly
changed, for while I consciously sought to remain objective and detached, I
could no longer separate myself from my humanity and what the players’
experienced.

In writing the Prelude and Interlude 1 I sought to present each of the
players as real people; I blended fragments of each character together. In
seeking to portray how emotionally challenging situations were, I melded
sections of narratives together into completeness. So what I have presented
in Storyscape is ultimately my versions of the players and situations created
through ‘an amalgam of raw data, real details’ (Clough 2002, p. 9) and my
interactions with them. The Luke I have presented is not the Luke that
attended NACE; it is my picture of him and his narratives, and as such is
partial, selective and sculptured; the same as for each of the players, the two
teachers, and NACE. This is not to say that I have not continually striven to
be objective and detached, especially in my analysis and writing, but to acknowledge that

‘despite the sterility of instruments, we never come innocent to a research task, or a situation of events; rather we situate those events not merely in the institutional meanings which our profession provides, but also constitute them as expressions of ourselves’ (Clough 2002, p. 8.)

In the later part of my research, as I theorised on how and why ‘space’ and ‘place’ were significantly different for the players, I realised that my research space had become a ‘place’ for me. As I reworked the frieze frames, my involvement was there in my responses to the players and their situations. The players’ experiences, narratives and the essence of their beings could no longer be separated from the theoretical indices and frames, and there was no way to avoid my humanity and how it impacted unconsciously on what I recorded, the lenses that affected my vision, and the ideas that infiltrated my analysis and writing. The invisible threads of a theoretical research space combined with the data were now embodied in my being as a place; a place from which to present the players through Storyscape.

For me it was important to understand the significance of the players’ narratives and behaviours from their perspectives, and to ascertain how culture was implicated in their educational experiences and identities. I wanted to learn about the symbolism of their choices and actions; what were they expressing through their agency: anger, satire, rejection or challenge (Geertz 1975)? From the outset it was imperative for me

‘to figure out what it is about school they are withdrawing from, resisting, and fighting. It means being receptive to students' interpretations of problems in the school...’ (Blackburn 2004, p.109).

I wanted to contextualise their experiences in ways that enabled a greater understanding of their values, beliefs and actions, and to do it in a non-judgmental way.
As I write my knowledge and understandings now are very different from what they were in the initial stages of this research, and this reflects in how I then defined the problem I wanted then to research, and how the research eventuated. The research questions established early in the study were:

- How might six 'at risk' students at a community based facility in eastern Victoria react to and interact with a range of narrative texts in and out of school?
- What is the relationship between these interactions and students' own sense of identity and issues of concern to them?

At that stage the term ‘at-risk’ encompassed adolescent students disconnected with contemporary secondary schooling. I then didn’t see the judgments in that term, and it was later discarded as discussed in Chapter 1 Introduction. I approached this research with concern for adolescent students, but I was especially interested in the reading aspect of literacy, and in identity. Once I met the players and experienced their education at NACE I realised that such a narrow area was too confining in seeking to understand the students and their experience; flexibility became important.

Clearly defining the problem and clarifying the issues to be researched (Yin, 1994), and reflecting about the research questions, and issues of student disengagement with school subjects, lead to the following more specific questions:

- What was happening to ‘at risk’ students in and out of school?
- Why were they interested in texts that I used, but not the ones generally used in schools?
- What is a fair and equitable education, and in what ways were some students being privileged over others?
- What are the educational, cultural or social practices affecting the lives of these students which impact on their identity?

Again these questions reflect my early naïve approach. But by regularly reviewing these questions from a variety of approaches I was able to identify the issues behind the educational condition of ‘at-riskness’ as the focus shifted to cultural practices and processes. My recognising the
cultural differences between the curriculum and pedagogies with those operating in the lives of the players, led me to investigate cultural models, a move not anticipated in the original research concepts.

For me the importance of **context** (Goodson and Sikes 2001) was crucial; I designed the research to provide opportunities for maximum contextualisation of the data, not treating incidents, comments and artefacts as isolated positions, but allowing for the interactive relationships within the players’ lives, perceptions, experiences, and historical and social contexts. I positioned narratives and identity formation in the contexts of lived experiences, discourses and social practices within figured and historical worlds. In building a contextualised understanding of experiences, the interpretative aspect of the research was important. I deliberately wanted to view knowledge not from a specific scientifically model, but building from an **inductive, theory generating, mode of inquiry** that allowed for multiple realities as constructed socially by individuals (Merriam 1998).

A **qualitative design** acknowledged my subjective positions, perceptions and biases, and those of the players (Merriam 1998). In particular a qualitative approach allowed this research to focus on the participants’ perceptions and how they made sense of experiences in their figured worlds in educational arenas. While I acknowledged the importance of **flexibility** in the planning stage, during the actual research project it was essential. The daily program and student population at NACE was different from what had been anticipated. Initially it was planned that I attend on Mondays and Wednesdays for the classes that were specifically for the youth. However once there Luke wasn’t in those classes and Suzie attended a class on Tuesdays, as well as the Monday and Wednesday classes. Janice thought Luke would suit my research and so it was decided that I would attend three mornings. Even though the youth program had the same aims, Government funding had made it expedient to have a different focus with courses. Instead of having six participants it was more suitable to have seven. On a day-to-day basis similar flexibility had to be maintained as students didn’t
arrive for interviews when expected, or arrived during a class observation time, or needed some time-out from the regular routines.

I was also able to incorporate richly descriptive concepts, where words and images convey practices, artefacts, and social interactions and relationships, all of which have been crucial to contextualising the data (Merriam 1998). Also ‘thick’ descriptions (Geertz 1975) could be utilised where the significance of a symbolic action could be acknowledged. So when Luke unexpectedly interrupted a class to ask Janice if they could have a drum set in the classroom, what was the significance of this? Or when Terry grabbed my camera and took photos of anything capturing his attention in the common area, and why did Nathan so strongly object to his photo being taken? These are examples of the constant interactions which I observed during the data collection time, and which created their own vortex of explanation-demanding puzzles.

A case study inquiry offered me an effective approach for examining contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, as it relied on multiple sources of evidence, was suitable for a range of data collection strategies including direct observation, interviews, informal conversations and participant artefacts (Yin 1994). As explanatory research it had an advantage in allowing for consideration of causal links, where interventions and events could be contextualised and illustrative components could be incorporated (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a; Yin 1994). Case study also allowed for incorporating narrative strategies in facilitating contextualising data and building narrative descriptions (Zeller 1995).

For me the process of discovery about the players and their identities, about education and about myself was important. Also important was the setting of boundaries for the research so that it was a ‘single unit’ (Merriam 1998) with limits set to the youth program for one term at one educational institute. This enabled sufficient data to be collected and analysed in depth, with consideration of a broad range of educational and cultural issues. Using this in-depth contextualised approach proved effective as it enable me
to have new insights into cultural processes, identity formation and identity as a lived practice, educational practices and values, and adolescent perspectives on learning and engagement.

It was expeditious for me to use participant observation as I wanted to understand educational experiences from the perspective of the students, and this approach allowed for a degree of ‘insider’ knowledge and practices with students and teachers, while maintaining a peripheral outsider observation focus (Ely et al. 1991; Merriam 1998; Yin 1994). For this strategy to work effectively it was necessary for me to establish and maintain a good rapport with the players and the teachers, to be sensitive to them, their programs, the NACE setting, while at the same time maintaining a neutral position. My neutrality in the eyes of the players was important so they could express their feelings without hesitancy. One factor that worked in my favour was that the players were used to adult ‘extras’; volunteer tutors were frequently in classes, and my presence seemed ordinary. However there were times when I had to consciously make decisions to not be aligned with the teachers and risk my neutrality in the eyes of the players. At times I had to judiciously decline ‘teacher’ tasks, and other times when I consciously decided where to sit in a classroom.

While the role of participant-observer had advantages of access to real-life educational experiences from an insider’s perspective, there was a disadvantage when time did not always permit sufficient notes on events (Yin 1994). On one occasion I took a student role in a language game when there were insufficient students and Janice was not willing to adjust her program, but it helped in keeping an ‘even keel’ on my presence at NACE, and that compensated for missing observations. Audio recordings did assist in this incident and in recall of many classes, but the advantages of the insider position, I felt, verified the choice as worthwhile.

While personal and professional interests formed the basis for the initial research project, the informal atmosphere at NACE allowed for an unobtrusive participant-observer position. There was not a strong student-
body identity in the classes; their ages varied, and they came from a range of situations. They were used to having adults around as students and helpers, and this assisted with my blending in to the community in an unobtrusive way. A friendly familiarity with the players resulted in comfortable interactions and semi-structured interviews. As I had no official status with NACE or any government agency, the players recognised my neutrality from educational officialdom, which gave them the freedom to be honest about their experiences at secondary schools and NACE. The artefacts recorded, copied and photographed represented the players’ lives in ways that were legitimate to them. The choice of participants was not a consideration as all eligible students were voluntary participants in the project.

Sometimes being a participant involved doing class activities like language games or art activities. At other times it involved being a ‘volunteer’ helper assisting students with writing, or getting photocopies done, or providing transport for excursions. The balance between observing and participating varied according to how the program eventuated each day. Continually allowances were made for the unexpected, and sensitive flexibility was essential for the smooth operation of the participant-observer role. There were times when participation had to be negotiated with observation, especially when some class activities were designed for groups and only two students arrived for the class. On one occasion my class observations were interrupted by the need for a student interview with Mick, who had arrived unexpectedly and there was no certainty about when he would return. Central to the observations of students, staff, the program, was noting and describing factual incidents, conversations and activities (Ely et al. 1991), not judging, seeking to alter or transform who and what was encountered. This position had to be handled delicately when Janice sought me as ‘professional’ wanting advice about her program.

The most crucial consideration in selecting a site for my project was to ensure that the opportunity for unhindered student voices and perceptions be available. There is a political dimension to student voice as research
methodology as dominant social vision has expunged opportunities for many students to have any real advocacy (Smyth and Hattam 2004). Schools, as social places, have implicit rules for who gets to speak and what gets to be said. In providing a place for adolescents to speak it was imperative to exclude, as far as possible, any covert restrictions on student opinions and expression that may be present through social power control measures. Another important issue was the value of getting information from adolescents who were ‘exiles’ from schools; adolescents who no longer attend school, whether from their own choice or that of school administration (Fine & Rosenberg 1983).

In the rural area where the research project was to be conducted, at the planning stage the local secondary schools were reticent to be involved. However there was a community college which conducted a youth program specifically designed for adolescents who were disengaged from secondary schooling. The administrators were interested in the research project, and the teachers in the youth section were pleased to be able to accommodate the research into one term. While the numbers and types of students differed each semester, staff members were certain that there would be sufficient interest from the students to have enough willing participants for the data collection for the project. The atmosphere at the college was very informal; no uniform, and rules minimal for safety, personal esteem and class functioning. Guidelines for courses were directed from government funding sources, but allowed for flexibility within curriculum areas. The college (NACE) had a government funded program aimed at re-engaging adolescents through alternative educational activities. This program provided the conditions that Yin (1994) identified as ideal for a case study research in a real-life situation, and had a suitable environment for collecting a range of data. Access to NACE and the relevant student population was possible with ethics clearances, transport and schedule of classes all being manageable.

The research project at NACE was scheduled for the second term. Usually a ten week term, a major international sporting event meant that all
educational schools and institutes in the state had the term reduced to 7 weeks. The relevant classes for the project were conducted on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings; however they were disrupted by NACE staff-development commitments, program changes, a public holiday, student non-attendance and late arrivals. In total days that classes were observed were: Mondays: 6, Tuesdays: 6, Wednesdays: 7.

A significant aspect of student voice being used for research was the provision of a space which allowed for young people to reveal what was real for them (Smyth and Hattam 2004). This meant there was a consciousness of the interests of the students and what they wanted to say about their educational experiences at secondary school and at the community college. Interview questions were ‘guidelines for inquiry’ which could be deviated from if participants desired. The flexibility in classes allowed for interviews to happen where and when it suited students. While I anticipated that snacks and drinks might be conducive for participants’ feeling easy, it was the provision of a lap-top computer which assisted most students to feel comfortable. My role as researcher was also generally easy to manage at this particular educational institute, at least from a student perspective, as a large number of volunteer tutors assisted students in classes, and in one-to-one instruction. The students were used to adults in classes; sometimes assisting students, sometimes playing the role of a student, or just helping with organisational matters such as photocopying.

I anticipated that the student participants, in being disengaged from mainstream schooling, may have uncommon attitudes to education, systematic attendance, and traditional study skills. Terms like ‘at-risk’ and ‘problematic’ were avoided as they presumed biases and were judgmental. This affected, for example, how the Student Plain Language Statement was written (Appendix 4), and how participants were spoken to. I also recognised that social, financial, mental and physical health concerns may also have been issues. Accordingly there was some flexibility in the number of students to be participants, the timing, conditions for and number of interviews, and provision for a permission form to be signed by a carer.
other than a parent. The choice of participants did not eventuate as a consideration as all eligible students were voluntary participants in the project. NACE, being a small non-government institution, was able to involve itself in aspects of care of students beyond which secondary schools usually offered in this region.

I treated the participants and the research with **integrity, honesty and respect**. The players and teachers were fully informed about the research and their voluntary, but valuable, participation in it. The research was conducted to ensure mutual respect, no coercion or manipulation, with privacy, self respect, confidentiality, and anonymity being assured at all times. The data too was treated with respect and honesty; hard questions were not relegated to the sidelines and dismissed, but issues were tackled by several approaches until resolutions emerged. Some of the most difficult issues have been transposed into *Chapter 7 Frozen Moments*.

The research project was approved by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee. The application ensured that all issues of coercion, and anonymity were understood and addressed. The decision to incorporate a procedure for students less than 18 years whose parents or guardians were not available for counter-signing permission forms was fortuitous. Some of the participants had no family interest or support, but provision had been made for support workers, or similar responsible people, to accept the responsibility. The participant forms were signed and countersigned, and are securely stored in a locked cabinet. All ethical issues regarding confidentiality, disclosure, and informed consent were maintained during the collecting of data, its analysis and reporting.

NACE, as an independent educational provider did not require any special ethics approval, and a letter to this effect was included with the ethics application to the university. NACE required that all the various ‘duty-of-care’ issues, harassments and bullying policies, and Occupational Health and Safety Work instructions, were complied with for the duration of the data collection.
There were several strategies that I employed to ensure that the research was dependable, and to validate the results. The first aspect of dependability was that I used multiple sources of data collection, to create a chain of evidence (Golafshani 2003; Yin, 1994). Narrative perspectives were incorporated into the amalgam of evidence analysed (Chase 2005).

Field notes were a major part of the collecting. Written records of observations and descriptions (Bigum et al. 1999; Ely et al. 1991) were made during classes, or straight after the classes or excursions. The use of an A4 spiral book for hand written notes had the advantage of my not being implicitly identified with teachers who used the large binders. Notes were made using improvised shorthand and symbols that served as reminders for expanding the notes. Time indicators were regularly made to assist with matching audio recording sections. Many of these notes were transcribed to digital format, and supplemented audio recording and cross-checked with it to enhance reliability. They captured feelings, attitudes, gestures, hunches that helped to build richer, more cohesive captions of the participants, and of the NACE youth program. An example of a field note transcript from May 24 which reads in part:

```
11:27  B n’p  weather map... circling ? north.... C’Aust  
      Na  computer... spell ck  dirty pants
11:40 Na  paint –pants
      B  pak papers rubbish-bin  
      cards –b’ shelf
      patience  cards-table
```

An inconspicuous pen-shaped audio digital recorder was used to capture the exactness of instructions, teacher–student interactions, and student conversations (Bigum et al. 1999; Ely et al. 1991). It captured voices effectively and allowed for ease of transcription and listening multiple times. Allowing the players to be familiar with the recorder helped it to be accepted as an everyday part of routines. The recorder proved an asset when voice recordings were needed for the video the Wednesday group was
composing. Use of the audio-recorder left me free to note activities, movements, body language and reactions. The digital recorder was very specific in the direction it was facing, and picked up voices well. It did not pick up peripheral conversations; an advantage when transcribing, however some possible data may have been missed, for example some comments between Nathan and Terry when playing computer games were unclear.

The time consuming task of transcribing the lessons was warranted by the detail contained. Audio recordings enabled close scrutiny of the actual dialogues and enabled details for consideration of incidents for frieze frames in the analysis and data chapters. In these transcripts italics are used to indicate speech, with bold and print size indicating a speech emphasis.

**Terry, be quiet for 5 minutes!’**

Terry was somewhat overcome with surprise, looked directly at Janice, his words frozen without a chance at life.

Terry: *Me?* He was too stunned to move or say anything else.

Janice: *Yes. I want you to be quiet for 5 minutes.*

No-one moved or spoke; everyone’s eyes and ears on the unusual scene.

**Artefacts** as material objects produced in people’s lives contain traces of ideas, feelings and historical materiality (Rowsell & Pahl 2007; Yin 1994). They are material evidence for investigating and seeking insights into the contexts and historical perspectives of the players’ lives, narratives and educational experiences. Artefacts are articles produced by participants, significant items they used (Knobel & Lankshear 1999; Yin 1994), or photographs of these things include teaching instructions, student work and handwriting, art works, dramatisations, clothing and food (Prosser 2011). The two examples below are typical of those taken. Photocopies were obtained of student written exercises, class worksheets, and newspaper articles used in class. Copies of two student video narratives were also collected.
Interviews were informal (Yin 1994) and sometimes used as purposeful conversations (Ely et al. 1991; Smyth & Hattam, 2004). They provided opportunities for dynamic social interaction because

‘[i]nterviewing is best understood as an interactional event in which members of a culture draw on and rebuild their shared cultural knowledge about how members-of-certain-kinds routinely speak in such settings...interview responses need to be treated as accounts rather than straight reports’ (Freebody 2003, p137).

The players were free to respond in ways that suited them, and ask questions at the same time. I was very careful during the interviews to respond in encouraging ways that didn’t impose any suggestions for answers (Freebody 2003). I had no preordained agenda for what I was seeking through the interviews, so it was easy to accept answers given even if they didn’t make sense to me. I had a list of guiding questions for initial interviews.

Positionality and the dynamics of power (Smyth & Hattam 2004) were issues I was aware of so I ensured that the players knew of my independence from NACE, the Education Department or any Government body. Times, places and conditions for interviews were chosen to suit the individual students around their NACE classes. The players were fascinated by the small digital recorder, and six of the participants were happy for interviews to be recorded. Nathan was very self-conscious about his voice problem and didn’t want it
used for his individual interviews, but didn’t mind its use when he was sitting in on an interview with another student. Mick said he felt important and empowered by a recording being made. I wondered if this empowerment resulted in elaboration of details in his answers; however the interview was short as an interruption curtailed its flow. This interruption is included as part of the frieze frame set in Chapter 5.

In planning for a more relaxed atmosphere in the interviews, I allowed for drinks or snacks. However during the second week I realised that for some of the players reading a newspaper, playing on a lap-top, or having a friend in for a combined interview proved the best ways for creating an atmosphere where they felt comfortable to talk freely, and the later interviews were more productive. During each interview a copy of the guiding questions was positioned so the participant could read them. I also made notes on this paper which the participant could read. Three participants took the opportunity to read my notes at the beginning of the first interview, but didn’t continue to read as they got involved with telling their narratives. Transcribing the interviews within the week of conducting them had two benefits. Firstly it was easier to match dialogue with any significant notes about reactions and responses. Secondly it enabled me to reflect on the answers and my research questions, and to revisit ideas or missing information I might want to get. This formed part of the ‘cyclic process of doing-thinking-doing’ (Ely et al. 1991, p. 59) and deductive processing assisting me in being less subjective (Eckett 1988; Grbich 2005).

The initial plan was for three interviews for each player; two informal ones followed by one where transcripts of the first two could be checked by the player. As I said earlier, flexibility was necessary at NACE, and the interviews were no exception. The interview planning suited Luke as his attendance was regular all term. However non-attendance of other players or late enrolment in the term limited interviews and meant that some transcripts were not checked by the players concerned. The interview room, detailed in Interlude 1, was used for two interviews before being abandoned; it may have hindered Luke and Bethany’s communication;
snacks or drinks could not expunge the effects of the physical conditions. While later interviews were more productive as the players knew me better, it was expedient to do some early in my time at NACE as particular students were in attendance. There was no guarantee that any of the students would ever be there. Nathan, Mick and Terry’s interviews became shared recounts of experiences and beliefs, and as such were more productive than formal interviews. Janice and Rosemary, the teachers who delivered the youth program, were very supportive of the research and the informal approach used. Both teachers were happy to have their interviews recorded, but declined to review the transcripts. There were also ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Knobel 1999) which I directed with questions about their ongoing concerns about their program, the funding requirements they had to work within, and the needs of the students. An example of sections of interview transcripts used in this Storyscape text:

**Dad’s on a farm. There were only three classrooms in the school nearby. All the classes were together, but divided into kindy, primary and secondary. Up there they’re not that bright. I was in year 7 and I was brighter than the year 12s and all**

However facial expressions, movements and similar observations are not italicised. (Appendix 5: a summary of who was interviewed, how many times and transcripts checked by interviewee.)

**Informal conversations** were identified as valuable data. However I was conscious of my privileged position to sometimes sensitive or personal information, and endeavoured to balance the purposes of the study while also being sensitive to the players’ lives (Bigum et al. 1999). There were four sustained staff discussions about ongoing concerns of their program and the needs of the students. There were several informal conversations with students, some recorded, some not. The students were most animated and talkative in informal, everyday situations such as in the common area before or after classes, during morning tea breaks, discussing newspaper articles out-side of class, or transporting them on excursions. Where
conversations were not recorded immediately after the event I made an audio recording and written notes; participants were aware that this would be done.

Six of the student participants and the staff participants were comfortable with being recorded at informal times out of classes. They soon got used to my walking around with the recorder hanging around my neck like a pendant. The exception was Nathan, the student self-conscious about his voice projection problem, whose attitude altered depending on the circumstances. When he was alone, for example before class reading the newspaper, he was reticent to have it on. However the arrival of any other person reduced the significance and he was happy for it to be used. Early on Nathan and I established a non-verbal means for him to indicate whether it was OK or not. Initially he always checked the recorder, but soon learnt that I followed his wishes. From midway through the data collection time Terry and Nathan were almost inseparable companions and that made it easier to have a more sustained use of the audio recorder. Another interruption was when the recorder was needed to support the group video production. But this was counteracted by seeing how expert Terry was with digital technology, downloading the software for the recorder, finding files and transferring them, altering settings between video equipment and recordings, and splicing the sections required into a seamless recording … all without oral or written instructions.

Post-interview or class audio reflection recordings made immediately after an event were important as they could reveal issues or observations that have been mentally observed or noted but not recorded (Grbich 2005). They are also valuable for recording immediate responses, hunches or questions that may be indicators for further interview questions, academic research or reminders, without the possibility of being forgotten. Some of the 18 audio recordings were made in my car, some the common area when no-one else was there. Generally they vary in length from one and a half minutes to 16 minutes, but average about 12 minutes. Sometimes these recordings held important materials gained from participants. For example
Nathan didn’t mind me having any information but he was very self-conscious about the audio recorder being used. There were times when I was driving & he chatted about his interests, life, and school experiences. It was a situation where notes could not be made, and may have been inappropriate anyway. However by memorising key ideas and words of Nathan’s, as soon as he left I was able to make audio recordings to substitute for notes.

Only significant parts of these recordings were transcribed into written text, but their storage on my computer enabled easy access to hear any sections as needed. The following is an example of the details possible through this process.

Research audio recording reflections May 8th 2:50 16:49 minutes
Transcribed August 1st
Today Bethany brought new student Yvette; girls similar in literacy and intelligence. Not distract each other with work. Example: girls working on writing down what knew about some occupations that interested them, then research facts to verify.
Yvette had down 3; photographer…
I was surprised that Bethany had professional basketballer. A very nice girl, but a big girl, lot of excess weight; was it now / later / dream? Might pursue this in an interview
3:02 (minutes into the recording) seating positions for using computers very different. Yvette has very straight back, eyes on screen, hands moving without strain. Bethany slouched over the table; initially computer close to her, then later further out; her still slouched. No pressure or talk in class re posture. Bethany has her own fingering, (watches keyboard) works OK. Yvette correct fingering probably learnt it, efficient touch-typist.

Reflective journal writing was an important part of my research as it consciously drew my attention to cultural assumptions and biases (Lincoln and Guba 1985). It provided space to acknowledge my position within the research, both professionally and personally, and to reflect feelings and hunches (Clough 2002). Frequent reflection was part of the cyclical process of doing–thinking–doing during the data collection (Ely et al. 1991), and journal writing was useful for this. I also found it useful for noticing
preconceived ideas, assumptions and biases, and limiting them as much as possible (Riessman 2002), especially in the presentation of players’ narratives. My reflective journaling assisted me to detach from emotional issues with the players, and assisted in my striving for a less subjective perspective. Reflection of some data during the collection period resulted in questions needing qualification, additional information needed, and clarified about artefacts. For example Luke, during his first interview, told me of his father’s position in the army during the war. Thinking about the details he gave led me to wonder about Luke’s perceptions. The second interview gave me an opportunity to clarify his beliefs.

During the data collection Lamb's (Ely et al. 1997) reference to 'research as "me-search"' appealed to me as an illustration of the personal requirements in this type of observations. She explains that

’[b]eing able to see the 'maze of many' truths requires an openness of mind, a willingness to confront one's own beliefs directly, and the strength of character and intellectual honesty to let go of cherished assumptions. This is yet another instance of the....need to discard stereotypes...’ (Ely et al. 1997, p. 131).

I found that some of my foundational assumptions were continually challenged by participants at NACE. I had to consciously refrain from imposing my ideas about what was ‘normal’, or ‘right’. I quickly learned to look at perspectives from other views. For example what priorities were important and why, and whether appearances, such as cleanliness and personal hygiene, were indicators of personal qualities.

My journal writing took two forms. A digital journal was kept during the data collection and the analysis periods. It was written several times each week after an observation session, or when issues arose from readings, notes or reflections. It was a place where I consciously considered myself ‘as[the] instrument through a personal dialogue about moments of victory, and disheartments, hunches, feelings, insights, assumptions, biases, and ongoing ideas about method... ’ (Ely et al. 1991, p. 6). The writing provided
a safe place where I could record my feelings, and then return to NACE with a clearer mind. The following is an example of the entries.

**June 5th** Next day reflection: This is an interesting incident for consideration with Holland’s *Identity in Practice* at work... my theory of what was perhaps happening.

Terry has a problem with authority (his own admission) and the way he talks about his experiences at school, with reading & enjoying books but not the assignments, I think he didn't enjoy the ‘authoritative teacher’ ‘submissive pupil’ relationship and bucked against it constantly. In this incident he was thoroughly enjoying being the focus of attention; laps that up like a thirsty dog does water. But I think it was part of his playing out, and reinforcing, this change of positionality. I think he deliberately (but maybe not consciously) moves out of the figured world of Teacher-pupil; and when the positionality is what he considers ‘safe’ he’s happy to be part of the relationship and interactions. There was at no time any anger, inequality, just a playful jostling of positions to see how things would operate in this new figured world he had entered.

In contrast to the above type of journal writing I kept a *morning pages* journal, hand-written first thing each morning. As a right-handed person, two A4 pages of left-hand writing each morning was a well established routine providing a place for brain-balancing and where unconsciously new perspectives could emerge. While many entries held no reflections about the research or data collection, many did and usually revealed implicit comparisons with what I was observing, and what I had experienced in the past. These were copied into digital text for ease of access. Following is an example of part of a transcribed ‘morning pages’ entry:

*Doing data collection continues to have its good and bad features. I’m getting more used to time being relevant and important and having to be away at certain times. But when I...*
During the data collection process I endeavoured to be aware of the impact of my presence in the college, its effect on participants, and the ripples caused (Ely et al. 1991). Even though I tried to blend in, I was conscious that Luke treated my presence as another interested adult and enjoyed making fun of me when he could. He didn’t care about the recorder being used, and in fact usually forgot that it was on. While my presence possibly had a positive impact for him, Bethany was self-conscious and, as she didn’t like being observed, many of my observations were surreptitious. She was much more relaxed when Yvette was with her but Yvette’s attendance wasn’t sustained. In class observations the other participants didn’t usually notice that I was there recording or observing them.

Additional resources were used to further strengthen the reliability of the research, used either during the transcription or the analysis stages. Documents were used to verify standards of certificates for NACE courses, funding policies, Occupation, Health and Safety requirements, and for approximating levels of writing in the literacy area. In using these documents I was aware that they were not bias free, and that their accuracy could only be assumed; however they provided guidelines for measuring or balancing data when it was applicable (Yin 1994). (Appendix 6 lists these).
Close scrutiny was paid in making transcripts (Riessman 2002) of audio recordings, and these were an asset in close analysis (Bigum et al. 1999) of observations, conversations, interviews, reflections and meetings. The following is typical of a transcript. The chronological time as well as the recording time were noted. ** * * indicates where the recording could not be deciphered. Brackets indicate the speaker.

| May 24 recording 10:49AM 6:38 minutes |
| 10:50 [Janice to Nathan] Are you alright? Want a drink of Milo? ** * * To be in the program really need to turn up on time ** * * only an hour left ** * * To be marked here ** * * I know you like Xxx and like money, to be able to get $ ** * * Glad you turned up, now needs to be earlier ** * * know what needs to be happening here ** * * to tick for attendance ** * * can’t tick when arrive at ten to eleven ** * * [Nathan] got to bed at 2AM [Janice ] ** * * [Nathan] woke up at 7, went back to sleep. Couldn’t help myself. Everyone was being noisy. 4:00 (minutes into the recording) |

Expanded notes were formed from combining field notes, transcripts and artefacts.

They recorded actual time as well as the time on recording, and dates and sources of data. This made it easier to check information during the analysis process. When I discussed field notes earlier I used this example:

| 11:27 B n’p weather map… circling ? north.... C’Aust Na computer… spell ck dirty pants |
| 11:40 Na paint–pants |
| B pak papers rubbish-bin cards –b’ shelf patience cards-table |

After Bethany left I collected the discarded newspaper she had been reading to include in the artefact collection; her markings were used as I compiled
the expanded notes. Originally this section of expanded notes included Nathan and Janice. I separated the notes concerning Bethany when I composed individual profiles on the players. The expanded note reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11:27 | Bethany reading today’s Herald Sun Newspaper  
       | circling places on weather map in newspaper  
       | significant to her personal history [Small Smoke and Quiet Place]  
       | Bethany doing Mind Game in newspaper  
       | reading newspaper re media and abortions |
| 11:40 | Bethany out of room; paint brushes out to wash  
       | Packing up papers etc. Boxes packed up.  
       | Rubbish in bin. Empty [paint water] cups.  
       | Bethany playing patience with cards on table  
       | Found the cards on the book shelf |

**Photographs** were sorted, copied and printed as needed. When a photo was relevant for two sections, for example literacy and a player profile, two copies were made.

The **first stage of my data analysis** involved **labelling and grouping** the data at a concrete level. I used a variety of methods (Merriam 1998; Miles & Huberman 1994; Yin 1994), utilising themes as they emerged; sometimes lists, other times tables and diagrams. Some themes, such as secondary school attendance, had an educational perspective (Stake 2005) others reflected disadvantaged and unemployed youth (Bogdan and Biklen 2003). Sometimes codes applied to all players and so templates were created.

At other times an issue would show with a player that I hadn’t noticed with the other players, necessitating rechecking of all players. In working towards categories that were exhaustive, mutually exclusive, reflecting what was in the data, and conceptually congruent (Merriam 1998), there were some times dilemmas about where data should be placed, and this required me to return to original documents to ascertain what was most significant. For example, when Luke suddenly said in class one day “Gambling is bad”, it seemed out of context. I needed to check if it was a financial comment, or
related to the class topic of the day, or his personal experiences or interests, to contextualise it and determine which category warranted its inclusion. Concrete and descriptive patterns emerged, and groupings and names used reflected what the data displayed. Some of the groups that emerged were attendance, clothing and personal care; food; education, and technology. Lists were compiled on individual players’ and additional lists of themes by dividing the data into theme sections and compiling notes from all the players.

Patterns within interviews, class observations and field notes were recognised; however pattern matching had its challenges in considering data that wasn’t in a recurring pattern. These were kept at the end of each file and frequently revisited; sometimes unexpected connections emerged, like the importance of birthdays and their celebration at NACE, which wasn’t originally recognised. During this process drawing out ‘meaning making’ chunks (Ely et al. 1991; Merriam 1998) provided the foundation for developing participants’ files compiled from different data sources. These provided the basis for writing a wide range of frieze frames, some of which were utilised in this thesis. These lists and texts proved very valuable in my post-illness reconnecting with the research. My reflective journal writing continued through this stage.

Through the second stage of my analysis I investigated explanatory or casual links or conditions, moving from the concrete to abstract categories and connections, to ensure all meaningful information is categorized appropriately (Ely et al. 1991). At this stage I took categories and represented them in matrix of categories, tables, frequency charts, concept maps, relational and consequential diagrams. The data was revisited and re-organised by alternate themes with different comparative tables. I was constantly reading, reflecting, creating tentative categories, and constantly checking the data and my analysis, (Miles & Huberman 1994), and using many sticky notes! Triangulation of analysis (Golafshani 2003; Yin 1994) was involved at this stage, so when an item was revealed in several data types it took precedence over items that occurred irregularly. This assisted
with recognising issues of importance, and which were peripheral, while also strengthening the reliability of the research. This exploration also enabled me to ponder on explanations, possible causes, and insights from descriptions, and some puzzles sent me exploring more theoretical ideas. Memory and improvisations were two such concepts that required more exploration both theoretically and within the data.

During this stage I applied various perspectives (Merriam, 1998) to the most prominent or recurring themes. For example I used the information on actual class attendance at NACE to create tables for each of the players, and viewed it from the imagined perspective of the players, their friends, the teachers at NACE, the local State Parliament member, and a social worker. Several chunks containing political comments or aspersions were also drawn into a table to ascertain links, and test perspectives. I also wrote a variety of personal profiles for each of the players and the teachers. Some were lengthy and included quotes and photos; others were shorter as I focused on crucial qualities. I also started grouping chunks according to themes, and test writing sections for snap-shots or frieze frames. Some were grouped for comparisons and differences, others for social processes and conditions, others focusing on education or literacy indicators. Some of these texts eventually became the frieze frames for this thesis.

