Teacher identity and power relationships in contexts of change: a case study of teachers

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Teacher identity and power relationships in contexts of change: A case study of teachers

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Faculty of Education, Health and Science
School of Education
Charles Darwin University
Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
Date: September 2005

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by research at the Charles Darwin University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Signed: Jenny Overton.............................................Date...................
Abstract

This qualitative research project employs a critical case study approach to examine the effects of change on teachers. It uses the concept of identity to investigate the deeper personal and professional implications of change. Open-ended interviews with eight early childhood teachers provide the data, which are analysed using a three-tiered approach.

The first level of analysis utilises a narrative approach, storying the interviews. This summarises the information for the reader and provides background understandings about each of the teachers. The second level of analysis interrogates the data using a grounded theory approach and arrives at three themes of change, power and identity, with their accompanying categories and sub-categories. The third level of analysis expands on the previous analyses and employs a discourse analytic approach using Gee’s (1999) framework of 18 analytical questions, in conjunction with the research questions, to develop further understandings from the teachers’ perceptions of their identities in contexts of change.

The key findings relate to the interconnected issues of teacher professionalism, the actions of the education system towards teachers, and the relationship between teachers’ identity and change. The study has evidenced the ways in which the actions of the educational system shape the value that teachers assign to themselves and their working lives and corrode teachers’ sense of value to their employer. In contexts of ongoing educational change, teachers experience some degree of personal and professional uncertainty and instability. This puts teachers at risk of eroding the residual goodwill that exists between teachers and the education system. Marked disparities in how issues of professionalism are understood also place teachers in a position of uncertainty and conflict and create the need for self-protective behaviours on their part. In turn, this can diminish teachers’ commitment to teaching tasks and has direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning.
Acknowledgements

If an army marches on its stomach, then a PhD candidate functions with networks of support and I use this forum to both acknowledge and thank those who have assisted me in this process. Firstly, the supervisors—in order of appearance—Victoria Carrington, Joan Abbott-Chapman, Julianne Moss, Ian Falk, and Brian Devlin. They have all helped me in assorted ways and for various lengths of time. Their individual contributions have ensured the completion of this thesis. I am greatly indebted to them. Secondly, the friends and colleagues—mainly from the DoE and UTas—too numerous to mention individually but given thanks and recognition for their interest, support and conversations along the way. Special appreciation also goes to Marg Falk for her proofreading—she is one of the few people I can think of who enjoys reading theses and to Heather Smigiel for her assistance with data analysis. Thirdly, I want to give due acknowledgement to the eight participant teachers who gave generously and freely of themselves and their time. They are the foundation of this thesis. And fourthly, I want to thank and acknowledge my parents and to my two wonderful daughters, Amy and Katelyn—who will always be my greatest achievements. And lastly, to my wonderful partner Bill, who has seen the best and worst of me over this time. I am sure I have challenged his patience as he has stood with me in the frustrations of the research processes. Unlimited thanks and acknowledgement is due and given.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD/ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Disorder /Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>Australian Education Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEI</td>
<td>Australian Education Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST2, AST3</td>
<td>Advanced Skills Teacher 2 or 3 [promoted positions within schools, carrying additional responsibilities, pay and duties]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>Committee on Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRESAP Report</td>
<td>A 1990 report commissioned by the Tasmanian government and chaired by the Cresap firm that resulted in major cuts in funding across the education sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of Education and the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECCD</td>
<td>Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education, Tasmania</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECET</td>
<td>Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdNA</td>
<td>Education Network Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELFs</td>
<td>Essential Learning Frameworks</td>
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<td>ELs</td>
<td>Essential Learnings</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>Education Resources Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPLP</td>
<td>Individual Professional Learning Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12 or K–8</td>
<td>Kindergarten to Grade 12 or Kindergarten to Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KILOs</td>
<td>Key Intended Literacy Outcomes [1994, state-based literacy policy outlining the intended literacy outcomes for students K–8]</td>
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<tr>
<td>KTA</td>
<td>Kindergarten Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCEETYA</td>
<td>Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELs</td>
<td>New Essential Learnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTU</td>
<td>Northern Territory University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Partnership Agreement [formalised agreements between the school and its broader community]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS</td>
<td>Program of Additional Support and Structure [for literacy]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP</td>
<td>Principals’ Incentive Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIPS</td>
<td>Performance Indicators in Primary Schools [screening of all Prep age students]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proquest</td>
<td>An academic, online writing database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Expansion and details</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACS</td>
<td>School Administrative Computer System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>Student Achievement Module [computer program used in schools from 2000]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THRASS</td>
<td>Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills [literacy program used in some Tasmanian schools]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLOs</td>
<td>Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes [revised version of the KILOs, produced in 2000]</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPPA</td>
<td>Tasmanian Primary Principals’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTas</td>
<td>University of Tasmania</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction: The research defined

We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are.

(Anaïs Nin, French-born author and diarist, 1903–1977)

Overview of the chapter

This chapter establishes the basis for the research study. The first section gives an overview of the research, prefacing the role of change in education and the notion of teacher identity. The second section explains the significance of this research, outlining five distinctive features of this research that create its educational significance. The third section provides the context of the research and its background in terms of the educational, chronological and geographical location of this study. The fourth section discusses the research focus, expanding upon the researcher’s position, the underpinning premises of the research and how it evolved. The fifth section presents the research problem and questions. It introduces and defines terms used throughout this thesis (See also the List of acronyms and definitions on pp. ix–x). The final section outlines the thesis structure, setting out the chapters that follow.
Chapter 1

Introduction: The research defined

1.1 Outline of the research: An overview

This research focuses on two areas of education, teachers’ identities and change, seeking to investigate what happens to teachers in contexts of change. As analysis of the data progressed, it evidenced a third area of prominence—that of power relationships. This research highlights what happens to, with and for teachers and their identity at the intersection of change and power. The literature review reveals that teacher identity as a topic in educational research is largely ignored. Where the concept of teacher identity is acknowledged in the field of educational change, it is usually in the sense of teacher satisfaction, motivation, career development, the development and maintenance of a professional identity and/or it is linked to other aspects of teachers’ work lives.

This research seeks to foreground the importance of teachers. Their identity, as an indicator of their individuality, is the combination of physical attributes, personality, life history, understandings, attitudes and beliefs, but this is rarely evident in the literature. In using the concept of identity as a lens or research tool, it becomes possible to view what is happening to, with and for teachers in the processes of change. This research takes the stance that teachers’ personal (private) identity is inherently connected to their professional (teacher) identity and cannot be lucidly separated. Individual teacher identity is significant in that it not only constitutes and shapes each person as a teacher, but it also mediates the ways in which teachers manage all aspects of their teaching lives, including the noticeable aspect of change. Power relationships became evident in the data through the ways in which teachers interacted with their employer and its agents and sought empowerment while experiencing the contexts of educational change.

Change and teaching are integrally linked and, as such, change is an inevitable component of teachers’ work lives. It is evident throughout teachers’ careers and in every aspect of their daily work. It encompasses large-scale changes, for example in curricula and in programs, through to the seemingly insignificant, for example,
whether or not the letter J should be written with a ‘lid’\(^1\) on it. This thesis seeks to highlight the effects and repercussions of the processes of ongoing educational change on teacher identity. It asserts that, in the educational research arena, there is a paucity of research and understanding about the implications of ongoing educational change on teacher identity.

Because of the paucity of research in this area, a theory-building research design is appropriate. This qualitative research has used interviews with eight early childhood teachers as data. Analysis of these data has employed a multi-layered approach, using a range of tools and methods to analyse the data, to search for deeper understandings about the ways in which ongoing educational change affects teachers. Further details about the methods are outlined in Chapter 3, Methodology.

### 1.2 Significance of the research

This research is significant in five ways, which are outlined here. It is distinctive because of these features and its findings contribute to the body of knowledge and educational discourse on teacher identity and change.

1. This research highlights both the early childhood and Tasmanian contexts. Few preceding research projects have focussed on Tasmanian early childhood teachers employed in the state education department, and no other research appears to have focussed on teacher identity and the impacts of change within these Tasmanian contexts. Thus, this research is able to shed light on the local Tasmanian context with the potential for its findings to be generalised to broader contexts.

2. This is a piece of research conducted by a teacher about teachers. The researcher in this study is a teacher with considerable experience in early childhood teaching who chose to conduct research about early childhood teachers. This means then that, as the researcher, I have an advanced appreciation of the ‘culture’ of teaching—early childhood teaching—in the state government education system. My appreciation of the contexts of

\(^1\) Single quotation marks are used in this thesis to denote emphasis and to differentiate from references and interview quotations.
teaching, coupled with research skills and knowledge, give me valuable insights into the working lives of the participant teachers.

3. This research aims not only to contribute to the academic dialogue on the issues of teacher identity, power and change, but to raise a general awareness of these issues. As such, this research adds to the research base and generates new knowledge at the intersection of change and teacher identity in contexts of power.

4. The results of this study provide information that is useful to teachers, school staff, departments of education, policy makers and teacher educators. Information from this research is made available to those with an interest in change processes. This information includes: some of the repercussions of change on teachers’ identities; issues about the professional treatment of teachers and their personal responses to these kinds of power-related change initiatives; and the importance of each teacher’s identity at the intersection of change. This information could be used as the basis for further study to help improve the way in which changes are initiated, thereby maximising the effects of potential changes.

5. Although generalisable results were not sought, readers can take from this study data, knowledge and perspectives that may have resonance with other similar contexts and thereby may further enhance the dialogue on teacher identity, power and change.