Consideration of inferences and interpretations occurred during the third stage of analysis. To address external validly, while at the same time framing within theoretical propositions, I incorporated three analytical approaches: narrative analysis (Chase 2005; Riessman 2002), discourse analysis (Gee 1999) and thick descriptions (Bigum et al. 1999). Interwoven with these theories was the frame of identity in practice (Holland et al. 1998) to gain some in-depth understandings of the complexities of identity issues involved within specific educational situations. These strategies also ensured that, if desired, the outcomes could be tested through replication in other studies (Yin 1994).
The broad perspectives of narrative inquiry provided a useful means of viewing the overall pictures of players, their lives and educational experiences, and contextualising these with cultural considerations. I viewed the narratives not as factual accounts but rather as particular tellings of one’s experiences where there may be a breach between ideal and real, self and society (Clandinin and Connelly 2000b; Riessman 2002). This highlighted the need to view narratives not in chronological order, but by themes including shared cultural beliefs, values, imagery and history. The issues of voice, power, and representation were also significant during this analysis. It was during this work that I began to appreciate narratives as partial, selective and sculptured, as I discussed earlier in this chapter. Narratives do not contain historical truths, but rather are bound within social discourses and power relations which do not remain constant over time (Riessman 2002).

Discourse analysis guided the investigation of language and meanings, and the effects of cultural models on situated meanings (Gee 1999). I considered how language operates to simultaneously reflect reality as the way things are, and constructs it to be a certain way, with speech stresses, intonation, pitch and physical movement being involved in the process. Included also were the centripetal and centrifugal processes within language, and the range of 'authoritative' and 'innerly persuasive discourses' (Morson 2004). Interwoven with these principles were considerations of a three-dimensional inquiry space which includes questions of meaning and social significance, working with multiple readings to include interrogation of tensions and silences (Clandinin and Connelly 2000a).

My analysis of thick descriptions (Bigum et al. 1999) in the data examined for patterns of interactions, mindsets, discourses and social practices, and the effects of cultural models. The work also allowed for my created snapshots to be examined ensuring that portrayals aligned, as far as possible, with the meanings and intentions of the participants.
Reconnection texts and artefacts made during my recuperation assisted me to reconnect with the data. I created montages, textile works, cartoons, flow charts and new texts about the players, their narratives, literacies and experiences at NACE. The picture on the left was typical of the pictures that reminded me of something in the data, and I noted ideas and connections as I worked.

The piece on the right represented the interweave of theories in the research. These notes were checked with original data notes for correctness of details. The extensive coding notes, charts and texts made during the initial analysis were invaluable during this reconnection time.

Dependability has again been addressed in constructing this text. I ensured that there was a strong relationship between my conclusions and the data upon which they are drawn, and that what I have presented matches what is in the data (Merriam 1998), and that the players’ perspectives have been presented in a holistic interpretation of their intentions and what happened.

Chapters 2 and 3 have presented the theoretical perspectives of Storyscape. While incidents about the players have been referred to in these chapters, there are 5 chapters (Chapters 4 – 9) where issues and incidents about the players’ educational experiences have been examined in detail, with different aspects of identity being a focus in each chapter. The next chapter, Interlude 2 Explorations in Identity Enactment, introduces those chapters.
'There exists a huge variety of discourses, practices, concepts means, and modalities of the self. The question now is not so much whether the differences exist, but what they signify. At issue is the role of historical, social, and cultural phenomena in constituting the self'

(Holland et al. 1998 p. 20).

In *Storyscape* are the essences of the research conducted into the conditions, narratives and experiences of adolescent students not attending secondary schools. The data were collected during a term at Neatsville Academy for Community Education where I spent time with 7 student players and their two teachers. Janice, in enrolling the players for courses at NACE, took individual needs into account, so not all the players attended the same classes or days. Chapters 2 and 3 of Storyscape have presented the theoretical perspectives, and this section introduces the chapters involving detailed investigations of identity enactments.
Identity is considered as a flexible, dialogic composite plurality of many self-understandings, which are always forming and sometimes are contradictory (Gee 2006; Hall 1996; Holland et al. 1998; McLeod 2000). Identities are lived in and through social activities and practices (Alvermann et al. 2006). In Storyscape ‘identities in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) has been foundational to conceptualising identity formation and enactment. It has four parts or processes which are separated to enable discussion, but in individual lives the processes are intermingled.

What became evident during the data analysis using a variety of approaches was how saturated cultural practices were with ideologies, and the flow-on assumptions of what was ‘normal’. Also evident was how mainstream education was accepted as suitable all adolescents, yet how strong were the players’ objections to the prevalent educational discourses. Simultaneously ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) enabled me to understand the processes of identity in formation, adaptation and lived experiences. This identity process became like a transparent film that I automatically applied not just in this research, but also in everyday life.

The four parts of the identity process: figured worlds, positional identities, self-authoring and moving to new figured worlds, were frames that were used in some of the data analysis, and then they naturally evolved into chapters for this text; however the vortex of insistent puzzles kept demanding my attention, and so Frozen Moments was born. The next five chapters of Storyscape are situated within the four parts of ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998), with the addition of Chapter 7 where some of the anomalies are presented as frieze frames within Frozen Moments.

**Chapter 4 Literacy Spaces and Places** explores the literacies of Luke and Terry. Figured worlds, as social arenas, involve complex interweaving of relationships, discourses, identities and cultural practices. Through seven frieze frames the everyday literacies of these players are compared to those at use in their classes at NACE.
Chapter 5 Positional Coordinates investigates two of the positional identities that operate at NACE as an educational institution, those of TEACHER and student. They are explored through four frieze frames of incidents that happened one morning when Mick unexpectedly arrived at NACE.

Chapter 6 Making One’s Way discusses how self-authoring and narratives are involved in identity formation or thickening work. Three of the frieze frames present incidents concerning Luke in the self-authoring processes through signifying practices, inner conversations and semiotic mediation. Mick is again a focus through three frieze frames as he and Nathan make a narrative video; artefact materiality, performance and multimodality are considered through narratives being involved in identity work.

Chapter 7 Frozen Moments explores four of the anomalies that either occurred at NACE or were in narratives told by a player during my time there. Luke features in two of the frieze frames, while Terry and Nathan are in the other two.

Chapter 8 Going Places investigates some of the reasons why students decide to leave formal education sites such as school or NACE. Bethany and Yvette are presented in one of the frieze frames, Bethany by herself in another, while Terry and Mick both are in one.

Having contextualised the next several chapters, Storyscape now turns to the first of the identity enactment chapters, Chapter 4 Literacy Spaces and Places: Literacies in Figured Worlds.
‘To begin altering the patterns of adolescent literacy achievement, we must address the complex issues around adolescents’ access to and alienation from social institutions; their positions and identities within cultural fields of community life; and their engagement with texts and discourses of power’


This, the first of the chapters in the Explorations in Identity Enactment section in Storyscape, discuss the literacies of the players Luke and Terry. This Chapter 4 Literacy Spaces and Places investigates the everyday literacies of Luke and Terry. As both students have very different literacies and responses, my discussion is presented in separate sections. However, by way of introduction, and building from the presentation of literacy in Chapter 2, I have an introductory discussion before looking at the literacies of Luke and Terry.
Generally it was the experience of the players at their secondary schools that their knowledges, skills and interests bore no resemblance to what they were compelled to ‘learn’ in classes, despite the fact that learning is most effective when knowledge is built upon the cultural resources that students’ already possess (Aronowitz & Giroux 1991). Learning is situated within cultural forms and specific times (Holland et al. 1998), so what an individual experiences depends upon their social position and where they engage with others in formal education. None of the players were interested in traditional modes of writing, yet some of them when faced with a digital mode to progress through a game were only too happy to write. Five of the players enjoyed reading a variety of texts. The exceptions were Suzie, who struggled to decipher any meaning from commercial texts, and Mick, whose literacy skills remained unknown. What was obvious from the players’ narratives and from what I observed at NACE was that there was a **discrepancy** between the literacies that the players regularly used in the activities of their everyday lives (Barton 1991) and those that the schools and NACE sought to have them use.

In Storyscape there is a significant difference between **space** and **place**, as outlined early in Chapter 2. Spaces are those figured worlds where the players were required to be; learning within spaces was minimal as they were not actively engaged and preferred other identities than the ones valued in those spaces. In contrast places were where effective learning took place through the players’ engagement as their interests, skills and knowledges were utilised. While sometimes the difference between space and place is clear, the distinctions were not always observable, especially with Luke in the early days of my being at NACE.

Cultural lives are lived in ‘**figured worlds**’ (Holland et al. 1998) as discussed in Chapter 2. The situations presented in the frieze frames happened during Janice’s classes at NACE. Traditional educational curriculum, procedures and routines, established in pre-digital technologies, times and cultures and have little in common with the lives of contemporary students. Yet ‘...**schools today are often out of kilter with the contemporary**
*culture in which young people live outside of school*’ (Gee 2006, p. 168), and NACE was no exception. Students’ skills and knowledges are frequently disregarded (Smyth & Hattam 2004; Luke 2001), while students with alternative cultural experiences and learning styles encounter a range of ‘interactive troubles’ (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Knobel 1999).

**Literacy** is viewed in different ways, and at NACE the traditional view of literacy as testable, cognitive skills, predominated the courses and teaching - only to be expected when the college and staff were unconsciously entrenched in the prevalent cultural model of education. The college and teaching staff were bounded by cultural and political decisions and funding. They worked within these confines to bring what education they could to adolescents who were not in secondary school. Luke and Terry were in separate programs so didn’t have any classes together. Their everyday literacies were very different from each other’s, and different from those used in Janice’s classes at NACE. In this next section I discuss Luke’s literacies, framed around three frieze frames. Following that I examine Terry’s literacies where four frieze frames are utilized.

**Luke** has, he told me, been able to read from a young age. He talked about picture books and early reading both at home and primary school. This interested me as Janice said that he had difficulty reading. It seemed that Luke’s reading of the daily newspaper was specific to NACE; he gave no indication of newspapers in his home. The two state daily papers were freely available at NACE and before classes he regularly browsed the *Herald Sun* for articles or advertisements of interest, frequently drawing my attention to them. The pre-class and lunch times at NACE were times when Luke was in a **place** as he didn’t need to be forced to read; there were good things to read (Farber 1972). He had interests and needs to accommodate (Alvermann, Moore & Conley 1987) through newspapers, magazines, comics, web pages and digital texts. Luke constantly displayed a thirst for knowledge, frequently asking questions about politics, current events and, as an election approached, voting procedures. He was taught about democracy not by having taking part in a democratic style of education (Shor 1996) but by diagrams and worksheet.
The three frieze frames in this section happened during one class and followed on in the order they are presented. Before class that day Luke was enthralled by a newspaper report of an asteroid anticipated to land on earth in the future. He showed me the article; he showed class members; he tried to show Janice when she arrived. However Janice was preoccupied with her own agenda; the work to be done in class that day.

F F 1 Luke: Student interest and knowledges subjugated.

Luke brought newspapers to the classroom 20 minutes before the start of class. He left most on the table near the door, taking a Herald-Sun to read. He was fascinated by a predicted asteroid explosion, and trying to imagine the actual size of it, wondering what the actual impact would be. He flicked through to other pages, but kept returning to this article. Janice arrived and, while she explained the instructions for the day’s task, Luke continued to ponder the asteroid article, working out how old he would be when it landed, and how much physical space it would cover. He seemed not to be listening; when Janice asked him a question he knew the answer.

The students were given a worksheet with typed instructions for the task. The next frieze frame has the instructions.

Luke announced: I’ve already got mine. His hands were on the asteroid story.

Janice: No you can’t use that. It’s not about a famous person.

Luke: But this is interesting.

Janice: But it’s not a famous person.

Luke: But why can’t I do this one?

Janice: Because NASA isn’t a person.
Luke: *This is going to be hard... I can’t find anything...*

While this discussion was going on Luke carefully ripped out the asteroid article and put it on the desk where he could see it. He also got some game-character cards out of his bag and put them next to the article, chatting to a fellow student about swapping some. Then suddenly he blurted out *‘I know who’s famous, the Prime Minister’.*

There are several issues to notice about this incident. Firstly there is **no place for accommodating student interests** which usually allow them to build on their existing knowledge (Moll et al. 1992; Smyth & Hattam 2004). While this example is only one incident, it is indicative of a trend which the players grumbled about, that school was so boring. They wanted to do something *interesting*. The assumption on the part of many educators that student interests can’t be utilised in schooling is part of the cultural model of education prevalent in Neatsville.

The second issue is that there is **no negotiation**; the teacher’s position is authoritative, and her decision final and not to be questioned. It is evident, from what Luke told me, that he has a history of his interests and knowledges being regarded as insignificant in and to his education. His secondary school experiences only served to confirm that, as a student, his value and opinions were also insignificant in what I signify as the **TEACHER – student** positionality. This significant relationship is discussed further in the next chapter. It was my observation that at NACE Luke’s figured world as a student often clashed with Janice’s figured world of teaching, and her expectations of student practices. She was dismissive of his knowledge; listening but not respecting it. She tolerated his interests but never took them seriously enough to incorporate them into any competency assessments. Luke’s interest were disregarded, replaced by a category significant to Janice’s figured world, and imposed on him as she has a position of power. Luke, while muttering objections to this, did not strongly object. He had learnt that having student objections ignored is an accepted cultural practice within educational institutions. The first of Luke’s
strategies was to start with someone famous and then to find something about him.

The cultural model of education that Janice operates within, and the classroom-based discourses and signifying practices she employs, result in a ‘top-down’ teaching frame, which reflects a narrow interpretation of the processes of teaching and learning (Cummins 2002, p. 124). There is no alternative offered for this task; indeed for all the tasks I observed in Janice’s classes there were no alternatives. Reorganising a course to enable students to learn skills working from their individual needs, interests, and abilities (Alvermann, Moore & Conley 1987) was not within Janice’s figured world of teaching adolescent learners. Her limited training did not assist her to see such opportunities, nor to appreciate why they may be used. Worksheets are part of the ‘social goods’ (Gee 1999) of the cultural model of literacy Janice is entrenched in, and also form part of the ‘social practices of schooling’ (Sheehy 2004) that she believes to be effective education.

Having situated the use of a worksheet within the educational discourses operating in Janice’s classroom, let’s look at the written instructions.

**F F 2 Luke: School literacies - the worksheet instructions**

Find an article about a famous person; it could be a footballer, singer or an actor.

Quote the Heading used, the date of the paper and the page number of the article.

Summarise the article in the space below.

Is the report positive or negative? Does it make you like this person better, feel less respect for them or leave you not caring either way? Explain your answer briefly.

Give some examples of how celebrities influence others. Is this a good or a bad thing?

Closed, factual questions, accompanied by practices of teacher talking and students listening, are a feature of top-down teaching (Cummins 2002), and
this worksheet structure follows this approach. While there are 5 instructions numbered, allowing for sub-questions there are 8 tasks for students, and only one does not require a direct answer. The teachers’ authoritative position implicitly guides the frame and use of the worksheet, where the question-answer pattern of schooling is established, maintained, and reinforced (Freebody Ludwig & Gunn 1995). This pattern begins in homes where educational practices and roles are introduced to reinforce the school approach, and to assist students to adopt the roles specified by the culture. As a result of literacy being regarded as a cognitive activity, the reading and writing skills involved to complete the task focus on the ‘code breaking’ (Freebody & Luke 2003) aspects of encoding and decoding. This type of literacy does not guarantee that critical thinking, as a part of meaning making (Knobel 1999), is taught as a natural part of literacy. Janice, in refusing to consider the use of NASA, has made no allowance for the corporations and institutions to be considered, yet their influence is widespread and significant.

Worksheets form part of the literacy practices that are historically contingent and culturally specific, and which privilege and celebrate texts and practices relevant to mainstream education. These texts and practice maintain the disadvantage of minority groups (Comber & Nixon 1999). It is the social meaning attached to worksheets, as a successful educational practice, that inevitably privilege the most powerful group (Alvermann 2001). And it is the privileging of this, and similar literate practices, and their associated behaviours and knowledges, which puts some students 'at risk' (Comber & Nixon 1999). Indeed schools are implicit in producing a ‘great divide’ between students with privileged literacies and those without (Gee 2006, p. 183).

The students in this NACE class, while enrolled in a pre-employment course, are also enrolled in a general certificate course at level one. At this beginning-literacy level students would not be expected to read newspaper reports unassisted, and could be expected to have difficulty with words and concepts that Janice had used in the worksheet. For example the words:
article, quote, Heading, in the space below, positive, negative, explain, briefly, celebrities and influence would be challenging. Even ‘famous’ could be interpreted differently, for marginalized people not only perceive, but also interpret incidents and issues from a different reality than that experienced by the dominant or mainstream group (Collins 1995).

In setting this task Janice gave minimal instructions, but stressed she wanted details of influences in their own lives or the lives of others. She didn’t give reasons why referencing details were to be included. The course the students were doing was focused on employment skills, and it seemed to me that referencing skills were not some that would assist Luke in getting employment, but could assist with getting a formal year level certificate, for example Year 10, if his work were to that standard. This frieze frame is also used in Chapter 7 Frozen Moments, where anomalies are discussed.

**F F 3 Luke: ‘Doing school’**

Luke drew horns and tail on the picture of the Prime Minister.

He wrote that the Prime Minister was helping our environment. The article reported that Chief Minister, along with the USA President, was at the Australian Embassy in Washington planting ‘two skinny saplings’ trees which were from cuttings from an historic American elm tree.

Luke worked independently choosing to write minimal words… one word when three would be a better description, and dot-points for the summary. He talked to himself, to neighbours, to himself, then wrote a word or two. He read his cards, the asteroid article, then wrote a couple more words. He talked some more; no-one responded. Out of his bag he got a small folder and read about the RAAF. Suddenly it was nearly morning-tea time and he
had to have the task finished. In the forty-five minutes of class work time he took less than 5 minutes to complete the worksheet.

Worksheets form part of ‘doing school’ activities (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Knobel 1999) and the social practices of schooling (Sheehy 2004). Many ‘doing school’ tasks are designed to keep students gainfully employed. When considering literacy from a socio-cultural base, it is fundamental to remember that

‘[e]very literacy is learnt in a specific context in a particular way and the models of learning, the social relationships of student to teacher are models of socialization and acculturation. The student is learning cultural models of identity and personhood, not just how to decode script or to write a particular hand’ (Street 1995, p. 141).

As a NACE student Luke was expected not just to complete class work but to be the sort of student that complied with the cultural model, to take on the identity and be a member of the figured world of Janice’s classes at NACE. In Luke’s figured world of the NACE classroom he faces different experiences from those of his everyday literacies. There are different underlying ideologies creating tensions between Janice’s figured world of teaching authority and power on the one hand, and Luke’s need for individual resistance and creativity on the other (Holland et al. 1998; Street 1995). While outwardly Luke appeared initiated into the membership of NACE figured world of classes, there were indicators that this was only skin deep, and that he didn’t value the same beliefs and results. His response to the class worksheet activity reflected some interesting coping strategies.

During the lesson Janice never checked to see if Luke was focused on the set task. **Disinterested** with the task, the classroom is a space of learning in which Luke has little interest or involvement. While Luke was physically in class his mind wandered, and he retreated to his own place of learning quietly keeping occupied with things that interest him; the asteroid article, his cards, and his Personal Portfolio. Suddenly Janice announces there’s
only five minutes to complete the task, and the strategies that he has learnt for getting work done quickly is employed. He doesn’t read the article, but using what’s in the picture he makes assumptions about connections, brings forward his knowledge, and using dot-points gets the work completed in less than five minutes. His answers were not supported by what the article reported. Janice collected the papers, glanced at Luke’s work, saw all sections had something written in them, marked his assessment task as ‘completed’, but didn’t read his answers and check that he had correctly interpreted the article or the worksheet instructions. In terms of class work he has ‘wasted’ forty minutes, a situation that has gone noticed in other places (Dewey 1897; Hull & Schultz 2002a; Knobel 1999). Perhaps because he hadn’t been disruptive it’s not noticed.

While this frieze frame presents only one literacy event (Blackburn 2002-03; Heath 1983), my observations and discussions at NACE indicate that this event is not an isolated incident, but an example of a sociocultural literacy practice carrying over from established secondary school practices. While Luke enjoyed reading for his own purposes, he avoided reading class texts. NACE, in consideration of Luke’s perceived literacy needs, had organised a literacy tutor for him one afternoon a week. During my time at NACE the tutor never arrived. The work she did with Luke wasn’t connected in any way with any of his class work. When I asked about what sort of work was done Luke just shrugged and muttered ‘Just school stuff. The tutor organises the work and keeps it for next time’. He could not recall her name.

In contrast to this disinterest and lack of enthusiasm, Luke spoke enthusiastically about his time at Convenience Cove Specialist School. He was in foster care at the time and doing Year 8. Every Thursday his class went on an excursion, and on Friday they wrote about their experiences. Luke showed me a CD he had of this work, where photographs, maps and diagrams (all his own work) were incorporated within his reports. While I was at NACE he decided to create a scrap book of things going on in the world so, in future years, he could show his children. In class there had been
a discussion about a local time-capsule soon to be opened. This sparked Luke’s idea for recording historical events. In his out-of-class time he pasted information about DVDs, the latest Play Stations, pictures of planes and some news items like the asteroid one. Out of class Luke used writing independently four times when it suited his own purposes, for example when making ‘car wash’ advertising when he wanted to earn some cash.

During class time Luke used forty minutes in non-class activities; this was not an isolated incident. He frequently sighed with boredom and occupied himself with other activities, then utilised his well developed strategies for getting work done quickly to satisfy Janice. His experiences at secondary school left him too frightened to risk getting into trouble at NACE so he was quiet with his frustrations. While classes occupied some of his time at NACE he had plenty of unsupervised time in which he pursued his personal interests. Luke appeared to function as a full member of the figured world of Janice’s class, yet there were indicators that he was still developing his beliefs, assessing his situation and the relevance of the work, and perhaps wondering about other possibilities. His art work was perhaps the greatest indicator of this indecisiveness, and I consider a piece of his art work in the discussion in Frozen Moments.

Terry arrived at NACE midway through my time there, but his presence was immediately evident as his vivacious personality created daily challenges in unexpected ways, taking over conversations and equipment, challenging teachers with verbal games, and disrupting classes with his comical antics. He said he came to NACE to break the boredom of his days and with hopes of gaining skills to get employment when he was older. However at the same time he was upfront about his difficulty with authority and being told what to do, and with being bored with usual school work. He was confident about his literacy skills, although he said he didn’t enjoy writing. He wrote minimally; only once in class, and twice for his own purposes, both with computer games. He found the figured world of NACE classes limiting; twice he reluctantly read class work, suggesting to me that for him NACE classes may have been educational space. In comparison he
read 19 different types of texts for his own purposes, none of them valued by the teachers. He was fascinated by interesting snippets on the notice boards and in newspapers, freely sharing his delight and amazement with anyone about. It seemed that his general knowledge was gained from computer games, and he accepted the information as ‘true’, absorbing messages like a sponge.

There has been an assumption that the power offered by school literacies would be the same for all students (Comber & Nixon 1999). However viewing literacy as a sociocultural practice (Barton & Hamilton 2000; Gee 1996a; Luke 2001; Moje & O’Brien 2001) means that student literacy empowerment differs with the literacies they experience both in school and in their everyday lives. The literacies in Terry’s figured worlds are vastly different from those of Luke, providing an informative contrast. Terry’s figured worlds, with digital and paper based literacy practices, is fast moving and ever changing (Gee 1999; Eckersley 1994). But it is not just the literacies that differ. Terry’s figured worlds are constantly forming and transforming as his ‘what if’ philosophy drives his activities and passions (Holland et al. 1998). I wondered if NACE would be a little slow for him and wouldn’t engage him. Within Terry’s figured worlds his literacy practices were established on a cultural model of interest, speed, accuracy, and interaction. Janice’s practices, however, had developed through a cultural model of traditional ways of learning, study and success. My discussion is woven around four frieze frames which happened one morning, with an additional postscript in the forth frame that happened a few days later, the next time Terry was at NACE.

The Wednesday multi-media class was in the process of making a video aimed at a teenage audience. The aim, established by the teachers prior to Terry’s arrival, was to show teenagers the necessity of studying for their Learners’ License before they went for their driver’s test. Below are some of Janice’s notes for the video. The character sketches, a scenario and some visual effects had been established before the class where these frieze frames took place. An excursion to Main Roads had been organised to assist
with understanding the process of obtaining a ‘Learners’ and the knowledge needed. Terry and Nathan were in my vehicle travelling to and from the visit, and Terry had entertained us with realistic impersonations of a DJ, a parking attendant, a sales man and a truck driver during those times. The frieze frames take place in the classroom usually used for this class.

**F F 4 Terry: Personal literacies - computer writing and hand writing**

The Wednesday multimedia class had just returned from an excursion to Main Roads, where they had been through the computer test for the Learners’ License. Janice was preparing scripts for the video voiceovers. Terry was working on a lap-top computer trying to find voice files, and not wanting any assistance from Rosemary.

Terry: *Look out then.... What’s the title? I’ll look...* his fingers expertly working the keys, his eyes never faltering from the screen.

Terry: *I’ll find it. OK.... Who the hell’s Syd?*

Rosemary: *He’s a take-off of you. He’s the character you are doing the voice-overs for.*

Suddenly Terry leans back in the chair, his hands triumphantly in the air: *Told you I’d find it.*

Terry moves from the computer, towards another student. However he was stopped by Rosemary directing him to his chair and to the writing on the board.

Rosemary: *You can do this* [copy Syd’s script from the board.]

Terry: *But I hate writing.*

Rosemary: *We all hate writing. TOUGH.*
Terry sat at his desk and started singing ‘Are you happy…’.

Terry: Well, I don’t know. He started writing with the pen Rosemary had given him.

I don’t like this pen. He tossed the pen on another table and took my (much more expensive) pen.

Terry: This pen’s nice.

Terry’s comment ‘But I hate writing’ belies his actions. It is situationally specific (Gee 1999) for his use of the computer indicates that he doesn’t hate writing. As he engaged in the online fantasy world of ‘Rune Scape’, he typed many instructions and replies. He explained that he hated handwriting because his muscles get tired. Watching him copy the script, what he really meant when he said ‘But I hate writing’, was a combination of ‘I hate being told what to do. I hate sitting quietly when I can listen, talk to myself, wiggle, play a computer game, converse with friends AND write all at the same time. I hate writing someone else’s words. I hate writing with a cheap pen.’ He commented that it was OK writing with a smooth pen that slid over the paper easily. His highly developed touch-typing skills were part of his portfolio of personal attributes he had learnt out of school (Gee 2006). With Janice’s teaching the classroom was a space for Terry, a space where he was confined to do tasks that didn’t engage or interest him.

**Literacy is more than a set of technical skills** used to achieve educational competencies (Street & Street 1991). The meanings and uses of literacy are reflective of community values and practices. Terry exemplifies the limitations of using standardised reading tests as a measure of students’ literacy achievements (Alvermann et al. 2006) as he was bored and didn’t bother to complete them. This brings into question the legitimacy of results and performances judged by this type of testing. Testing does not equate with learning (Comber 1997) and does not always test what a learner knows or their capacity to learn (Kalantzis & Cope 2005). While Terry didn’t achieve on any educational literacy test, it was obvious that he had the
necessary literacy skills to operate very effectively within his everyday figured worlds, including commercial transactions.

Terry’s literacies were not confined to paper texts. As an avid on-line games player he gained knowledge of historical events and read a wide range of text, visual and aural literacies (Alvermann 2002; Beavis & Charles 2005). The digital world was Terry’s place of engagement where his learning excelled. Digital technologies, while being incorporated in the Wednesday morning class, were regarded by Janice as secondary learning tools to the ‘real learning’ that the students needed to do. Rosemary’s implementation of the technologies was situated more from the experiences of the students; however in practical terms the use of them was limited by financial and course constraints, and Janice’s program. Ever developing interactive digital technologies were a natural part of Terry’s figured worlds, and learning them was easy for him as they were part of his culture (Cope & Kalantzis 1987) transforming spaces into places. His forms of literacy were multiple (New London Group 2000) and varied, representational of different youth cultures (Street 2000). But his interpretations were limited. Without exposure to think in ways differently from what he does (Freebody & Hornibrook 2005; Luke 2001; Moje 2000) he was positioned to accept texts’ perspectives and media representations as ‘the way things are’ (Freebody & Luke 1999).

Terry’s ‘That’s Nixon man, the worst president ever’, in response to an image on the computer, and his ‘Joan of Arc! She was the greatest woman ever’, were indicative of the effects of digital games on his beliefs. New digital technologies can provide an opportunity for students who have been failed by conventional schooling to be re-engaged (Freebody & Hornibrook 2005; O’Brien, Springs & Stith 2001). But for Terry schooling did not offer the opportunity for engagement through these media, nor for critical consciousness as an integral component of his literacy and broader education (hooks, 1994, 2003; Freebody & Hornibrook 2005; Moje, 2000; Shor 1996). Having the capacity to read and write is only ‘a thin representation’ of what it means to be 'literate' (Knobel 1999, p. 198); to
participate fully as citizens a person needs to be able to **critically examine**
texts, presentations and issues.

Students need to explore their own social and cultural beliefs, to examine
whose point of view is being put forward (Marsh & Stolle 2006) implicitly
and explicitly, and what power relationships are being exploited or
expunged (Bean & Moni 2003). Popular culture is not immune from these
biases, and adolescents need to be aware of this (Giroux & Simon 1989) and
how their beliefs can be affected by their influences. Terry is typical of the
players having no awareness of other viewpoints in texts, news items,
games and films. Joan of Arc may have been the greatest woman ever, but
Terry isn’t aware that this is only one point of view presented for a
particular reason.

Within Terry’s figured worlds was a variety of literacy practices and
operational styles developed from the values in the cultural models in his
every-day world. At NACE he encountered educational practices very
similar to those he encountered in his short time at secondary school. In this
next section I examine some of the differences, and the implications of them
in general educational pedagogy.

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**F F 5 Terry: Writing procedure - interactive trouble**

Students in the class were involved in doing a variety of activities for the
video production. Janice was continuing to write the four voice-over scripts
on the board. She stood poised at the whiteboard.

Janice: **OK. We need these scripts so they can be learnt and recorded. So far we’ve only got one done.**

There was no response for a short while.

Then, mid conversation with a student, Terry suggested:

*Too cool. Wishes he was as cool as me.*

Janice ignored this suggestion.

Janice: **Nathan, what do you think?**
Nathan ignored to question.

Janice: *I think we need a sexy voice.*

There was no response to this suggestion.

Terry had been at NACE a couple of weeks at the time of this class. In informal times Janice, Rosemary, some of the students and I had witnessed Terry successfully impersonate doctors, lawyers, TV personalities, singers, news presenters and numerous other characters. The impact of these performances did not affect Janice’s approach to getting Terry to do a voice-over of Syd for the video. The *process for getting a video made* was well established in her mind, and to get the script right it had to be produced as a text, learnt by the character and then recorded.

NACE, as an educational provider, was not a neutral institution; it had the implicit goal of developing students’ values, skills and knowledges (Heath 1983) to conform to the predominant cultural model. But it wasn’t just in the macro-structural issues of qualifications and funding that different values, skills and knowledges were evident. The behaviours and settings of literacy events (Blackburn 2002-03) also evidenced these differences. Janice’s assumption that the way to produce a good voice-over was to rote learn, or read, a written script presented *interactive trouble* (Smyth & Hattam 2004; Wexler 1992) for Terry. There’s a range of pedagogies which frequently present problems to students, especially students with cultures different from the mainstream one (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995). Most of them applied to Terry, but in this instance it was the procedure for the voice-over. Was the challenge due to his unconscious discord with being told what to do; or was it the natural actor’s preference for improvisation; or was it being in a position where he wasn’t ‘the controller”? Probably it was a combination of all these. The space was confining and conflictual for him.

Another pedagogy which caused the players to present as ‘problems’ was Janice’s refusal to acknowledge the students’ interest and involvement, not just in the script this day, but in various procedures in this Wednesday class.
The **players’ apathy**, evident in their slow responses, was in marked contrast to the excitement, challenge and spontaneity of Mick and Nathan’s video made independently, which is discussed in Chapter 6. Rosemary, who would have had a different approach, was in this class to assist with digital or technical tasks; it was Janice’s class, program and decisions. ‘[L]anguage has a shaping effect on power. It is about kids performing their identities moment-to-moment, shifting and destabilizing classroom power relations’ (Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007, p. 7). In this instance it’s not a verbal language, but the **language of ignoring and silence** that is powerful. It’s Janice asserting her power and domination through silence, rejection and body language (Hattam et al. 1999), while the students likewise are asserting their agency. It’s the performance that is imbued with meaning. From a different view, it’s the Bakhtinian anticipated response; the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener (Morris 1994). It’s the interpretation process, each participant in the frieze frame involved in ‘evaluation, the supplying of unstated premises, the invocation of social rules signalled by contextual cues, and, finally, the formation, at least in inner speech, of a reply’ (Morson 1989, p. 64).

Terry’s response ‘Too cool. Wishes he was as cool as me’ was an ‘olive branch’ held out to break the tension of Janice’s position and the weighty silence smothering the atmosphere. Terry’s response was not in line with his usual buoyant character and words. He ‘broke-the-code’ (Knobel 1999) and anticipated what it was that Janice was seeking. He refrained from smart comments and noisy characterisation, and played the character ‘Syd’ as he thought Janice would want. But there is an interesting turn-around here. Janice is positioning herself as knowledgeable about youth culture language. Her suggestion of ‘sexy’ is meant to engage the students. However it just destabilises the meaning of the text (Alvermann, Hagood & Williams 2001) as her perceptions are not in line with what the students anticipate she wants. For Terry, on the other hand, it works in reverse as he anticipates a conservative response, instead of his usual
colloquial one, but Janice had moved from her conservative cultural model to an idealised youth one.

These are examples of how people vary their mode of speaking according to the social practices and languages (Gee 1996a) in particular figured worlds. Likewise cultural groups also have their own styles of speech. Social and historical forces affect the language of particular cultural groups reflecting their conceptualizing, understanding, and evaluation of the world (Morson & Emerson 1990). In this next section I examine implications of language usage in this classroom situation. The frieze frame continues straight on from the previous one.

**F F 6 Terry: Script composition - language to suit occasions**

Janice: *What about ‘Stupid dickhead’.*
There was no immediate response to her suggestions.
Nathan then said: *You should have read the book.*
Terry then responded to Janice: *I’m too cool for that.*
Then quietly to Nathan: *Wishes he was as cool as me.*
Nathan responded to Terry: *He’d be a smart arse and not talk to me.*
   *I know how to drive.*

Syd’s voice-over text on board:

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I failed my Ls test.
I didn't study the book.
That's for nerds.
I'm too cool for that.
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Speech, for Bakhtin, invokes two voices; the voice of the person speaking, and that of the social language through which words are being ventriloquated. The situation in the above example is more complex as
Janice assumes two roles, that of the teacher, and that of the character, Syd. Skinner, Valsiner & Holland (2001) explain how

‘[a]n author in her utterances also creates or assumes one or more positions in a cultural or figured world. In weaving a narrative, the speaker places herself, her listeners, and those who populate the narrative in certain positions and relations that are figured by larger cultural meanings or worlds. Narratives may reinforce or challenge these figured worlds’ (n.p.).