1.3 Context of the research

This research was conducted over the period 2000 to 2005. Data were collected at the end of 2001 and analysed during that period of data collection and during the following year. The researcher and participants are residents of Tasmania, the island state of Australia. Tasmania is approximately 68,000 square kilometres in size with a population of about 480,000 people. The state government school system caters for students from Kindergarten (4 to 5 years of age) to Grade 12 (17 to 18 years of age). In between Kindergarten and Grade 1 there is a Preparatory year (Prep) during which students turn six years of age. The teachers in this study were all early childhood teachers, teaching students from Kindergarten to Grade 2.

The Department of Education provides education services in 218 schools across the
Chapter 1

Introduction: The research defined

state. There are 140 primary schools (K–6), 26 District High Schools (K–10), 31 high schools (7–10), eight secondary colleges (11–12) and 12 special schools (for students with a disability). This system caters for over 73,000 students (Department of Education [DoE], 2003f, p. 1).

Catering for these 73,000 students are approximately 4,950 teachers, of whom 3,110 full-time equivalent staff members work in Primary schools (Department of Education [DoE], 2003b), with the pupil/teacher ratio for Primary schools being officially listed as 16 students to each member of teaching staff (Department of Education [DoE], 2003b). It is noted though that the reality is that most Primary and early childhood classes have between 25–30 students, dependent on how the school manages its resource package allocation (funding and resource provisions). The average age of Tasmanian state government teachers in 2003 was 42 (Department of Education [DoE], 2003b, "Our Workforce").

At the time of data collection, the Department of Education (DoE) had six districts\(^2\), based on geographic location, and this research was conducted in the largest of these. A superintendent and an assistant superintendent, with administrative staff in support, managed each of these districts. The districts were responsible for funding allocations, staffing and policy implementation in the schools within their districts.

\[1.4 \text{ Focus of the research} \]

At the beginning of the research process it was intended to investigate the impact of ongoing educational change on teachers. While I was aware that teachers were constantly upgrading their knowledge through a wide range of professional development activities, I suspected that there was a deeper, more implicit message that teachers received from the constancy of this change. There seemed so much of it and some of it created fundamental shifts in teaching focus. It seemed to me that these constant changes not only affected teachers’ professional practice—the content and way that they taught the curriculum and their personal and practical knowledge (Goodson, 1991b)—but the impact of the requirement and expectation of change went deeper than knowledge and practice.

\[^2\] During 2005 the DoE restructured its ‘districts’ to be known as ‘branches’ and reduced the six districts to three branches.
It also seemed that changes created problems and in some cases conflicts for teachers and that this situation was not related to fickle, cynical, petulant or stubborn resistance to change on the part of teachers. Perhaps there was a more veiled, underlying message that teachers felt that there was a failure to provide meaningful support for them in the course of going about the task of teaching. I questioned whether there were deeply felt repercussions of this ongoing engagement with change and whether the support mechanisms to assist them in the process of change were working. What did teachers think about the changes and what was the message that they got about change? Indeed, what happened for teacher’s sense of self at the juncture where they met with ongoing change?

I recalled a specific situation that has remained with me as an example of the impact that teaching can have on teachers. In the 1980s the Education Department changed the style of handwriting for all students and therefore all teachers. Subsequently staff were required to attend professional development seminars to learn the new handwriting style. As teachers we were to model this new style, hence we were required to change the way that we wrote and formed letters as we role-modelled this for our students. The particular curriculum consultant who was conducting the seminar revealed to the group the profound effect this was having on her. Her name—and I can't recall what it was—began with a J and the new style of handwriting did not have a ‘lid’ or ‘hat’ on the J. She said that somehow when she wrote her name with this new J at the beginning she felt incomplete, deficient or naked without the ‘lid’ on the J. I could relate to this, not only because I was in the same position with my name beginning with a J, but because I was aware that Departmental decisions affected me at a level that went deeper than simply knowledge or teaching practice.

As an early childhood teacher, I was also aware of two things that seemed to me to be interlinked and connected to the previously mentioned understanding. Firstly, the largest part of the early childhood day is consumed with the teaching and reinforcing of literacy skills. It is the primary focus of what early childhood teachers do in their job. Social skills and behaviour management are perhaps the second biggest consumer of teacher’s time. So when there is a major change in literacy focus that
requires teachers to change something about the core of their teaching task; it cannot help but have an impact. The presumption here is that the impact of this change, whatever form the change takes, goes beyond just the knowledge, strategies and content skills that teachers use in their teaching practice. I was becoming convinced that the impact was deep: to the foundation of who they are as teachers and as people—to their identity.

I have long been aware of the degree of ‘self’ which is invested in the processes of teaching. Teachers invest so much of themselves in their job. It appeared to me that my employer ‘owned’ me in the sense that my life was decidedly different as a teacher than it may have been if I had been, for example, a dentist or secretary. I became aware of the need to be functioning at full capacity every day or there were significant ramifications within my classroom. When and if I arrived at school tired or unwell there were consequences in the classroom. I could not afford to attend school tired or the least bit unwell. Late nights, poor health or a difficult home-life was not a possibility if classroom practice and routines were to run smoothly.

Considerable amounts of home-time were needed for planning, making and locating teaching resources and, while this was an accepted part of my responsibility as a teacher, there were times when it became a considerable imposition on my life outside of school. It went beyond what I considered to be tolerable or reasonable.

This sense that my life was not my own because of my choice of career only became a burden when the amount of time and effort that I was investing in my working life became disproportionate to the amount of ‘reward’ I was gaining. I seemed to be giving out far more than I was getting back. The tide had turned and the kinds of rewards that I had previously received were no longer as available. It was never about monetary reward. It was a sense of being valued, of being part of a productive, active team, of having appreciative parents to work with, of having students who were able to be engaged in learning, of continuing to learn my profession in positive and self-fulfilling ways, of knowing that the work that I did was worth the effort that it required. Somehow the ratios had changed and it wasn’t as rewarding any more. I was putting in more and getting out less. Yet the messages I gleaned from the consistent changes indicated that I needed to continue to give regardless of what I got...
in return. This was a conflict that had the potential to see me out of classroom teaching. If it happened for me then I was concerned that I was not alone. Was this the case? Were teachers over-investing in their jobs?

In 1932 Willard Waller published his seminal work on *The Sociology of Teaching*. This work is insightful, especially considering its publication date. Included in it is a chapter entitled “What teaching does to teachers” (Waller, 1932). While much of his work could be considered to be stereotypical by today’s standards and in many regards politically incorrect, Waller’s insight in posing the notion that teaching ‘does something’ to teachers struck a chord with me. As a teacher I have been aware of a degree of truth in this assertion. In terms of this research project, my interest centred on the repercussions for teachers of the changes with which they engaged. My focus was not just on teaching as a generality, but more personally, on whether the change aspect of teaching has a deeper effect on teachers.

Another piece of literature that also struck a chord with me was the anecdote recounted by Philip Jackson in his chapter in Hargreaves and Fullan’s *Understanding Teacher Development* (Jackson, 1992). Jackson tells the story of a man who had played the double bass for the Metropolitan Opera for thirty years without ever taking an evening off. When he was given the night off, he attended the opera, sat in the audience and was enthralled by the spectacle of the totality of the performance. For years he had contributed to his one section of the orchestra, but now as a member of the audience, he came to a fuller appreciation of how all the parts fit together to form the complete opera. He now had a dual view of the opera—from his perspective as an instrument player and from the perspective of a member of the audience. Perhaps it was a more balanced view. For me this was an analogy of how my journey had been. As a classroom teacher I performed my teaching role, and as both a lecturer and researcher I was able to see another vision of what it was that I had been doing all those years in the classroom. The picture of totality was, as a result, clearer and I wanted to share this vision of how the parts fit together to form

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3 This account is also cited in Avalos’ chapter entitled “Professionalism and empowerment for teachers” (Avalos, 1997).
the whole, both for teachers themselves and for others interested in education—be they researchers or members of the education faculty or department.

So, after consideration of the literature and with a renewed awareness of the concept of identity in the change processes, the research topic was determined to be: ‘Teacher identity and power relationships in contexts of change: A case study of teachers.’ I wanted to know what was happening to and for teachers in the processes of change. The concept of identity would become a lens, providing the research with a way to focus on the teacher both as an individual and as a professional person. Since changes in literacy programs, policies and practices were the most salient for early childhood teachers, it was decided that literacy change would be the point of connection with teachers. It was not, though, to be limited to literacy changes, and as such could become the starting point for researching a case of the repercussions of broader educational change.

1.5 The research problems and questions

This section outlines the assumptions that underpin this research. It highlights the issues that the researcher considered to be significant at the outset. The following set of assumptions, based on both my teaching experience and what I had read, helped to focus the research, giving it clarity and suggesting perspectives from which to investigate the issues at hand further.

- Change is an ongoing and essential part of education.
- Because teachers invest so much of themselves in their job, changes in programs, policies and practices imply not only changing what they do but it also has implications for who they are as people.
- As a result of this investment of self in the process of teaching, change impacts deeply on teachers and with increases in the number and frequency of changes, there are implications for teachers that go beyond adjustments to teaching knowledge and practice.
- This research seeks to uncover what happens to teachers in the processes of change. If education systems are likely to continue to expect that teachers will authentically engage with future changes, understanding what change means to them and how it affects them is critically important.
This research also questions whether teachers are adequately supported in the processes of change and whether the individual teacher’s identity—the deeper, core parts of themselves, what they understand, know, believe, feel and value—is significantly affected by the ongoing expectation of educational change.