As Janice anticipates a figured world for the character Syd, she uses language which she believes would be natural in Syd’s figured world as a young adolescent non-conformist student. This confuses the students for two reasons.

Firstly, NACE has very explicit expectations for the types of unacceptable language within their institution. In talking to young people at NACE Janice frequently disregards these instructions, inserting colloquial language, believing it will help students better relate to her. The students seemed not to realise that she was anticipating Syd’s language. For them she was a teacher breaking the rules. The second reason for their confusion was that in their figured worlds ‘stupid dickhead’ did not feature in their everyday peer-group language. They anticipated more explicit words, but would not use them for a character in NACE class work.

Complex interactions of this sort serve to illustrate the history of language (Morson & Emerson 1990). Warren (2004) explains that ‘Bakhtin makes very clear that language is complex, constantly changing and charged with a sense of competition, even battle’ (p. 1). The centrifugal forces reflect individualisation and disunity (Morris 1994) with, in this case, the importation of explicit words and expressions in speech where they would not usually be used. These changes serve to destabilise the language, in the same way as does youthful disregard for some forms in Standard English they are expected to use in class work, but they see no logical reason for.
On the other hand, Bakhtin stresses that the centripetal force is indispensable to guaranteeing a **mutual understanding** (Dyson 2003; Morris 1994). Within the frieze frame there are enough stable words and phrases in the discourse for the meaning to be understood by the students. For example ‘I’m too cool for that’ could be analysed to have different meanings to do with snow, water, clothing or hot-air balloon travel. But within the situated context of the class lesson students understand the message of peer acceptance and adherence to behaviours acceptable within that figured world.

Nathan’s use of ‘smart arse’ is interesting. He is most particular about his language and manners, and I never heard him use any explicit language in the presence of staff.

‘Students’ colloquial language is often peppered with swear words - a language which is not part of the curriculum, but is the language form that many students use in their everyday “talk”’ (Hattam et. al, 1999, p. 15).

On this occasion Nathan spoke so that Janice could not hear the comment. He appeared to be assuming both his own and Syd’s positions in their figured worlds, combining his vernacular speech with what he would anticipate would be Syd’s everyday speech (Skinner, Valsiner & Holland 2001).

‘Central to Bakhtin’s theory of language is the social constitution of utterance, with the speaker’s utterance embedding prior and anticipated utterances’ (Lewis & Ketter 2004, p. 119). These prior and anticipated **utterances** are not only the immediate ones, which help understand the ‘situated meaning’ (Gee 1999), but also the historical and institutional uses of utterances that compose their history (Morson & Emerson 1990). Words and utterances are imbued with past meanings located in social languages which dialogically engage with speakers to create their unique intentions (Skinner Valsiner & Holland 2001). ‘You should have read the book’ has, for Nathan specific historical and personal meanings which impact on his statement giving it multiple meanings.
Chronotope is Bakhtin’s term for specifying time–space coordinates, which convey to the reader or listener the social and historical dimensions of a situation (Danow 1991). Holland et al. (1998) describe it as ‘Bakhtin’s phrase for the definitive figured world of a form of discourse’ (p. 209). Figured worlds are specific to social conditions, identities and practices, and as such have much in common with Bakhtin’s chronotope. The meaning of Nathan’s utterance ‘You should have read the book’ is dependent upon the chronotope or figured world to which it applies. Being involved in a reciprocal dialogical relationship, Nathan provided the reply that he anticipated Janice would be happy with. But there are shades of less obvious meanings. Morris (1994) explains

‘[t]he living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousnesses around the given object of an utterance, it cannot help but become an active participant in social dialogue … Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other … ’ (Morris 1994, p. 76).

There are four ‘dialogic threads’ that I consider in understanding this utterance of Nathan’s. Firstly, Nathan’s statement may have been in response to Janice’s overt use of explicit language where, Nathan considered it inappropriate. Within Nathan’s figured world at NACE, and his interactions with Janice in and out of classrooms, she was very influential. He was particular about his language, and constantly pulled Mick up if he used inappropriate words within Janice’s hearing. He could have been saying to her ‘you should have read the book of NACE rules about language’.

Secondly, it could have been an automatic repetition of Janice’s words to him. In the weeks during the research project Janice spent time with Nathan reprimanding him, counselling or encouraging him, advising him. But in all the discussions I heard, and from what he told me, he was constantly
hearing: ‘You should have…’ from Janice. You should have got up earlier. You should have eaten breakfast. You should have attended. The list could go on. He could have been mimicking her, and enjoying the role reversal.

The third meaning that Nathan’s statement ‘You should have read the book’ could have had was as an objection to being told what to do. Nathan had lived independently for about four years at the time of the research. He was used to making his own decisions, he usually didn’t blame others if he made a poor judgment, and he didn’t like being told what or how to do things. At NACE there were not many opportunities for him to voice any objections; this could have been one.

The fourth possible meaning to Nathan’s statement is another objection. Nathan learnt best by watching, listening and doing, not by reading. He first learnt driving rules as a youngster, in the car with his parents. He passed his Learner’s licence eleven months before the video was being made, and had never read the book. For him it was conceivable, and easy, to learn other ways. For Nathan reading was for pleasure and for gaining information, not for learning. Understanding comes in the response. While there was no verbal response from Janice, she altered Nathan’s suggestion for the text, which is considered in the next section. And Nathan? He closed the lid on the lap-top computer and dismissed himself from the matter by picking up the tripod for the video camera, and commencing to assemble it.

The text I failed my LS test holds a pertinent phrase: ‘I’ve failed’. Janice, as the writer, unconsciously implants her own perspectives on the text. The students, in discussing the results of doing the computerised practice test, never used the word ‘failed’, but acknowledged that getting 75% out of a possible 100% was a good effort; this was Syd’s mock-up effort. It wasn’t high enough to get a Learners’ Licence. There is an evaluative cultural model (Gee, 1999) used in this instance. The prevalent use of ‘I’ve failed’ in contemporary society is an example of a relatively stable utterance that corresponds to specific social conditions which present ‘specific points of
view on the world’ (McCallum 1999, p. 11). It focuses on the short-comings and failure of students, and holds them responsible for these conditions (Thomson 2002; Smyth, et al. 2000a). It places value on results and not on effort, and doesn’t allow for any other meaning of ‘success’, which exacerbates the plight of non-conformist students (Smyth & Hattam 2004). The Government, supported by community beliefs, perpetuates this value through funding mechanisms. NACE and Janice hold the same values, with Certificates and achievements in particular pathways given priority over participation, progress and individual learning or interests. However it’s a cultural model that some young people are rejecting, as will be seen in Chapter 8, Going Places.

Nathan’s suggestion to write ‘You should have read the book’ was interpreted by Janice as I didn’t study the book. This represents another example of an evaluative cultural model, which focuses on the community perceived value of ‘study’. It’s also an example of how the supposed ‘non-neutrality’ of words has been used in a subtle way to convey Janice’s own intentions (Danow 1991) on the character, supplanting the student suggestion.

The cultural models within Terry’s figured worlds differ greatly from those of Janice’s, and highlight observable behaviour difficulties. As mentioned in frieze frame 2 ‘the procedure’, Terry’s behaviours in the NACE classroom frequently could have been classified as ‘interactive trouble’, as the example of the voice-over would illustrate. He was having procedural difficulties with Janice’s wording, and the writing expectations for the activity, the types of difficulties that establish the classroom as a space of learning not a place. These are but the outward signs of the cultural differences; differences in values of academic education, interpretation of what ‘success’ is, what is considered a ‘normal’ way to learn, to express, and many other issues.

Rosemary’s figured world is also very different from Janice’s and Terry’s; her approach is different. This next frieze frame illustrates how different
things can be for an adolescent learner when a teacher operates differently as her figured world corresponds more closely with that of the student. The first part of the frame takes place in the same class as the previous frame, only a short time later in the lesson. For Terry it is the last class for the week. The second section, Postscript, is an informal, impromptu activity that occurred a few days later, the next time Terry was at NACE. This frieze frame is used again in chapter 8, but with slightly different information as the analysis varies.

F F 7 Terry’s Response: learning styles – appropriate teaching (student voice prevails)

Terry, script in hand, went outside with Rosemary to record Syd’s voice-over. He tried reading the script but stumbled with the words. On the second attempt the words lost their clarity, and the lack of spaces made the recording hard to decipher. The third was not much better.

Terry: *I don’t like the recorder.*

Rosemary: *Well pretend it’s not there.*

Terry: *I don’t like pretending.* He screwed it up and tossed it at the bin.

Rosemary: *You do it all the time, like when you take-off Dr Phil.*

Terry: *But that’s different. I don’t like listening to my own voice.*

It was lunchtime; Terry wasn’t the only one ready for a break. Rosemary’s plans to combine the voice-overs with the visuals that weekend disintegrated.

Postscript

Mid-morning Monday, in the common area, there was a lap-top computer on the table. Terry arrived and was happy to sit chatting to me, busy on the computer while he did so. Rosemary joined us. Terry did two impersonations of television personalities. The discussion turned to Syd’s voiceover. Terry did an impromptu of Syd’s script. Rosemary held up the audio recorder and asked if she could turn it on. Terry nodded. After a bit more discussion and bantering Terry did an improved version of the script, using his ideas, words, and altering his voice tones. He loved the attention
and laughter at his antics. By then he had really taken on the character, and he stopped typing as he kidded around, pretending to be driving, then crashing a car.

Terry: *I failed my Ls test that I went for today.*

*I didn’t study the book. That’s for nerds.*

*I’m too cool for that.*

*You’re doing 75 kph in a 60 zone.*

Rosemary, playing the part of Elliot, Syd’s older brother: *Yeah well there’s a big truck up my arse.*

Terry: *Yeah, well watch what you’re doing. There, there’s a kerb!*

Rosemary’s relationship with Terry is casual, respectful, with fun and humour. She takes time to joke with him; they sing along the same lines of films and songs. But Terry cannot handle the procedure for making the recording. He lacks the schooling ‘mainstream cultural experiences’ (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995, p. 267) of script performance. His *I don’t like pretending* is really talking about pretending that this style of learning and recording matters and will be successful. Terry’s whole life seemed to be a long line of pretences, from his fantasy reading and his on-line activities, to his ignoring official law-enforcement warnings, but these ‘pretendings’ were not the same as the recording session; they were part of his inbuilt, automatic coping mechanism where becoming another character was part of the game of life. The procedural, experiential and relational problems evident on Wednesday were not present on Monday morning; different context, approach, relationship, and result.

In the context of Terry and Rosemary’s relationship, it was a natural progression for the voice-over recording to take place the way it did. Rosemary, using Terry’s cultural experiences and resources to accommodate his socially situated practices (Tatum 2006), seized the opportunity to use Terry’s own style for producing a script and recording of a character. Frequently young people avoid, resist or reject academic pursuits from boredom and lack of their interests. By combining students’
knowledges, interests, and skills with their cultural resources, Rosemary was able to work more effectively with Terry and other students rather than against them (Blackburn 2004). But there were times when her approach was constrained by her supporting role in Janice’s class.

**Identities are formed** at the intersection of texts, including media texts, contexts and persons (Anderson 2002; Street & Street 1991). Much of Terry’s visible identity reflects his preoccupation with television. He does not act and speak like the personalities, he ‘becomes’ them, taking on the persona, and in a natural way presents as that person. It is part of his agency work; it puts him in control much the same way as he has control in the online games. His failure to produce a character recording was, in part, the same agency at work. He couldn’t pretend or act something that wasn’t ‘real’ to him; he wasn’t, in the first instance, able to become the character. Agency isn’t something young people need to be taught (Blackburn 2004); they use their agency in all manner of ways. Terry’s inability to produce a recording was his agency at work; his recognising that something wasn’t working and his instinct to withdraw from it. Fortunately for Janice, intent on a ‘good’ video artefact, the incident was without trauma and Terry happily returned to NACE. Placed in an informal situation he was able to take on Syd’s persona, implement his own dialogue, and play along with his brother Elliot (alias Rosemary) in making a suitable voice-over.

Luke and Terry each employed a **wide range of literacies** in their everyday worlds. Prior to coming to NACE both Luke and Terry had experienced educational spaces where they were bored, disengaged and so frustrated they decided to seek learning elsewhere. In the figured world of NACE classes they encountered other literacies and practices which presented them both with challenges. But the situations were challenging for reasons additional to literacy texts and practices, for figured worlds are arenas of complex relationships, discourses, histories and practices. In the next chapter positional identities are examined, while in further chapters other aspects of the processes of ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) are examined.
Chapter 5 Positioning Coordinates

Positional identities

‘The ways in which identities are negotiated in schools and classrooms reflect the pattern of power relations in the broader society and educators’ role definitions with respect to these power relations’


**Storyscape** is an account of several adolescents’ narratives about and experiences as students in secondary schools and Neatsville Academy of Community Education (NACE). In Chapters 2 and 3 I detailed my theoretical underpinnings for the research, interweaving the texts with examples of the participants, whom I call players. My investigation into identity formation and as lived experience had been framed in *Identity in Practice* (Holland et al. 1998) as the continuum is lived in social contexts. In Storyscape **space** is treated as a figured world where an adolescent has superficial relationships, interest and minimal or nil motivation. **Place** is where an adolescent is engaged in formal or informal learning in a meaningful way. Each of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8 focuses on one aspect of the process, while Chapter 7 discusses Frozen Moments, anomalies in the narratives or lives of some of the players. This Chapter 5 focuses on how **positional identities** involving power and status are negotiated.
Figured worlds are conceived as social arenas where an individual relates to particular people, situations or artefacts within a particular cultural environment. They are not stable, but mould and blend to people’s changing interests. There can be confusion, conflicts and contradictions within a figured world (Holland et al. 1998). As complex social spaces figured worlds involve a range of relationships, some of which involve implicit positional identities. These can be harmonious, but sometimes are conflictual as ‘day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, difference and entitlemen,t social affiliation and distance - with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 128) are configured.

People’s intimate beliefs and values are foundational to any figured world that a person moves into, remains in or transforms to their needs. Within youth figured worlds, young people need a place to develop relationships that support their chosen identifications (Moje 2004). Mick found no such place at secondary school. The cultural model of student privileged at secondary schools did not suit Mick. Secondary school, as a localised figured world, displayed and promoted their own ‘value laden qualities’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 128), many of which were disdainful to Mick; qualities like conformity and respectful silent submission. Mick valued honesty and opinions; he did not function well in the mornings and was more comfortable in sloppy shirts and torn jeans than the required uniform. He wanted to study motor mechanics but the class was full and he missed out. By mid year 10 he was tired of the hassles of trying to do subjects he didn’t enjoy, and of constantly being told what when and how to do things. He found no reason to stay. At NACE he encountered many of the same demands which then reflected in his haphazard attendance. The four frieze frames in this chapter happen on the same day, in the order they are presented, but with time lapses in between.

I decided not to use the ‘official’ interview room for an interview with Mick and Nathan, seeking a more inviting, relaxed and friendly area. Janice offered her office which was on the side of the common area. She was
teaching at the time, and no other staff were utilising the area, so I decided it would suit if Mick and Nathan had no objections. I had met Mick the previous week when he and Nathan made their video, and we had our first interview. On this day he arrived laughing, and sharing a smoke and bottle of coke with Nathan. As he walked into the common area he stubbed out his cigarette, and held out his greasy hand as he met me in the doorway.

Margaret: Hello Mick, how are you? Hi Nathan
Margaret: It was great. Come on in. You guys want a coffee or something?
Mick: Nah we’ve got this.
Mick playfully jostled Nathan for the nearly empty coke bottle.

Janice was busy teaching all morning, so I had accepted her offer to use her office for the interview as there were no other people in the office area. Mick and Nathan, on their previous attendance at NACE, had seemed at ease in Janice’s office. Nathan was clean. Mick’s hair and clothes were unkempt; he reeked of poor hygiene but was pleased meet me; his clothes looked like he’d slept in them, which he probably had. He smiled when I complimented them on the video. As we entered the office

Mick: Hey, I’ll use Janice’s chair.

Man is this comfortable.

He manoeuvred it in front of the computer, and indicated that I should take the less comfortable one at the other desk, but close to him. Nathan brought in a third chair.

Mick: You go there Na.

Mick, swivelling on Janice’s chair, pointed to where he wanted Nathan to sit.
How material spaces within figured worlds are experienced and understood depends on the **positionality** of people relative to figured world. The **social and cultural identities** operating within figured worlds offer both possibilities and problems for youth as they try to navigate and make spaces of power for themselves (Moje 2004). Mick was comfortable with the space that being a research participant offered him, and found Janice’s office area opening new possibilities for him as she was absent.

What was valued in **Mick’s cultural world** was, in part, evidenced in his personal hygiene and clothes; it seemed that there was a deliberate attempt to disrupt the normative. The status and social capital in his everyday figured world did not reflect the social norms. Mick’s socially configured space (Leander 2004a) of the informal interview for research was still fairly unfamiliar in his social practices and provided an opportunity for new identity practices. Although the physically space intersected that of Janice’s figured world, we anticipated that it would not be a problem and Mick affirmed that the area was fine. Relational identities are publicly performed through perceptible signs that are not always conscious (Holland et al. 1998), and Mick displayed this when he took the commanding position in the seating arrangements, and was very quick to take Janice’s chair, a symbolic gesture, I would suggest, of his sense of worth and significance, and an opportunity to do something that Janice might disapprove of if she was there.

**People vary their ways of speaking** according to the social situations they are in (Gee 1996a; Holland et al. 1998; Scollon & Scollon 1981) and their identities in each situation. There was mutual respect and internalised understandings in his and Nathan’s friendship, and it showed in their easy speech and acceptance of Mick as the leader. Mick was polite, and during our initial informal minutes he was enjoying his command of this new figured world where he and his experiences and opinions were valued. The context of the interview allowed him to speak openly, and he was aware of my neutrality. When relationships are encountered within a new figured world there are not always social practices, discourses, or individual
experiences to guide the development. Such was the case for Mick when we first met for an interview. In that instance the positional identities were more nebulous and transitory. With this interview he probably viewed his position as interviewee as more significant than mine as interviewer, so my being directed to the less comfortable chair, and Nathan to go and get one, probably signalled his self-importance for this occasion. From the beginning of this interview his confidence was stronger, his voice firmer and his chatter more decisive than previously.

However in the next frieze frame the situation is very different as we witness long established institutional identities of TEACHER and student operating. Historically these identities have been firmly entrenched in the cultural model of education prevalent in Neatsville. They are public ‘identities’ with signifying practices reflecting values and expectations as part of the social regulatory device of ‘school’ (Freebody & Herschell 2000). It’s not just through direct classroom instruction that the roles of these identities are established, but in social practices and ideologies, and home directives and expectations of what being a good OR successful TEACHER or student entail.

Foundational to Janice’s figured world of teacher is the cultural model of the teacher as a powerful, authoritarian instructor who can and should discipline recalcitrant students (Gee 2000-2001). Her TEACHER identity in and out of the classroom displayed many features of traditional modes of schooling, where ‘teachers as holders of personal practical knowledge, knowledge which is embodied, personal, moral, experiential, professional and cultural’ (Huber, Huber & Clandinin 2004, p. 182) were authoritative, and often absolute. It was evident from the stories that Janice told in classes that her teacher identity was shaped by her personal school experiences as a student. She perceived educational success as an accumulation of certificates which would ensure worthwhile fulltime employment and the means of material possessions. Many students at NACE also held the same educational values, beliefs and aspirations, and when their figured world of student engaged with Janice’s there was little conflict or dissent.
However there are times when there’s a mismatch between home and school values (Smyth & Hattam 2004) and tensions occur when the cultural histories, experiences and assumptions of a teacher are different from the class students (Huber, Huber & Clandinin 2004). If these tensions are not recognised and negotiated, then conflicts erupt, sometimes in unexpected times or ways, as in this example with Janice and Mick. Mick’s cultural knowledge, his everyday life contexts and his identity revolved around meaningful learning, negotiated dialogic relationship often involving mechanical knowledge and situations. The ‘interlappings’ of Mick’s knowledges, contexts and identity with Janice’s, vital for teacher – student relationships and classroom learning, did not happen (Huber, Huber & Clandinin 2004). Without these connections gaps and conflicts eventuate in classroom interactions, and so with Janice’s classes they result as a space for Mick.

**Mick’s figured world** as an adolescent student was undergoing transformations. At secondary school, he told me, he rebelled against the institutional identity of a student as academic, conformist, compliant, and submissive (Freebody & Herschell 2000), preferring to keep his individualism and opportunities to speak. At NACE some of his figured worlds were unsettling for him as he experienced different meanings of teacher, student and educational opportunities. With Rosemary as teacher, and Mick as adolescent student, he was afforded respect and equality in the relationship and learning situations. However, as Mick explained in his interview ‘she (Janice) was worse than the secondary school teachers, only except she doesn’t give detentions’. In this frieze frame we see institutional identities at work. It is situated straight on from the previous frieze frame.
Mick and I had just finished the preliminaries when Janice arrived unannounced. She stood in the doorway, arms folded. It was not time for a class break, and this was an unforeseen interruption. Janice, taking a step inside the office, then placed her right hand firmly on the back of the chair Mick was seated on.

Janice: *I’ve found somebody!*

*My God! Is this a figment of my imagination?*

*So, are you guys going to turn up occasionally or what?*

Mick’s shoulders and head dropped noticeably. He and Nathan’s replies were muffled.

Janice: *Eh. What!*

*’Cos what happens is ...*

*You know. ...*

*You can’t sleep all your life.*

*You know...*

*You actually have to DO something.*

Mick next response was muffled. Using his legs he tried to swivel the seat of the chair, but Janice had moved closer to the chair and stopped any movement. He placed his feet on the chair supports. Janice continued to berate the lads about doing something, and asked what they were doing with their time. Nathan glanced at Mick, but Mick didn’t notice. Nathan’s response was muffled, but clear enough for Janice to respond:

*Working on cars. That’s paying you big bucks, is it?*

**Later, six minutes into the altercation:**

Janice: *Centrelink rang me last week about Nathan’s attendance.*

Nathan’s gaze shifted from the floor to Janice; he looked startled.

Mick glanced at the computer next to me, then back at the floor.

Janice: *I won’t lie about your attendance. I might tell a little white lie.*
So Mick, don’t ask me to lie for you.

I won’t lie for anyone.

It’s not worth my risking my job

Mick immediately lifted his head, and clearly interjected: ‘All I said was “Did you be nice?” I didn’t say would you lie.’

Janice was stumped by this, admitted that he was asking a tricky question, and evaded the answer.

Janice’s tirade continued in a similar fashion for twelve and a half minutes. It was almost exclusively directed to Mick.

Identity, in this thesis, is viewed as the kind of person one exhibits through artefacts, behaviours and relationships at a particular intersection of place and time. In this frieze frame Janice exhibited traits of the dialogic institutional identity of TEACHER as she assumed the right to interrupt the research interview, and to attempt to direct Mick’s life. Identity, being neither stable nor unified, can change midway in an interaction (Gee 2000-2001; Hall 1996; Moje 2004; Wortham 2001), as Mick exhibits in this example. His transformation was instantaneous as he assumed the reciprocal identity of student; he adopted a position of relative silence, his head bent maintaining a view of the floor.

People vary their styles of speech according to the social situations they are in (Gee, 1996; Holland et al. 1998; Scollon & Scollon 1981). As part of Janice’s TEACHER identity, she spoke in a very commanding tone, which varied from her social every-day use. Analysing the content of Janice’s speech by situational meanings, cultural models and discourses (Gee 1999), the words that she uses do not express what she is actually ‘saying’. The word meanings are altered and compounded by Janice’s TEACHER identity. When her words are framed in teacher discourses, located in the context of Janice’s teaching expectations at NACE, and placed alongside the cultural model of education she operates within, their actual intent is changed. This effect is compounded by Mick’s student lack of motivation
and attendance in Janice’s classes. Some examples of what I believe Janice is actually saying and the meanings she is portraying, are

‘So, are you guys going to turn up occasionally or what?’
Mick and Nathan were actually there for the second time in three weeks, being 2 out of a possible 6 attendances. Her question was rhetorical; Mick and Nathan’s attendance was occasional. What Janice was meaning was: ‘I want you to turn up to all my classes. Why aren’t you here?’ Logically Janice’s ‘or what’ is opened for any interpretation that Mick or Nathan want to give it.

‘You can’t sleep all your life.’
It was obvious that Mick and Nathan didn’t sleep all their life; they were at NACE. They didn’t seem malnourished, so it was apparent they spent time eating. Nathan spent time looking after his clothes and personal hygiene. What Janice was really meaning, I would suggest, was that these two lads shouldn’t be sleeping instead of being in her class. And to me it seemed an assumption that sleep was keeping them away; however she may have been aware of factors from previous contacts with Mick and Nathan that I was unaware of. Even so their course at NACE was only for ten months, less term holidays which was a small amount of their lives.

‘You actually have to DO something.’
Janice did not acknowledge the things that they did in and out of NACE, for example the video they made with Rosemary, and their work on cars outside of NACE. It seemed to me that some of what Mick and Nathan did was keep alive without parental or family support. What Janice was really meaning was ‘Do the things I want done in my class, here at NACE, this week, and each week of term.’

Through the institutional identity of TEACHER Janice is employing a speech genre that is part of Bakhtin’s heteroglossic element of social languages. Her addressing of Mick is particular to the TEACHER mode
that, from what I observed, is not employed outside NACE. In this instance the voice is authoritative and hegemonic in suppressing any other voices (Skinner, Valsiner & Holland 2001) or the possibility of any other conditions. From the narratives that the players told me about their experiences and schools, they obviously learnt the TEACHER – student relationship from an early age, although it was more problematic at secondary school than during primary schooling.

Janice’s interruption suddenly transformed the figured world of the casual research interview into a TEACHER – student confrontation. Janice appeared very comfortable in her figured world of authoritative control within the NACE environment, and her TEACHER identity. Mick’s figured world suddenly changed and the all-too-familiar, uncomfortable environment of ‘adolescent student under attack’, which he hoped he had left behind when he left Neatsville secondary, emerged. Both Janice and Mick had their own history-in-person implanted deep in their beings; Mick as a student, Janice as a student and later as a teacher, and these histories compounded the complexities of the situation. And me; well I decided just to sit back, leave the recorder on, to keep taking notes and let the event unfold.

‘History-in-person’ (Holland et al. 1998; Holland & Lave 2001) provides a concept helpful in seeking to understand people’s behaviours, allowing for the effects of previous experiences and conditionings. The power and authority of institutional history, combined with Janice’s personal ‘history-in-person’, resulted in her perceptions of TEACHER that permit her to interrupt the research interview without invitation, explanation or excuse. She made no comments to me, or to Nathan and Mick, about interrupting what was supposed to be a confidential interview. At the same time Mick’s ‘history-in-person’ is such that he automatically assumes the student model, although, as I’ll later detail, he didn’t remain compliant.

Implicit in Janice’s identity as a TEACHER is the traditional social practice of the teachers’ role as disciplinarian who relegates moral
judgments, where the teacher is the manager, and the student the ‘controllee’ (Gee 2000-2001, p. 117). Cummins (2002) supports this view when he says

‘[t]he ways in which identities are negotiated in schools and classrooms reflect the pattern of power relations in the broader society and educators’ role definitions with respect to these power relations’ (p. 109).

Educational institutions, such as NACE and schools, serve a wide range of social purposes, one of which is to imbue students with socially acceptable moral values through the powerful positions of teachers (Freebody & Herschell 2000). Institutional identities of TEACHER and student, and their accompanying power relations, are social practices which are frequently accepted as ‘natural’, ‘normal’ and the ‘usual way’ that educational identities and powers operate. Cultural impregnation of ideologies in the young has ensured that teachers and students accept this type of communication as natural and normal in educational institutions (Smyth et al. 2000).

Through these identities schools and educational institutions, complicit with mainstream cultural practices, have been able to exert regulation of student behaviours. The hidden curriculum (Connelly & Clandinin 1988; Wells 1986) forms part of the strategies used by dominant culture to regulate student development and to impose their ideologies upon students. Through signifying practices and by regulating curriculum, as discussed in Chapter 2, the hidden curriculum affects beliefs in subtle ways which students may not be aware of. The silencing of students is one crucial way that this curriculum serves the dominant or mainstream culture. The student identities preferred by mainstream schools are ‘ideological privileged styles’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 132) with a dominant, assumed ‘normality’ (Fordham 1993). While many students readily comply and adopt the identities required of them, others balance out the sacrifice of personal ideals against the educational gains for them (Sheehy 2004). Some mute their own voice (Fine 1991), and others deliberately pass up their identities to adopt the educational identity most likely to secure a desired outcome
(Holland et al. 1998). These issues of sacrificing personal goals and of muting are discussed further in Chapter 8 regarding Bethany. Some students, like Mick, openly resist the identities required to guarantee a satisfactory educational outcome, and challenge the regulations that schools impose.

The culturally sustained educational practice of silencing of students through the hidden curriculum is only one way students are silenced. Another is through talk and movement (Freebody & Herschell, 2000). There is an imbalance in teacher – student communication (Scollon & Scollon 1981), favouring teachers and disadvantaging students (Freebody 2003). This imbalance is sustained and strengthened through the socially prevalent practice of scholastic relationships where the teacher talks while the student listens (Cummins 2002). The voice of the teacher has behind it the history and authority of TEACHER; its hegemonic strength suppressing other voices, an example of the heteroglossic aspect of social languages which can be engaged in opposition and struggle (Skinner,Valsiner & Holland 2001). The voices operate in the physical world, but also exist in the heads of teachers and students.

Through this frieze frame I explore silencing being accomplished through body positioning and movement, pauses, movement or restraint of equipment (in this case a chair), tone and stress of voice, gestures and gaze (Leander 2002c; Norris 2004), and the cultural view of success. I also consider Mick’s response. Gee (1996) explains that

’speakers do not just ‘say what they mean’ and get it over with. They lay out information in a way that fits with their viewpoint on the information and the interaction. They are always communicating far more than the literal message’ (p. 96).

Speakers manipulate a series of mutually interconnected devices to get their message across in a particular way, from a specific viewpoint, and to position the listener in particular ways. Janice commanded a performance combining her pitch, tone, pauses, control of furniture, and physical
movements to gain maximum dramatics to strengthen her position and to shame and weaken Mick’s.

When Janice arrived she stood framing herself within the doorway, and placed her hands on the doorway frames, which signified not just her arrival, and commanding position above the seated youths, but also there was no way out, no exit; she blocked the space. She used pauses to strengthen her verbal message. After ‘My god!’ she paused for three seconds in what seemed to be a deliberate pause for emphasis and effect. Then she continued ‘Is this a figment of my imagination?’ before another significant pause. And in the above frame the poignant pauses of about three seconds are shown by **, and the extended significant ones by ***.

I won’t lie about your attendance. **
I might tell a little white lie. ***
So Mick, ** don’t ask me to lie for you. ***
I won’t lie for anyone. *** ***
It’s not worth my risking my job. ***

These pauses continued all the way through the twelve and a half minute altercation.

After Janice’s arrival at the office, to strengthen the effect of her control, she stepped inside the office and took control of any movements of the chair on which Mick was seated. My researcher journal notes show that in between the verbal messages a subtle battle was going on between them over the movement of the chair.
Janice: moving to Mick’s chair, and resting her right hand on the back of it.

Janice: swivels Mick’s chair slightly so she has a better view of him.

Mick tries unsuccessfully to return the chair to the previous position.

Janice senses this, leans towards her right side and holds the back more firmly.

Mick shoulders and head drop noticeable.

He places his feet on the chair supports.

Mick tries to move the chair using his legs but Janice has moved closer to the chair and stops any movement.

Janice adjusts her position and tries to use the back to manoeuvre the chair, but Mick’s legs grip is too strong. The lines on his face strengthen/deepen.

Janice lets go of the chair, and, with arms folded firmly in front, moves to the left where she can see Mick more clearly. Mick doesn’t make any attempt to look at her. The chair swings slightly in the opposite direction.

As well as using pauses and physical movements to strengthen her argument, Janice varies her **tone and stresses** for additional effects. Bakhtin maintains that tone is a constitutive feature of every speech act, that the speaker brings something new to a word or phrase, something particular to them, and the tone signals its singular relation to the speaker (Morson & Emerson 1990). Looking at Janice’s speech in the frame above, by way of example, some of her tonal accents are:
Janice, by *positioning her body* in certain ways, adds implicit weight to her words and intentions. As she arrives she not only stands in the doorway but also rests her arms on the frames to create a closed effect at a significant height, near her shoulders:

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taking up the whole doorway, hands resting on the frames, near shoulder height
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Then to reinforce her commanding position she moves closer to the chair Mick is seated on; her chair. This *movement* also serves to direct Mick and Nathan’s attention to her, just in-case the lads haven’t yet registered her presence and *TEACHER* position. She then moves her right hand:

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 moving to Mick’s chair, and resting her right hand on the back of it, she swivels Mick’s chair slightly
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I would suggest her physical contact with the chair, and her decisive movement of it was unconsciously her claiming ‘ownership’ of it, a statement that would weaken Mick’s delight in temporary ‘ownership’ of it. However there is also intent in the movement. She needs him to have a better view of her:

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so she has a better view of him
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In an altercation with Terry Janice made it clear that she believed that people listened better if they were looking at the person talking. It probably wasn’t so she could see Mick better, but so he could see her as she spoke to him. The student identity is weakening a little, and it is at this point that Mick’s agency starts to be exerted in a small but perceptual way:

**Mick tries unsuccessfully to return the chair to the previous position,**

but with no success. Janice is determined to hold her commanding position and to maintain Mick’s submissive one. She takes control of the situation AND the chair more firmly than before:

**Janice senses this, leans towards her right side and holds the back more firmly.**

While the chair physically continues to be the ‘battle ground’ for control, it is really symbolic of the power struggle going on between Mick and Janice. She uses her TEACHER mode, while he is silently dismantling the repressive student identity.

Simultaneous to Janice’s speech accentuations and movements, and the chair battle, there are gestures and gazes reinforcing the intentions of Janice, Mick and Nathan. Janice had her arms folded, a signifying practice gesture, I would suggest, maintaining a shield like gesture to keep away ideas she didn’t want encroaching on her established ones. In my field note observations I have three times mentioned that Janice’s arms were folded, and in the last note it says they were ‘folded firmly’ in front.

When Janice mentioned Centrelink, the government department allocating and monitoring financial payments to approved, needy students, Nathan’s response was instantaneous:
Nathan’s gaze shifted from the floor to Janice; he looked startled.

He was dependent on these payments, and they were tied to his studies. His gaze had been on the floor, probably to avoid eye contact with Janice, but suddenly he gave her his visual attention. Mick’s head and shoulders move in accord with his disposition changing, and he steadies himself using the chair:

Mick’s shoulders and head drop noticeably He places his feet on the chair supports.

Mick avoids looking at Janice, glancing at the computer next to me, then back to the floor:

Mick glanced at the computer next to me, then back at the floor.

Janice’s entrenchment in the prevalent cultural model of education unconsciously determines her values and views, and it reflected in a wide range of issues. In this confrontation with Mick her perceptions of success and materialism contrast with those of Mick and Nathan. Her emphasis, and that of NACE, is that young people should be studying to get a job. They have to be doing something which is culturally considered educational and constructive, and that will be financially successful.

Working on cars.

That’s paying you big bucks, is it?

Janice’s perception of success reflects not just in these statements.

She uses ‘The Real Game’ to teach pre-employment skills and to motivate students (see Appendix 8). When, as part of my participant – observer position, I was involved in playing the game, the majority of the careers
required high formal tertiary qualifications resulting in high salaried professions. During the research interviews Janice never considered that there was anything wrong with her program, materials or timetabling. Her programming decisions were based on what she read or heard about of successful programs in secondary schools, for example ‘The Real Game’. The foundational principles for this game align with the cultural goals and processes which suit privileged students from successful middle-class families, where they have supportive family environments, academic ambitions and stable economic circumstances. Janice seemed unable to conceive that adolescent students from struggling circumstances, and without family support, might have different values and needs. Mick and Nathan explained they valued other qualities that assisted them in life, like friendship, honesty, flexibility and practical knowledge and skills.

Two other cultural practices which Janice uses are **shaming and blaming** (Bartlett & Holland 2002; hooks 2003). These practices, which permeate mainstream schooling, are forms of symbolic violence (Bartlett & Holland 2002) which are intended to reflect negatively on the person and on their social standing. It is used to regulate student behaviour (hooks 2003). In some cases it robs a person of their dignity and can leave someone feeling inadequate in personal qualities. Janice’s thematic organisation (Gee, 1996) for her argument, the way her language was distributed within and across her speech, was one of ‘blaming and shaming”; blaming them for their inadequacies and poor attendance, and shaming them about their lack of motivation to come to her NACE classes. She was sarcastic about their attendances:

*My God! Is this a figment of my imagination!*  
*So, are you guys going to turn up occasionally or what?*

She scoffed about their work repairing cars:

*Working on cars.*  
*That’s paying you big bucks, is it?*
And she was impatient with the control they had over their lives.

*You can’t sleep all your life.*

*You’ve got to stop sleeping so much, that’s all.*

She would not lie about their attendance *just because they wouldn’t get out of bed.*

Janice’s *intonations and words* were often sarcastic and designed to humiliate Mick and Nathan. Her introductory ‘I’ve found somebody’ is, I believe, intended to belittle them for their lack of regular attendance. It seemed to me that it was no accident that she ‘found’ them, but deliberately orchestrated events so she could tackle them about their attendance. In a similar vein she denigrates the work they do outside, not just for what they do but that they are not earning a lot of money doing it. She wasn’t interested in hearing their explanations, but later they delighted in explaining that they were learning from their mates and reciprocating friendships, which would not fit Janice’s definition of ‘value’, ‘success’ or ‘education’. The inaccuracies of many of her statements reflect on her emotional state and narrow view. This distortion of communication and reasoning in relationships involving powerful positionings is discursive coercion (Smyth et al. 2000), in this instance designed to exert more pressure on Mick and Nathan. The lads’ unsatisfactory attendance was all their own fault and they had to be held responsible, and for them to address the situation.

But perhaps Janice’s most telling point in her argument is her ‘I won’t lie’. I have repeated the relevant section of the frieze frame here, but have emphasised the three phrases I discuss at this point, and will address Mick’s response after that.
Janice: *Centrelink rang me last week about Nathan’s attendance.* Nathan’s gaze shifted from the floor to Janice; he looked startled. Mick glanced at the computer next to me, then back at the floor. Janice: *I won’t lie about your attendance. I might tell a little white lie. So Mick, don’t ask me to lie for you.*

*I won’t lie for anyone. It’s not worth my risking my job.* Mick immediately lifted his head, and clearly interjected: ‘*All I said was “Did you be nice?” I didn’t say would you lie.*’

I was somewhat confused and concerned when Janice spoke about attendance and Centrelink. I was fairly sure that Janice had told me that Centrelink hardly ever checked up, and if they did it was always through an employment agency. The significance of this hesitancy did not become apparent to me until later when I checked with her, and she said that what she told Mick and Nathan was not true.

Gulland & Hinds-Howell (2001) define a **white lie** as a harmless or well-intentioned lie. ‘*This is generally not considered morally wrong because the motive of the person ...*’ (p. 6). So was Janice’s ‘*Centrelink rang me last week*’ a white lie? Janice would justify her lie because, in her eyes, she was doing what was the best for the lads. Her cultural model ideologies positioned her to justify what she did. Getting these boys an education and employment was her job no matter what it took. They needed more discipline and motivation, and at this stage of their education she was there to provide that. However from Mick and Nathan’s perspective Janice’s words were a deliberate deception; their values were based on different beliefs from Janice’s, and they said it wasn’t up to her to try and control any part of their lives. The above definition would not support Janice’s words being a white lie.
There are three indicators that a statement is a lie: the speaker believes the statement to be false, the statement is, in fact, false, and the speaker’s intention is to deceive (Sweetser 1987). In four short sentences Janice makes four statements about lies; apparently lies were on her mind. She states that it isn’t worth her risking her job to tell a lie, yet it seems she has just lied to the lads. There were two other occasions that I witnessed when she apparently deliberately deceived students and I take this matter up in the conclusion chapter. Given the context of Janice’s verbal altercation with Mick and Nathan, it is plausible that she was deliberately lying to increase the value and pressure on Mick. Whereas some speakers or writers use manipulative silences (Huckin 2004) she was using a manipulative restructuring of facts to support her point of view.

Mick and Nathan’s second interview for this research was interrupted by Janice’s unexpected arrival. This last section as mainly examined Janice’s words and position as a speaker, it is timely to now discuss Mick’s one clear vocal response:

“All I said was “Did you be nice?” I didn’t say would you lie.’

Mick’s physical and social space of interviewee in a research project had been completely reconfigured with Janice’s arrival. Her TEACHER identity, with all its associated authority, had a marked and immediate effect on him as he struggled with an old, now uncomfortable, student identity. His discomfort and submissive status was apparent in his almost inaudible responses paralleled his physical reactions. His subtle vying with Janice for control of movement of the chair, discussed earlier in this chapter, was his way of navigating and attempting to make a space of power for himself (Moje 2004). But his attempts were thwarted at every ‘non-turn’.

People are constantly changing and adapting, and as part of identity in practice when people experience discomfort within a figured world they either alter it, or move from it (Holland et al. 1998). There is a continual
internal process of conceiving ideas for figured worlds and imagining changes, and while there is an extensive discussion of this process in Chapter 8 Going Places, it is pertinent to touch on it here as we follow Mick’s reaction in the meeting with Janice, and in his classroom experiences later on in the morning.

In his interview for this research project Mick made it clear that he elected to leave school before he completed Year 10. The figured world of secondary school at Neatsville did not suit his wanting some decisions about how, when and what he studied. He hated the books they tried to make him read. The teachers, he explained, were demanding, controlling and bullied him. There came a time when he decided he wasn’t going to take that anymore. So he moved out of that figured world. He was willing to try NACE; he liked only having to come two mornings each week, but didn’t like most of the classes. He liked the practical video work; he liked the way Rosemary didn’t hassle him about arriving late especially ‘as they start the classes too early’. He preferred afternoon classes and really wanted to learn through working on mechanical things such as cars.

During any discourse there are contextual clues or signals which shape the anticipated response of a listener or reader (Morson & Emerson 1990) and Mick’s responses to Janice’s questions and commands were predictable. Having learnt student institutional identity at school, when confronted with Janice’s TEACHER identity, he immediately reverted to those patterns of responses. The ‘already spoken’ question and answer pattern, the submissive gestures and subtle persuasions of the discourse were ingrained deeply. But when Janice falsely accused him, his imagining new worlds became a reality.

Mick immediately lifted his head, and clearly interjected: ‘All I said was “Did you be nice?” I didn’t say would you lie.’

The context for his vocal reaction wasn’t just Janice’s words.
‘The context for an utterance (oral or written) is everything in the material, mental, personal, interactional, social, institutional, cultural, and historical situation in which the utterance was made…’
(Gee, 1999, p. 54).

It was, at the least, Mick’s **history-in-person** being confronted, and him finding ways to release old shackles from his secondary school days, his values demanding affirmation, and his agency for change being exerted. Nathan did not like being misquoted, and it showed in his immediate physical reaction, the clarity of his words, and his direct eye contact with Janice. He was very particular with his recall of what he in fact had said. He laid out clearly Janice’s misquoting of his words, and also spread out his actual words. Honesty was valued by him.

**Mick values** truth and honesty, as was mentioned in the **Prelude**. One of the reasons Mick and Nathan gave for not attending a Borderlands VCAL was because of the general disregard students there had for other peoples’ belongings. Mick’s leaving secondary school too was related to his being honest with himself and with the school about the sort of student he did or did not want to be. In this frieze frame he didn’t want to be regarded as dishonest. His statement ‘Did you be nice?’ at first had me puzzled as I was fairly certain that Mick didn’t get any Centrelink payments, but it seemed that Janice may not have remembered that. But his ‘Did you be nice?’ did not refer to himself; he was concerned for his mate Nathan who was dependant on the payments.

When Janice left, Mick and Nathan’s **immediate reaction** was to laugh, and to dismiss all she said as Janice just being a teacher. It seemed to me that Janice’s triad was for Mick and Nathan just like water on a duck’s back. We had only a little time for our interview before it was morning tea time. It was then time for Janice to resume her technology and multimedia lesson. This is the same class that Terry had the voice-over difficulty with, discussed in the previous chapter, only it was a couple of week prior to Terry’s arrival. Rosemary, who normally would have also been in the class
to assist with technical – digital processes, was away. At this stage the main characters were established, but not any scenarios.

**Power** and the covert mechanisms for control work in a myriad of ways, and usually simultaneously (Smyth et al. 2000). Janice’s **TEACHER** position carried the history and authority of cultural processes imbued with subtle signifying practices designed to regulate students. This power reflected in her stance and position in the classroom, where she stood at the front while the students were seated lower than her. Her voice regulation, pauses and language in the above frieze frame were not, from what I observed, an isolated incident but a natural extension of her **TEACHER** persona. She wore it as a mantle wherever she went at NACE, and it accompanied her to the multi-media class she was teaching.

Mick, however, was assessing his options and how to manage the changes that meant the **student** identity no longer sat comfortably with him. I wondered if Mick would remain at NACE that day and attend the multi-media class he was enrolled in. The following frieze frame is again considered in Chapter 8, but with some text differences as a different perspective is being considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F F 3 Positionality 3: In the classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the mid-morning break, Mick and Nathan returned to the Wednesday multi-media class, making a total of five students. Janice explained to Mick and Nathan what was happening with the class video, and who the characters were.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice: <em>OK guys, what is going to happen in the story for the video?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick: <em>We could put a crash in.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At this suggestion Janice sighed deeply, put the whiteboard marker down, and folded her arms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mick: *It doesn’t have to be a real crash. We can fake one. My friends...*

Janice: *No Mick. We can’t have a crash.*

Mick: *Oh, but ...*

Janice: *No Mick.*

Mick: *Well then we could go to the wreckers. We could....*

Janice: *I said no Mick.*

Mick turned towards the windows and didn’t take part in the rest of the lesson. No other suggestions were made about inclusions in the video.

**Postscript**

The next week, as the class started, Rosemary suggested incorporating a crash in the video. Janice accepted her idea easily.

The *undervaluing* of students and their experiences and opinions (Hattam et al. 1999; Smyth et al. 2000) is a common practice with the prevalent cultural model of education. Again Janice’s whole being expresses her authoritative position and her negative reaction to Mick’s suggestion. She didn’t just sigh but sighed deeply, while also putting down the whiteboard marker, and folding her arms.

A couple of weeks ago at NACE Mick and Nathan had created a very successful video, and now it seemed he wanted to go further. He wanted the same engagement, success and affirmation that their previous video had brought. He had developed skills and no doubt wanted to develop them further. He wanted to invent and incorporate a car smash, and in the class he made various suggestions for how the crash could be ‘created’ as if real. My research journal records:

*Mick was in his element; he was excited and could hardly stay on the chair with anticipation. His words tumbled out so quickly they sometimes melded together.*
Janice was adamant that it wouldn’t be done. He was very convincing, his ideas sound, and I found it easy to imagine how he might produce a realistic crash without actually crashing a car. But Janice was determined. She didn’t present any concrete reasons why a crash couldn’t be incorporated, and why Mick’s ideas were unrealistic.

No other student contributed to the ideas or to this discussion. In the end the TEACHER positionality won. For Mick the possibility of the class being a place of learning dissolved in the moment that Mick realised that his ideas were not going to be listened to. He slumped down in the chair, buried his head on his arms resting on the desk and hardly spoke for the rest of the lesson.

Positional identities within figured worlds often cause revaluation and change. How a person perceives and mediates their way through relational aspects depends on how important are the ‘rewards’ of their membership. There are times when security within a figured world changes negatively, and at those times a person can change, or be constrained to move (Holland et al. 1998). After the altercation about the video, Mick was faced with choices about the figured world at NACE. There was about twenty-five minutes of class time left, although Janice often finished early. Nathan was the only student Mick knew in the class. He didn’t respond to any of Nathan’s advances, so Nathan withdrew to the safety of the newspaper. Suddenly at ten to twelve Mick picked up the nearly empty coke bottle, finished it off and tossed it towards the rubbish bin. When it missed he shrugged and got up. As he passed, he pressed Nathan’s shoulder muttering ‘See you in a few weeks. I’m going up the coast.’ He opened the door. Janice heard this farewell comment and asked if he had heard anything she said in the office. Mick had heard but had made his choice and kept walking.

Silencing of students occurs in a variety of ways. Particular educational discourses, like the teachers’ authoritative position, support the voices of
students being suppressed or silenced. At the same time discourses around student behaviours and identities underpin student acceptance of their silencing as an acceptable social practice. Mick’s voice was silenced. Janice’s refusal to consider Mick’s idea of incorporating a crash seems to be a direct attack on him, and a result of the power struggle between them. Rosemary, however, was not a student, let alone, from Janice’s perspective, a contrary, recalcitrant one. In accepting the idea from Rosemary Janice denigrated Mick.

In the frieze frames in this chapter we see Mick slowly exerting his agency to take control of his situation at NACE. Mick was one of a number of students who were rebelling against the confines of what formal education offers, but don’t have the discourses to address the problem, and are powerless to bring positive changes in education (Smyth & Hattam 2004). Analysis of competing social discourses leads to a partial understanding of silencing (Leander 2002a). The reciprocal positional identities of TEACHER and student are among the social practices dominating the prevalent cultural model of education. There are competing discourses because there are other models of education being informally adopted by students who sometimes find themselves not served well by the mainstream one. This chapter, in exploring these particular institutional identities, presents examples of the types of ongoing struggles that some students experience daily. Among the varying roles of schools and educational institutions are the regulation of young people and the moulding of them into model citizens (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995). This is done through a variety of educational discourses, including teachers’ authoritative position and the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Connelly & Clandinin 1988).

The four part process of identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) forms the basis of my discussion in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8 in this Storyscape thesis. People move in a variety of figured worlds, and the identities that operate are affected by the positional identities involved. In the next chapter I consider the third part of the process, that of self-authoring and the involvement of artefacts in identity work.
Chapter 6 Making One’s Way

Identity, self-authoring, and narratives

‘People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are’

(Holland et al. 1998, p. 3).

**Storyscape** is the narrative of my investigation into several adolescents’ narratives and experiences at secondary schools and a community education facility, NACE. I call the students and teachers players, and they are introduced in the **Prelude. Identity in practice** (Holland et al., 1998) provided the basis for my investigation into the identity aspect of the research. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8 of Storyscape focus on the four parts of the process. In Chapters 4 and 5 I discussed figured worlds and positionality as they related to the players educational experiences. I now turn to the third part, **self-authoring.** There are six frieze frames; the first three focus on Luke in two class lessons at NACE, while the next three focus on Mick and a video he and Nathan made in one NACE class.
Ever-changing personal and cultural landscapes necessitate a variety of ‘selves’ or identities to function within the social arenas. ‘Figured worlds’ (Holland et al. 1998) is the term I most often use in Storyscape to describe localised social worlds such as schools or sporting groups. Within each figured world are discourses, practices, symbolic artefacts, expressions or languages and behaviours which are common to the world and create an environment for successful communication and effective relationships. One description of identity is:

‘an enactment of self made within particular activities and relationships that occur within particular spaces (geographic, social, electronic, mental, and cultural) at particular points in time’  
(Moje 2004, p. 16).

In Storyscape identity enactment describes how the players enact or act out certain dispositions or characteristics which they feel appropriate for a specific occasion within a specific figured world (Wortham 2006). Their behaviours, narratives, speech and representations through clothing, hair and accessories may affirm or reject and challenge the cultural practices within that area. Identity shaping practices and artefacts are developed as they are acted out (Gee 2000-2001), and are visible to others. These are not necessarily conscious decisions, but a person’s natural reaction to relationships or practices. Mick’s hair and clothing is an example of an enactment that indicates his rejection of mainstream cultural practices.

People tell others, or enact, who they are in a variety of ways. But even more significantly than telling others, they tell themselves; in telling others they are reaffirming this to themselves. ‘[T]hen try to act as though they are who they say they are’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 3). Telling may happen through narratives a person tells or writes, or artefacts created; narratives are foundational to the way lives are lived. Cohesion from the past into the future is narratively based as lives are lived on a storied landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000a), and narratives are intricately involved in identity work (Brodkey 1996a; Holland et al. 1998; Kamler 2006). Narratives may also present through videos, art works or other artefacts. In the first frieze frame the narrative surrounds a sequence of nearly identical
messages on a white board. But some more about identity before I present the first frieze frame.

Identities are multiple and adaptable as each person will usually have a variety of differing relationships and social practices within their figured worlds. However figured worlds are ‘invoked, animated, contested, and enacted through artefacts, activities, and identities in practice’ (Bartlett & Holland 2002, p. 12) and so identities are frequently adapting and changing. Figured worlds are not always harmonious (Weeks 1990). As cultural conditions change members within a specific figured world may want to adapt established practices to suit a changing environment, but there will usually be some who resist change. New technologies and popular culture are automatically assimilated into adolescents’ ever adapting identities, often creating challenges to educational discourses and practices (Luke & Elkins 2000). The mobile phone as a contemporary accessory for students brought challenges to educators. Rather than seeing the possibilities for using these tools, NACE students were banned from having them in class. Bethany and Yvette chose not to openly challenge the rule but circumvented it. They were adept at surreptitiously texting friends at Borderlands VCAL to meet them during a break in class, and no doubt other messages too.

Identity work may be an on-going struggle because social worlds are

‘...indeterminate, perspectival, and intensely ideological... A practice theory of identity aims to account for the ways in which identity is stabilized and changed during the course of interaction, keeping one eye on the social structuring, while not losing sight that social processes may be unpredictably transformed through social and individual agency’ (Leander 2002b, p .201).

As a society’s structures adapt to emerging technical, digital, economic, political or other situations, new cultural relationships and practices evolve, forcing changes in discourses and practices within localised figured worlds. New identities emerge and old ones may be adapted or rejected. Former ‘student’ identities may not apply to new social worlds as identities will most often be specific to a time and place. An identity that a student
displays in one class where their interest is engaged will differ from that in a
class where they are bored or distracted. Their preferred identity for a
schooling year level will not usually carry over to another year level; it may
be similar, but essentially cannot remain identical.

Over several years Luke’s ‘student’ identity adapted to contrasting figured
worlds at varying schools. Before going to Convenience Cove Specialist
School, he explained, he was a ‘good’ student who enjoyed reading and
could read well. At Convenience Cove he managed the written work which
had set routines and centred on activities the students did. The work was not
identified at any particular year level, and when he moved to Neatsville
Secondary he didn’t have the academic skills to cope with the year level he
was admitted to. As he spoke about his experiences at Convenience Cove he
spoke with confidence and established some eye contact with me. It seemed
his student identity was one of a compliant student who happily completed
the work required of him. He also spoke about his friends there, naming
them as he explained activities they did together. Luke elaborated how
schooling became a problem for him when he didn’t get the help he needed;
then some teachers and students started bullying him in and out of classes. I
had to listen carefully as he spoke, he hesitated frequently during the telling,
and looked at the table. It seems he started skipping classes to avoid the
bullying and the work he couldn’t manage. His identity had transformed as
the practices in his new figured world didn’t support his former identity.

Identity enactments involve the use or rejection of cultural forms of social
practices, often identified through signifying practices. Identity behaviours
and signs result from dialogic relations between a person’s intimate and
inner world with the material, external figured worlds in which they live
(Rowsell & Pahl 2007; Smyth & Hattam 2004). Within a person there’s a
constant inner communication where self-understandings develop, and
voices are responded to. Identity work is complex because of conflicting
ideologies which usually infringe on a person’s deliberations about cultural
practices, and also because of how personal histories can impact on the
present. In Chapter 7 Frozen Moments, I explore how the lack of identity
thickening or lamination (Holland & Leander 2001; 2004; Leander 2004b; Wortham 2004) can be destabilising, resulting in an identity not being realised.

In this section I present three freeze frames about Luke. These happen in Tuesday classes where Janice teaches pre-employment skills to a regular core group of students, most of whom had been in the class since the middle of the previous year. Luke and Suzie are the only players in the class, and Suzie was one who commenced this year. The incidents happened in two classes; the first on May 16th, the next the following Tuesday. During my time with the players at NACE I heard narratives about changes in Luke’s identities. I also witnessed identity indicators which fascinated me because of the complexities and conflicts that were evident. But also evident was his awareness of strategies he utilised to bring about changes. Before investigating two of these developing identity frieze frames I need to start with a frieze frame establishing something of Luke’s ‘NOW’ position.

Classrooms were one of the areas at NACE where I observed representational space (Lefebvre 1974) operating as generally staff were the only ones with keys to them before classes started. Students had other areas they could use such as the common area, the kitchen and the courtyard. While the system probably had practical security reasons for its existence, I suspect it was an unconscious demarcation of staff positions against students’ lesser status; in NACE’s eyes an unwritten sign or symbol of authoritative people being differentiated against those not having any. However there was one exception and that was Luke. On Tuesday mornings he was allowed the key to open the classroom; when he returned the key he collected some newspapers and returned to go in to the room. Representational space is associated with some signifying practices, and both are implicit in the subtle work of ideologies being sustained. The practices of excluding students from rooms, and the authority of administration to make these decisions, are accepted as ‘normal’ within the prevalent cultural model of education.
When I first went to NACE, I understood from Janice that the unwritten ‘rule’ about keys and access was made to keep students out. In my Interlude 1 I share about my having no access to keys, computer codes or any secure areas. But not only was the rule made to students out, they were given access to other areas so there was no need for them to go into classrooms. Looking at the access as representational space Luke was placed separately from other students. Meanings are inextricably linked to cultural practices, and here was a normal cultural practice being thwarted. I didn’t discuss the issue with either Janice or Rosemary, but I suspect that in Luke’s early days at NACE, when he was emotionally fragile and wanting to avoid any contact with teenagers, he was allowed access to assist his transition to NACE. That’s the caring sort of thing they would do. In Endlude: Luke’s Ligature, I discuss several issues relating to Luke and his student status and relationships with staff.

So Luke has access to the room before class, and without any staff supervision. He is recognised as a compliant, trustworthy student. And what does he do? He writes on the whiteboard. Messages were written, one each of the four weeks prior to his birthday, and it’s here that I move to consider signifying practices (Hall 1997a; Walkerdine 1990).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F F 1 Identity and self-authoring: signifying practices</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 16th class.</strong> Prior to class Luke had written on the white board:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 days until Luke’s 16th birthday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 23rd class.</strong> Prior to class Luke had written on the white board:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 days until Luke’s 16th birthday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literacy is a signifying practice** in the cultural model of education prevalent in Neatsville, and Luke exhibits identity signs indicating his successful apprenticing into the skills and associated social practices, even
though his levels did not attain to those desired by Neatsville Secondary. Literacy is not just knowing how to read a particular text, but being able to utilise reading or writing for specific purposes (Lankshear & Knobel 2007), and these skills are learnt easiest and most effectively when they are in meaningful contexts (Li 2006). Luke utilises his literacy when it serves his purposes, reading a wide variety of paper and digital texts and writing a few. In contrast to Luke’s procrastination and minimalist approach to writing in class, using almost illegible script, his notices about his impending birthday are written confidently and clearly. A few weeks later when he wanted to earn some money he created advertisements for his car washing venture, and again his writing was clear, correctly spelt and well presented. His literacy currency (Obidah & Marsh 2006) was different from that used in class, and different too from what he was expected to use at Neatsville secondary. It was purposeful and reached standards suited to the occasions within specific social spaces.

So was NACE a space or a place for Luke? The NACE environment provided him with newspapers to read and cut articles out of, with computer and internet access, and paper to print on, and a job enabling him to hire the games and DVD he desired. He was learning life and ‘education’ skills through these activities; through Janice’s classes he learnt about ‘head talk’ and how to develop assertiveness, so it was for him a place of learning. However in Janice’s classes I observed him frequently bored, requesting interesting things to do, and occupied with activities that were not the class lesson, indicating a space. I would suggest it was both, but more about these things in Endlude: Luke’s Ligature.

The meanings people associate with words and signs come from the culture in which they are located (Kress 2003b). Within figured worlds there are language specific meanings that may be specific to that figured world, and in Chapter 2 I used the example of ‘book’. However there are broader values and discourses that emanate from the culture; practices that are distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of a people or community, the shared understandings in the production and exchange of meanings (Hall 1997a).
‘Birthday’ is an example of a situated meaning (Gee 1999, 2004a) where there is a culturally accepted meaning for a word and occasion. There are signifying practices associated with the concept. It’s generally a time to recognise and celebrate in a special way; it’s generally specific to a person, and generally it is shared with others. Birthdays at NACE are no exception.

One of the cultural signifying practices associated with birthdays is the **counting down** to the day. Luke was obviously very aware of the practice, and seemed to delight in sharing it with the class. In the first two weeks of the notice not much was said; Janice read it aloud before the class started and then wiped it off as she needed to use the board. However as it got closer to the actual day Luke started commenting about it in class, unsuccessfully attempting to disrupt Janice from her work – student routine. Another associated practice is the significance of some ages, whereas other ages are not so important. For Luke, it being his 16th birthday held significance. **Money** and related budgeting considerations featured frequently in Luke’s comments, especially in his informal conversations. The highlight of his 16th birthday would be that he could then get a student allowance from Centrelink. He knew how much he would get and was planning to spend some and save some for when he wanted to leave home and set up in a flat.

There were a variety of places Luke could have utilised to announce his birthday, even within NACE, and also a range of readily available mediums. People’s construction of signs is not a haphazard event; the sign maker’s intentions and interest (Kress 2000a; 2009) determine what symbols will be used and their placement. The making of signs mediates a person’s own social history (Kress 2009), while how and where they are placed is socially situated (Scollon & Scollon 2003). It was no coincidence that Luke’s message was placed on the whiteboard before the Tuesday class; it was the most suitable culturally situated context (Hodge & Kress 1988) for his purposes. Luke was aware of what could be said, when, and to whom (Fine 1991; Leander 2002a); his intrusion into the room was permitted, and his writing on the board would be tolerated. He was the only student to take the
liberty to borrow the room key and enter the room before class, and then to write on the board, disrupting the teachers’ domain. This Tuesday class was the one that had, by his and Janice’s accounts, been instrumental in Luke’s emergence from a withdrawn lad to a sociable one in certain figured worlds.

Luke’s message on the board was one way he was telling others who he is, and that he had something to celebrate. When Luke was expelled from Neatsville secondary he was, he admitted, very frightened, preferring his own company in his home to any interaction with other people. He told me he spent three weeks sitting at home wondering about coming to NACE before his mother persuaded him to come and look at NACE. Janice and Rosemary spoke his of his behaviours when he first came, with no eye-to-eye contact, single word answers in a monotone voice and no interaction with other students. Yet here he was reading the world of NACE and knowing he could confidently draw attention to himself, break traditions and write on the whiteboard before class, and preparing to celebrate his birthday. The celebration wouldn’t be for him alone; it was written for the class he was comfortable with so they could celebrate with him.

The results of Luke’s identity transformation could be seen in contrasting his initial student days at NACE with the ones I witnessed during my time at NACE. But recognising changes doesn’t account for the processes of change, and it is to two of those that I now turn; firstly inner conversations, followed by semiotic mediations. This next frieze frame happens on the day of the first message in the first frieze frame. The course was pre-employment skills and Janice was covering preparing for interviews. The students had worksheets to complete where they had to identify suitable behaviours and clothing for interviews.
The mental process of **inner conversations** describes the process where a person listens to and answers inner voices (Morris 1994). These inner dialogues sometimes involve struggle and conflict as internally persuasive voices and authoritative discourses can be challenged or negotiated (Morson & Emerson 1990), when a person decides which messages to retain, and which to alter or remove. While it may be an unconscious process, Luke was aware of his talking to himself inside his head. Inner conversations form part of the **self-authoring** aspect of ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998), and involve ‘the conflictual, continuing dialogic of an inner speech where activities are ever forming’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 169). These conversations are in the constant dialogistic state of addressivity and answering which involving various messages, visualising and imagining other ways of speaking, being and believing.

**Languages used** in the conversations are inextricably linked to the social life of the person and are imbued with values, perspectives and ideologies. For Luke being ‘cool’ was associated with particular styles of clothing,
accessories, behaviours and speech, all indicators of a particular identity. As he says in the frieze frame ‘I want to be cool ... That’s why I wear the clothes I do’. While the authoring of the self comes from the person, the words are from collective experiences through peers, the media or other social communications, and will have situated meanings (Gee 1999). Inner conversations draw on social speech which has penetrated to the person’s inner being to become a building block of thoughts and feelings. It is part of the mediating devices a person uses to modify their own mental environment and so direct their own behaviour. ‘[T]he cultural forms which come to inhabit the individual depend on the place, the social position, from which the individual engages with others in activities, in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 176). Luke’s cultural images from his secondary school experiences were different from what they’d be if he had attended the school as a teacher, or as a cleaner, or if he’d been assertive or successful in an academic subject; his mental images and words are also contextualised generationally. Within the figured world of Neatsville Secondary School Luke felt he was positioned by the school administrators, the teachers and the students as a social and academic failure (Wortham 2004), an identity mirrored in his behaviours. At NACE teachers and students commented that when Luke commenced at NACE his posture was stooped, he didn’t make eye contact, and he rarely spoke.

Bakhtin

‘describes inner speech as a complex orientation among voices and dialogues that we have internalized and brought into interaction. We form a self from ‘innerly persuasive words’ which are a kind of hybrid, ‘half-ours, half-someone else’s’’ (Morson & Emerson 1990, p. 343).

Contemporary schools bring a range of **internally persuasive discourses** which affect the development of students’ beliefs about themselves and the world (Alvermann et al. 2006). The internally persuasive discourses, the basis of a personal behaviour (Bartlett & Holland 2002), struggle with other discourses for importance and control. Previously Luke had internally assimilated those discourses and voices which were loudest or most
frequent - and these were probably also the cruellest - which left him shy, passive and unable to refute the violence directed toward him. He not only assimilated those voices but believed them. Against his timidity there were powerful discourses repeating by words and actions that he was stupid and dumb.

But within the figured world of NACE, which nurtured his individuality and encouraged his cognitive and academic skills, he began to hear other voices. Innerly persuasive words bind people precisely because they are persuasive, but as a person begins to investigate other perspectives and to discover alternative possibilities, they then begin to recognise the limitations or applications of such voices (Morson 2004). Luke was awareness of negative inner voices, and his behaviours evidence that he was altering them. There wasn’t a Tuesday class went by without mention of changes in Luke, usually initiated by Luke.

The self-authoring process involves dealing with a variety of voices, some of which may be authoritative and powerful. The inner communications involved may involve juggling with conflicting messages, calming angry ones, or encouraging quiet desirable ones. While this communication is on the intimate, unseen level of a person’s being, behavioural changes happen when there is a mediation of inner decisions into the material world, usually involving cultural images, signs or artefacts to manipulate or adapt a personal environment (Connery 2010). The next frieze frame happened the week following the previous one. Luke had written his birthday announcement, but the lesson proceeded without discussion about it. The topic was assertiveness, and passive and aggressive behaviours. It was revision for most students as the topic had been covered in term 4 the previous year. There was an acknowledgement from Janice and students on Luke’s progress. In contrast to his initial silence he now asked questions and made comments. Janice was reading from a worksheet, stopping occasionally to make comments and list relevant words on the whiteboard.
Luke fiddled with his pens, his folder, mobile phone, then suddenly in the middle of Janice listing passive behaviours:

Luke… shy, like me, like I used to be

More words were suggested by other students.

Luke: *Oh that could be me. I’m getting tired of being passive.*

Janice directed the discussion back to examples of student behaviours.

A short while later the discussion changes to assertive behaviour. Luke was reading the newspaper when Janice read aloud from the class worksheet example: “*You will or I’ll bash your head in.*” Suddenly

Luke: *Oh that’s what people say to me.*

*People used to tease me and I used to believe them sometimes…*

Students are part of the material world on and in which meaningful signs are inscribed (Lemke 2000), and Luke was no exception. He now recognised that he used to be shy and passive, and believe what people said about him. Altering these signs, whether vocal, visual or behavioural, involves ‘symbolic bootstrapping that creates a revised sense of self’ (Holland et al. 1998. pp. 42–43). **Bootstrapping**, as a cultural term, illustrates a person using their own efforts, and explains something of the work involved in mediating new identities and slowly discarding old ones.

Later in this class there was a discussion about Luke’s developing assertiveness, and Janice used the metaphor of a ladder to explain moving from passivity to assertiveness, and Luke asked where on the ladder she thought he might be.

At NACE Luke was not isolated in his efforts. Janice and Rosemary were not the only staff supportive of Luke, and tireless with their suggestions;
other staff was also involved, as were most students in the Tuesday class. Through external dialogues at NACE, videos and computer games Luke was finding new voices and altering innerly persuasive voices, adapting new ones and **testing new identities**. I use the word ‘testing’ because at this stage I consider his identities provisional, not stable. It is highly likely that during this ‘testing’ time the ‘eddying’ effect of identity stabilising and reversing went on. ‘Eddying’ is the term I use to describe the process of debate and deliberation that accompanies identity formation. During periods of well-being, positive inputs and support an identity can begin to stabilise, however these times can be interspersed with times of doubt, weakness and reversals to old patterns. Identity formation and stabilising are ongoing processes, and Luke’s identities that I witnessed at NACE did not appear to be stable. The first section of my *Frozen Moments* chapter discusses Luke’s identity dilemma, and then later, in *Endlude: Luke’s Ligature* I deliberate on observations about Luke and his education that drew my attention, and the implications of social practices on his situation.