The following set of research questions directed the focus of the study, seeking confirmation, refutation or other answers to the perceived problem. It commences with two generic questions and then broadens to include questions that arose under the three themes of identity, change and power.

Questions arising from the Research Problem

- What are the implications of ongoing educational change for teachers?
- Is there an impact from this change upon their individual identities? What might this be?

Identity

- What are the implications of how identity is defined in the literature and by others?
- How does the use of identity as a concept for studying teachers benefit research?
- What is the role of identity in contexts of ongoing educational change?

Change

- What do teachers understand, know, feel, believe and value about the ongoing nature of change in education?
- What are the implications of the ongoing nature of educational change for teachers?
- What mechanisms and beliefs do teachers apply in change contexts?
- What happens to teachers’ identities in the processes of change?

As power relationships emerged as a theme in the analysis of the data, the following questions arose about issues of power.

Power

- What are teacher’s understandings about the use of power in the processes of change?
- How do teachers position themselves in these power relationships?
- Is there evidence that the use of power in the change process affects individual teacher’s identities?

Therefore, in the broadest sense, this research has sought to investigate what happens to teachers at the point of intersection between their identities and educational
change. The power relationships that are evident in teachers’ working lives became an issue in this context as teachers balanced their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values against what their employer—and/or its agents—expected of them in the processes of change.

1.6 Definition of terms

This section gives the reader a brief overview of the four main terms used throughout this research: teachers’ identity, change and power. For more detailed explanations about the specific acronyms and terms used in this thesis, the reader is referred to the List of acronyms and definitions (on pp. ix–x) and to footnotes that appear throughout the text. More detailed explanations of the use of the three terms, identity, change and power, are found in Chapter 3, literature review.

In this thesis the term ‘teacher’ refers to those people who are employed in the educational arena and who are in charge of a class of students. It is usually presumed that teachers work on a full-time basis, but this is not always the case, as increasing numbers of teachers work part time. The term also generally refers to those who work in the Kindergarten to Grade 10 range—the compulsory years of schooling—with this research focusing on early childhood teachers who teach within the state government’s Primary Schools. The use of the term ‘teacher’ is not intended to be limited to this focus.

The term ‘identity’ is explained in greater detail in Chapter 2, Review of the relevant literature and background information. In this study it is intended that the reader understands ‘identity’ to be the amalgam of many of life’s aspects including, but not restricted to, the combination of each person’s personality, life history and experience, culture, physical characteristics and genetic makeup, and that this combined identity is socially and relationally constructed. Hence, this definition of identity is used: “The collective aspect of the set of behavioural and personal characteristics which identify a person as a distinct individual” (Dictionary-Online, 2005).

‘Change’ is the broad term used for the ongoing processes that occur within society
and education. This term is also discussed more fully in Chapter 2. This study is prefaced by an assumption of change being a continual component of teachers’ work lives and as such it foregrounds the array of kinds of change with which teachers engage. Change and education—the work of teachers—then, are integrally linked. Use of the term ‘change’ can encompass large-scale curriculum reform change through to the relatively incidental changes that include timetabling and planning details. There is an assumption that much of the change is imposed upon teachers through the processes of the education system’s operations (programs, policies and projects), however the use of the term is not restricted to imposed change as some of the changes within the study are teacher-initiated (some professional development, transfers and planning).

‘Power’ is used in the sense that it has been evident in the data—that is, the power that positions these teachers. There were three broad forms of power that are evidenced for teachers in schools. Power is evident in teachers’ relationships with their employer and its agents—usually senior staff and Principals, and unspecified members of the DoE who determine the policy and practices under which teachers work. While this is not surprising, it creates an imbalance of power relationships; teachers having the obligation to do as their employer requires. This kind of power is labelled ‘imposed power’, implying top-down directives. The second kind of power is that of ‘disempowerment’ and is a logical consequence of imposed power. This type of power—or lack of it—is evident in schools with the incidences of implicit or explicit power which serves to actively disempower and lead to an implicit sense of being undervalued and/or not supported. The third kind of power is taken to be the ways in which ‘empowerment’ can be sought. Empowerment takes a variety of forms which include: self-empowerment for teachers when engaging in specific instances of imposed power; empowerment resulting from action/reactions to more generic conduct of their employer or its agents; and for some teachers, self-empowerment through their own efforts to empower others.

1.7 Outline of the thesis framework

The thesis is structured with six chapters, this introduction being the first. Chapter 2 is a distillation of the literature relevant to this study in the areas of change, teachers’
work lives together with supporting background information about Tasmanian contexts, and identity. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in this study, including the explanation and choices of research design, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 describes the results, reporting on them in three levels as they were analysed. Chapter 5, the discussion, interprets the results and their relevance, and leads to Chapter 6, the conclusion, which summarises the findings of the research and makes suggestions about the implications of the findings for stakeholders. Recommendations for further research are also noted. A list of references used in this study follows chapter 6. Appended to the body of the thesis are copies of relevant documents which are presented on a CDROM. These include ethical approval forms, data collection instruments, interview transcripts and interview summaries.

**Summary of the research defined in the introduction**

This introductory chapter has set out the background and provided some explanatory information that the reader needs in order to proceed though the thesis with a sense of clarity. It has outlined the background of the researcher and the process of arriving at the research topic. It has expanded upon the focus, significance and contexts of this research project and briefly detailed the use of the main terms used throughout the thesis. It has then set out the structural framework of the thesis. The next chapter, Review of relevant literature and background information, provides a critical analysis of applicable literature to establish a scholarly context for the study.
Chapter 2: Review of relevant literature and background information

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

(Martin Luther King Jr., Civil rights leader, 1929—1968)

Overview of the chapter

This research study set out to investigate what happens to teachers in the processes of educational change. Using the lens of ‘identity’ to envisage teachers as both personal and professional people, it has sought to deepen the understandings about what change does to teachers. Power relationships have been implicated in this deeper understanding as analysis has evidenced examples where teachers have ‘bumped up against’ the powerful forces of the expectations of their employer or its agents. A synopsis of the available literature on the topics that are relevant to this research problem provides the background about contemporary understandings on these issues.
The literature about the relevant aspects of these three issues—change, power and identity—provides the basis of this chapter. There is, however, a strong interconnection between these themes. The ways in which teachers engage with issues of change in their working lives is integrally linked with who they are as people and as teachers. This sense of ‘who they are’ leads directly to the issue of identity. The power relationships with which teachers engage is also inherent in their working lives. As employees of the Department of Education (DoE) they are bound to do the bidding of their employer and/or its agents. Power forms the basis of these relationships and the ways in which teachers manage and perceive this power is evident throughout this study. These perceptions about power-based relationships, however, determine the issues of identity. As teachers know, feel, understand and value certain aspects of their working life it determines how they view the relationships and, in turn, the changes that are required of them.

Introduction

The first section includes a review of the literature on educational change over the last three decades. It looks at the ways that social, political, economic and ideological changes have created changes for education as a whole. This review includes national and international initiatives and trends, as they are relevant to this situation, helping to lay a foundation for an understanding about these teachers’ work lives and identities.

The second section covers the changes in the conditions of teachers’ working lives and narrows to a focus on the policies, programs, documents and practices that have been, and are, in use in the Tasmanian education system. While, strictly speaking, the section on the policies, programs and documents is not research literature, it is vital to establish an awareness of the kinds of changes with which teachers in the state government sector have been required to engage.

The third section outlines the literature that relates to the kinds of power that are evident in the lives of the teachers in this study. It covers the issues that surround: power and control in organisations and institutions; leadership and management; the uses of the terms ‘profession’, ‘professional’, ‘professional development’ and the
‘professionalisation’ of education; teacher autonomy and trust; as well as empowerment and disempowerment for teachers. While much of the literature on these matters is directed from a ‘top-down’, managerial-based perspective, this study has sought literature which views these issues from the perspective of the teachers and so, where possible, has restricted the literature to those authors who have taken the “teacher’s side” (Avalos, 1997, p. 69).

The fourth section sets out the literature about identity and arrives at an understanding about the nature of the term ‘identity’, as it is used in this research, given that it has a range of uses and meanings in the literature. There are psychological and sociological perspectives on the topic. This review investigates the literature on identity as it relates to education and specifically to teachers. The fourth section overviews the perspectives and discussions and comes to an understanding of how identity is conceived of for this study.

The sections within this chapter on the relevant literature and background information include:

2.1 Change in education
2.2 Changes in Tasmanian teachers’ work contexts
2.3 Power and teachers
2.3 Identity

This first section of the review of the literature looks at research and writing about global and national changes that have taken place over the last three decades, outlining trends and tensions that have become significant in education. The second section links these changes to the contexts of teachers’ work lives, showing the local and state-based issues that have been relevant for the teachers in this study. The third section discusses the ways in which issues of power relate to the contexts of this study. The fourth section of the literature review addresses the issue of teachers’ identity.

While the review is wide-ranging there are, however, some topics within these broad areas that are not covered in this review of the literature. For reasons of brevity, there is no analysis of the literature on, for example, the topics of teacher thinking, the specific and changing roles of the teacher, teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
or teachers’ responses to change. Nor are the broader areas of educational reform or policy implementation covered in any detail. These topics, while related to the thesis and important areas of study, are not central to it and detailed discussion on these areas does not serve the purpose of this research. It is acknowledged that some of these areas may be connected to the focus of this thesis and that en masse they are a compelling argument for further research into the complex and interrelated issues affecting teachers in education. The focus here, however, is restricted by the practical consideration of establishing a basis for academic dialogue into the issues that relate to the intersection of these early childhood teachers’ identities, power and changes in their work lives. As this research is about early childhood teachers, research and literature that focuses on primary and early childhood contexts has been foregrounded.