The classroom at NACE afforded Luke a social space where his emerging identities could be tested not just in everyday interactions within lessons, but also in lessons involving role-playing. Following the discussion of assertive, passive and aggressive behaviours, Janice involved Luke in **role-plays** depicting each emotion. He practiced stances and facial expressions, and adapted remarks to suit each scenario. In another session Janice took the students to a second-hand clothing shop so they could select suitable clothing for interviews. However it spontaneously evolved into a **play-acting** time as Luke dressed in a variety of outfits and acted out diverse characters, eager for each to be captured on camera. Through these episodes he was also rehearsing the **cultural practices** he was recognising as significant. These rehearsals were also seen in his having pens and books ready for classes, arriving on time, eating and behaving appropriately and using culturally contextualised manners. These were part of his accessing the ‘*artefacts-in-use*’ operation (Leander 2002b) to support his identity enactment adaptations.
Adolescents’ **literate identities** both mediate, and are mediated by, the figured or social worlds in which they live (Alvermann et al. 2006). In the same way that artefact mediation does, this type of reciprocity allows for adolescents to modify their behaviour through literacy, but also their narratives will reflect their identities and social worlds. Activities such as story writing, traditional narrative compositions and interactional digital narratives are kinds of semiotic mediations which allow adolescents some **agency** within their figured worlds (Holland et al. 1998). Parts of adolescents’ identity-making practices jointly produce storylines that position themselves and others in particular ways (Moore 2006). The internal dialogue of the human mind continually coordinates different internal voices. **Agency** is present amid these internal dialogues as people continually negotiate links among their past, present, and future selves (Morson & Emerson 1990). Sometimes it is through narratives that the internal becomes external, and as a person’s agency increases changes in behaviours may be witnessed in the person’s external world. Luke’s literacy artefacts reflect his growing optimism, assertiveness and positive self-image. There were many similarities between his cultural models and those at NACE. Job acquisition, financial responsibility and independence from parents featured in his reconfiguration of The Three Pigs story (See Appendix 3), written during my time at NACE.

Luke’s new **assertiveness and identities** were, however, not without **problems**. While many of these new identities, such as inquisitiveness and dressing in a ‘cool’ manner, suited the cultural model of NACE and the teachers there, not all did. Janice and Rosemary were aware of Luke’s preoccupation with war videos, DVDs and computer games. However they were surprised by his attitude to violence as it showed in discussions and the level of it in his story. It wasn’t just the ‘positive and acceptable’ NACE values he was assimilating, but also ones they devalued, like his attitude to violence from his media absorption. The similarities in these real and media dialogues serve as important clues to Luke’s inner dialogues (Morson & Emerson 1990). While forms of narration will differ with cultures and times, the essence of the narrative is the exposure of a dramatised self,
fabricated in a cultural material form (Brodkey 1996b, 1987). Luke’s story had the basic level of organisation in which actors, action, and associated meanings were recognizable within social positions significant to Luke (Leander 2002b). However his Three Pigs story detailed graphic images of bullies being violently assaulted and annihilated with modern aircraft and weaponry which the main protagonist controlled. It reflected a preoccupation with, and delight in, extreme violence within his fantasy world.

Narrative, as the primary way humans organise their experiences into meaningful sections (Richardson 1997), creates connections allowing people to contemplate the effects of their actions and the direction of their lives. Narrative, as both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation, is significant in this section for narrative exposes the underlying cultural models in the performance and material form of the artefact. The first two frieze frames follow one to the other, while the third is a textual representation of part of the video they made. They all contain both Mick and Nathan, although Mick is the main focus for analysis and discussion.

‘From a Bakhtinian perspective, narratives are externalized, multivoiced utterances that originate from the author’s internalization of past and imagined dialogues and encounters in the social world. As such, they become a primary site for analysis of the mutual constitution of self and the social world, of meanings at the personal and cultural level’ (Skinner, Valsiner & Holland 2001, par.2).

Mick’s internalization of social practices and positional identities in his past figured worlds, embodied in his history-in-person, affect his ongoing identity in practice. Mick’s narrative is discussed in three separate sections but also needs to be considered as a whole. It includes his narration of educational experiences, his performance during the creation of the artefact, and the text of the video. In understanding something of the interactions of Mick’s performance and artefact production at NACE, something of Mick’s cultural model is revealed. Identity artefacts are projected and interpreted
(Leander 2002b) against this situating of cultural models. It is in considering the performance and materiality of the artefact, and contrasting them in the context of Mick’s secondary school experiences, as he tells them, that an understanding emerges of his cultural models. Understanding the differences between his cultural forms and those of traditional mainstream secondary schooling, gives an appreciation of why Mick’s educational needs were not successfully met at Neatsville Secondary School or at NACE. While some of these issues are discussed in this chapter, others are contained in Chapter 8 Going Places.

**Material artefacts** form part of the ‘living tools of the self’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 28) which are intricately involved in identity formation and self authoring. They are products at the intersection of space-time, and as such are historically and socially marked as materials, schemas, modalities and productions; they are indicative of historical and social influences (Rowsell & Pahl 2007). Mick and Nathan’s video, as an artefact of identity in practice, exhibits material and social markers from their personal social spaces, and from a cultural aspect. At the same time the video has these **material - social dimensions**, it also shares in the process and production of identities.

Identities are intimately situated in sociocultural contexts and practices, and are instantiated in discourses which affect the meaning and materiality of texts or artefacts. Meaning-making commences as individuals negotiate, transform and materialise discourses they encounter into texts or artefacts (Gee 1996b, 1999; Rowsell & Pahl 2007). Students’ identities sediment into texts during production as social and signifying practices and impinge on aspects of texts. Using Mick and Nathan’s **video as a contemporary text** (Alvermann 2001, Moje & O’Brien 2001), it is possible to identify sedimented traces of identities and meaning making through engagement with the video product and production.

These frieze frames happened the second Monday of term. Mick and Nathan had been absent the first week. Bethany and Suzie were there, and
as Janice didn’t expect Mick and Nathan to arrive she left NACE for another appointment.

**F F 4 Identity and narratives: artefact materiality - Setting the scene**

Monday morning class: Janice left the class as Mick and Nathan had not arrived by ten o’clock. However they arrived in time for the morning break, oblivious to the time or any inconvenience to staff or students. I heard their laughter on the verandah before they entered the room. Mick was also oblivious to the weather, his clothing being not only unkempt but inadequate for the freezing conditions. Nathan’s was also inadequate, but clean and tidy.

I chatted with the lads while Rosemary went into preparation mode with a video player, a video camera and a lap-top with suitable software for the video camera. The guys happily watched a short video on road construction, but as soon as their attention waned Rosemary explained the procedures for using the video camera. During this time, as Rosemary was speaking, Nathan read the sections of the video camera handbook then played with his mobile phone. When Rosemary was explaining about the disk and recording on it, Mick kept trying to get his hands on the video camera; when he couldn’t get the camera he played with his mobile phone.

As Rosemary passed Mick the camera he slid his phone into his pocket. She checked they knew how to work the camera, and gave them 5 minutes to produce a 3 minute video without leaving the courtyard.

Nathan: *What! What will we make it on?*

Rosemary: *Anything. Find some insects in the gardens or something.*

Mick meanwhile was already pulling on Nathan’s arm, leading him off the verandah, and passing him the camera.

**Student learning** is most effective when motivated by a need to understand (Moje & Lewis 2007), when connections exist between existing knowledge and new (Burbles & Callister 2000) and when active participation of
students in their learning (Ladwig & Gore 1998; Smyth, Hattam & Lawson 1998) is central to pedagogies. Rosemary’s approach to teaching Mick and Nathan suited their interests. Prior to this lesson neither Mick nor Nathan had had any experience with a video camera and while that held the advantage of no associated prior failures or stigmatisms, it did highlight the limitations of their access to, and experiences with, digital technologies. Schools don’t always capitalise on the learning available from use of contemporary technologies (Beach & Bruce 2002), resulting in limited digital experiences for those students without access to these resources at home, or in the community. When Mick and Nathan were at Neatsville Secondary, the academically successful students were offered use of these technologies once traditional, paper-based work was completed.

Historical structures of privilege become locally situated and significant in understanding the context of this frieze frame, and are not limited to the educational area. Mick and Nathan’s only access to computers was at NACE; they had never used a video camera, and couldn’t afford to keep their phones in service; they used them to play games and to store numbers. So, while many adolescents lived with these technologies within easy access at school and home, Mick and Nathan were disadvantaged because ‘material and symbolic resources are distributed disproportionately across socially identified groups and generate different social relations and perspectives among participants in such group’ (Holland & Lave 2001. p. 5). Suzie had occasionally used a video camera, and had access to a computer at weekends at her mother’s place; she had a contemporary mobile which her father ensured was always in credit so she could use it. Bethany had access to digital equipment but, apart from her mobile phone, wasn’t interested in using any of it. Luke and Terry’s only access to computers was at NACE. It is not unusual for the digital experience of students from lower socioeconomic areas to be very different from that of many students in more affluent areas (Beach & Bruce 2002).

The reproduction of social inequalities happens routinely through the promotion of certain forms of class-specific cultural knowledge and social
practice. The cultural capital of mainstream students, naturally, aligns with the cultural model of education, and students or groups with beliefs and values different from the mainstream suffer disadvantage.

‘Students who lack the cultural capital or the requisite knowledge and skills with which to successfully navigate the parameters of middle class culture inevitably fail at school... cultural capital is a form of symbolic wealth that one acquires through membership and participation in the dominant or middle class culture...Because schools are established in relation to these norms and standards, they also legitimize and therefore reinforce such standards while promoting the myth of meritocracy’ (Jennings & Lynn 2005, n.p.).

It isn’t only the use of digital technologies that students don’t experience, but the associated languages, practices and knowledges also evade them. New and emerging technologies bring with them changing social practices (Burbles & Callister 2000), and students with access to the technologies assimilate these practices naturally. Simultaneously their cultural capital is enhanced, and they are more powerful through their control of the associated discourses (Moje & Lewis 2007). Mainstream students in well resourced schools and affluent homes have their knowledge enhanced and their contemporary technologies utilised in ways that matter in formal education. They also benefit from their assimilation into the ‘naturalness’ of the practices that accompany the technologies. Students with less material resources in their schools, homes or communities are severely disadvantaged when measured against others.

Students like Mick and Nathan are among a group of students who are disadvantaged by cultural assumptions about the ways that students learn. Their playing with mobile phones in no way hampered their learning the functions of the video camera or their comprehension of the task. This was neither the only example, nor these the only students, who functioned better when their hands were occupied with another task while they listened. The example of Terry was discussed in Chapter 4 when literacies were considered. There were a variety of ways that students’ interactive
troubles (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Hattam et al. 1999; Smyth & Hattam 2004) presented during my time at NACE. This assumption that students needed to be still and looking at a person to hear was one of them. Another was the assumption that students learnt best through being told or shown. Mick and Nathan represented a group of students who learnt through doing, and not necessarily with the teacher present, and not necessarily individually.

In this instance it wasn’t just the use of video that engaged Mick. His status as a learner was different as he was allowed to explore and use the medium without specific steps and directions from the teacher. The literacy practices and events in Mick’s culture were very different from those in ‘mainstream’ society and broader definitions of literacy and texts were needed. He read graphic images of car parts, engine components and illustrations. He could tune and maintain car engines, plan and execute the procedures for rebuilding an engine and recite the steps without hesitation. He said he could also repair a range of other mechanical equipment, like mowers. He made it clear that not reading, for him, was a conscious decision. Whether he could read traditional print modes I could not ascertain.

Identities are reflected in discursive practices such as texts and artefacts as they connect the intimate, inner world with the wider world of social relations (Holland et. al. 1998). Identities are produced at the interstices of multiple figured worlds, mental and material spaces (Leander 2002b). These spaces are heterogeneous and conflictual, and charged with potential for the transformation of learning and identity. These social spaces operate diachronically as joint dialogic accomplishments over time, and synchronically as multiple spaces in a single moment (Leander 2002c). Understanding Mick and Nathan’s performance in the video production necessitates seeing some of the complex interactions of their social worlds leading up to the production, as their history-in-person reflects in the performance. It was apparent at NACE this day that Mick was the leader; Nathan willing to comply. There were times when I was at NACE when
Nathan very strongly asserted his independence, but not on this occasion. Most of the discussion in this section and the next centres round Mick as the organiser, creator, speaker and leader. This frieze frame follows directly from the previous one.

F 5 Identity and narratives, artefact performance: The performance

I remained on the verandah. Mick was obviously the leader, his broadly grinning face reflecting excitement as he grabbed Nathan’s elbow and led him to a car in the courtyard. He spoke as he pointed. Nathan was fiddling with something on the camera, trying to make an adjustment and follow Mick’s directions at the same time. There was no planning or hesitancy on Mick’s part. He moved smoothly and easily from one part of the car to another, talking to Nathan, indicating what he wanted Nathan to film, which to zoom in on, where to pause. Much of the communication was through pointing and nodding; it was obvious that these two students were familiar with each other.

Even before I saw and heard the results of the recording, it was obvious that Mick was in command of something he enjoyed and knew about. His head was high; he walked with purpose around one car, then around a second. He paused at significant parts of the vehicles, and his hand gestures and facial features indicated he was making a detailed, impressionable recording. He didn’t check the time; when he had finished saying what he needed to the recording was finished. It was obvious that both remembered what Rosemary explained about the operating functions of the video camera.

Back in the classroom, while waiting for Rosemary, they kidded around, joking and laughing. She tried to get them interested in the technical aspect of putting the video through the television, and onto a disk, but they were too excited to concentrate. They sat on the tables to view their production. After watching it three times they followed Rosemary’s directions to make copies on disks. Then they used Mick’s phone to get a number, and used the NACE telephone to call a friend to come and collect them.
There are a variety of ways that people incorporate into their behaviours when moulding themselves into an appealing identity or culturally imagined type; ‘deep acting’ (Holland & Leander 2004) being one of them. Nathan told me Mick was a wealth of knowledge which he continually displayed as they walked down the street, looked at magazines, or met with friends. He would point to features on cars, discuss components with owners, and compare prices. I would surmise that this natural talking was, for Mick, part of his ‘deep acting’ and imaging new figured worlds. Mick, in this frieze frame, is a contrast to the ‘failing student’ picture of him that Janice presented to me, or the one he told of his secondary schooling. He presents as a competent, commanding, knowledgeable young man, alert to the unexpected and challenging opportunity, and able to exhibit his skills and knowledge in positive ways. In the process of making meaning he was assembling, adapting and negotiating knowledges and discourses which then materialised in the video. Effective knowledge is being able to recognise, work on and transform generalizations within situated meaning which are relative to a person’s figured worlds. ‘Thinking and using language is an active matter of assembling the situated meanings that you need for action in the world’ (1999, p. 49, emphasis in original). This is what Mick and Nathan did. They use their specific knowledge about cars; they communicate effectively without interrupting the flow of the video. They quickly, easily and adeptly use technology new to them.

People’s cultural models are not static; as they encounter new situations, tools, and experiences, new ‘ways of being’ are evoked (Marsh & Stolle 2006). Discourses are altered or transformed, and so what is typical cannot be anticipated. Rosemary anticipated that the video camera would engage Mick and Nathan for a short time, but not their subject matter. Their engagement with the video medium was, in part, a result of their limited educational and economic conditions, having never operated one before. It is moments like this, when new mechanisms are experienced, that new ways of acting are developed and new identities explored, part of the ‘expansive cycle’ (Wortham 2006. p. 104) that engages students. The video production
illustrates how Mick responds to changes that allow for his interests, skills and creativity.

Each **mode of artefact** delivery carries with it material and cultural constraints and possibilities (Rowsell & Pahl 2007). In this instance Mick and Nathan had no choice in the mode for their artefact; however it suited Mick’s creativity and allowed him to explore possibilities. There were two limitations to the video production as an identity artefact for Mick and Nathan. Firstly, their time was limited and so there was little opportunity for planning and re-drafting; it was an ‘off-the-cuff’, stand-alone presentation. The second was that, even when transferred to disk, they and their friends had no way to replay it easily such were the limitations of the economic and social resources. However, on the other hand, it offered a mode that held no negative associations. Having had no previous experience with the mode did not prove a limitation for Mick, but rather provided him the opportunity to use his ‘deep acting’ as a car presenter. Nathan, conscious of his voice difficulty mentioned in the Prelude, kept positioning the camera so it would pick up Mick’s voice. Mick, also conscious of the voice recorder, paused in his oral presentation, and pointed directions to Nathan, rather than interrupt the dialogue.

Janice and Rosemary’s **cultural model** of education, foundational to their teaching, involved introducing the students to the digital equipment for play and experimental purposes as a precursor to a planned video narrative. The lesson Mick and Nathan were involved in this day was the first in a series. Following the introduction to the video camera, further lessons would involve detailed characterisation, listing of skills and tasks, and sequencing for a video production. Other aspects of the cultural model included the written composition and continual practice of voice-overs to ensure a perfect production. The Monday and Wednesday classes were designed with these expectations. This is the class video production discussed in Terry’s literacies (Chapter 4), Mick’s positionality (Chapter 5) and Mick’s engagement in Going Places (Chapter 8). Mick and Nathan’s cultural model, with an emphasis on co-operative experiences, mutual friendship,
spontaneity, humour, and enjoyment, made for a very different learning experience. What Janice and Rosemary didn’t anticipate included one or more of: Mick and Nathan’s natural aptitude for the medium, their quick learning when something was interesting and relevant, or where their creativity could go given the right conditions. Whatever the reason, in six minutes they created a successful, interesting video where the dialogue flowed, was easily understood, was directly related to the visuals, AND which had a significant message.

There are several aspects to consider when examining Mick’s transformation into a student engaged in meaningful learning through using the video camera. Firstly how Mick uses the artefacts-in-use function to present a particular identity (Leander 2002b). His identity production, enabled by his making the video, reflected positively in his behaviour. From what Rosemary and Janice said this confident, capable Mick was an identity they had not seen before. Secondly, in Storyscape, to understanding the effects of institutional positioning on learning it’s expedient to remember the compounding effects of history-in-person of the players (Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007), in this case Mick’s. His refusal to submit to the status-quo was evident from his secondary school days where his constant questioning of rules, practices and expectations brought him constantly into conflict with the school administration. He was dissatisfied with the figured world of secondary school and chose to leave. He encountered similar discourses at NACE, which highlighted the contrasts in his behaviour with the video production. The third aspect to acknowledge is the work of semiotic mediation (Holland et al., 1998). Controlling emotions, personal histories, relationships or unfamiliar practices is not an automatic condition. ‘[S]emiotic mediation through cultural artefacts offers one means of acquiring some voluntary control over one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions’ (Bartlett & Holland 2002, p. 14). A person, in this case Mick, uses cultural artefacts to adapt their behaviours or emotions, or other aspect of their life.
For Mick the mediation is informal; the confidence he has with directing Nathan and the camera to desired parts of the car, the word knowledge, the spontaneous flow of ideas, and meeting the challenge with success. Such identity production or strengthening then exerts itself into the material world to affect the local social forces, the teacher who is amazed by their performance, and the result. In 5 minutes they produce a successful 4 minute video. What may seem extraordinary to someone from one cultural model may, in fact, just be ordinary to another model. From the teachers’ perspective Mick’s performance may be considered an extraordinary outcome. But from Mick’s perspective it wasn’t. When he explained how he learnt about cars and worked as a team member in rebuilding motors, it was with the same enthusiasm and animation. When he storied his life of adolescent misdemeanours, or explained the honour of loyalty and friendship, it was with the same flow and vibrancy as in the video. So what did the video contain?

This third frieze frame is a textual representation of the video, and doesn’t do justice to what they produced; (sorry boys). But it does give the general idea of the commentary and visuals. In one section of the commentary I couldn’t decipher what the specific tail lights were, and have inserted xxx as I was unable to check this detail with them.
F 6 Identity and narratives: artefact multimodality:

The Red Car video

Mick's video commentary: Nathan focusing the camera on:

All right, this is what’s called a piece of shit because… it’s a Ford, and because … because it’s…

Closing in on a very dirty, maroon Ford sedan car, parked on the bitumen in the NACE courtyard.

a government owned car, you see. All government owned cars are pieces of shit.

Close up of number-plate featuring the distinctive red lettering used on government cars.

Plus it may be a BA, but the hub-caps …If you really wanted his car to look anything decent, you’d put mags or somethin’ on it, plus you’d also lower it …

Close up of the rear driver’s hub cap.

it needs to be this high…

Close up of Mick’s hands about 30cms apart.

and about this high to the ground. You don’t want it any higher.

Close-up of Mick kneeling at the rear passenger’s door to show the desired height of the car, about 30cm off the ground.

And the exhaust; you can’t even see it. Arrr, here it is.

Mick now kneeling on the ground, looking under the back of the car.

You need a sport’s one of them.

Plus, it needs a Holden logo just ‘here. And xxx tail lights; give it a spray job… Also get off these,

Mick pointing to, then tapping the Ford logo on the boot, moving to the tail lights, the dirt on the side of the vehicle, and the front guards.

... the guards. It needs …

And also you need a big Super Charger popping out right here…

Mick showing the height of the desired ‘charger’ sitting proud on the bonnet about 40cms.

The CD video clip is just over 4 minutes in length, impromptu and not edited. The Red Car section is 2 minutes. The second part is a similar clip of a white Ford making different comparisons.
The function of an artefact is determined by implicit cultural meanings attached to it (Leander 2002b). Cars, in Mick’s cultural world, were very significant. In some cultural models the speed of the car is important, in others it may be the vintage or its size. For Mick and Nathan the make was critical, but the external additions were essential. In this video Mick was able to dream his greatest dream, to build his greatest wish. Another time he was able to dream through the car advertising section of the *Herald-Sun*, and no amount of money was spared. In his view it was all about how the car looked; mechanical power was secondary, and economy didn’t count. Within Mick’s figured world of cars he uses appropriate words as the situated meanings (Gee 1999) are natural to him. Some of them, like number plate, spray job and charger I could identify, but the type of tail light eluded me, as did ‘BA’ in the third section.

Narration of social scenes incorporates specific social space-time configurations (Leander 2002a) similar to Bakhtin’s chronotope. The Red Car video is an example of a specific social scene, using localised language at a specific time-space intersection. As such it is caught up in what Bakhtin describes as the centripetal and centrifugal forces constantly at work in any cultural world. Mick’s language is very controlled as the centripetal forces would demand to enable understanding of the commentary (Dyson 2003; Morris 1994). His phrases are carefully managed using many common words like *Ford, government,* and *distinctive red lettering.* He expresses his ideas coherently, with no expletives. It would depend on a person’s cultural model as to whether ‘shit’ would be considered appropriate for the video, and as such is illustrative of the centrifugal forces at work (Morris 1994). These forces seek to disrupt the normative, allowing for individualism and making the language used more forceful. If it were a personal video he may have used a different descriptive word. I would suggest he was aware it was a ‘school’ work video and as such had language constraints attached to it. His *Arrr* and *somethin’* could also be centrifugal workings. But this force is not just evident in the words used.

*The cultural productions through which people act also provide the media through which persons live the boundaries between*
themselves and those identified as others. Through embracing their words and practices, socially marked others can be incorporated into ‘us’. Through being forced or seduced to using their words, we can be colonized by others. .....we can sneer at their words and practices and stop attending seriously to them’ (Holland & Lave, 2001 p.14).

Mick identifies with the Holden brand of car, and places Ford in the place of ‘other’. As such he considers it a legitimate object for ridicule, as also is the government. Mick delights in ‘sneering’ at Ford and the government. The government car, for Mick, is just a symbol for the government who, Mick explained, made him go to secondary school and have a bad time, and it didn’t give him money now.

**Student learning and identities** are intricately interwoven. Students’ participation in experiences is vital for successful learning; student interests and knowledges need to be central and not imposed by adults. Of significance are the knowledges that students bring to school or educational institutions. These ‘historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills [are] essential for household or individual functioning and well being’ (Moll et al. 1992, p. 133). These frieze frames illustrate how closely connected are the identity formative practices of self-authoring and that of narrative work in a variety of modes. In leaving the figured world of secondary school Mick transformed or created other worlds to suit his interests. It appears that Mick, in his informal ‘work experience’ arrangement of assisting his mates rebuild their car motors, used these experiences to strengthen those identities and positions he enjoyed. At NACE he encountered two intersecting figured worlds. With Rosemary he was afforded respect and challenges. Rosemary, in seeking to engage adolescent students, recognised the importance of their active participation incorporating their interests and knowledges. But it wasn’t always so. Often student knowledges are subjugated to official, out-dated curriculum or authoritative teacher-centred pedagogies (Smyth & Hattam 2004), as Mick had experienced with Janice at NACE, and at secondary school. It seems, from what Mick told me, that it was the same at secondary...
school. He constantly battled not to conform to the uniform code, but at the same time ‘cool’ or ‘popular’ images portrayed by other students or the media consumer culture also did not feature in his identities. Whether these identity indicators were from limited economic resources, or from other choices, was hard to tell. For him it was inconsequential; it was all part of the same ‘them against us’ package. His identities revealed a cultural model very distinct from mainstream cultures.

In Storyscape identity is situated in the four part ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et. al. 1998). In Chapters 4 and 5 the first two sections of figured worlds and positionality were discussed. The third aspect, that of self-authoring, has been developed in this chapter. Before going on to the final part of moving into or creating new figured worlds in Chapter 8, it is expedient to first explore some of the anomalies I witnessed during my time with the players. I do this next in Chapter 7 where I present Frozen Moments.
In my teaching adolescents there were occasions when a sudden verbal outburst or behaviour would be inconsistent for a student as I knew them. A normally placid student would suddenly react with great emotional energy, or another may pass a comment which seemed out-of-context for their lives. They were not, from my perspective, being recalcitrant; they were expressing something and I needed to respond appropriately to that student in that moment. When incidents like that happened at NACE I wasn’t surprised. I wondered what the incidents meant for the students, and waited to see how Janice would deal with the issues. In this chapter of Storyscape I digress from the ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et. al., 1998) framing to investigate some of the anomalies that occurred during my time at NACE. There are four frieze frames in the chapter, each focusing on an explanation for the incidents. However these explanations don’t exhaust the multitude of possibilities for incongruent comments and behaviours, especially those outside my time with the players. There are others that could be considered but not as this stage of Storyscape.
Learners bring to educational environments a history of explorations, experiences and exchanges; some negative, some positive, but all leaving a residue of participation (Moje & Lewis 2007). The players whom I met at NACE were no exception. These residues affect thoughts, motivations, behaviours, and numerous other human processes in invisible ways, some imperceptibly, some more distinctively. The ‘self’ aspect of a person has been likened to a magic writing pad (McLeod 2000); when the writing is erased there is still an imprint on the pad. This analogy partly explains how traces of the effects of discursive practices are present in a person, more pronounced sometimes than others. These effects of historical markings on a person are termed history-in-person (Holland & Lave 2001); they affect actions within figured worlds. History-in-person is a way of encapsulating the intricate histories that accumulate in the inner being of a person, which is distinctive from history in person conceived primarily through psychodynamics (Holland et. al. 1998). It allows for the dialogic nature and multiple layers of an inner-life and external activities of people over time as identities are established, adapted or stabilized. History-in-person is an important concept for understanding the incongruous words or actions of students, especially those engaged in education outside of mainstream schooling. There were other aspects of identity formation that could be considered, such as positionings within multiple social spaces, but history-in-person offered the most pertinent concept for my research.

Identity, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, is an enactment (Moje 2004; Wortham 2006) of the inner conversations and self-authoring processes as they are reflected in a persons’ material world. These reflections may be in clothing or accessories, behaviours, speech or the rejection of other mainstream cultural practices. Unexpected, unexplained incidents occur when a person’s individual history-in-person

‘collides with combinations of circumstances that are by degree precedent and unprecedented. The behaviours, the products of the moment, then become available as mediators ...’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 46).
The effects of historical markings will have cultural imprints brought about by impact of the person with cultural practices. What may be accepted as usual in one figured world may be viewed as extraordinary in another, but however viewed the imprints may be evidenced in behaviours, speech or artefacts. The person may also draw on these occasions to strengthen an identity or exert their agency. For the players an emotional reaction may have been tolerated in their home, whereas a similar reaction at school could be perceived as inappropriate. Students in minority groups view the world, their relationships, social practices and themselves from a different reality than from what mainstream, dominant students do. It is not just the realities that are different, but their perceptions too (Collins 1995).

When adolescents are consistently positioned in particular ways by themselves, teachers or students, this positioning affects their identity (Wortham 2004). Adolescents often enact an identity (Holland & Leander 2004, Wortham 2006) in which they have been constantly positioned, so students may take on the identity of smart, trouble-maker or other stereotype; these need not be long-term identities. Identity work is performed through social or role play, narratives and artefacts (Rowsell & Pahl 2007) as discussed in chapters 2 and 6. These self-authoring activities assist in stabilisation of an identity (Wortham 2004).

To build an understanding of Frozen Moments and the implications of history-in-person, the sedimentation process of thickening (Holland and Lave 2001) also needs consideration. Sedimentation causes a ‘thickening’ in an identity, and assists in the stabilisation whether permanently or temporarily. Events, perceptions and memories have an agenda and momentum of their own (Leander 2004b). The sedimentation process is a composite one of slow, sometimes erratic, but continuous change. Some ideas and memories wash away or transform, new experiences may leave their own traces, but some particles remain submerged. Over time, as the multiple layers of materials are washed and sifted, as new materials are deposited and some old removed, the configuration alters and settles. The stabilizing of these layers, known as lamination (Holland & Leander 2004),
is an on-going process, never completed. Sometimes in identity enactment, unrecognised mental – emotional particles may surface; some provide stability while others have a destabilizing effect. When there is a rupture in the sedimentation, when particles are tangled or too large to wash away, surface fractures can occur. When particles don’t congeal in the sedimentation, then identity practices may be compromised. The evidences of these occasions in language, behaviour, narratives or artefacts may be painful, anti-social, or out-of-character for the person.

In chapter 6 I discussed the artefact-in-use function of identity work, investigating materiality, performance and multimodality. Artefacts were considered in their broadest understandings to include narratives, pictures, conversational concepts and notes. Artefact production is an integral part of identity formation (Kress 1997, Kamler 2006), and relational to social space for their meaning as they are interpreted against them (Leander 2002b). In this way each artefact or narrative is time–place and space specific. This space, whether physical space or social space, is part of the figured worlds that people inhabit, and therefore subject to a range of constraints such as positional identities (Moje 2004). Time–place and space impact on the enactment of identity, and its marks on artefact production and effects.

During my time at NACE the players used improvisations as means of coping with unexpected situations. Some of the instances were humorous; some puzzling, some rebuked the teachers, and sadly, a few reflected tragic circumstances. I have included four examples in Storyscape, and refer to them as Frozen Moments; they are representative of a pattern that emerged in the data. They also represent four significant approaches for considering unexpected behaviours and reactions from students. In the first frieze frame an artefact of Luke’s is presented along with out-of-place comments made in class; the second considers the situated meaning of ‘home’ with Terry. Nathan’s narrated memory is discussed in the third frieze frame, while the last returns to Luke and an identity related artefact where product and performance were combined.
In Chapter 4 I investigated literacies, and presented three frieze frames concerning Luke. In this frieze frame I return to the third of chapter 4’s frames where Luke drew a devil horns and tail on the Prime Minister; however details around the drawings are different to facilitate contrasting discussion. Also included in the frame is another incident in the same class but two weeks later.

The Tuesday class had an employment focus, and Janice regularly used worksheets for student participation. In the first part of the frieze frame the students had to find an article about a famous person and complete a comprehension sheet about it. Luke picked an article with a photo of the Prime Minister. In the second part, two weeks later, the same class was working on preparations for job interviews. Janice had a discussion about jobs that might suit the students, and the students were working on worksheets regarding questions and answers for job interviews.

**F F 1: Luke’s political comment** (artefact association)

The Tuesday class exercise was to find a newspaper article about someone famous and complete a comprehension worksheet about it. Luke found a picture of Prime Minister John Howard planting a tree. He said to no-one in particular that Howard was the devil and drew horns on him, and then a devil’s tail.

He placed the pictured article prominently in front of him.
Two weeks later: in the middle of class writing time concerning job interviews, Luke suddenly called out

‘Howard’s a liar. I don’t like John Howard.
He says he’ll do stuff and then he doesn’t do it ... He lies.
He says all these things just to get people to vote for him,
but then he doesn’t do them’.

Janice and the other students, being used to Luke’s out-of-context interruptions, ignored the comments.

The class proceeded as though nothing had happened. However I was curious and as I was sitting close to Luke I quietly questioned him about his comments. His response was that Howard didn’t do things that he said he would, like help people; like help his (Luke’s) mother, but didn’t elaborate any further.

In a different classroom from Janice’s at NACE Luke’s interjections about Howard being the devil and a liar might have been interpreted as disruptive. Janice wasn’t concerned about it; she’d got used to his out-of-context comments and most times ignored them as ‘just Luke’s ways’. I would suggest that a teacher centred on a student learning might not have been so dismissive. These types of comments and artefacts are indicators of identity formation or in practice, and attention to them could be revealing in ways to assist that student’s learning.

The newspaper photograph as an artefact can be used to consider reactions associated with the artefact; these are not always easily recognised, as memory association is a provisional and continuous process, continuously negotiated and modified in light of present experiences (Rowsell & Pahl 2007). The time-place correlation (Leander 2002b; Moje 2004) for the incident is important as meanings and associations change over time; as experiences are reflected upon, the ensuing story can alter (Connelly & Clandinin1990). In another situation or time Luke’s responses may have been different, but something in the newspaper picture triggered a memory.
Very little is known about Luke’s home situation during his time at Neatsville secondary and NACE, and it maybe that something there had been an impetus for the political context and comment. There may have been something at NACE prior to my arrival, but it’s not known. Janice paid no attention to any of his comments, so didn’t record them to see if there was any pattern in them, or any connections with other comments or incidents.

Luke’s random comments in classes were, I believe, delayed responses to issues previously discussed. Sometimes these topics were only 5-10 minutes before, other times they came from a previous lesson. Speakers, writers, artists, consciously or otherwise, lay out their information to convey much more than their literal message (Gee 1996a). This is, I believe, the clue for understanding Luke’s messages in his drawings on the picture. Luke was laying out a message pictorially. Material artefacts, such as the picture of Howard, are laced with memories and with feelings (Holland & Leander 2004); something in the picture sparked memories and feelings for Luke. However the connection to Luke’s Howard – devil associations were found beyond the classroom situation that day.