2.1 Change in education

Change has been and will continue to be an ongoing feature of all levels of education. Changes in society, in national economies and the political contexts of nations and the resultant changes in ideologies have a noticeable impact on a country’s education system (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 1998). These kinds of broader, global changes create ripple effects for teachers. There are direct links with what happens in education in other western nations, notably the USA and the UK, and what happens in the Australian education systems. What teachers do in the course of their teaching lives, how they do it and how they feel about their work are directly or indirectly influenced by these broader, global changes.

Many complex issues surround the topic of change in education. Some of these complex issues have been highlighted in critiques of the educational reform movement and curriculum policy implementation. These associated topics, many of them covered by noteworthy authors such as Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves (Fullan, 1991, 1993, 1998; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, 1992; Hargreaves et al., 1998), have been considered to be secondary to the focus of this thesis which has remained centred on changes in teachers’ work lives and its resultant impact on teacher’s identity.
Chapter 2  Review of the relevant literature and background information

The following discussion about the literature on change is a generic one, covering the broader contexts of international and national trends and the tensions that change has created for education and for teachers. In the next section it narrows to include the more site-based and specific changes with which the teachers in this study have engaged. In that sense this review seeks to be explanatory, laying the foundations for an understanding of the ways that changes have impacted on the contexts of the work lives of the teachers in this study. Each section of this literature review includes a table that outlines the major literature, as it is relevant to this study. The tables are by no means exhaustive and other texts are referred to throughout this review.

2.1.1 Global to local change

We live in a global economy (Hargreaves et al., 1998). The decisions and events that happen in large organisations and institutions such as the OECD (Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development), Wall Street, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank have impacts for our daily lives (Henry & Taylor, 1997; S. Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). The price and flavour of the coffee we buy, the chance of getting a job or a promotion and the interest rate on our home loans are all affected by international decisions. So there is little wonder that, in the new millennium, the flavour and price of our education is also affected by decisions and events outside our shores. World events dictate and necessitate change. The last three decades of the world’s economic situation have been characterised by increasing rates of change (Dalin, 1998; Kenway, 1994; Welch, 1996).

The generic state of change is characterised by changes in the structures and events, the foci and policies of the economies and politics of the major world powers (Dalin, 1998). The complex and synergistic relationship between politics, economies and social ideologies will not be dealt with here. What is argued here is that the changes in philosophies and ideologies of world powers and the resultant economic and political policies that are created and enacted at national and state levels have implications within the educational arena. This causal relationship is important because it highlights the global aspect of contemporary education. Global changes
influence local education and local education can affect what happens in global education. It implies that what occurs in education, for example, in the Tasmanian contexts, may well be replicated in other regional areas across the western world (Welch, 1996). Thus, we find ourselves in the ‘village of the world’. The implications of this are that, while all research is not necessarily generalisable in the modernistic, scientific sense, across all contexts, any piece of research and its findings may have implications, relevance and resonance for other systems and contexts. Readers are thus able to draw conclusions that reflect the nature of their own contexts.

The ways that international events and changes impact at the national level is well summarised by Welch when he asserts:

one can no longer understand reforms in Australian education in isolation from similar reforms elsewhere. Examples of international trends which bear on the Australian context include the back—to basics movement in Australia, the UK, the USA and Canada during the 1980s and 1990s; the trend toward some decentralisation of authority to local level while increasing centralised regulation and control …; the vocational training agenda …; privatisation; the reduced role of the state …; and ongoing reforms in higher education (Welch, 1996, p. xii).

Thus it can be seen that what happens in other western nations is mirrored in part by the Australian situation.

The rise of information and communication technology industries has created new ways of working and new industries (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2000). From the early 1980s information technology has become accepted as the new tool in business and management and has been a driving force in the globalisation processes of the last two decades (Unsworth, 2002). Information access, ease and speed of communication and system redefinitions have occurred as the necessity for, availability of and potential uses of the new technologies have been realised (Allington, 1995). Jobs have been both created and lost as computerisation has continued to replace personnel and the shape of employment has been altered with greater emphasis on flexibility for employers and employees. Unemployment levels have risen in Australia, along with a decline

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4 Membership of MCEETYA Council comprises state, territory, Commonwealth and New Zealand ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island having observer status (MCEETYA, 2003).
in public sector employment, resulting in greater uncertainty in labour markets (Karmel, 1998).

Economic and social changes have been occurring simultaneously, symbiotically and consequentially. Since the 1970s there has been a rise of anti-discrimination policies that seek to redress social inequities (Lingard, Knight, & Porter, 1993). Beginning in the United States in the 1950s, racial issues have been on the political and social agenda (Karmel, 1998). This has gradually resulted in the demise of overt racial discrimination and has had the filtering effect of raising other issues of discrimination and society inequity. Societies across the world have been moving on a pathway that was more socially tolerant and accepting of diversity. The rights of the individual and marginalised members of society have been elevated (Karmel, 1998). In Australia social justice and equality had become catchcries in the 1970s and 1980s (B. Connell, 1998). Haynes asserts that the economic optimism of the 1960s and 1970s saw the potential to “increase the share of opportunity and wealth available to less privileged groups in Australian society while not adversely affecting the well off because the redistribution could come from growth in jobs, production and wealth in an ever expanding economy” (Haynes, 1997, p. 181).

In Australia, the deregulation of the financial markets in 1986 created the situation where the country became more vulnerable to the ebb and flow of international economic events. This economic uncertainty has meant that governments globally, and certainly the Australian federal government, have had fewer policy options (Porter, Lingard, & Knight, 1994). Governments had to push for a competitive edge in international markets. The need to restructure and focus on productivity has therefore been evident at both the international and Australian levels. There has been a move away from the traditional focus on welfare and in response to the need for competitive approaches to state services (Weir, 1997). Restructuring of public service industries became important as all areas of the economy came under scrutiny (Morrow, Blackburn, & Gill, 1998). Systems and processes needed to be tighter, profits and productivity raised and ‘accountability’ was suddenly on everyone’s lips (Porter et al., 1994). At the same time as the Australian federal government was tightening control, there was a narrowing of policy agenda to promote the new efficiency and effectiveness drive.
Major changes have been evident in the ways that governments and employers at all levels have sought to control and manage their employees. ‘Managerialism’ is one of the newer catchphrases of the corporate world. This puts the focus on strict financial management, devolved budgets, efficiency, productivity gains, quality and accountability (Blackmore, 2000). These are monitored by the extensive use of quantitative performance indicators, while consumerism and marketisation are used as a mechanism for creating discipline and accountability (Marginson, 1997, 1999). Managerialism asserts that schools, like businesses, need to be managed using business mechanisms, systems and structures (Weir, 1997). The need to manage each employee’s performance, using benchmarks and indicators of success, has motivated the public and private sectors to incorporate the new managerialism (Kydd, 1997). The downsizing and restructuring of bureaucratic agencies and corporations saw drastic cuts to the numbers of middle managers and those who were left were expected to do more with less (Morrow et al., 1998). Job uncertainty and competition in a market economy have created the conditions whereby employees are subjected to all kinds of change that would have been unthinkable in the paradigms of the 1950s (Marginson, 1997).

For Australia,

the removal of trade barriers, the reduction in the protection of Australian manufactured goods, the elimination of subsidies for agricultural products and the freeing of the exchange rate have opened Australia to international competition and the globalisation of economic affairs (Karmel, 1998, p. 5).

Major overhauls of the private and public sector systems, including education systems, were the result of the shifts in both ideology and practices. The federal government, on behalf of the taxpayers, began requiring more accountability, especially for the huge outlay of money that was poured annually into welfare sectors (Morrow et al., 1998). Welfare and family services, health and police services all suffered the same fate. Tensions were created as professionals sought to maintain control of their services on behalf of the community (Weir, 1997). Since economists and financial managers began to take control of these service industries, marketisation and accountability have become paramount (Blackmore, 2000; Marginson, 1993, 1999).
In Australia these shifts have altered the assumptions about the economy itself. The focus has moved from a mixed economy—private enterprise, with a commitment to social welfare, and a balance of goods and services—to a smaller public sector with more emphasis on the provision of goods and services through a deregulated market (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997; S. Taylor & Henry, 2000). This deregulated market has brought with it the ‘economic rationalist’ approach that put profits and products ahead of all else, and has often been used as the basis for the all too common privatisation of public utilities. The result has been a rise in the utilisation of such mechanisms as: outsourcing, the user-pays rationale, strategic planning, benchmarks, performance indicators and world’s best practice (Karmel, 1998). Education systems have come under pressure from governments who provide funding and who have, in typical bureaucratic style, handed on these pressures and expectations of fiscal restraint and accountability to schools, Principals and teachers. As Lo Bianco and Freebody (1997 p.6) state, “the discourse of efficiency and productivity is translated into a simple maxim: do more with less”.

Marginson notes the links between education and the economy when he asserts that:

Formal education is permeated by economy. Education is implicated in economic policy discourse; in strategies for population management; in preparation of labour for work, and its retraining; and the programmes for unemployment. The management of education is shaped by economically defined objectives and methods and increasingly is driven by competitive economic pressures (Marginson, 1997, p. 13).