Luke’s drawing of Howard as the devil revealed something of Luke’s identity as it sedimented and exhibited materially (Rowsell & Pahl 2007). But to understand Luke’s representation I needed to look at it from his perspective (Brodkey 1996b) of social discourses and his history-in-person. From what Luke says, the Department of Children’s Services (DSE) twice removed Luke and his sister from their mother’s care. Luke’s understanding of Government workings was limited and he equated the DSE with ‘the Government’, of whom Howard was the chief. In representing Howard as the devil he was exerting some control and agency, and making a personal statement. While this personal – social connection may have been one explanation for the drawing, another probability emerged later.

A week after Luke represented Howard as the devil there was an informal discussion among the students about voting procedures and political parties.
Janice was out of the room and Luke stated that he didn’t like Howard. As she returned the students went quiet returning to their reading. The next week was when Luke, seemingly out of context, declared: *Howard’s a liar. I don’t like John Howard. He says he’ll do stuff and then he doesn’t do it … He lies. He says all these things just to get people to vote for him, but then he doesn’t do them’.* Was this just a reaction to media representations of Howard? Was it a more personal – family related connection? Luke never elaborated on why he believed this, but it seems there was some emotional connection between Luke and Howard; something in Luke’s history-in-person that sparked the drawing and the comment. Howard was, for Luke, the bad man, the devil. The federal election was, at that stage, only a discussion and turned out to be eighteen months away. I return to these incidents in the *Endlude: Luke’s Ligature.*

My time with the players at NACE regularly featured the unexpected; some funny, some concerning, some puzzling, but all incongruous. In this chapter I consider four of the occasions, and term them Frozen Moments. Having considered Luke with memory association, I now turn to Terry where the situated meaning of simple word drew an unexpected response.

This next frieze frame happened Monday of the third week **Terry** was at NACE; he was enrolled for classes on Monday and Wednesday mornings. He attended Monday of his first week, Wednesday of his second. His varied narratives left me grappling to get any clear picture of a complex, capable lad in very varying circumstances, and what each situation meant to him. I arrived early and settled into the common area as had become my routine. Terry and Nathan got a lift to NACE so had arrived early. Nathan went to the kitchen for breakfast, while Terry settled into a computer game.
Terry enjoyed the attention of being a research participant, and had talked about a few different places as ‘home’, including his parents’ places in Hicksville and his maternal grandparents’ place in a nearby rural area. During an informal interview in his third week at NACE we were alone at a large table in the common area. Terry had turned on the heater, re-organised the chairs so he had a comfortable one and was playing a game on a lap-top while explaining about his boredom when he started secondary school, and his out-side school activities at the time. He said that he built his own computer at home, and I was hoping to clarify what he meant by ‘built a computer’.

Researcher: You built your own computer at home?
Terry: Yeah, it was no big deal. I spent 2 to 3 hours a day with a mate mucking about with computers.

Researcher: That’s great Terry. Is home generally at Hicksville, or within the area?
Terry froze for a moment, then threw his arms up and pushed back slightly from the table. Then, in a loud, agitated voice:

Terry: Home. Home was wherever I was living at the current time, wherever I could find a home. That’s home.

He avoided eye contact and returned to playing his game.

Students’ responses and behaviours result, in part, form their individual participation within specific social contexts that in Storyscape are referred to as figured worlds. Individual students follow typical ‘trajectories of participation’ (Wortham 2004. p. 164, my emphasis.) within and across classrooms. These typical languages and behaviours offer some stability within any figured world. However observers are not always privy to the figured worlds that students move among and that affect their dispositions
and responses. In the above frieze frame little is known to contextualise Terry’s responses.

At NACE Terry wanted to be identified in certain ways; he spoke and acted in ways that he knew would be acceptable in the NACE figured world, and in his wider figured worlds including his Department of Human Services. There was no official notification of why he was in DHS care. He voluntarily informed staff about his previous trouble with the police, but did not elaborate on details. Terry’s behaviour at NACE had been a continuous stream of what I would classify as ‘deep acting’ (Holland & Leander 2004). His identities, as I witnessed them, were consistently copy performances of personas and models he assumed from television and movie personalities. Whether he was taking photographs, talking with Nathan, moving between rooms, or directing a in a car-park, he was continually performing as an actor, so much so that it was hard to discern who the real ‘Terry’ was. He seemed to have a highly elaborate sense of selves around his identification with the personas of the culturally imagined types (Holland et al. 1998, Holland & Leander 2004). These persona laminations seemed to be bringing some stability to his identity. However, superficial evidence does not always reveal the underlying issues.

Within figured worlds ‘videotapes in the mind’ (Gee 1999, p. 59) establish meanings that offer stability for the people within that figured world; a standard to measure difference against. These mind-videos provide clarity to situated meaning within cultural models in a given context. They are linked to related situated meanings and cultural models. But in other cultural models the situated meanings of words can differ as discourses within the same language divide up the world and give it meaning in different ways. Groups not akin to the predominant cultural model experience and interpret the world in ways that often differ from mainstream members, and these differences are mediated by and through language (Alvermann 2001).
Within a figured world there is some **stability** to social practices and word meanings. Neophytes are apprenticed to learn these practices and meanings in a natural way. In the previous two weeks Terry had referred to several places as ‘home’. In one conversation it was his grandparents’ home, in another it was the Department of Human Services hostel where he was staying, and in another it was Nathan’s unit. In the frieze frame I’m interested in Terry’s computer skills, but his history-in-person causes him to respond to something different. He has misinterpreted my meaning; our languages collided, and suddenly two things become evident. Up until this point at NACE he has been calm and very much in control. When playing a computer game he doesn’t like to be interrupted, and later in Chapter 7 we see him calmly ignoring Janice’s questioning as he keeps typing before he answers as he types. But in this incident he not only stops typing, he pushes back his chair and raises his arms. As well as this irregular behavioural response it is apparent that, in that instant, the word ‘home’ has a different situational meaning for him than for me.

Students from non-mainstream cultures don’t always follow what is predictable for mainstream, dominant groups. Their individual trajectories of participation can deviate from typical mainstream ones (Holland and Lave 2001), and become a ‘**deviant trajectory**’ (Wortham 2004). Terry is unexpectedly faced with a situation which demands his improvising a personal response, as distinct from responding according to one of his actor personas.

In seeking to understand this incident it was necessary to contextualise it by several features all working in conjunction with history-in-person. There were several times in Terry’s figured world of NACE where the situated meaning of ‘home’ presented no disparity.

> ‘How the space is seen, experienced and understood depends on the positionality of people relative to the space...different perceptions of a given space, depending on people’s identities, their backgrounds and their positioning in society’ (Moje 2004, p. 15).
Now, unexpectedly, at this time-place intersection there was a different reaction. For some reason his perceptions were different. It was as if the reaction was a sudden emotional reaction to something; like pressure being released. A person’s reaction to something in their history-in-person can show in bodily reactions and responses (Holland et al. 1998). I ignored the incident and let Terry continue his computer game. About a minute later Nathan arrived with hot drinks and conversations continued as if the incident hadn’t happened. A few minutes later Terry and Nathan were busy hypothetically spending $200,000.00 on cars and modifications. The temperature in the room had increased and Terry removed his jacket. His left arm had dark pen drawings, like malformed crosses, all along it.

During my time at NACE there were no indicators of Terry’s inner world and speech where reasons for a conflict may have been evident. There were no other verbal or behavioural clues as to the reasons behind the outburst and the artefact on his arm. It may have been nothing to do with ‘home’, but he may have thought I was questioning his integrity. It may have been something external to NACE of which I was unaware. It was always difficult to separate Terry’s factual reality from his fantasy ones. I was never sure how much of his perceptions were affected by his acting personas and / or wishful-thinking.

At NACE Terry was as a compliant, clean, well mannered youth, with a disposition to fun and joviality. Indicators are that, on the morning of the fierce frame Terry’s NACE figured world suddenly was different. The meaning of ‘home’, that previously presented no difficulties, at this particular time-place intersection in this figured world, now presented a problem. ‘Home’ was no longer a secure place, but a temporary one, and perhaps one to be sought.

Frozen Moments are moments when, during my time with the players at NACE, there were incidents or parts of conversations which presented as anomalies for the players concerned. While there are probably numerous causes or possible explanations for these moments, in Storyscape I present
Having considered memory association and situated meanings, I now examine a fragment of an informal conversation with Nathan and Terry concentrating on Nathan and his narrated memory.

**Nathan** indicated that he was an avid reader, and spoke about his love of reading from an early age. At secondary school he read the required books for English but did not always complete assignments to a required standard to pass. He loved both fiction and non-fiction texts. When he attended NACE he regularly read a variety of articles and advertisements in the *Herald Sun* newspaper. This frieze frame occurred Wednesday of the seventh week, and was his seventh day of his attendance. By this time he was familiar with me and seemed to enjoy chatting about his life, education and interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F F 3: Nathan’s bookshelf (memory – perceptions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terry, Nathan and I were seated around the table in the common area one morning. They were discussing types of books they enjoyed, and surmising about the long-term survival of books. Each was playing a game on a laptop computer while we chatted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry: <em>I read lots of books. Mainly fantasy books.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan: <em>I read fantasy too. From when I was little I read lots of books.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry: <em>My mum would read something good and pass the book on to me.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan: <em>I like thick books; books that have suspense; the need to keep turning the page.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry: <em>Yeah, like the Garth Nix books.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan: <em>I have a big book-shelf full of my favourite books.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He indicated the size by extending his arms nearly full width.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan: <em>They’re my favourite books since I started reading.</em></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nathan was positioning himself as a literate, successful reader, an identity that was supported by his successful reading of a wide variety of texts at NACE, including reading diagrams to set digital equipment working. However I would suggest that in this instance there may be more going on. Terry and Nathan’s friendship was relatively new and Terry constantly boasted of his exploits. Whatever anyone else had done he’d done more; whatever someone else had he or a close relative had bigger and better. At NACE Nathan often ignored this competition as he read the newspaper. In this instance he continued in the discussion.

Improvisations allow a person to connect their past with the present and an anticipated future as it provides some continuity and cohesion (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a). For Nathan this narrative about his mother looking after his favourite books in a big bookshelf is an ‘improvisation’ that allows him some identity stability as it connects his personal inner life with social and cultural relationships and activities. As such this memory forms part of the intricacies of his history-in-person. Narratives reveal or explain a variety of conditions in their telling (Eubanks 2004). Each issue has possibilities, but no definite conclusions may be drawn to explain Nathan’s improvisation. It became a Frozen Moment as the context of Nathan’s life, as he told it, didn’t sit easily with this narrated memory.

Nathan’s account of his schooling presented him as an ‘itinerant’ student who usually spent no more than a year in any one school. Most of the primary schools were in rural cities. He had not had any contact with his father for several years. Prior to coming to Neatsville he lived with his mother, a brother and two sisters in Big Smoke city. In one year they shifted so much he attended 13 different secondary schools, explaining that going to lots of schools had its advantages as he made lots of friends all over the city. He hadn’t seen his mother since coming to Neatsville about three and a half years prior to my time at NACE.
Central to identity in Storyscape is Bakhtin’s concept of the dialogic interplay between a person’s inner life and their outer one in the world of social relationships and activities (Holland et. al. 1998), the inner conversations. While cultural forms have played a significant role in the frieze frames, it is the relationship between a person’s inner life and their material worlds that hold prominence. Whether Nathan’s story of the bookshelf full of books was a memory from the past, or whether it was adapted or created in that instance cannot be known.

‘One’s history-in-person is the sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded one in the present’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 18, see also Alvermann et al. 2006).

Nathan positioned himself as an independent reader from an early age, and his mother as caring for Nathan’s valued books. He was narrating to a keen listener who was interested in books and reading, and these conditions affect the narrating. Narratives are partial, selective, and sculptured, as I discussed early in Chapter 3. In this instance Nathan’s perception and memory are inextricably interwoven. He improvised on the internal and external cultural resources familiar to him; books and memories of reading. In comparison to Terry’s mother who shared reading with Terry, Nathan’s mother kept the significant books.

For Nathan, along with the artefact memory embedded with meaning, the story also brought back emotions associated with the artefact (Holland & Leander 2004). Nathan’s recent fatherhood, and his emotional involvement with his baby daughter, probably had brought back memories associated with his own parents. Even though he had not had contact with his mother for a few years, he believed she still had the bookshelf of books waiting for him, sitting as it was when he left home. Improvisations allow people to cope with the changes that are an inevitable part of life (Clandinin & Connelly 2000a). Narrating a memory can soften the edges of what may otherwise remain ‘an unbearable sequence of sheer happenings’ (Linden 1993, p. 17). In Nathan’s memory, travelling back ‘home’ he arrives at a
place that exists as it was. In reality this time and place may no longer exist as they were then.

Memories are fundamentally narrative in nature (Eubanks 2004) and their arrangements may be illusionary. And they can be tricky.

‘They come and go according to their own rhythms and reasons, like waves on the ocean, revealing themselves in mysterious, unpatterned ways. ... memories are never "pure" - raw or uninterrupted’ (Linden, 1993. p. ix).

As people revisit memories or experiences, the retelling or remaking tends to smooth out details, and their meanings shift and change over time. A significant aspect of identity in practice is the ability of a person to represent or ‘figure’ themselves as agents in described scenes (Leander 2002a). In Nathan’s narrated memory he can travel back and pick up the pieces of life as it was; his identity, his books. It is like a life-buoy for him to assist with coping with the realities of his current life. It is not a memory; it is the story of a memory which can change with each visit or retelling.

Nathan’s narrative of the bookshelf of his books is just that, a narrated memory. It is set in a past time–space that continues to exist in his mind; the memory changes with time and with what is significant each revisit. In these revisits entanglements of details can become acute (Connelly & Clandinin 1990) or distorted. This memory and Nathan’s identity as a son and a reader are entwined, and locked in this research moment. The significance is not, I believe, in the accuracy or otherwise of the memory, but in the stability it provides for Nathan’s identity during the social interaction at NACE.

There are a variety of conditions that pre-empt behaviours that I’m presenting as Frozen Moments. Having considered memory association, situated meanings and a narrated memory, I now return to Luke to consider a different aspect of his identity formation. People’s identities evolve over time, and are particular to historically specific times and cultural spaces (Holland & Leander 2004) within figured worlds. Repetition of an image
type, or positioning by oneself or by others, assists in stabilising an identity. It is difficult to realise identity sedimentation in a short-term research project such as this. However in seeking to understand the complexities of Luke’s identity it is expedient to consider some of the possibilities and their implications.

During my time at NACE Luke consistently displayed a couple of identities. In and out of class he spoke definitely and frequently about his desire to become a pilot; he has carried his information folder about aircraft and the prospectus for entry into the air force. He was clean, courteous and a well behaved student who was conscientious with some of his classes. He was friendly with older students in the Tuesday class, and with the men who attended the Men’s Shed program on a Wednesday. He was reticent in the research interview situation, but more at ease with the classroom situation where he frequently discussed family and personal matters, and gave his opinion on a wide range of topics. He was happy to chat informally whenever the opportunity presented.

This frieze frame occurred the second last week of the term. Janice had set the class a ‘fun and easy’ task, to represent their dreams and hopes in an art picture using paint or collage. The students and regular tutor were talkative and helping each other with ideas, pictures and captions. There was a variety of magazines available, as well as paints and glue. In this class Luke was a familiar and popular student amidst older students. In his work folder Luke had print-outs of himself during a recent drama performance, also pictures of planes and helicopters, research information. Up until this activity Luke had given no indication that he had a phone.
The Tuesday class were doing a designated art activity to collage or paint their interests, dreams and ambitions; things they would like for themselves in the future. Luke seemed distracted and did not settle to the task. He ignored all offers of help to do the collage, and they were frequent. He refused all aircraft pictures offered to him. He wandered around, in and out of the room. When Janice left the room Luke got out his phone and played music. He very unobtrusively danced to the music; he used a thin roller to put light green splutters on his paper. His movements were rhythmic and in beat with the music. He then used a brush to put on some brown and yellow haphazard strokes.

This lasted for about three minutes. As Janice returned Luke shut the phone off and slipped it into his pocket. He wandered out of the room muttering *I don’t know what to do. This is so boring.*

Janice put the work aside for him to complete the following week. No additional work was done to it.
Luke was faced with a task he seemingly could not do. He had the physical skills of cutting and pasting on pictures; some of the class members passed him pictures of things related to his interests (helicopters and air planes). Nothing in his behaviour at NACE suggested he was being recalcitrant. Yet here was a seemingly simple activity which he could not do; an ‘enjoyable’ task which he was not comfortable with.

An identity is not a stagnant notion that settles with a person; fixed and immutable (Hall 1996). In this frieze frame we see how fragile and illusive Luke’s identity is at that particular moment.

‘The person and the category plus the memories and artefacts of past episodes of positioning become virtually laminated on to one another and so come to constitute a hybrid unit in social and emotional life’ (Holland & Leander 2004, p. 131).

The ‘thickening’, the stabilising, of any identity had not yet happened for this adolescent. I would suggest any of Luke’s identities were still in the ‘sedimentation’ stage where shifting and sifting were still in process, still evolving and going through the ‘eddying’ process. There are several factors to be considered in understanding this Frozen Moment.

Luke talked freely and positively about his times at Convenience Cove Specialist School where the structured program suited his literacy skills and academic style. He lived in a family foster care home and missed his mother. His school friendships were, in Luke’s memories, various and enduring. Within this educational figured world it may be that some lamination of Luke’s identity as a student had started to solidify.

Repetition works to stabilize identity over time (Wortham 2004); however that year for Luke was followed by approximately eight months of emotional turmoil where, it seems, at Neatsville secondary school he was positioned by students and teachers as ‘stupid’, ‘illiterate’ and ‘anti-social’. Luke was not the first student to experience conflict and troubled relationships when he resisted cultural personas which others applied to him (other examples Hick’s 2004 and Fordham’s 1993). While such cultural
personas may help to interpret or figure social positions (Holland & Leander 2004) they did not sit comfortably with Luke. His angst in these positionings soon led to his skipping classes, then to truancy.

Artefacts are intertwined with feelings, words, memories and sometimes physical reactions associated with the artefact (Holland & Leander 2004). While the art activity seemed simple, for Luke it may have involve him facing a number of artefacts, such as photographs, pictures and advertisements, which brought unsettling emotions. Luke’s difficulties, in part, may lie with these memories and associated emotions.

At NACE Luke had been comfortable with intellectually discussing becoming a pilot, along with the design and features of certain aircrafts. During my class observation times there were two times when Janice made passing comments about ambition. He had been on-line and started completing the application for entrance for RAAF. He could not complete the application because he couldn’t enter his Year 10 english and mathematics results. Janice told him he could get his Year 10 qualifications at NACE; however Luke knew he wasn’t applying himself in the math classes. In the Tuesday class Luke was bemoaning the years of study ahead: ‘By the time I finish at NACE and TAFE, and then uni, I’ll be middle age when I finish studying!’ When challenged by Janice about his decision to become a pilot, and whether he had considered how much study was involved, he admitted he had never considered it. He saw pilots chasing aliens in the movie Independence Day and thought it looked like fun. He asked what going up in the air was like as the only time he’d been off the ground was jumping on a trampoline. It seems that Luke was unable at that particular point of time, to combine his academic interest and his emotional involvement by placing associated pictures on his page. The realism of the study to become a pilot may have been a factor in why Luke was finding the collage activity difficult to do. The second time I heard reference to the practical part of becoming a pilot was when the class was preparing for job interviews, an event which seemed formidable to Luke. He wanted to know
if there were any jobs he could get without an interview, and how many interviews he would have to have to get into the air force.

Another cross-roads that I believe was affecting Luke’s functioning on this particular morning, was the close proximity of the end of term. Even though Luke’s actual in-class times at NACE were three mornings, he spent from 8AM to 4.30 PM each week-day at NACE. He had access to the computer lab and the kitchen; he assisted staff with menial tasks, and did private research. Other than fellow NACE students, the only friends he spoke about were those from Convenience Cove School, 18 months and about 100 kilometres away. He frequently rode his BMX bike, but again always alone. With the end of term only a week away there were discussions about students and staff holiday activities. Staff members, aware of the importance of NACE in Luke’s everyday life, were trying to encourage him to find other avenues for his energies, and were actively discouraging him from coming during the holidays. This was probably a big demand for Luke’s whose self-image was built around his positionings and relationships at NACE.

My analysis of data brought an emergent change in Luke’s interests. While sometimes in class he would day-dream, and sigh ‘This is boring’, during the last three weeks of term music started to be mentioned. He asked if he could put a drum kit in the classroom, or if the class could form a band instead of doing ‘this boring work’. Then, as the frieze frame shows, he danced and painted to music from his mobile.

In terms of identity production Luke drew upon the multiple resources on hand to establish an emergent, provisional identity (Wortham 2004) within the classroom context. Though seeming not to be a stable identity, it did offer him some security. He used available resources, such as paint and his phone, to manage and express his emotions (Bartlett & Holland 2002; Leander 2002b). Limited as he was with the NACE constraints, he found expression for his troubled and insecure identity. While the results on paper did not meet with Janice’s requirements, I believe that the painting does

Storyscape, while interested in the educational experiences and outcomes of the players, recognises the importance of seeing each student as a ‘whole’ person. Frozen Moments are crucial to contextualising incongruent behaviours in adolescent students who leave traditional secondary schooling to engage in other educational activities. To contextualise Frozen Moments teachers need to be more than caring traditional teachers. Teachers need to know the students in ways that when out-of-character comments are made or incidents occur, teachers can be aware and consider the unknowns in the personal history-in-person and everyday conditions, and offer supportive hope for the future. Janice’s preoccupation with course outcomes and her limited training left many opportunities for suitable student development and training unnoticed. In such educational spaces many students leave to find more suitable figured worlds. And so I now turn to Chapter 8 *Going Places*. 
Chapter 8 Going Places.

‘Human agency may be frail, especially among those with little power, but it happens daily and mundanely, and it deserves our attention’

(Holland et al. 1998. p. 5).

‘Learning... both involves and requires participation in something. Learning is motivated ... by a need to understand something, whether an act, a word, a sensory experience ...’

(Moje & Lewis 2007, p. 16).

**Storyscape** captures critical moments in the lives and narratives of several adolescent students and two teachers whom I spent time with at a community education facility in Neatsville. I call them players, and in this chapter I investigate situations around education for three of them; Bethany, Mick, and Terry. Identity is a central focus in Storyscape, and my investigation centres on the four key processes in 'identity in practice' (Holland et. al. 1998). In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 I presented the first three parts of figured worlds, positional identities and self-authoring. In this chapter I consider the final part of creating or moving to new figured worlds. There are four frieze frames: the first two feature Bethany, the second features Mick, and the third Terry. These are focus points, and all the players feature in my discussion.
In previous chapters there has been mention of the significance of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in Storyscape. In this chapter they are crucial terms as I explore the socially endorsed educational practices which caused the players to leave secondary schools without any formal qualifications, and the similar conditions at NACE which seemed to impact adversely on the attendance of most of them. Each of the players lived in a range of figured worlds. Where these worlds were of their own choosing they had common interests, ideas and beliefs to other people in those worlds, and so valued those worlds and were valued in them. These may have been family or friendship group figured worlds. However there were figured worlds which the players preferred not to be part of, but the prevalent cultural model of education stipulated compulsory education, so the players were forced to attend secondary schools. At these schools the players ‘attended’ figured worlds where they held different values and ideas from the members and therefore had little or nothing in common.

It is conditions like these, where people hold little in common with other members, which cause individuals move to, or create other figured worlds. Imagining a new world or a different future is part of narrative development (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), as well as the process of moving from one figured world to another. Imagining opens up alternative possibilities, which can result in ‘consciously chosen action’ (White & Wyn 1998, p. 315). Motivated by hope or desperation the players moved out of schools into other figured worlds and identities. Some of the players may also have moved out of the NACE figured world. Understanding some of the conditions that cause students to exit an educational figured world is a crucial aspect to situating why the players choose to leave secondary schools and it’s to this I now focus my attention.

In Storyscape the difference between space and place is significant, as presented at the beginning of Chapter 2. Space is where there is an opportunity for student engagement, which in a natural way would lead to learning; however opportunities are not utilised. Place is where the students
engage formally or informally in meaningful experiences within a space; this enables ‘deep’ learning (Gee 2003a), meaningful relationships and strengthening of particular identities. Membership within a figured world would normally indicate that the world was a place for students, a place where effective learning could be experienced. Spaces, on the other hand, are bounded and determined by cultural constraints and practices. Government funding and policies, administrative decisions, historically placed social practices, teachers’ authoritative positions or other contingencies all impact on figured worlds within schools, and result in places or spaces for students within classrooms, buildings, sporting arenas and playgrounds.

As I stated in Chapter 2, for the players secondary school and NACE provided opportunities for formal education; spaces where they could engage in academic and practical learning. When each of the players enrolled at NACE they had ambitions, dreams and expectations for personal, meaningful educational achievements. Each had a different goal from the others, but they all had clearly identifiable goals, and by the middle of the year, when my time with them concluded and their attendances were waning, it was obvious that none of the goals would be achieved. There was a difference between what was being taught, and what the players, from their perspective, were learning and went to NACE to learn (Lave 1996). For six of them their lack of attendance indicated that the possibilities within the educational spaces had not become places for them. Luke was the exception.

The players, in their interviews and informal conversations, explained the conditions that led to them leaving their secondary schools. Five of the players, Luke, Suzie, Mick, Nathan and Terry, were very direct, specific and resolute about their reasons. Yvette and Bethany’s interviews and conversations were not adequate to gauge their reasons. There were several common elements, and some of the issues also relate to NACE, and may indicate the probable reasons for inconsistent attendances for most of the players.
Agency is an integral part of identity work, as people position themselves ‘to allow for new ways of being’ (Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007, p. 5), the ability to implement actions of their chosen identities. While agency is identified as the means by which an individual acts to strengthen their self-belief or preserve aspects of their lives within figured worlds, identity is implicit in the processes. The construction and reconstruction of identities happens continuously and simultaneously (Marsh & Stolle 2006), with agency involved not just in major decisions or actions, but small ones too.

‘Agency might be thought of as the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources and histories, as embedded within relations of power’ (Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007, p. 18).

At secondary school the players experienced authoritative and powerful discourses through administrative, pedagogical and curriculum decisions, and also through language and implicit power relations. Within these figured worlds each of them was identified in certain ways. Suzie, Luke, Nathan, Mick and Terry found secondary school an inhibiting and sometimes debilitating figured world; they expressed disdain of some of the terms used for them.

Mick and Nathan did not want to be identified as ‘disruptive’ or ‘lazy’. They explained how they were neither of these things when classes were interesting and talked about a Year 9 project which held their interest for many months. In leaving Neatsville secondary they not only exerted agency to seek a more suitable figured world, but were also positioning themselves to discard the identity of ‘disruptive secondary school student’, avoid the identity of ‘expelled student’, and reconstruct their identities as ‘creative, mechanically able young men’.

‘[L]anguage is a powerful tool of social positioning and the layering of subjectivities. It is at once a means of naming one's identity and having one's identity named by others. Language becomes a way of narrating one's place within existing figured worlds and of imagining new ones’ (Hicks 2004, p. 223).
Luke didn’t want to be identified as ‘stupid’, ‘illiterate’ or ‘dumb’. The words were not only positioning him in particular ways, they brought back what seemed like traumatic or horrific memories. He also had memories of being a successful student, so confusion also impacted on him.

Each of the players, by their accounts, had been subjected to months or years of powerlessness. Bethany and Suzie said their schools weren’t interested in friends being in the same classes so they could help each other. When Suzie and Luke asked for help with school work it wasn’t available. It wasn’t just individual teachers in classrooms who exerted power over the players, but the positional identity of the institution and the associated social practices (Lewis, Ensico & Moje 2007) within the particular cultural model of education. The complexities of the power struggle were compounded by the history-in-institution (Holland & Lave 2001) on the one hand, and, on the other, the history-in-person (Holland & Lave 2001; Holland and Leander 2004). Historically the institution of ‘school’ held an authoritative position, while the reciprocal position of ‘student’ held the expectation of unquestioning submission and compliance. These are the basis for my student and TEACHER positional identities discussed in Chapter 5.

Agency can be identified as ‘the ability to exert power’ (Blackburn 2004, p. 103) and it can operate in a number of ways. It cannot be assumed that youth do not have agency just because they don’t exhibit it in ways schools approve of.

‘Resistance is not a failure to exert agency; rather it is a move, perhaps even an aggressive move, to assert agency for a purpose that is in conflict with the dominant person or institution, such as school’ (Blackburn 2004, p. 104).

At secondary school the players’ agency showed in a number of ways: deciding not to attend a class; not handing in an assignment; ignoring a request to be quiet; uniform non-compliance. While generally viewed by teachers or administrators as disruptive behaviours, they can be a form of agency (Urrieta 2004), especially when viewed from the players’ position. As I discussed in Chapter 2, clothing and behaviours are integral forms of
communication, and attention needs to be paid to what adolescents, through their behaviours are saying.

When an adolescent finds that the figured world of secondary school is no longer a viable arena to be in because the local discourses and practices are no longer are engaging or appealing, there are options for them. They could remain in the figured world at school and resist the discourses that are incongruent to their dispositions. For the players this option wasn’t viable as they recognised that the schools were not going to change to accommodate them, their learning styles or interests. They could have effaced their feelings, adopting the appropriate languages and behaviours, and remain at school ‘passing’ (Fordham 1993) as something they are not. In this mode students gives up other identities to achieve a specific cultural educational goal (Holland et al. 1998), but not without consequences in the muting of their feelings and the stifling of creativity (Fordham 1993). The players in choosing not to stay at secondary school were being honest to their feelings, interests and well-being. They may have been using personal agency for self-preservation (Blackburn 2004). The remaining option was to leave that particular figured world.

The decision to leave probably didn’t come suddenly, although some specific event or confrontation may have been the impetus for the formal departure. There is a continuum of positions, and degrees of involvement, that are available in any figured world. The growing dissatisfaction, the increasing degree of animosity may span weeks, months, or even years. A decision made when a person feels strong may be revoked when weakness or fatigue develop. The support of friends may give encouragement to try new endeavours, but if the friendships aren’t sustained then a person’s determination may diminish. I use ‘eddy ing’ to describe the development of agency and identity as I believe the process is not usually one of sudden transformation, but rather a slowly developing awareness through inner dialogues and practices of speech and enactments. Times of strength and certainty would generally be interspersed with other periods of doubts and
wonderings. This was certainly so with Luke, and I discuss this further in *Endlude: Luke’s Ligature*.

It was no coincidence that the players were at NACE, they all had **educational goals**. Their perspectives are important in contextualising their endeavours to find educational figured worlds to meet their needs, and in assessing their involvement with NACE teachers and classes. Each of the players wanted to improve their formal education and skills: Suzie wanted to improve her literacy so she would be attractive to an employer; Luke wanted to become a pilot; Nathan wanted to complete year 10 and 11; Mick wanted enough education to get a mechanic’s apprenticeship; Bethany and Yvette each wanted better skills to get good jobs, and Terry wanted to do something constructive towards getting an apprenticeship.

In considering the players moves to new or other figured worlds, I situate my discussion around **four frieze frames**, all of which happen at NACE. While the players gave informative narratives concerning their leaving secondary schools, their narratives are partial, selective and sculptured, as discussed early in Chapter 3. My observational accounts are also partial, selective and sculptured, but I have consciously sought to be objective about the incidents while at the same time presenting the perspective that I believe the players would want.

The **positive effects of friendships**, and the negative effects if friendship were absent, were significant categories in the data analysis. Bethany, Suzie, and Nathan spoke about the positive effects of friendships during their times at secondary school. Mick, Terry and Luke didn’t speak directly about friendships but alluded to them in their narratives of activities with friends at secondary school. None of the participants specified any positive teacher relationships in their interviews.

For many students the reason for being at school is the opportunity to form and maintain peer relationships take part in extra-curricula activities and organise their social lives (Smyth & Hattam 2004; Fitz Clarence, Green &
Bigum 1995). Bethany’s social activities at secondary school centred on reading activities with friends; discussing and recommending books they enjoyed, borrowing and sharing books and magazines together and trips to the local library. She also explained how she and her friends thought that dividing students into ability groups was a bad thing because in classes where students were mixed the able students would help the other students. Bethany knew that her friends who were struggling with secondary school work would not ask a teacher for help but would ask friends.

The first frieze frame occurs on Monday of the third week. Both Bethany and Suzie were new students that term. Bethany, up until this lesson, had actively resisted all attempts to use a computer for any purpose. She said she was able to use them, just didn’t like to. During my first two weeks at NACE I observed a very quiet Bethany. She answered questions directed to her but otherwise didn’t initiate any conversations. She frequently sent texts to friends in a nearby educational institute and was first out the door to meet her friends. Her literacy skills seemed quite sophisticated when playing The Real Game (See Appendix 8). She was, however, bored with it; twice in 15 minutes Janice drew her attention away from the birds outside. I introduced the game in Chapter 5 where I identify some limitations of the level that Janice uses for students at NACE. The game is based on ‘ideologically privileged styles’ (Holland et. al. 1998, p. 132.) in the predominant cultural model. The players lacked the supportive family environments, academic ambitions and stable economic circumstances conducive for success in formal secondary and tertiary education and professional futures. Bethany had access to special educational funding available to adolescents of Aboriginal descent enabling her to attend NACE to enhance her skills and employability. The government department regulating her payments checked Bethany’s attendance every week.
FF 1: Friendship for Bethany (significant relationships)

Monday morning. Bethany brought Yvette to NACE, and Janice attended to the enrolment. Bethany wanted to make hot chocolate drinks so they wandered down to the shops to purchase ingredients. From where I was sitting in the classroom I could see them chatting together as they dawdled towards the shops, and later back. While they were away Rosemary had set up lap-top computers for their use. They eventually arrived in the classroom with their drinks.

Janice was working with Suzie at a computer. The task for the lesson was to research 3 or 4 jobs that they were interested in. Bethany and Yvette sat near each other at the opposite end of the long table from Janice and Suzie.

Janice: You need to get information on conditions, training, rates of pay; that sort of thing. So you need to use the internet.

Rosemary assisted the girls to log on, at the same time telling them about a NACE photographic competition.

Bethany: Move your computer closer. What are you going to do?

Yvette, opening her computer: Photographer.

Bethany: Where’d you get that idea from?

Yvette: Her (indicating Rosemary), from the competition.

Bethany: Hey look.

Both girls giggled and chatted quietly about something Bethany had found.

Janice: Bethany, what career are you doing?

Bethany: Oh. Ahh. (Pause) A professional netball player.

More giggles from both girls.

Yvette: What an idiot am I, how do you spell photography?

Bethany, while working on her computer, spelt it for her.

Bethany: There’s too many sites here and none about pay or conditions.