Education then was not immune from the restructuring that occurred from the 1970s through to the 1990s. The impacts of this were gradual but dramatic. In this regard, Robertson talks about the tale of the frog and the boiling water:

The frog, with its wonderfully developed capacity to adapt to the environment, fails to notice that the heat is being turned up. By the time the frog’s system’s alarm bells go on, it’s all too late. The tale of the frog’s adaptation to its own eventual destruction sounds a sordid, if somewhat deterministic, account of the effects of restructuring on teachers over the last decade (Robertson, 1997, p. 621).

She thus likens the ways that schools, teachers and education have been restructured and reformed to the gradual but fatal effect on the frog. Robertson asserts that the changes from a Fordist economy, with production as its mainstay, to a Post-Fordist economy, with its new conception of work and workers, have had dramatic effects on all sectors of education (Robertson, 1997). Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga and Pollard (1997, p. 128) assert that the changes that resulted for teachers “differed little from those of many other professional and occupational groups within the UK labour
market.” The effects of the economic changes were being felt across the UK and indeed the globe (Blackmore, 2000).

So it can be evidenced that the changes that have occurred at an international level in the market place of national economies have been ongoing and in many cases radical. The rise and fall of economies has implications that ripple from one nation to another. Education, which is largely dependent on the finances of government, is implicated in this process of ongoing change. Accountability, productivity, marketisation and managerialism rose on the back of the economic changes. Education institutions have not been exempt from involvement in this process of change.

The next section looks in greater detail at the impacts that globalisation, world economies and restructuring have had on education. It continues the discussion about the impacts that change has on education.

2.1.2 The impact of change on education

Table 1, Overview of the literature relevant to educational change, distils the literature examined from searches of educational literature databases and libraries. It covers the main authors and issues and indicates the focus of the writing, as it relates to this study. This information is expanded upon and referred to in the discussion that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Focus, as it relates to this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blase</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td><em>The micropolitics of educational change</em></td>
<td>Sees ‘politics’ and the ‘political’ within schools as synonymous with power relationships. Contains an assessment of change and the ‘powerful’ workings within schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td><em>Educational reform and primary teachers’ work: Some sources of conflict</em></td>
<td>Focuses on the role of change in primary teachers’ work and discusses the rate of change in education in England and Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookson &amp; Lucks</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>The new politics of teaching</em></td>
<td>Sees teachers as moral agents and political actors; historical assessment of the social, economic and cultural contexts of teaching; includes demographic statistics on US teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling-Hammond</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td><em>Policy and change: Getting beyond bureaucracy</em></td>
<td>Argues for a more balanced paradigm of policy change; acknowledges the challenges of change for teachers; calls for more support of teachers in these processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Australia schooling is the constitutional responsibility of each state and territory.
with the federal government contributing funds for specifically nominated areas of education. The federal government has had responsibilities for higher education and for some broad policy creation (Lingard & Porter, 1997). In this sense, the federal politicians have traditionally “kept their noses out of the educational ‘experts’ business and concentrated on broad policy initiatives” (Porter et al., 1994, p. 225), leaving the states and territories to manage their education systems as they see fit. Until the 1970s in Australia, the state education systems were centralised bureaucracies that “exercised unquestioned authority and legitimacy over the curriculum in schools” (Bartlett, 1993, p. 285). Things began to change as civil rights movements across the western nations began to elevate their causes to the political as well as social arenas. Economic changes were beginning to impact on education (Marginson, 1997).

As with most of the changes in the public and private sectors of the economy, education was also subjected to changes in management systems and procedures. In Australia, this meant changes in the roles and responsibilities for schools, Principals and teachers. Although independent of each other the individual states and territories began to decentralise and devolve powers and responsibilities from centralised bureaucracies of education to the district and school level, giving schools greater responsibilities (Deer, 1996; Hull, 1994). But at the same time as education departments were handing down greater power to schools and districts to determine their own directions with such issues as curriculum implementation and financial allocation, governments and education departments were requiring greater accountability and tighter structures (Deer, 1996; Hargreaves, 1995; Marginson, 1999; Weir, 1997).

This devolution of power to the schools put pressure on Principals to become more managerial in their styles, distancing them from classroom practice and placing on them burdens of responsibility for which they were poorly equipped (Bishop, 1996). In 1999 the Tasmanian Principals Institute was established, as a partnership between the University of Tasmania—the only tertiary provider in the state for teacher training—and the Department of Education. Its aim was to better equip those aspiring to leadership or already in Principal positions with the skills and knowledge for the changes that had and were occurring (Mulford, 1999). It was recognition that
those in these positions needed support to manage the changes. This change in the role of the Principal towards a more managerial focus widened the gap between them and their teaching staff, whose focus remained on educational rather than managerial issues (Porter et al., 1994).

In Australia, the federal and state ministers for education have met annually to discuss educational issues. Until 1993 this occurred under the banner of the Australian Education Council (AEC). The federal government then amalgamated ministerial councils, forming the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). This became the main forum for commonwealth educational discussions (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2003). This situation has caused an uneasy relationship between the two levels of government, with the states reluctant to be dictated to, yet aware that they are dependent on Commonwealth funding. As budgets became tighter, this accentuated an already precarious situation (Lingard, Ladwig, & Luke, 1998).

For schools then there was a subtle but nonetheless noticeable change in focus. The rhetoric of corporate enterprise had entered the scene by the early 1990s (Porter et al., 1994). Schools were expected to be more efficient in their delivery of education as a product; parents and students became ‘clients’ and teachers were to ‘work smarter not harder’. Accountability was the key to what was being done in classrooms (Doherty, n.d). Schools were becoming accountable for their students’ performance (Lingard et al., 1998). Testing of student performance using newly allocated national benchmarks came to be accepted (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997). Teachers were accountable to parents, students and Principals as agents of the education departments. Principals were accountable to parents, students and their staff as well as the education department. Parents suddenly too were accountable (Strom & Strom, 2003). They had to ensure that their children were attending school and were developmentally ready for school (Department of Education [DoE], 2003a). Gone were the days where parents’ responsibilities were simply to send their students to school and collect them at the gate at 3.00 pm. Now there was pressure to attend the school associations and become involved in the extended school community. For the parents of students in the early childhood years there was
the expectation of greater involvement. Partnerships between home and school became the rhetoric in educational circles (Ashton & Cairney, 2001).

With fiscal restraints at all levels of education, school-based fundraising was firmly on the agenda. Parents were expected to be involved. The devolution of power had its implications for the whole school community (Bishop, 1996). Schools were expected to create partnerships with the communities and involve parents and teachers in the decision-making, as stakeholders in education. The language of social democracy, with the power to determine school policy implementation devolved to parents, teachers and the school community, was heard with a softer tone than that of the roar of corporate managerialism, fiscal restraint, educational restructuring and accountability (Porter et al., 1994; Weir, 1997).

Perhaps the most prolific authors on the areas of educational change are Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves. Fullan and Hargreaves have outlined many of the problems surrounding the issues of change and educational reform (Fullan, 1991, 1997; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, 1992). They offer solutions and call for remedies to the ongoing situations in which schools and teachers find themselves. Their focus is on finding ways in which teachers, schools and education systems can best manage the inevitable changes in education highlighting the impacts and problems with change. Much of their literature on change has its foundations in the major reforms that have occurred in England and Wales following the 1988 Education Reform Act. Fullan and Hargreaves have written predominantly about the situation as it was experienced in the United Kingdom (Fullan, 1991, 1993, 1998; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, 1992; Hargreaves, 1997, 1998b; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). However, while acknowledging overtly that there are implications for teachers that frequently are not positive, Hargreaves and Fullan do not go into detail about what these affects or effects might be.

In a retrospective look at educational changes since the publication of his seminal work, Schoolteacher: A sociological study (1975), Lortie reflects that there have been many changes in education. These changes he lists as increased specialisation, new structures for collegial interaction, and the incidence of ‘inclusion’ in special education; and changes in task assignments and internal relationships, the

Green, Hodgens and Luke (1997) list four interrelated elements of change which they assert are influential in the shifts in social, cultural and economic realms in Australia over the last thirty years. These include:

- the shift from relative geographic and communication isolation to “participation in globalised culture and multinational economic relations”
- an intergenerational shift from traditional British orientations to greater affiliations with the USA and Asian nations
- the move away from agriculture and resource-based economy to a globalised and competitive market-based economy
- the creation of a multicultural and ethnic population with recognition for Aboriginal citizenship

(Green et al., 1997, pp. 10-15)

Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan and Hopkins also give a summary of the changes that have occurred in education in the introduction to their two volumes of *The International Handbook of Educational Change* (Hargreaves et al., 1998). They assert nine broad features of the changes that educators are facing include:

- new and often tightly defined curriculum targets, standards or outcomes that emphasize various kinds of higher order thinking
- more systematic and pervasive forms of standardized testing alongside more “authentic” portfolio and performance-based kinds of classroom assessment
- innovative teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, manipulative mathematics and reading recovery
- the impact and rapid spread of new technologies, especially computers, on classroom practice
- greater attentions to “constructivist”-inspired forms of teaching and learning that seek to develop teaching-for-understanding, help children grasp the deep structures of their subjects and take into account their prior knowledge and beliefs
- more insistence on “robust” kinds of educational accountability through such strategies as rigorous external inspection, and measurements of school performance which are in turn linked to levels of funding, or are published in the school-by-school league tables of results
- increased attentiveness to parents’ rights, wishes, choices of school and involvement in school governance
- an ever-increasing influence and imposition of market principles on education, where school must compete for clients, be conscious of how they perform compared to their competitors, and manage their image with diligence and care
more involvement of business in education through sponsorships, partnerships, curriculum innovations and the intrusion of its corporate concepts into the overall language of educational reform

- various measures to improve the status, standing and quality of teachers from defining professional standards or competences through to compulsory re-certification of teachers on a periodic basis

- numerous efforts at local and regional levels to bring about whole-school improvement, to restructure schools and attempt to change the entire way that they operate (Hargreaves et al., 1998, p. 2).