Yvette: Change your search. Look at this!

Bethany leant across to share Yvette’s computer. More giggles.

Bethany: Hey, look at this. (Giggles about the sexy driver) We could buy one (a new sports car).

Yvette: Yeah, as if. Who’s goin’ to drive?

Bethany: Where we gunna get that sort of money?

Yvette, now on a different site: Look at her hair. Wow! Hey, you could be a hairdresser.
On a **personal level** it was obvious that Bethany was more relaxed with a friend there, and that she and Yvette shared a close relationship. They had known each other for several years and had attended a year of secondary school together. Yvette has just shifted from a north-western region and was living with Bethany’s family. In this frieze frame Bethany and Yvette chat and giggle as they share work and ideas, a very different picture of Bethany from what I’d previously seen. My researcher journal entries for the two days when Bethany and Yvette were together at NACE record:

There is a marked difference in Bethany with Yvette coming. Bethany is more vocal, and smiles more, and enjoys chatting while she worked. Working together these girls achieved a lot as they were not distracted from their task, and enjoyed creating the sort of guys they wanted these characters to be. She’s getting more relaxed and used to the class, smiling more, responding quietly to comments. She’s far more open when Yvette is around.

Bethany’s belief that there were times when struggling students would ask friends for help in class highlights an assumption prevalent in the cultural model of education implicitly operating in Neatsville; that there is only one teacher in a classroom. Friends learn from each other informally and in formal situations; Mick and Nathan’s experiences affirm that. Yvette didn’t have to interrupt Janice to get the spelling of ‘photographer’, not that Bethany taught Yvette to spell it, but it’s an example of students cooperatively working.

The task for the day, to research pay-rates and conditions for jobs, aligned with Janice’s use of ‘The Real Game’, to introduce students to a range of **employment** possibilities. She perceived educational success as ‘academic achievement’, an accumulation of certificates that would ensure worthwhile fulltime employment, financial success and the means of material possessions. In my weeks at NACE there was only one small reference to
the practicalities of a job, and that was informally in a Tuesday class. The issue of practicalities comes up for consideration in *Endlude: Luke’s Ligature*. For Bethany and Yvette there was no consideration of practicalities; of acknowledging skills and training needed, of suitability for a position, or what personal or academic qualifications were needed. So how relevant was Bethany’s suggestion of a professional netball player? She was very overweight and didn’t play sport. I wondered if she would have the necessary coordination, skills and determination needed for such a career. I suspect she wasn’t being serious about the task, but just enjoyed having Yvette there to socialise with. Bethany and Yvette’s walk to the shop used 38 minutes of the lesson time, which wasn’t a dilemma for them; they could talk and text wherever they were. It is difficult to ascertain how much of Bethany and Yvette’s talk was related to their work, and how much ‘real work’ they achieved in the session.

Educational institutions are landscapes of ‘ideologically privileged’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 132.) activities and relationships impregnated with power, history and meanings which unobtrusively impact on students, sometimes in negative ways. Schools and educational institutions sustain and reproduce an education based on a cultural model designed to promote a certain type of academic success and particular identities. The players at secondary schools and NACE constantly struggled against coercion to conform, boredom and irrelevance; a ‘constrained space’ (Leander 2002c, n.p.) instead of an educational place engaging their creativity and skills. Some of the coercion was implicit and subtle, like the expectation to succeed academically, then further education or training and a ‘good’ job. I wondered if Bethany’s lack of interest and motivation was associated with her questioning of the relevance of an education based on middle class British beliefs (Hicks, 2004), how different values in schooling and her predominant culture affected her, and whether she was interested in a cultural model of education and employment different from the predominant cultural model. I also pondered about her language assimilation, and whether the language of the predominant culture had been ‘imposed’ upon her but had not given her access to, or she didn’t want to
access, the associated practices that led to membership of the ‘club’ (Comber & Nixon 1999) which was alien to her natural or preferred culture (Comber, 1994). It seemed to me that Bethany was an example of how explicit curriculum can achieve different results for different students (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), when comparing her to mainstream students who remained at school. Other uncertainty was whether the literacy she achieved wasn’t valued in her culture, and what its relationship might be to the effects of long term unemployment in the culture (Comber 1997). Once again the lack of data left these issues unresolved.

While, for a brief time, Bethany experienced the effects of a close friend being with her at NACE, there are other relationships which can affect attendance at schools and educational institutes. One research found that ‘the overwhelming explanation given by young people for exiting school (early), was the failure to establish relationships during the crucial years of schooling’ (Smyth 2003, p. 28). None of the participants in this research identified caring teachers as significant in their secondary schooling. Mick and Nathan grumbled about the teachers who didn’t care about them. A report on effective alternative programs for adolescents identified eight consistently recurring factors (Kerka 2003). One was the presence of caring, knowledgeable adults. Smyth (2003) found that when there was a high level of attention given to the relational work of teachers then schools could succeed for the majority of disadvantaged students. At NACE there were caring teachers and adults who went out of their way to assist students in more ways than educational programs. They regularly provided food, celebrated birthdays and assisted with clothing and advice. Luke is an example of how caring relationships at NACE assisted in developing his personal agency (Moore & Cunningham 2006).

However, by itself caring is not enough. It is incumbent on caring teachers still to provide suitable teaching (Moje 2000), especially when students often have had negative experiences at secondary schools. The programs of the NACE teachers were limited; there were limits on the courses that NACE were certified to deliver, there were funding restrictions, the teachers
were limited by their training, and the educational model in which the
teachers operated did not correspond with the needs of the most of the
adolescent learners.

In the first frieze frame Bethany is presented with her friend Yvette. They
had classes together that Monday and the following Wednesday. Janice
enjoys art and sells some paintings through a local bazaar. She frequently
uses art in her classes with the assumption that all the students will enjoy
doing it because it is a ‘fun’ thing to do. The task was to create a
background for the video clips. This Wednesday Bethany and Yvette spent
two hours painting; my journal records show:

The pages were larger than A3; maybe twice as large. Bethany
painted maybe five black lines from top to bottom, the width of
the brush. She then sprinkled silver stars on them (although they
did not stick). On the other page Yvette painted 5 or 6 spirals.

After the girls left Janice muttered that the backgrounds ‘wouldn’t do’ and
she guessed she’d have to do them herself. It seemed to me that one
difficulty was that Janice couldn’t imagine anyone not thinking art was fun.
She enjoyed art and assumed that everyone else would too. Another
difficulty was that Janice had a preconceived idea of what she wanted for
the backgrounds, but she hadn’t conveyed this to Bethany and Yvette, so
they did what they wanted. And in the course of the two hours Janice never
checked their efforts to guide or assist them.

It seems that Bethany and Yvette’s decision for Yvette to attend NACE with
the same funding and in the same program as Bethany was circumvented by
the funding body. Yvette, instead, was consigned to do work experience at
the office of the funding body as a full time trainee doing secretarial work.
She did not arrive at NACE the next Monday, and Bethany came alone.
Bethany also attended on Wednesday, and it is on this Wednesday that the
next frieze frame took place.
The second frieze frame is set in the multi-media class, the one in which Janice is intent on getting a video production done using traditional processes. It’s an early stage of the production; planning is not complete, and in this class students are set the task of creating visual collages to establish the characters. There were four students in the class. During the class I surreptitiously noted where Bethany was reading in the newspaper, and after she left I got the paper and expanded my notes.

**FF 2 Bethany’s engagement** (in non-class activities during NACE class)

Wednesday: students in the multi-media class were working on aspects of the art work for the video production. Bethany, in previous lessons, had not contributed to discussion ideas for the video. She was not interested in following Janice’s suggestion to make a collage to represent Handley, a character for the video. She sat on a table browsing the current Herald Sun while Janice got the other students organised. Janice came to her 30 minutes into the lesson.

Janice: *You haven’t started yet Bethany!*

Bethany folds up the paper, leaves it on the table, and slides off.

Janice: *This is a fun thing. Come on, I’ll give you a hand to get started. Now, what is Handley like?*

Bethany: *I don’t know.*

Janice: *Well that’s the idea, we can make him up.*

They move to the art table where magazines are strewn about; Bethany sits on a chair.

Janice: *Here, grab a magazine and I’ll help you. Does Handley smoke?*

Bethany: *I don’t know!*

Janice: *Well how old is he, and what’s his job?*

Bethany remains silent while browsing through a magazine.
Janice: *Well let’s say he’s a 35 year old truck driver who smokes.*

Bethany, a quiet, lifeless, monotone: *Yeah.*

Janice flipping through a magazine while she talks: *So now cut out some pictures to show that. See you could cut out this truck, or (flipping over some pages) these cigarette ads.*

Bethany gets a pair of scissors and starts to read the magazine.

Janice’s attention was diverted and she left the room. Bethany wandered to the back table getting the Herald Sun newspaper she browsed before. She read an abortion article, then a couple of the cartoons and did the Mind Game on the same page. She went to the weather page and circled the places where she has lived and connected them with lines. She discarded the paper and got a dictionary and browsed through it. She wandered to the whiteboard and wrote HELLO. Then she wandered to the back of the room, found cards on the bookshelf, and played patience.

Janice was intent on getting the video production done using the systematic traditional processes she knew. She and Rosemary recently attended a workshop on video-narratives, and a traditional style of production had been used. They came back all inspired. She confessed to me that they were trying to do in 8 weeks what really should take about 10 or 11 months. But that didn’t daunt her. One of the continuing difficulties that Janice faces is that she either can’t read the students’ ‘boredom indicators’, or if she reads them she chooses to ignore them. She plans her lessons, but fails to match students with activities that suit them. Bethany has not taken part in the discussions about the video, and shown no interest in the art activities. Some of her reaction may have been due to interactive trouble (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Smyth & Hattam 2004) and her lack of exposure to the concepts and processes. Janice’s limited training leaves her unable to recognise Bethany’s strengths and consequently incapable of planning video work suited to Bethany. Once again the undervaluing of student experiences and opinions (Hattam et al. 1999; Moll et al. 1992; Smyth et al. 2000) is evidenced. I was not aware of any attempt by Janice to discuss with
Bethany the program and video, Bethany’s involvement, and possible options for her.

Janice’s teaching is imbedded in the ‘top down’ mode; the course has the priority, and consequently she has a ‘teaching curriculum’ (Lave 1996). The planning and implementation of the class lesson, while aimed at student participation, failed to address Bethany’s interests (Moje 2000) and build her skills. The suggestion that curricula reforms are needed to address complaints that school is boring, knowledge is meaningless, applies not just to schools but also to educational institutions catering for adolescents (Rubenson 1996; Smyth & Hattam 2004). Bethany was offered no activity to engage her in the class program or a program of her own. However she is not disengaged. She liked to have her mind active and engaged in a wide range of activities including reading the paper and some of the dictionary, doing puzzles and playing patience. Had Janice been capable of creating a student centred ‘learning curriculum’ (Lave & Wenger 1991) Bethany might have been more engaged in the class activities. She didn’t seem lazy, but the same as at school, there was no system established where she could voice her disinterest or concerns as a learner (Greenleaf & Katz 2004).

Bethany, in her interview, spoke about school subjects not helping her to get a job. According to Mick and Nathan the only part of school that would have helped them to get a job was the mechanical class, which they were not permitted to join. Terry believed schooling offered him nothing. Students in lower socioeconomic areas

‘openly say that there is nothing that they can get from schools that will help them... question the purpose of schooling... alienated students generally refuse to actively engage with much of the curriculum on offer.... They query school conventions and the relevance of school knowledge...these young people assert that school teaches them nothing’ (Thomson 2002, p. 51).

Other research indicates that students are unconvinced of the relevance of schooling (Smyth & Hattam 2004), they retain little or nothing of the content of knowledge in schooling (Aronowitz 1989), and that learning is
not a purpose of school (Moje 2000). Silencing isn’t done just through the teachers’ authoritative position, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, but also through historically established practices of student submissiveness and acceptance of the status-quo.

I pondered about Bethany’s lack of creativity. In this activity, and two other art-based activities, Bethany showed minimal creative abilities. It wasn’t just in the art activities; it was as if she couldn’t imagine things different from what she knew. In a written activity she couldn’t write a report of an excursion from different viewpoints. This may have been lack of exposure to that style of writing, or she may have been pretending not to know. But I wondered whether Bethany was ‘passing’ (Fordham 1993; Holland et al.1998) or something similar. I discuss this aspect of identity enactment earlier in this chapter. Bethany was almost lifeless at NACE, but transformed when with friends. It was like she was ‘lying’ by being at NACE, and I was aware that ‘lying is done with words and also with silence,’ (Fine 1991, p. 186). She dressed well, but the signifying practices associated with being a student were never evidenced; she didn’t come with books or pens; she expected others to prepare or collect class materials for her, usually didn’t help to pack up, and didn’t care if work was well done or not, and generally didn’t take part in any of the lessons. NACE was for her not a place of learning. It may have been that she choose to attend NACE as a way of securing regular money, and with hopes of something interesting and relevant to do, but beforehand had no realistic expectations of what she was embarking on.

Each of the Storyscape players has their own experiences and challenges at NACE. Having considered some of Bethany’s situation, it’s time to return to Mick. In Chapter 5 Janice initiated an altercation with Mick interrupting our research interview. In the third frieze frame in that chapter he was in the multi-media class wanting to incorporate a car smash in the video. This next frieze frame revisits Mick in that class, so it’s the same situation as in chapter 5, only with more information before and after Janice’s refusal to include a car crash. This is to enable discussion using the same incident, but
from a different viewpoint. The class had reassembled from break, and
Janice showed a locally youth produced video about safe driving.

**F F 3 Mick’s enthusiasm** (exclusion and disinterest)

Mick was riveted watching the video. As it finished,
Janice: **OK guys, what is going to happen in the story for the video?**
Mick, attentive and focusing directly at Janice: **We could put a crash in. We’d only need two old bombs.**
Janice sighed deeply, put the white-board marker down, and folded her arms.
Mick: **It doesn’t have to be a real crash. We can fake one. My friends...**
Janice: **No Mick. We can’t have a crash.**
Mick: **Oh, but. We could have one of these two guys driving legally and smash into the P platers.**
Janice: **No Mick.**
Mick: **Well then we could go to the wreckers. We could....**
Janice: **I said no Mick. Has anyone else any ideas?**
Mick folded his arms on the table; his head slumped to rest on them. He stayed that way, watching out the window, not speaking to anyone for the rest of the lesson.

Janice: **That’s it for today.**
Mick wandered towards Nathan while Janice was speaking.
Janice: **Mick and Nathan, you need to turn up next week. Monday and Wednesday.**
Mick, cuffing Nathan on the shoulder as he passed: **See you in a couple of weeks mate. I’m heading up the coast.**

Two weeks prior to this incident Mick and Nathan had produced The Red Car video discussed in Chapter 6. For that activity NACE had become a place for the two lads, and they revelled in acknowledgement of their success. Buoyed by that experience Mick was eager and excited; it was little wonder he could hardly stay on the chair as he spoke. However, the success of his engagement through The Red Car video was not to be repeated with Janice. Mick’s disappointment is reflected in his ‘rejectionist’ behaviour as
he ignores anything going on in the room. NACE again became an educational space for him.

In the social arena of schooling there are social practices and implicit rules about who gets to speak, to whom, when and where (Fine 1996, 1991; Leander 2002a). In Janice’s multi-media class she maintains a strong control of the space. The informal student interactions that happen in the Tuesday classes are absent from this one. Janice, in the authoritative **TEACHER** position asks the questions, and the students are expected to reply with suitable answers. Mick is the first to answer, but is silenced by words, the **TEACHER’S** body language, and the lack of student support. Social practices imbue educational spaces usually in unrecognised ways, including who gets welcomed and included, and who gets excluded within those arenas (Leander 2004a; Sibley 1995). In this frieze frame Mick is physically present in the classroom, but as an embodied space for sharing he is excluded. Exclusionary practices often go unnoticed as implicit rules are accepted as natural and normal (Sibley 1995), and exclusion of some students for a variety of reasons is not unusual; they may not speak or dress the right ways, they may not know how to ‘read’ body language and visual clues. Mick’s response to his exclusion is to mentally exclude himself from the class.

Sometimes what is out of the ordinary gets **excluded** because it may threaten an image (Smyth & Hattam 2004), and it may be that Mick was a threat to the status of success at NACE. His image of unkempt clothing and poor hygiene, didn’t comply with the NACE preferred image, and it maybe that Janice unconsciously could not equate poor dress, hygiene and attendance with an ability to suggest realistic ideas. Sometimes disruptive students are silenced (Moje 2000), but I had not witnessed him being disruptive at NACE. Material spaces and places shape and reflected the practices of the community (Moje 2004), and in a physical sense Mick reflected different values from those reflected by the staff and many students at NACE.
Mick, in his interview, made it clear that he hated boredom. Life was for living in whatever way he could find exciting. He is excited by the prospect of the video, only to have his interest quashed. While positionings occur in particular historically specific times and places, they travel from one locale to another (Holland & Leander 2004). Janice wears her TEACHER positionality like a mantle from office to classroom, while Mick struggles to discard his student positionality. While the lesson proceeds he has time to reflect and make decisions. When a figured world no longer satisfies a person’s interests or needs they may move out to others. As Mick passed the bin and opened the door, Janice heard his farewell comment: ‘See you in a couple of weeks mate. I’m heading up the coast’. Janice asked if he had heard anything she said in the office, but he was in a space where he was silenced, so he didn’t reply orally. Mick had made his choice and kept walking. Only with his friends did he feel free from the constraints. There is another figured world with other possibilities outside NACE, so he’ll go travelling with his friends.

While Storyscape involves seven players, they were not all enrolled at NACE at the same time. By the end of week four Yvette and Mick no longer attend. At the beginning of week five Nathan brings Terry; neither Bethany nor Suzie arrived on Monday. On Tuesday Suzie rang in sick and wasn’t seen for the rest of the term. Bethany attended Wednesday, left early and didn’t attend NACE again. So now the players are three; Luke, Terry and Nathan, and it’s imperative to investigate why the players are choosing not to attend, and not just to what was happening, but also what was not happening or was missing. But more about that later, there’s one more frieze frame as we consider Terry’s position.

In Chapter 4 Terry’s literacies were discussed, and in the last frieze frame he was having difficulty with the voice-over for the video. I revisit this situation to examine it from a related but different perspective. In Chapter 4 I discussed learning styles and appropriate teaching. In this chapter, where moving out of educational figured worlds is the focus, I examine the broader issue of mismatching students and programs, a concern which
could apply to any of the students, but Terry is the example. The frame is situated in the Wednesday multimedia class, and it’s towards the end of the video production time. While the frame is the same situation as in Chapter 4, the frieze frame is slightly different to enable different discussion.

**FF 4 Terry’s voice-over scripting** (mismatch student & program)

In the Wednesday multimedia class students were busy with a variety of tasks; digital drawing, reading, playing games. Janice was trying to get Terry’s input for Syd’s script for the video.

Janice: *Did you hear me Terry?*

Terry, without breaking from his computer game: *Yes*

Janice: *Look at me Terry!*

Terry: *I can hear you without looking.*

Janice: *I’ve been taught to look and watch when listening to someone talk.*

Terry doesn’t respond but keeps on typing.

Janice: *Look at me.*

*Listen to me Terry!*

Terry: *I am listening. I can do this at the same time.*

Janice: *I need you to give me some suggestions for Syd’s script.*

Terry, while continuing to type: *I’m too cool for that.*

Janice: *Too cool for what?*

Janice chose to ignore Terry’s remark and asked another student for assistance while she compiled a script on the board.

With some bantering and digressions along the way, Terry copied out Syd’s script.

Later on in the lesson Terry, with script in hand, went outside with Rosemary to record Syd’s voice-over on the digital recorder. Terry tried reading the script but stumbled with the words.

Terry: *I don’t like the recorder.*

Rosemary: *Well pretend it’s not there.*

Terry: *I don’t like pretending.* He ripped up the script and tossed it at the bin.

Rosemary: *You do it all the time, like when you take-off Dr Phil.*

Terry: *But that’s different. I don’t like listening to my own voice.*
On the second attempt the words lost their clarity, and the lack of spaces between the words and sections made the recording hard to decipher. The third attempt wasn’t much better. By then it was lunchtime and Rosemary decided to leave the recording until another day.

The next Monday morning, in the common area, Terry was happily chatting to Nathan and I while playing a computer game. Rosemary joined us. Terry did two impersonations of television personalities. The discussion turned to Syd’s voiceover. Terry did an impromptu of Syd’s script. Rosemary held up the audio recorder and asked if she could turn it on. Terry nodded and it was left on the table. After a bit more discussion and bantering Terry did an improved version of the script, using his own ideas and words. His performance improved with the attention and laughter at his antics. By then he had really taken on the character of Syd, and he stopped typing as he pretended to be kidding around, badly driving a car, with Rosemary doing an improvisation of Elliot as his passenger Terry pretended to drive the car and concluded it with an improvised car crash.

Terry represents a group of adolescents for whom mainstream schooling doesn’t cater; there is a mismatch between them as learners and the system of teaching (Kerka 2003). Many of these students are disengaged with curriculum and traditional learning, and have a profound dislike of school (O’Brien 2006). At NACE Terry encountered many of the same difficulties that other of the players encountered. The problems were also strikingly similar to what they said they encountered at secondary school. In this frieze frame there are three strategies that Janice employs that indicate there is a mismatch between the way some students learn and the way Janice conducts her program. Naturally these strategies also predominate in the prevalent education cultural model.

From the stories that Janice tells, her teaching is based on how she as a student was taught. Her limited training has provided her the skills to assess what is effective teaching or learning, so when she wants Terry to
listen she says *Look at me Terry!* What she is meaning is ‘*I am the teacher and in control in this room*’. While some NACE students would readily comply, Terry isn’t one of them. Brought up in ‘the university of hard knocks’, so to speak, he isn’t about to comply; it isn’t in his nature, and anyway he was too involved in his game to stop playing. And his argument is legitimate: *I can hear you without looking.* He isn’t annoyed or angry, just in a matter-of-fact way states what’s true; people don’t listen with their eyes, and some people may listen better with their eyes on something else. Janice perseveres: *I’ve been taught to look and watch when listening to someone talk.* Terry ignores Janice. I’ve noticed on several occasions he’s very good at ignoring someone when he doesn’t want to be interrupted. He keeps typing. Ignore. Ignore. Ignore.

Janice isn’t easily put-off, and persists: *Look at me. Listen to me Terry!* Again Terry is calm and collected as he explains: *I am listening. I can do this at the same time.* Terry in his initial interview told Janice he had a problem with authority. She heard that but doesn’t seem to realise the implications, so she determinedly continues: *I need you to give me some suggestions for Syd’s script.* To Terry’s credit he doesn’t retaliate; he’s probably too engrossed in his game for that. He ignores her challenge, and in doing so sets up his own. Terry quietly says *I’m too cool for that.* Janice fails to recognise that Terry’s response is actually a reply to her question; it’s his suggestion for Syd’s speaking. But the statement is ambiguous, and it could be Terry saying I’m too cool to give you a suggestion for Syd’s script.

An integral part of Terry’s playful life was his sense of humour and quick wit. He constantly picked up on the ambiguity in people’s speech, so when he says, in the frieze frame, *I’m too cool for that,* I believe he wasn’t deliberately provoking Janice by suggesting he was too cool to give suggestions for the script, but it was part of his natural way of being. He was joking around as he had been doing since he arrived at NACE. I think the uncertainly of Terry’s meaning confused Janice, and rather than
replying inappropriately she leaves Terry and the statement, and confrontation, and goes to another student.

Janice’s use of the **traditional method** of script production, expecting the ‘copy – learn – reproduce’ strategy to work for Terry brought difficulties. The pedagogies involved form part of *‘the politics of classroom elitism [which] ensure that biases in the way knowledge is taught ...and what is taught’* (hooks 2003, p. 42) persist. Terry wasn’t an avid writer, and getting the script written was a challenge; however with Rosemary’s intervention Terry coped with that challenge. The next challenge was getting the script produced as a voice-over. While these methods may be appropriate for some students, and in some video productions, they indicate that Janice had not taken account of Terry’s natural theatrical characterisations and acting ability, and his acute and accurate memory.

The traditional method of scripting did not suit Terry; however it may have suited other students. What is crucial is not the method, but the **teachers’ awareness** of students skills, interests and knowledges (Moll et al. 1992; Rowsell and Pahl 2007), their learning styles and times most suited for productive learning. Interactive troubles (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn 1995; Hattam et al. 1999; Smyth & Hattam 2004) cover a range of communication styles, language concepts, social practices and styles of learning. These need to be accounted for in educational decisions, especially those impacting on adolescent learners who engage in learning outside of traditional rooms and spaces.

*‘Planfulness’* (Moje 2000), as distinct from planning, promotes a broader consideration of planning issues than just curriculum. A ‘learning curriculum’ (Lave & Wenger 1991) focuses on the strategies, students abilities, needs and progress, and provides a more appropriate starting point for planning than does teacher from a ‘facts’ based curriculum. Teachers need to pay attention to how they can reach individual students who have not responded to traditional mainstream schooling methods. Understanding how students learn and taking account of that for teaching, is foundational
to planning for effective learning. Providing for or connecting with suitable resources to enhance the skills and knowledges students bring to the classroom, needs to be utilised (Hill et al. 1996; Smyth 2003), and from these active participation, engagement and learning will emanate.

Figured worlds are ‘landscapes’ in which implicit power and meanings determine who will belong and contribute positively, and who will be dissatisfied and move on to other worlds. Sometimes members may attempt to reconfigure a particular figured world, but this wasn’t so for the players. Each of the seven left the figured world of secondary schools; they each came to NACE with hopes and dreams of a suitable educational figured world; a place to learn. Just prior to frieze frame 4 of this chapter I took account of the players at week five, and out of seven there were three in attendance at NACE; one of the three was new. Four of them, Suzie, Bethany, Yvette and Mick had already left NACE for other figured worlds. What of the other three? The last Monday of the term was a public holiday. Nathan, who was enrolled all term for two mornings a week, attended for 6 out of a possible 15, he was often late, and Mondays were the least attended days. Terry, who enrolled for the same two mornings a week as Nathan commencing week five, attended 4 out of a possible 7 classes. And Luke? Luke was always punctual and in attendance, but his situation was different from the other players. That is not to denigrate the individual needs, aspirations and experiences of the other players. They too were special and deserving of individual notation. But Luke’s situation was very challenging, and warrants closer examination. It is to Endlude: Luke’s Ligature that I now turn.
People’s identities are complex, and in Storyscape my discussion of identity is situated around ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et. al. 1998), a four part framing of the processes involved in identity formation and enactment. Each of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8 focuses on one aspect of the processes, while chapter 7 investigates some of the anomalies I witnessed during my time at Neatsville Academy for Community Education (NACE). My discussions throughout Storyscape have variously involved all of the seven players, but in this section I focus on Luke to address some of the complex issues around his education. While I focus on Luke, I believe that the conditions he encounters may be identified in many students and so the chapter also is addressing issues that impact on broader educational issues.
By way of introduction it’s important to remember that identities are ever evolving, overlapping, complex, and can be conflictual. What is apparent by words or behaviours one day may not be evidenced again for some time. The ‘eddying’ process, discussed in Chapter 6 after frieze frame 3, would account for the appearance and then the disappearance of an identity for a time. There were many conundrums that I had concerning Luke. There were contradictions around his literacies; his knowledge of words was good yet at times he lacked understanding of seemingly simple concepts; he wanted to be ‘cool’ and a normal teenager yet it seemed he had no friends around his age. In Chapter 7 I discuss Frozen Moments, a term I devised to situate moments in the players’ lives that became frozen in my memory because of the incongruities in them. Two of the frieze frames in the chapter are based on Luke’s NACE activities.

In the Tuesday NACE classes Luke was vocal about his experiences at secondary schools, and these details supplemented his interview information. He attended Convenience Cove school for his Year 8, and from his accounts there was no truancy. He believed he was at Year 8 standard at Convenience Cove, and that at Neatsville the help he needed to achieve the Year 9 level was not offered to him. There was no educational information available regarding Luke’s attendance at Convenience Cove Specialist School, then his transference to a state secondary school when he returned to Neatsville; both cities had both types of schools. From my point of view Luke’s abilities seemed too advanced for a specialist school, but it seemed there was no consistency in what type of educational facility he attended. No information was forwarded to NACE regarding his educational standards. At Neatsville secondary he read the books required for English but didn’t complete the assignments as he wasn’t interested. His experiences at Neatsville secondary school, both educationally and socially, left him subdued and withdrawn. He started cutting classes, then staying away for a day at a time. The school bribed him (his expression) to attend classes by paying for him to attend individual sessions at the local gym. He also complained that the hours at school were too long, and he couldn’t see
why students couldn’t learn what they wanted to. Luke epitomizes the students operating in a system for whom Faber (1969) argued, at school

‘the real lesson is the method. The medium in school truly is the message. And the medium is, above all, coercive. You are forced to attend. The subjects are required. You have to do homework. You must observe school rules. And throughout you're bullied into docility and submissiveness. Even modern liberal refinements don't really help. You're called an underachiever instead of a dummy...’

(Farber 1972, p. 20).

This program did not compensate for the taunts and his difficulties with the work, and he started cutting classes and days again. It wasn’t long before a school administrator gave him an ultimatum: ‘Change yourself or leave’.

It seems that Luke had a positive student identity at Convenience Cove; however it wasn’t a stable or laminated identity (Holland and Leander 2004; Wortham 2004) rather the problems he encountered at Neatsville eroded this identity. I would suggest that this erosion was a slow ‘eddying’ process where the identity would be strong for a time if situations were stable, but then the identity would slowly deteriorate as bullying or difficulties with work would undermine the identity.

Identity and agency are interwoven and Luke’s decision to leave rather than go to school and be abused was an assertive decision of his agency in action (Blackburn 2004). He chose to leave before he was formally expelled. He sat at home for four weeks before getting enough courage to see if NACE had an educational program to suit him. Again, I would suggest, there would be an ‘eddying’ time of decisions and strength interspersed with times of doubt and insecurities, and associated identities.

Luke’s sense of humour was evident in most classes, and early in my time at NACE he showed me a photo of a scorpion in the newspaper. He asked me how I would pick it up… well I hadn’t looked properly and didn’t realise it was a scorpion. So I said ‘the head’ (to protect from venomous bite). He took great delight in laughing at me, saying I was wrong and that it
was by the tail. Another Tuesday Janice asked Luke to get something from her office and passed him the keys. As he was leaving the room he turned around and said ‘I won’t leave town!’, waving the office keys at Janice. There was laughter from Janice and the class.

Sometimes Luke’s humour showed in unexpected ways. By the fourth week of my time at NACE Luke was very comfortable with my being in class and enjoying some discussions with me before class. On Tuesday of this week, Janice early in the class remarked about the mess of papers in front of Luke, and in a friendly, jovial way blamed Luke for it. At my suggestion, and with my encouragement, Luke got assertive and said it wasn’t his mess. Janice was mystified about what was going on, and asked whose mess it was. Luke pointed across to me and looked me in the eyes. Everyone laughed. Another day my researcher journal records:

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When the class was doing an art activity, Luke seemed distracted and did not settle to doing anything and wandered in and out of the room. There were conversations going on around the room. I hear a “So” from the other side of the room. Instantly Luke replies Buttons. Even though he was unsettled his sense of humour was still intact.
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In class one of the funniest incidents concerned socks, but when I later visited my original notes and realised new associations, what had previously been a humorous situation now was one of concern. In classes Luke often read or daydreamed but usually knew what Janice was speaking about and answered questions correctly. On this day the class was discussing what they would wear to job interviews. Janice interrupted Luke’s daydreaming …


Luke: *You could take off your shoes and ask if they like your socks.*

The class, being used to Luke’s sense of humour, erupted in laughter.

Janice: *No Luke, you wouldn’t do that in the interview.*

Luke looked confused and befuddled.
There were a couple of other disconnections from Luke that day. What I noticed was that on that day Luke was constantly yawning and sighing.

Sometimes Luke’s interruptions were questions about concepts or word meanings, for example bifocal glasses and negotiate. But while I was there, a new facet emerged from this growing confidence. It starts the third week when Janice uses the word ‘heir’ about Paris Hilton. But Luke corrected her: Not heir, heiress. Janice rewarded his behaviour with affirmative statements. So the next week, she was reading from the worksheet, and the students were following along on their copies. She was startled when Luke said: you read that wrong ... You said ... but it says. She misreads another section, and again is corrected by Luke, and then a third time. It’s then obvious to her that he is reading the text with understanding, so she invites him to finish reading the section. The class waited quietly while he considered the offer (about 45 seconds), which he accepted, and read capably.

One morning Luke showed me a picture of a jet and was talking about the size of the cockpit. I commented that I wouldn’t enjoy sitting in such a confined space because I would get claustrophobic. He knew the concept but found it hard to imagine that anyone wouldn’t like to be enclosed in a small space. In class Luke would frequently call out answers or remarks that seemed to have nothing to do with the current discussion or topic. While it first surprised me, it seemed to be a pattern that Janice and the other students were used to. Janice would either ignore the remark or draw him back to the topic by asking Luke directly how it was related to the issue. For example when the lesson topic was preparing for interviews, and Janice was explaining the procedure for borrowing suitable clothes from the NACE clothing pool, Luke suddenly called out ‘Clean your teeth’. Reviewing my
notes showed that the hygiene aspect of interview preparation was discussed earlier in the lesson, and his answer wasn’t inappropriate in the full context. I began to regard them as delayed associations.

The week before Luke’s birthday Janice remarked to the class that during the next term they would be working on Certificate 1 in Vocation Preparation, and perhaps would be building something. Luke straight away asks if they could build a jet. Did he realise what was needed to build a jet? This was a time when I wondered about the limitations of his experiences and exposure to contemporary engineering feats. For his birthday Rosemary gave him a book about constructing paper aircraft, but Luke wasn’t excited about it, and I wondered if he realised what the book actually contained. Maybe he did and was focused on real aircraft. With Luke it was often difficult to tell.

There were times when Luke got concepts or words confused so when he said he was always punctual, he meant his attendance. When he saw the video narrative made by the Wednesday students which featured Janice’s new car in crash, his immediate reaction was to ask if the students really crashed Janice’s new car. He constantly sought clarification on words that he didn’t understand like catastrophic, bifocal and negotiate.

But if we revisit the Frozen Moments chapter, and the fourth frieze frame, Luke was in a quandary, and couldn’t represent his ambitions or dreams. In every class I have observed he has at some time spoken about his desire to become a pilot, yet he couldn’t equate his words with the requirements of this ‘art’ activity. So here was a conundrum as I saw it: there were times when Luke’s reality seemed not to be established in the world as it is generally known and experienced. He didn’t seem to realise the skills and education needed to become a pilot, nor to make a jet. I’m sure he had in mind a real jet in which he could fly. Was he lacking in ‘intelligence’ as it is generally assessed in the prevalent model of education? There were
indicators that would suggest he was not lacking; his correct use of words like bribed and heiress and his constant correcting of Janice would indicate cognitive abilities of the sort used in traditional literacy and school activities. Luke’s uncertainty about his father only adds to the quandary.