This summary of changes describes the issues and concerns that individual teachers, schools and Principals, districts and the education departments themselves are facing in the new millennium. It covers the impact of the economic reforms, the system-based innovations and structural reforms that are evident within education across the western world.

The next section looks in greater detail at the ways that these changes in society, including changes to ideologies, politics, policies and economies across the world and in Australia have impacted on the teaching of literacy. This positions these changes against a global backdrop.

### 2.1.3 Changes in literacy teaching and focus

The changes that have been implemented across nations and education departments have had implications for not only what was being taught but the ways that it has been taught. As agenda have changed, so have curricula. The change in focus from simple productivity to effectiveness, accountability and performance had its logical conclusion in more formalised testing of student performance and refocussed attention then on what was being taught and the ways that it was being taught.

The initial focus of this research was on changes in the teaching of literacy. The rationale for this was that, for early childhood teachers, literacy was the major curricular focus and had been subject to perhaps the most noticeable fluctuations and changes. In asking teachers to talk about change and its impact on their identities, literacy provided a logical focus. The following section (2.2, Changes in Tasmanian teachers’ work contexts) explores in more detail the nature of changes for Tasmanian early childhood teachers in general and in relation to literacy. The current section covers the broader changes in literacy curriculum, highlighting literacy changes as an
exemplar of the kinds of change with which teachers in Tasmania have been engaging.

Green, Hodgens and Luke (1997) assert that the ways that literacy is debated is a reflection of the ideologies and social visions of the existing culture. Whether literacy and education themselves are seen as important for life-long learning, for entry into employment or for active and effective participation in society, is dependent on the prevailing winds of cultural ideologies. These prevailing winds can alter direction and with this change has come the inevitable variations in focus for the teaching of literacy. Literacy itself, and how it is conceived, shifts its focus. What literacy is, what it is to be ‘literate’ and how this is useful within a society (Gee, 1996) are all open for examination. Other issues that have been debated include the levels or standards of that literacy and the kinds of skills and knowledge society expects students to have acquired during the course of their schooling (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Brock, 1998; Coomber, Green, Lingard, & Luke, 1998).

The following quote summarises the situation in the teaching of reading and writing:

> During the past 40 years there has been extensive debate on how best to teach children to read. Some educational researchers propose instruction emphasizing sound–letter relationships (phonics) while others emphasize immersion in language and literature (whole language). Often these two factions are at odds with each other. Policymakers, parents and educators in each camp have voiced strong opinions on the merits of their respective approach and have blamed the other for plummeting reading scores or decreased interest in reading (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999, p. 1).

The great debates, or Reading Wars as they became known in the United States, about which method is the best for teaching reading and writing have been protracted and heated (Allington & Walmsley, 1995; Beard, 1993; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Brock, 1998; Diegmuller, 1996; Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Hoffman, 1998; Luke, 1998). This review is not going to enter into this debate or to summarise the particular cases for or against any of the issues within the debate. Suffice to say that in many quarters there has been polarisation of the debate with the whole language and phonics approaches standing against each other. In the United States, “between 1990 and 1997, legislation was introduced in twenty-six states encouraging or requiring the direct, explicit and systematic use of phonics and similar word skills in beginning reading instruction” (Coles, 2000, p. xiii). The Australian education systems have not rigidly mandated literacy teaching practices, but tension between
parties promoting a particular literacy practice over others has been evident. In this climate, teachers, schools and education systems have been buffeted by the winds of pressure.

This pressure has been evident more recently in the push from the federal government in its desire to monitor and assess students’ literacy and numeracy progress (Karmel, 1998; Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997). A state of ‘literacy crisis’ was publicly declared as measurement of student performances became public in the 1980s (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Coomber et al., 1998). The media has played a key role in promulgating concerns about the supposed low rates of literacy amongst students (Wallace, 1997). Genuine concerns by parents seeking a sound education for their children supported this stance. This concern though has been with us for centuries. Socrates (469–399 BC) complained about the youth of his day and their supposed inability to learn. This phenomenon, whereby each generation expresses concern over the perception that they are experiencing falling standards of literacy (reading and writing) for their children, is not new (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Brock, 1998) and can be seen in previous generations (Brock, 1998; Green et al., 1997; Luke, 1998; Richardson, 1998; Welch, 1996; Wray, 1999). Changes in all levels of society mean that each generation focuses on different sets of knowledge and with this comes the need for change in education content and method (Luke & van Kraayenoord, 1998). Thus, what it means to be ‘literate’ or ‘educated’ varies with successive generations.

This has resulted in a generic re-examination of the ways in which literacy is taught. There are numerous stakeholders in the teaching and learning of literacy: students and their parents, teachers and the education system, politicians, employers and community groups. Each has its own agenda and needs—overt and hidden—that then interact with each other throughout a process of change. This brief summary lists the stakeholders and the ways in which they are involved in this ongoing educational change process:

- parents, with genuine fears for their children’s education and knowledge limited to what they see and hear in the media (Richardson, 1998; Routman, 1996);
• politicians and political forces, with the control of financial allocation, the need for re-election and the requirement for evidence of progress through problem identification and remedying (Marginson, 1999);

• the mass media, who see a ‘news-worthy’ situation, discuss it at length and risk creating a problem where one did not exist (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Brock, 1998; Green et al., 1997; Routman, 1996; Wallace, 1997);

• education systems, which, on the one hand, need to be seen to be doing the best job they can, raising standards and making teachers accountable for teaching and learning and which, on the other hand, require further funding and desire to be seen to be progressive in their outlook (Welch, 1996);

• employers, who need employees who are skilled, despite the infinite skills and knowledge that may be required across the range of jobs for which schools are educating their students (Marginson, 1993);

• teachers, teaching at the ‘coal face’ of policy implementation and change (Routman, 1996).

Invariably, the resultant processes of ongoing change are complex and involve an array of agenda, stakeholders and their respective ‘needs’.

This process is further compounded by the interrelated issues of:

• pressure from society for better standards of teaching and higher rates of literacy (and numeracy) in the students (Green et al., 1997; Richardson, 1998);

• social pressure as a result of a perceived ‘literacy crisis’ (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Coomber et al., 1998; Richardson, 1998)

• greater accountability from the systems for the funding provided (Blackmore, 2000);

• tighter regulations and policies at all levels of bureaucracy (federal, state, district and school levels) about what is taught, when and how (Blackmore, 2000);

• work intensification and ‘performativity’ (Lingard, 2001; Lyotard, 1984) for schools, teachers and students, including monitoring and assessing student progress against national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997; Peach, 1998);
the need to be both progressive and yet get ‘back to basics’ with teaching and learning while at the same time raising standards and levels of student competency (Richardson, 1998; Routman, 1996).

The complexities and issues mentioned here are just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ in the arena of literacy changes. As stated previously, they will not be discussed in great detail, but rather mentioned in an attempt to lay the foundations for the ways that teachers have been impacted by change in the contexts of their working lives.

Perhaps the biggest change in literacy teaching over the last three decades in the Australian situation has been the change in the methods of teaching literacy. The 1950s and 1960s were dominated by a ‘phonics’ approach to literacy. The 1970s and 1980s saw the elevation of a ‘whole language’ approach but in the 1990s and in the new millennium the attention has swung to a skills-based, back-to-basics focus, with many touting phonics as the saviour for those students who struggle with literacy skills (Routman, 1996). The way that the pendulum has swung back has not gone unnoticed within the teaching profession (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). For teachers this has meant changing the ways that they teach (Wray, 1999). In the 1950s and 1960s the focus was on teaching such skills as letter names and their corresponding sounds. Skills were often taught in isolation and without connection to the broader frameworks of how language functioned (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Whole-class or large-group teaching was the norm and the focus was on learning words and sounds (Soler, 1998; Spalding, 1957, 2003). The ideas that led to the whole language paradigm could be considered to be a progressive reaction to many practices associated with the teaching of a strongly skills-based phonics literacy program (Spiegel, 1998). Whole language looks at the teaching of reading and writing skills as a ‘whole’, emphasising the need for words to be seen as whole entities rather than strings of letters and sounds, and that students could be immersed in a language-based environment that highlighted language and not letters and sounds (Routman, 1996). The emphasis was on literacy as ‘caught’ rather than ‘taught’; teachers were facilitators of learning, not teachers of skills. Students were taught as individuals and it was often the case that few specific literacy skills were taught (Reutzel, 1999).

While the reality of classroom practices has never been as simple or as polarised as
most academic writing—or indeed this summary—would have it, the focus of this study is that teachers, schools and systems have been expected to vary and adjust their teaching to accommodate changes in focus. Authors in recent times have been calling for a balanced approach to reading—covering the more eclectic, middle ground between the whole language and phonics approaches (Allington, 2000; Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Hoffman, 1998; Reutzel, 1999; Richardson, 1998; Routman, 1996; Spiegel, 1998). This noteworthy call seeks to put an end to or at least neutralise the ‘Reading Wars’ debate that has raged, particularly in the United States, over which is the best method to teach literacy (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Hoffman, 1998). It asserts there is not one, simple and easy way to teach literacy to students and that students and teachers need a balanced approach that covers the best of a range of methods and meets the individual needs of students (Allington & Walmsley, 1995; Routman, 1996). It also gives a degree of empowerment back to teachers to control their own teaching styles rather than be mandated or dictated to by those in authority (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

However, it is not just the method or program for teaching literacy that has been subjected to changes over the last few decades. Social, political, economic and ideological changes have also brought with them the change in the conception of what literacy is, why it is important in our society and how it should be measured for purposes of accountability. There are those who assert that there is a changed conception of what literacy is and why it is important for students to be literate in ‘new times’ (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 1997; Luke, 1998; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Unsworth, 2002; Welch, 1996). Re-assessing what it means to be literate in the new millennium, for students whose world is in a state of rapid social and economic evolution has been the focus of debate. This has led to growing interest in critical literacies (Luke & Freebody, 1997), ‘multi-literacies’ (Unsworth, 2002) and ‘techno-literacies’ (Lankshear & Snyder, 2000) to name just a few of the newer ‘spins’ being linked to the term ‘literacy’. As society changes, so do the needs of students—both for effective functioning in a more literate society, or a society with changing needs, and with a view to effective employment in a society that demands worker with more task-specific, contextualised literacy skills.

Thus, it is argued that the social, economic political and ideological changes that are
evident have and will continue to influence the teaching of literacy. Methods for the 
teaching and learning of literacy skills and attitudes have undergone a 
metamorphosis. Expectations and understandings about what literacy is and how it is 
required for social functioning in contemporary society have also been subjected to 
re-examination. These changes have resulted in changes in educational policy, 
programs and practices.

Summary of literature about change and its impact on education

This section of the literature review has discussed the contexts of change and its impact on education. It seeks to establish a basis for understanding the nature of the kinds of changes with which teachers are involved in their working lives. It has looked at some of the broader economic, social, political and ideological changes that have been evident nationally and internationally over the period from the 1970s onwards. The impact of these changes had had direct and explicit implications for education, affecting the policies, programs, practices, structures and understanding about education, and more specifically the nature and methods used in the teaching of literacy.

The next section of the literature review looks in more depth at the specific nature of the work lives of teachers in Australian and Tasmanian contexts. It seeks to develop an understanding for the reader of the kinds of local and contextual changes that have been evident and the resultant changes in teaching lives and conditions.

2.2 Changes in Tasmanian teachers’ work contexts

This second section of the literature review establishes a backdrop that relates the changes that have occurred in education over the last few decades to what has occurred in the local Tasmanian context. Its focus is predominantly on teachers, indicating the ways that the educational reforms and restructuring, school-based decision-making, devolution, decentralisation and accountability have all filtered through the system to have specific and localised effects for the working lives of teachers. It is important to develop an understanding of the issues that are present in
the everyday lives of teachers in Tasmanian government schools. The ‘culture’ of
teaching in Tasmania in the recent past and the culture of changes with which these
teachers have been engaging form an integral basis for establishing the contexts of
this research. In analysing the data to determine meanings and foreground issues, it
is essential to have an understanding about the context and the culture of the situation
(Corsaro, 1985). To understand the discourse is to understand the contexts from
which it has evolved (Gee, 1999).

This section contains three parts:

- The first explores the literature on teachers’ lives and working contexts;
- The second covers Tasmanian, government school contexts and the issues
  and changes that are discussed in the literature;
- The third looks in detail at some of the more noteworthy policies, programs
  and documents with which Tasmanian teachers have engaged over the last
  three decades.

This covers a broad sweep of the context of teachers’ work—policies, programs,
documents and the resultant expectations of change. It sets the scene for a deeper
understanding of the kinds of changes with which the teachers in this study have
engaged. This, in turn, develops an awareness of the kinds of impacts that these
changes have had, not just on their teaching practice or knowledge but opens the
discussion for an investigation of the impacts of these changes on their identity.

Table 2 is a summation of the main authors in the areas of changes to the contexts of
teachers’ working lives and conditions. It focuses on the local Tasmanian context,
but does include literature about national and international contexts as many of these
issues are generic to other western educational situations.

**Table 2  Overview of the literature relevant to teachers’ work contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Focus, as it relates to this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball &amp; Goodson</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td><em>Teachers’ lives and careers</em></td>
<td>Covers the careers and lives of teachers; Chapter by Ball &amp; Goodson looks at the political, social and economic contexts of teachers’ work, 1960–1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/s</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Focus, as it relates to this study</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td><em>When worlds collide: School culture, imposed change and teachers’ work</em></td>
<td>Reports on research that links individual school cultures and teachers’ work; acknowledges the importance of teachers’ beliefs and values that shape cultures and influence teachers’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td><em>The Tasmanian Primary Principals Association 1985–1996</em></td>
<td>Contains an historical account of the TPPA’s policies and focus during this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biddle</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Recent research on the role of the teacher</em></td>
<td>Focuses on the role of the teacher—as a social position, as characteristic behaviours, as expectations; reviews literature under these headings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td><em>Educational reform and primary teachers’ work: Some sources of conflict</em></td>
<td>Gives an historical view of teachers’ work prior to the 1980s; sees three pressures on teachers: 1) curriculum crowding, 2) subject expertise pressure, and 3) pressure for collaborative/cooperative planning and working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td><em>Educational change and teachers’ work</em></td>
<td>Sees strong links between educational change and teachers’ work; lists research about educational change affecting teachers’ work and roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchill, Williamson &amp; Grady</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Educational change and the new realities of teachers’ work</em></td>
<td>Outlines seven new realities of teachers’ work and has statistics from research on the effects of educational change on teachers’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connell</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td><em>Teachers’ work</em></td>
<td>Focuses on teachers’ work; identifies changes teachers have experienced (up to 1985); discusses the impacts of educational reforms on teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookson &amp; Lucks</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>The new politics of teaching</em></td>
<td>Sees teachers as moral agents and political actors; contains an historical assessment of the social, economic and cultural contexts of teaching; demographic statistics on US teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbaz</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td><em>Teachers’ thinking: A study of practical knowledge</em></td>
<td>Acknowledges teachers’ practical knowledge; sees teachers’ voice as important; links with teachers’ knowledge and the curriculum. Is an early but seminal work on the study of teachers as practitioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullan &amp; Hargreaves</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td><em>What’s worth fighting for?: Working together for your school</em></td>
<td>Acknowledges ‘the problem’ of the reality of classrooms and teaching; refers to “total schools” and “total teachers”; three assertions about the contexts of teaching: 1) some aspects of context vary, 2) realism and practicality, and 3) sameness for all teachers; places value and importance on the contexts of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/s</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Focus, as it relates to this study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodson</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Sponsoring the teachers’ voice: Teachers’ lives and teacher development</td>
<td>Sees the importance of studying teachers’ lives within the study of curriculum and schooling; asserts: 1) a respect for the autobiographical, for ‘the life’ of the teacher; 2) that life experience and background are key ingredients of the people that we are; 3) the importance of lifestyle of teachers—in and out of school; and 4) the need to focus on lifecycle of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodson</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Studying teachers’ lives</td>
<td>Looks at the lives and careers of teachers; thorough historical outline of teachers in research; sees the ‘person’ of the teacher as vital to the processes of schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodson</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Life and work of teachers</td>
<td>Asserts the need for the teachers’ voice; acknowledges the importance of the life, background and teachers ‘sense of self’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodson</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Professional knowledge and the teachers’ life and work</td>
<td>Asserts the need to sponsor teachers’ voice; the way teachers are studied reflects their value in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hargreaves</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Changing work cultures of teaching</td>
<td>Views teachers as the key to educational change; assesses teachers’ work cultures as 1) individualism, 2) Balkanisation, 3) collaboration, 4) contrived collegiality, and 5) the ‘Moving Mosaic’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hargreaves &amp; Fullan</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Understanding teacher development</td>
<td>Acknowledges the ‘person’ and contexts in teacher development; sees the teacher as vital in the delivery of curriculum; values the biographies of teachers; sees the need for a balance of voice and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Teacher development and educational policy</td>
<td>Focuses on the professional development of teachers in the era of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little &amp; McLaughlin</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Teachers’ work: Individuals, colleagues and contexts</td>
<td>Looks at teachers’ individual and collective sense of autonomy, teacher individualism as ‘heresy’ and reconceptualises individualism; cites implications for improvement and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maclean</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Teachers’ career and promotion patterns: A sociological analysis</td>
<td>Takes a sociological perspective on the study of teachers’ careers; uses Tasmanian teachers as the basis for research; statistical, empirical and modernist approach; Chapter 8 covers teachers’ perceptions of teaching as a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maclean &amp; McKenzie</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Australian teachers’ careers</td>
<td>Edited work covering a range of issues relating to teachers’ careers; acknowledges the importance of studying teachers’ careers; provides a composite picture of Australian teachers and teaching as a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menlo &amp; Poppleton</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The meanings of teaching</td>
<td>Reports on research about secondary teachers in nine countries have experienced aspects of their work and how their experiences have affected the quality of their working lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Redefining teachers, reculturing schools: Connections, commitments and challenges</td>
<td>Investigates the changes in schools and the need for reculturing schools to accommodate change; lists seven key elements of this process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2

Review of the relevant literature and background information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Focus, as it relates to this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poppleton</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td><em>Receptiveness and resistance to educational change: experiences of English teachers in the 1990s</em></td>
<td>Looks at teachers’ reactions to educational change; uses statistics from cross-country research, including Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikes</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td><em>Imposed change and the experienced teacher</em></td>
<td>Acknowledges the role of teachers’ perceptions in the change process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing on the information from the above table and the summation of information in section 2.1, change in education, the following section outlines the ways in which these changes affects teachers.