While the quandary about Luke concerned me, I was also concerned that he has got through nine or ten years of formal education seemingly without anyone having done an assessment of his learning. Was he developmentally delayed? Did he have a processing or relational disorder? Were there environmental deprivation or cultural differences? If he had been assessed there was no coordination of findings passed on to NACE to make Luke’s education more effectual.

That Janice and Rosemary cared was not questioned, but was their care doing Luke any justice? For example Janice told Luke he was working at Year 7 levels for some things, and maybe 8 for others. His altered Three Pigs story, mentioned in Chapter 2 and included in appendices (number 3) was the most complex piece of writing he did during my time there. Checking his work against a locally produced guide of writing levels (Mulcahy, n.y.) would put him below a Year 6 level for most areas of writing skills being assessed. At NACE I saw no evidence of moderation with other education providers to assess levels of competencies. Luke could read some of the Herald Sun with understanding, but there was no indication of other reading skills being assessed or used. Luke was enrolled to do mathematics classes but chose not to attend. Janice was not aware of his non-attendance, but Luke discussed it with me in an interview and said the teacher didn’t explain the maths in terms that Luke understood. He used maths in everyday situations, but he needed Year 10 maths for entry into the air force and it seemed there was no consistent record being kept of what he was attending or competencies that he was achieving.

In her teaching Janice was focused on presenting a course; she didn’t focus on students and hadn’t noticed the delayed associations that Luke displayed. These incidents were attributed to ‘just Luke’s ways’. Earlier in this chapter
I presented an incident with Luke’s comments about socks in a job interview situation, and my concerns about his functioning that day; he wasn’t functioning as he normally did. The sighs and yawns were abnormal for him, but Janice was oblivious to them. At NACE there seemed to be no referral available for any assessment to be done to ascertain what his delayed associations might be indicators of.

Luke wasn’t often interested in the reading and writing used for class lessons and during the data collection time he frequently found ways to subvert the requirements and complete work to his own satisfaction. Frequently in the Tuesday classes, during the data collection time, Luke muttered or called out ‘This is so boring. Can we do something interesting?’ He frequently day-dreamed, doodled or read the newspaper or his own materials. His individual research and other out-of-class activities showed he wanted more engagement than what he was getting in class. In contrast to Luke’s disengagement at Neatsville secondary and NACE he had a range of interests that he pursued involving literacy and maths. Apart from his air-plane related research in his Personal Portfolio, he monitored his bike riding times and distances, planned his spending and started a small-scale car washing service at NACE. While these seemed to increase his agency and provide avenues for identity formation or stability, they were not recognised by NACE staff as relevant to his maths and literacy outcomes for his educational certificates.

At Neatsville secondary Luke was silenced by authoritative positional identities; his learning was circumvented by discourses that didn’t relate to his interests and skills. At NACE he was ‘nicely’ silenced by kind words and meaningful relationships; power was exerted implicitly through niceness and caring. He was not being given help with literacy or maths to achieve levels he needed to enter the air force. He was given incorrect information about what could achieve at NACE. He wanted to study, learn and do interesting things but was enrolled in classes that were designed to get him employment for which he seemed to have neither the appropriate
personal nor practical skills. So what would Luke do now? I could not
remain at NACE to see the answer to that question.

Of the seven student players Luke epitomises students disadvantaged by the
conditions that the players confronted on a daily basis. The concerns
portrayed about Luke were no less for any of the adolescents. The next
chapter of Storyscape, Chapter 9 Twilight Enfolds, summarises the
findings of Storyscape research.
Chapter 9 Twilight Enfolds Storyscape

‘High stakes testing has not taught our children how to think, nor even how to read, but it has taught many how to hate school. It has not given them the joy of great books or even the pleasure of a good story... it has not made our children love learning; it has not raised them up to be thoughtful citizens of a democratic nation, it has not made them wise’

(Paterson 2003, p. 9).

In examining the educational narratives and experiences of several adolescent students Storyscape covers significant theoretical and conceptual territories. It has situated these experiences and narratives in identity enactments, while acknowledging the critical interlocking of engagement and learning. This concluding chapter draws together crucial findings and indicators about suitable educational opportunities for adolescents for whom traditional schooling offers little or nothing. There are four areas highlighted: the divide between the prevalent model of education in schools and that of the student players in Storyscape; the political decisions affecting funding, teacher training and courses conducted at NACE; the interweaving of identity, engagement and learning; and the question of what is education for.
Many adolescent students find secondary schooling inhibiting, boring and not related to their lives. In Storyscape only the narratives and experiences of the players have been discussed, but the student players told stories of their friends who were also disgruntled with schooling. Some have voted with their feet (Farber 1972; Thomson 2002); some like the player Luke have been pushed out, while others stay. Many students want change in the schooling they are compelled to receive; however they don’t have the discourses necessary to implement change (Smyth & Hattam 2004). Some students question the relevance of school knowledge in their lives, and, like Bethany, cannot see how their schooling will help them get a job (Thomson 2002; Smyth et al. 2000). For other students the objections are different for their culture differs from mainstream culture and for them success in school would imply the rejection of their social origins (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes 1990, p. 91). Mick would be an example of this type of student who has different values, life style and ambitions. 

The preceding chapters have revealed how the educational ambitions of the student players in Storyscape differed from the educational values and opportunities they were afforded at secondary schools and at NACE. Each of them, for different reasons, was dissatisfied with the identities expected, the studies offered, and the lack of relevance. They had educational ambitions and wanted to be gainfully employed but couldn’t tolerate the suppressive systems they encountered. The graphic image introducing the Prelude (page 10) was deliberately set-up to illustrate this, with pawns representing the players at NACE. Six have left the environment, and are strategically placed in relation to each other, while one (Luke) is still uncertain and remains on the border.

What became apparent through my research was the divide between mainstream model of education, and the education that the student players were wanting; the discrepancies between the beliefs and values of the students, and those of the educational system which they were compelled to experience at secondary school and offered at NACE. Some of the players
were obviously capable of academic achievement but chose to leave, exposing ‘contradictions in prevalent cultural beliefs about meritocracy, individualism, and self-motivation’ (Fine & Rosenberg 1983, p. 258). The other student players were, I believe, not lacking in academic abilities but experienced ‘interactive troubles’ with traditional teaching styles, and so were failed by a system that was supposed to provide equitable education. The fact that schools today are often out-of-touch with ‘the contemporary culture in which young people live outside of school’ (Gee 2006, p. 168) did not assist the players.

It was no coincidence that the players were at NACE; each wanted to improve their formal education and skills: Suzie wanted to improve her literacy so she would be attractive to an employer; Luke wanted to become a pilot; Nathan wanted to complete Year 10 and 11; Mick wanted enough education to get a mechanics apprenticeship; Bethany and Yvette each wanted better skills to get good jobs. Yet at the end of my time at NACE their goals were not being achieved, and maybe part of the problem were the students. However it was not surprising that they were disheartened with their struggles in and against a system that expected them to change radically; it seemed to be an uphill battle all the way with little support or encouragement along the way for most of them.

The cultural model of education prevalent in schooling in and around Neatsville valued discourses and social practices different from those of the student players. There was a mismatch between their homes and schools; differences in culture, knowledges and language (Li 2008).

‘It wasn’t just the home language that was different, but that students weren’t used to asking teachers for clarification of meanings, and rarely asked teachers to repeat something they didn’t hear properly ... the school discourse of teacher initiated requests for student displays of knowledge were unknown to many children, but that this exchange pattern serves strongly to emphasize the inequality of status and power between the participants in the discourse’ (Wells, 1986, p. 81).
The language, the texts and associated literacy practices and ways of communicating were among the myriad of differences the adolescent players experienced routinely in everyday incidents at school and NACE as their preferred student identities didn’t comply with that the schools desired. **Clashes** in language and identity reflected the cultural differences (Hicks 2004) and there was no awareness from administrators or teachers that the students were situated differently culturally and politically, and not necessarily in the ways schools envisaged (Comber 1994). Perhaps they could echo Tatum’s words:

> ‘Everything I had experienced in my childhood was the opposite of what I needed to survive socially, intellectually, and psychologically at school, … my socialization in school felt like an assault to my culture and values’ (Tatum 2006, p. 66).

Alongside language and literacy differences there was also a difference in the **cultural capital** which was foundational to successful formal education in mainstream schools; while many students from mainstream homes had this capital naturally endowed in and upon them, students from outside were disadvantaged. Their lack was implicitly seen as their personal failure, and not as failure of the system to provide suitable education (Obidah & Marsh 2006). The positional identities of **TEACHER** and **student** further exacerbated the plight of the non-mainstream students as they were silenced by a range of discourses employed by authoritarian teachers.

**Schooling is an instrument** of the government serving to reproduce culturally preferred students and future citizens (Li 2006; Smyth & Hattam 2004). Through the hidden curriculum (Connelly & Clandinin 1988; Wells 1986) schools serve the interests of mainstream, predominant culture and the associated social inequalities (Smyth & Hattam 2004). In rejecting schooling and the hidden curriculum the student players ‘in fact are resisting the dominant ideology of school and work’ (Fine & Rosenberg 1983, p. 261). They acknowledged that they saw no connection between their secondary schooling and work futures, and at NACE they faced the same predicament. But the cultural model was firmly entrenched at NACE.
and in Janice, and indeed the whole education system and the players faced other difficulties too.

**Janice** organized and supervised the youth program at NACE, and taught part of it. In Chapter 6 of Storyscape she was seen pressuring Mick and Nathan about their attendance at NACE, and deceived them about Centrelink contacting her. Another time I witnessed her telling Nathan he could get Year 10 and 11 at NACE; I had to remain the researcher and not interject with ‘that’s not true’. Janice, in the fifth Tuesday class I was observing, told Luke he could obtain Year 10 at NACE. When he asked what level he was working on at that stage she suggested maybe Year 8, or Year 10 with some things, or 7 with others.

Storyscape has concentrated on the ‘identity in practice’ (Holland et al. 1998) within the context of the students. However **Janice’s identities** also work within the same processes and her behaviour has to be understood from that. She was a product of the culture of which she was a member, and that culture ‘imposed’ certain ideas and values on her. ‘She was propelled...by the social forces that determined whether the discourse ... would be salient in that particular situation’ (Holland et al. 1998, p. 11). Janice’s personal and teacher identities were saturated with the prevalent cultural model of education. Her teacher mantle couldn’t be removed as she left NACE, just as her personal one couldn’t be discarded as she arrived. This cultural model left her with the perception that these students **must** get a formal education to get employment and to be successful. Janice also cared about the students so much that she wanted to help them get that essential education so she went to extraordinary lengths to assist them. She encouraged them to achieve their goals and levels by telling them they could get those levels at NACE. She confirmed to me in an informal discussion that the students couldn’t be given those qualifications through NACE. She believed that she was doing what was best for the students. While Janice may be able to justify these actions and words I believe it’s not helping the players. The role of a caring teacher does not nullify the responsibilities that accompany the position.
In class Janice created in Luke an awareness of his inner voices, and suggested ways that he could utilise to deal with them. She too had ‘authoritative’ and ‘innerly persuasive discourses’ within her head and being; the cultural model of education still spoke to her in her mind, ‘an authoritative voice of the whole society’ (Morson 2004, p. 321). They unconsciously affirmed her teacher actions; she never indicated that she would change listening to them; no doubt she believed them to be ‘good’ voices.

Janice’s **TEACHER** identity was situated in cultural, political and economic conditions that did not encourage or allow for her to consider other ways of thinking. Her limited exposure to cultural and educational discourses and pedagogies left her to draw on what resources she could. When she saw or heard about a successful strategy or teaching tool, such as ‘The Real Game’ (Appendix 7) or video narrative work, she adopted it without hesitancy without considering whether it would suit her particular students. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to investigate these things; she hadn’t been trained to, and didn’t see the necessity or the application of such thinking. These activities engaged other students so she would use them to engage her students.

At NACE I identified a range of issues which presented **difficulties**; I took these issues from a teachers’ perspective, but not necessarily Janice’s or Rosemary’s. For instance the pedagogical problems that presented in Janice’s classes might have been due, in part, to her only having Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessing, and probably inadequate for her for teaching literacy effectively to adolescents with failing literacy skills. These were difficulties that I perceived but that she wouldn’t have. The issues affected the courses that ran, when rooms were used, resources available, funding and other matters. An analysis of the issues revealed that:

- 9 directly related to the cultural model of education
- 11 were political relating to funding
Given that both the political issues of funding training were also cultural model issues, then the majority of difficulties faced related to a mismatch of the cultural model of education with the needs of the students.

The funding NACE received for the youth program was designed to bring disengaged students back into engagement with a system that they didn’t respond to. The funding was tied to outcomes of student participation and learning limited to what the cultural model considered appropriate; at no time were the student interests, abilities, skills and knowledges taken into account. Education for employment was the goal, and there were regular checks on student numbers, attendance and outcomes.

Some of the issues related to practical matters such as transport. In Neatsville there was minimal public transport around the city, and none into rural areas; some students were disadvantaged by this and it was constantly an issue for Mick and Nathan. Suzie was reliant on her father for transport and that impinged on his work routines. Before Terry came to NACE Nathan usually walked to NACE, and it would have taken him about 30 minutes. One of the carers from the hostel usually drove Terry to NACE, and he shared this with Nathan. Bethany and Yvette were reliant on Bethany’s mother, and then they had to stay in Neatsville until late in the afternoon when they could get another lift home.

Another practical issue was insufficient places suitable for work experience. No work experience took place during my time at NACE, and at the conclusion of my time none was organised for the next term, but it was an issue which Janice raised. I wondered how the courses that the players were enrolled in would prepare them for work life and hours. Their programs only had classes for two 3 hour sessions per week, with two weeks holidays every ten or so weeks. In 2004 it was reported that 55% of
apprentices in the building industry dropped out (Corney, 2004) because of inadequate pre-apprentice training, including managing time and not using their initiative. The courses at NACE didn’t seem to encourage either of these skills.

Schools in economically challenging areas face more everyday traumas and difficulties than schools in more affluent areas (Comber 1997; Thomson 1999) increasing the teachers’ workloads. NACE was no exception, and there is no doubt that Janice and Rosemary dealt with challenging students and circumstances; however giving them breakfast is not enough (Thomson 2000). Alongside community participation and support, a much stronger political commitment with funding and resources in educational and social issues would start to address some of the challenges. But binding the funding to inappropriate outcomes for these types of students wasn’t going to address the crucial issues.

In the meantime individual teachers can make a difference in small ways. Terry experienced a librarian who treated him respectfully and recommended books to suit his interests; Mick and Nathan experienced a science teacher with a ‘hands-on’ approach to learning. Care, however has to go beyond niceness, and needs to acknowledge the out-of-school lives of the students (Moje 2000). Caring teachers also need to learn about students’ cultures and backgrounds and adapt their teaching accordingly (Li 2006). Even though caring teachers can make a difference they are still framed within institutional discourses and practices, and problems of a bigger system (Hicks 2002). Janice and Rosemary’s caring for students were limited by the cultural model’s discourses, by their positioning within those discourses, and by the constraining funding limitations.

One of the recurring themes of my analysis was that of time wasted in NACE classes. From the perspective of a program, Janice was often late for class, frequently absent during class, and sometimes scheduled to take two classes at the same time. In Chapter 4, frieze frame 3 Luke took 5 minutes to complete a worksheet designed to take 45 minutes. In Chapter 8, frieze
Bethany and Yvette go to the shops during class time. In that three hour class time the lesson started late, there was a break in the middle and it finished early. Given that Bethany and Yvette were absent for 38 minutes buying drinking chocolate, there was only 1 hour 15 minutes of potentially productive work time. There was the potential for the purchase of the drinking chocolate to be tied to some learning activity, enabling the space to become a place of learning, but that was not considered as an option.

Another comparison of interest is the two videos made during my time at NACE. The first one, Mick and Nathan’s car comparison video, took about six minutes to record involving two people, about the same to download involving one person. It ran for just over 4 minutes, was captivating, factual and humorous. In contrast to that the class narrative video took one class lesson of three hours per week for six weeks, involved between four and six students and two teachers and a tutor most weeks. The students didn’t learn how to edit, or combine sound and visuals; it took countless hours of Rosemary’s time outside class to edit, compile and combine. The video ran for 2.5 minutes and was effective and interesting, no more nor any less than Mick and Nathan’s. The difference was that in the first instance Mick and Nathan were able to utilise their experiences from outside NACE; it made the lesson a **place** of engagement and learning. In the second instance the students struggled to apply anything they knew to the lessons, and what they were learning didn’t apply outside the classroom (Hull & Schultz 2002a). There was not only time wasted (Dewey 1897) but the lesson was a **space** of possibilities and opportunities that didn’t eventuate.

**Identities** are formed in and around social practices within the figured worlds that a person takes part in. ‘**Identity in practice**’ (Holland et al. 1998) provided a flexible framework for investigating the formation and enactment of identities, their involvement with student engagement and with learning. Agency is necessarily involved in identity work as individuals exert some control over their decisions, with students ‘**engaged**
The student identity of conformity and acquiescence, defined by the prevalent cultural model, does not suit all adolescents, as Storyscape has illustrated through presentations of the student players.

Through the Storyscape text the student players have been seen in a range of educational experiences, some of which were spaces where opportunities for engagement and learning were situated. Well intentioned teaching at NACE did not always result in all those possibilities becoming places for effective learning. In Storyscape literacy and learning have been viewed as more than cognitive skills, though conceptual structuring and cognitive processing are involved (Lave & Wenger 1991). Effective learning was seen to occur when student interests and skills were utilised in classroom activities, whereas a curriculum-centred program delivered in an authoritarian atmosphere produced a space for student inactivity and mental exclusion. Student participation was seen to involve something different from students completing worksheets; participation necessitated student identities being engaged in practices that were meaningful to them (Moje & Lewis 2007). It is possible for teachers to make personal shifts to honour all students’ identities (Tatum 2006).

**Contemporary educational reforms**

‘portray adolescents as little more than passive figures for educators to control rather than active, independent, and richly detailed human beings for educators to advise and assist. These reforms emphasize external forces and ignore adolescents’ internal worlds’ (Moore & Cunningham 2006, p. 129).

Regarding students as passive and compliant dishonours their intelligence and integrity, while also diminishing their interests and concerns (Kenway 1998). The cultural model of education does not take students as individuals into account; there has been a continual emphasis on academic results, with a past push for the ‘clever country’ (Fitzclarence, Green & Bigum 1995; Smyth & Hattam 2004), and another for the retention of students to
complete Year 12. At the same time there has been a growing resistance among many of the students (Bigum, Fitzclarence & Green 1998).

Identities, engagement and learning are interwoven; a student centred curriculum acknowledges the students and their interests. Standardized testing and Commonwealth mandated accountability systems take no account of students’ cultural worlds, knowledges and skills. While privileging the mainstream students these systems of levels and accounting disregard minority students’ lives and abilities. They don’t take into account student diversity, different ways of learning and differing paths to desired outcomes (Henderson 2008). In teaching there are no simple answers, but effective student learning requires a shift in power so the students take responsibility for their learning; it’s ‘about social justice, constructing a curriculum which provides opportunity, incentive, and support for students to do real world things’ (Comber & Nixon 1999, p. 355). If education is to be equitable then all students must be given the same regard and consideration for their cultures, knowledges and skills.

The players were typical adolescent students whose identities were interwoven critically with their interests; engagement presented no problem, and learning flowed naturally from this engagement. Suzie and Luke’s limited literacy levels were not their own fault, yet like Carlos (Comber 1997) they are left to find their own solutions when an education system hasn’t catered for them adequately. In times of failing literacy levels and high unemployment governments tend to blame the victims (Street 1995). The traditional academic curriculum has been a mechanism for defining certain students as failures (Cope & Kalantzis 1987). However the problem isn’t that Terry, Mick, Nathan or any other of the players doesn’t suit the schooling system; this puts the onus is the students. They have no problem with engagement and learning; the education system has failed to provide suitable learning environments for them and others like them. The issue of adolescent alienation from the social institution of schooling, their access to positions of power within their figured worlds, their identities through their engagement with texts and discourses of power, need to be addressed (Luke
& Elkin 2000) if equitable, effective learning is to happen for all adolescents.

**Contemporary education** is equated with Western-style schooling, with prevalent assumptions and meanings saturating school curricula and discourses (Levinson & Holland 1996). Fundamental questions about the nature of schooling are being raised (Barton 2000), but need to be seriously addressed. Attention needs to be paid to what the actions of some students are saying, and ‘if their implicit and explicit criticisms might well be a legitimate, or at least an understandable, response to and reading of the text and context of school and society’ (Bigum, Fitzclarence & Green 1998, p. 94). There are different economies from previous generations. A fast moving, ever adapting world of finances, types of employment and identities (Gee 2004b; Lankshear & Knobel 2002) which promises not to slow down, nor get less complex. Today’s students need not only basic education, but also the ability to deal with an increasingly complex and connected world. ‘We need to create inclusive educational solutions that address all sections of society and help transform them’ (Mitra 2010). Students’ persistent complaints about school being boring and the knowledge presented meaningless and many teachers uncaring must be addressed in all curricular reforms (Rubenson 1996). Such a shift requires rethinking of assumptions about student learning and constructing student centred curriculum ‘which provides opportunity, incentive, and support for students to do real world things’ (Comber & Nixon 1999, p. 355). Students learn what they want to learn and what they want to learn is very much connected to what interests them, and defined by what is relevant to their own particular cultural context (Kress 2009). Learners participation in engaging activities provide opportunities for identities to be formed, strengthened or contested on the basis of new ideas, practices or discourses learned in a particular figured world (Moje & Lewis 2007). What the players learnt at school and NACE was that schooling didn’t offer engaging opportunities for their learning and to support their preferred identities.
At a time when the Commonwealth government views reading and writing as neutral cognitive based skills that can be measured through standardised testing, Storyscape was conducted and written to address the roles that identity and power play in education of adolescents (Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007). Contemporary and future education needs to **understand the way culture operates** in the lives of students, for that affects the way teachers teach, what they teach, and why they teach certain ways (Kenway & Fitzclarence 1998). Such education, of necessity, will utilise the natural curiosity of students to catalyse learning (Searls 2002). The great challenge is to have political and cultural support to transform the institution of schooling, incorporating in the nation’s schools the cultures of the young being ‘educated’ (Hattam, Smyth & Lawson 1998).

The shaming and blaming of students (Bartlett & Holland 2002; Comber 1997; Fine 1996; hooks 2003) does not bring positive changes, nor does it focus the blame in the right direction. This type of discursive coercion belittles students, denigrates their interests, knowledges and skills, and is often accompanied by feelings of inadequacy.

Recently there was a slight variation in the ‘blame and shame’ strategy with the *Herald Sun* newspaper reporting the bottom nine Victorian schools in the various NAPLAN testing results (February 29th 2012). Alongside this list were the top 10 schools; however there was no accompanying reporting of the resourcing differences, cultural diversities and other challenges facing students and school communities in the less affluent areas. The article didn’t display any consideration to the feelings of the students and staff at these struggling schools.

At the very heart of educational reform should be the **question of whose judgment counts** about knowledge, schooling and ‘rightness’, and why (Griffiths 1998). Storyscape acknowledges the challenges that educational reform posse. What is needed is for more fundamental changes than what the current ‘education revolution’ has addressed. Laptop computers and improved facilities at schools do not give an equitable education.
‘We need a policy framework that is courageous enough to reform the 'system' in favour of the most disenfranchised students - not a regime that continues to defend the rights of the most privileged’ (Smyth & Hattam 2004).

The current cultural model of education is limiting and divisive. The players are representative of students who daily face challenges in schools not just in Neatsville but in schools across Australia. If the formal education of ALL Australian students is to be effective, there needs to be radical political and media changes to address the imbalance of educational inequality with resources, and within curriculum and administrative areas. It is time for Australia to embrace other cultural and educational models and not be limited to the prevalent ones.
If I have been able to see further than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.

Sir Isaac Newton


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Appendices

Storyscape: appendices

Suzie’s altered story

Terry spelling

Luke’s altered story

Student Plain Language Statement

Interviews summary

Documents

The Real Game
Term 2

Assessment task

14/4/...

Once upon a time there

Once a porcine there was a little piggy

and he loved to sing in the bowser

He is a Jemmy Happy pig. He always had

to have a cool bowser coz other pigs

sweat. He would get cool. He got out and looked

in the mirror and said "God I look

terrible. How I look," he chuckled. So to

Himself, so he got dressed and went to

the shop in this new sport club. The next

day he got a letter saying that he had

inversion which was

a inversion to a passing medal so he went.

And he was so nervous that he thought that

he was not going to get in but. He

was singer to the sugars and they thought that

he was so good, so he past. He was feeling

well, so good but then this week came along

and said "God so fast I can just past you in

my name right now." And the Piggy said
you can't bring me down coz I am flying on cloud 9. and I am better then some woof and I will out smart you with my hoofs not be hind my back so the woof just walk away the shut up then so then the Pig took a huddle lots of self esteem. And he became a big singer and lived Happily ever after.

By
Appendix 2  Spelling – Reading text

This is weird, but interesting! if yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a mnid too
Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can.

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclty uesdnatnrd waht I v
The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rs
Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos no lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! if you can raed tihs forwrad
eonvrye taht can raed tihs rsaie yuor hand

Morse Code is this way too. The great code operators didn't letters but actually heard the words or, in some cases entir

THREE LITTLE PIGS

Once upon a time there were three little pigs who lived with their mother and father. One day the three little pigs were begging to be too much trouble for their parents. They use all the hot water for the j.v. Mother and father pig couldn’t afford to feed them and pay for their power and water. So they told them to get a house of their own. The three little pigs were so happy they left the next day. During their younger life the pigs had to save money for a house. Some day the three pigs saved different amounts. The first pig saved $500, the second pig saved $1000, and the third pig saved $2000. The first pig could only afford a straw house. The second pig saved enough to get a stick house and the third a brick house. After buying these houses they needed to get a job. The first pig got a job in the air force. The second pig got a job in the military and the third pig in the Navy. After hard days work they went back to these houses. On the way back they saw a wolf Biker gang called “the Winds.” The wolf Biker gang saw the three little pigs and pulled up beside them. One wolf said, “Are you heading one pig?” The pig said, “Just over the hills the wolf said we were heading up that way, get on we’ll give ya a lift.” The wolf said no thanks. The wolves said, “I don’t think you have a choice.” The second pig pulled out his M4, and said, “I think I do” and shot them all except one he ran out of bullets. The wolf chased after the

Pigs. The pigs ran in there Houses the wolf stopped at the Straw House and blew it down. The pig jumped in his F14 Tomcat and flew to the second pigs house. The pig said get in if you don't want to die. He got in the jet and flew of. The wolf finally made it to the second house and set it on fire. He said yummy roast pork. But no one was there. He was heading to the last house. The 2 pigs landed and the third pigs house they went in side and shut the door. The got to the last house and tried to blow it down. But nothing happened. The pig from the Air force said why dont we fly my jet and strike from the skies. The other two pigs said good plan. They got into the jet flew up to 5000 feet and shot a AGM-65 H. Maverick Air to ground missile at the wolf. The missile hit and blew up. The pig landed the jet and went in side the house. They never had any trouble with wolf again.

The End
Hi students.
I’m Margaret Milne, and after teaching for more than a few years I’m now a fulltime education student at Deakin University, where XX is my supervisor. My studies involve me talking and listening to adolescent students and that’s why I’m at NACE.

In my studies I’m investigating what stories young people read, tell, watch or play during their secondary and post compulsory education. I’m especially interested in students who are no longer in secondary schools, and it would be great to see what different ways you make up stories using techniques and technology that suit your interests. I need 6 students to take part in this study and invite you to be one of them as you have experiences that would be valuable for my research. I am working with your teachers so my research will fit in with your program in second term.

Being part of the research group will not involve any extra time outside your normal POEM classes, and your assessment work for your studies is in no way affected by your taking part in this research or not. I will be observing and audio recording a few classroom lessons and taking notes. I will have three short interviews with each of you during the nine week period, and these will be taped, and I’ll check my transcript and notes with you to make sure I get right what you are saying. If it’s OK with you I’d like copies or print-outs of anything you create. If you are interested in the results I’ll get back to you later on in the year with a report.

Two important things you need to know. We are going to use fake names to keep your identity secret, and if you say you’ll be part of the group then later on change your mind, that will be OK; your information will not be used. You can pull out any time. I’ll get you to sign a permission form, and get your parents or guardians to sign one too. The data I collect will be stored securely at the uni for seven years. If you have questions, suggestions or complaints then you can talk to me or my supervisor. Her contact details are on the notice board and in the information for your parents.

Cheers for now, Margaret.
Appendix 4 continued: Plain Language Statements p.2 Parent / supervisor

Deakin University
Human Research Ethics Approval
Plain Language Statement for Parents

Project Title: Narrative and identity with adolescent at-risk students.

Hi, my name is Margaret Milne and I am enrolled in a doctoral program at Deakin University under the supervision of XX, an associate professor in the Faculty of Education. Under this program I’m conducting research into youth who are enrolled at NACE. The teachers there and I are planning a special part of the program for second term and your son / daughter has been invited to be part of the project.

The aim of the research is to see what stories students have read, told, watched or played during the past few years, whether school selected texts are enjoyed by them, and what sorts of stories they can create using whatever technology or media they prefer. Through listening to what they have to say, and seeing the stories they produce, I want to better understand them and the impact of stories on their lives. My plan is to use this information to help schools and teachers prepare better courses for students in the future. Through being part of the study the students will have an opportunity to build skills and knowledge to help them with their future education and training. However their assessment work and results are in no way affected by their participation or not in this research.

For nine weeks during second term (April – June) the students’ program will incorporate classes associated with this research and nine of the classes (one each week) will be recorded. During this time each participant will be interviewed three times, and copies taken of the stories they create as part of their studies. All this will happen during their normal class times at NACE. The sorts of questions I will ask might be: What stories did you enjoy during your last couple of years at secondary school? Did the stories used in school interest you?

These types of questions will guide the interviews and the stories the students tell. These interviews will be recorded digitally and transcribed into a text. After each interview, the audiotape will be transcribed into a text and the participants will be given a chance to review it and then delete, add, or revise any part their story. Participation is voluntary and the participants
are free to withdraw from the project at any time and their stories will not be used.

To protect the participants’ identity, students will have fake names and these will be used to code the consent forms, contact information and the stories gathered during the project. The coded consent forms and contact information will be stored separately from the data collected to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. No material will be published which could identify the students by their first or last name or any other identifying characteristic. The materials collected will be only viewed by my supervisor, the participant and me. The data will be stored in a secure place for six years as prescribed by University regulations.

The written text from this project will be used to write a thesis, which will be submitted for the award of a doctoral degree from Deakin University. The written results may also be published in professional journals or presented at relevant educational conferences.

If at any time you have any questions, suggestions or complaints about the project you can contact my supervisor or me. I will not be able to tell you what students say but I will be able to give you general things about the project.

Thank you.

Researcher: Margaret Milne

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the research project please contact the Secretary, Ethics Committee, Research Services, Deakin University, Ph (03) 9251-7123.
Appendix 5 Interview and transcript summary colour coded p.1

Audio recorded or not; where conducted; transcribed & checked; main issues raised

**Nathan**

May 17 with Mick hand-written notes made; **Recorded** Common area transcribed secondary school issues
May 24 by self; reading newspaper hand-written notes **NOT recorded** checking (& building) transcript from 1 Common area transcribed seco program (bikes / energy); subjects in first half year 10;
June 5 with Mick; using lap-top; hand-written notes made on green paper; **Recorded** (Janice interrupt) Janice’s office transcribed
June 7 with Terry; using lap-top; **Recorded** Common area transcribed films; books; computers; road rules; TV shows

**Mick**

May 17 with Nathan notes made; **NOT recorded** Common area transcribed secondary school issues
June 5 with Mick; using lap-top; **Recorded** (Janice interrupt) Janice’s office transcribed (aim to check transcript from 1 (didn’t eventuate) transcribed; transcript not checked

**Terry**

May 22 initial enrolment interview with Janice, then with me at end; recorded; Common area transcribed
June 5; interview 2; Nathan present & contributing ... **Recorded** Common area transcribed
June 7 with Nathan; using lap-top; **Recorded** Common area aim to check transcript of interview 1, not happened; transcription of 2 happened as Terry took over the interview transcribed films; books; computers; road rules; TV shows

**Bethany**

May 15 notes & audio transcribed; not checked; interview room recorded (next class-day no time to check transcript; then student away)
Suzie
May 9 notes & audio transcribed; not checked; recorded (next week no time to check transcript; then student away)

Luke
May 9 notes & audio transcribed & checked; interview room recorded
May 15 notes & audio transcribed & checked; common area recorded (Improvise questions eg what would your ideal school be like; think about for next time)
May 24 transcripts of interviews 1 & 2 checked common area recorded; and extra verification notes made (eg re years secondary school grades; the Playstation he wants).

Appendix 5 continued Interview and transcript summary colour coded p.2

Teachers: interviews / conversations answering my questions; the teachers declined my invitation to check the transcripts. They felt it wasn’t necessary.
Janice May 10 re enrolments and youth program recorded transcribed
Janice May 15 planning difficulties when students not arrive recorded transcribed
Janice May 16 re Luke & Suzie, background especially literacy recorded transcribed
Rosemary May 23 youth program, certificates, planning difficulties recorded transcribed
Appendix 6  Documents

Victorian Qualifications Authority (VAC)
Certificate 1 in Vocational Preparation,
Certificates 1 and 11 Information Technology,
Certificates 1, 11, and 111 in General Education for Adults
Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
Certificate 1V in Training and Assessment

Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training
POEM Guidelines…POEM = Partnership Outreach Education Model

Youth Pathways Programs operating in secondary schools, TAFEs and
Adult and Community Education Centres (colleges)

Australian Government Centrelink Youth Allowance information

Mulcahy, n.y., Innovations and Excellence (Local Cluster) “Raising
Expectations’ Prep to Year 12 Core Writing Goals for Students, Teachers
and Parents.
Appendix 7 ‘The Real Game’

‘The Real Game’ [http://www.realgame.esa.edu/au](http://www.realgame.esa.edu/au)

At the time of my research ‘The Real Game’ was a board game, although now digital versions are available. 5 levels were piloted in Australia to teach adolescents about careers and life skills, with the aim of students seeing a connection between their studies and their life after school.

‘The Real Game’ was used by Janice as a learning tool to assist adolescents with skills and knowledges that would assist them to gain employment. Janice was introduced to the game, and invested in it, because of its successful implementation in Neatsville Secondary School.