### 2.2.1 Changes that have affected teachers

The quantity and types of changes that have continued to occur in educational settings is unprecedented in the history of education in Australia. That these changes have repercussions for teachers is also presumed. This section of the review of literature looks specifically at the kinds of changes that have occurred and their effects on teachers’ work lives, focussing where possible on the Tasmanian and Australian contexts. Much of the literature has focussed on the ‘work’ of teachers—changes influencing work expectations, structures, routines etc. It is important though to review what it known and understood about changes in work circumstances. This study has sought to acknowledge this level of effect and move beyond that to gauge effects at the deeper level of the personal and professional identity of teachers.

Drawing on his research into Tasmanian and South Australian secondary teachers’ work lives, Churchill lists the kinds of issues that teachers see affecting their working lives (Churchill, 1995; Churchill, Williamson, & Grady, 1997). His research indicated ten effects of educational change on teachers’ work. These were, in descending ranked order:

- increase workload and stress
- more difficult teaching conditions
- adoption of new methods of work
- working harder each day
- pressure to complete tasks on time
- adoption of new roles or tasks
- adoption of stress-management strategy
• more collaboration with colleagues
• reduction in commitment to teaching
• improved working conditions (Churchill et al., 1997, p. 148)

Churchill goes on to discuss these ten issues under the headings of ‘Intensification of teachers’ work’, ‘A shift in focus of teachers’ core work’, ‘Increased collaboration’ and ‘Improvements in teaching and learning’ (Churchill et al., 1997, pp. 149-150). Churchill’s research also identified 79 different educational changes that significantly affect teachers in their work. These included systemic cuts to education funding, the introduction of national curricula, increased accountability requirements, new models for assessing and reporting students’ work and social justice policy initiatives (Churchill et al., 1997, p. 145). There were also four elements of the changes that were noted:

• that unfamiliar practices were replacing established work patterns;
• that there was an external imposition of these kinds of changes;
• that there were multiple and simultaneous innovations and
• that there were abbreviated timelines for innovation implementation (Churchill et al., 1997, pp. 46-47).

This information summarises the kinds of changes that are evident and the reactions of teachers to these changes. These issues and elements are evident in the following section which looks in greater detail at the specific state-based changes that have occurred over the last two or three decades in the Tasmanian government education system.

The teachers in Christine Easthope’s study reported “working longer hours, teaching more students and having increased professional, pastoral and administrative duties” (Easthope & Easthope, 2000, p. 43). This was attributed to four contributory factors: less money being spent on education; changes in the types of required student assessment; change in the administrative structure; and changes in the student population. While the data for Easthope’s study were sourced from Tasmanian secondary schools and colleges (years 7–12), the results are nonetheless indicative of the kinds of impact that changes have had for Tasmanian teachers.

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5 Churchill’s data were collected in the period directly after the introduction of the national curriculum.
2.2.2 Tasmanian state level changes

As with all states and territories in Australia, there has been a range of changes in the Tasmanian government education system, which continue to affect teachers’ work lives. This section covers some of the state-based initiatives that have been evident over the last three decades. It begins with the changes that resulted from the adoption of the recommendations of the Cresap Report in 1990 (Cresap consultants, 1990) through to some more recent developments. Some of these have a more direct impact on teachers’ work lives, others are more subtle, but nonetheless evident as changes to which teachers must make adjustments. These specific changes include:

- The effects of the Cresap Report
- The transfer policy
- Teacher registration
- Principal appointments and contracts
- Partnership agreements
- The changes in literacy documents from KILOs (Key Intended Literacy Outcomes) to TLOs (Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes)
- Curriculum Consultation processes including the New Essential Learnings (NELs), Essential Learnings (ELs) and Essential Learning Frameworks (ELFs)
- Inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream classes.

In establishing the ways in which change impacts on teachers, it is important that the reader gets a sense of what these changes have been, the rate at which they have been initiated by the Tasmanian education department and the nature of the initiatives themselves. This section sets out some of the broader, system-wide changes. The next section outlines the policies and documents implemented, written or adopted within Tasmania, and the final section looks at the literacy programs and projects by the Tasmanian Department of Education. While there have been an array of changes at all levels, those discussed here have been included because they have been mentioned by the teachers in this study as having repercussions for these teachers.

Cresap Report

In 1990 the state government engaged a consultancy firm, Cresap, to advise the government on the financial management of the Department of Education and the
Arts (Bishop, 1996). The report and its recommendations had far reaching effects for the Tasmanian economy and for education across the state, resulting in a 20 per cent reduction in the number of state employed teachers (Churchill, 1995). For Tasmanian teachers it was a difficult time. Financially attractive redundancies were offered to permanent teachers to encourage them out of the system. The result was a reduction of 552 teachers across the state—or 20 per cent of the total teaching force (Cresap consultants, 1990, p. 70a).

As Hull asserted (1994, p. 30),

the Cresap reforms had the effect of catching teachers in a pincer of reduction of state budgetary commitments and lowering of teacher numbers on the one hand, and increased expectations, greater workload and greater input into school budgetary processes driven by the demands of further devolution, on the other.

Economic rationalism had arrived in the Tasmanian education system with noticeable impacts.

**Transfer policy**

The decade preceding this study saw much angst about the education department’s changes to the transfer policy and processes. In the 1970s and 1980s there had been no official policy for transferring teachers (Cowley, 1999) but in 1994 and 1995 the Department of Education and the Arts (DEA) implemented a newly created transfer policy. Although it has since been revised and amended, it had placed a lot of stress on teachers. Teachers were informed that they would be required to teach in remote and/or ‘difficult to staff’ schools at some time during their career. Some teachers applying for transfers lived in fear of where they may be placed, as they were not guaranteed consultation in the transfer process. Teachers were also aware that when they were appointed to a new school they were expected to be there for a minimum of three years. As each year approximately 10 per cent of the state government’s teachers apply for transfers to new schools (Cowley, 1999), this meant considerable angst for large numbers of teachers each year.

**Teacher Registration**

After considerable consultation between the DoE and the teachers union, the *Teachers Registration Act 2000* was proclaimed in January 2002. It created the Teachers Registration Board, a body independent from the education department, whose aims are stated as follows:
The Teachers Registration Board has been established to ensure that all children in Tasmanian schools are taught by skilled and qualified teachers, who are of good character. As well as registering teachers, the Board will promote the teaching profession, take action to improve professional teaching standards, undertake relevant reviews and research projects and develop and maintain a code of professional ethics for the teaching profession (Office of the Tasmanian Teachers’ Registration Board, 2003).

Initially teachers had a one-year lead-in time before registration was mandatory. Teachers were required to have a ‘good character’ check, validating that they did not have any serious criminal convictions, and make a payment fee for their registration after providing a copy of their teaching qualifications to the Registration Board. For many older teachers with one and two years of official training this was seen as an undervaluing of their many years of teaching experience. The in-service Bachelor of Education course at the University of Tasmania witnessed an increase in its enrolments at this time as teachers sought to upgrade their qualifications—or in some cases to get initial post-college-level qualifications. The introduction of Teacher Registration also had repercussions for the pool of relief teachers and undergraduate students across the state, as they were also required to register or apply for interim or provisional registration in order to continue their teaching employment.

**Principals’ appointments and contracts**

In 1997, after pressure from the Tasmanian Principal’s Association, salaries for Principals were reassessed and the state government offered a take-it-or-leave-it package of above-award bonuses for school Principals of up to 15 per cent that could be paid on the achievement of set outcomes. Without this bonus scheme, Principals’ salaries across the state were set to fall to the lowest of all Principals in Australia. In order to maintain parity with their counterparts in other states, Tasmanian Principals were encouraged to enter into such agreements with their employer (Polglase, 2003). The agreements included: five-year contracts, supporting accreditation processes, the collection of data for literacy and numeracy testing and the facilitation of individual professional learning programs (IPLPs) with each member of their staff (Department of Education [DoE], 1999). In addition, there was a ‘secretive’ component, whereby the Principal and the District superintendent negotiated tasks to be accomplished. Most Principals signed, some resisted (Williams, 2002).

The state government election in 1998 resulted in a change in focus at state government level and the offer of the contracts was withdrawn, only to be replaced
by the Principals’ Incentive Payment (PIP) scheme. This reduced the amount of potential bonuses for Principals to 11 per cent and removed the ‘secretive’ component of their pay arrangements (DoE, 2002b). These contractual arrangements are still in place in 2005. For teachers this meant that their work was being monitored through the collection of data and that their Principals would receive financial benefit from the work that the teachers were doing. This situation has caused concerns for many teachers (Polglase, 2003).

**Partnership agreements**

In 1997, in tandem with or as a result of the expectation that Principals would enter into agreements with the DoE about their salary, came Partnership Agreements (PAs). These were formalised agreements that were to be introduced through consultation and negotiation with the broader school community. Stakeholders in the community—parents, teachers, senior staff and non-teaching staff as well as any interested community members—were free to participate in the creation of the agreement. It was intended that each school community would review its position and arrive at acceptable targets for achievement in a consultative manner (Department of Education Community and Cultural Development [DECCD], 1997). Each year the school was to produce an Annual Report in which the school community would report against its own targets with reference to such things as specific projects undertaken, student progress towards literacy and numeracy outcomes and showcasing of general and specific school achievements (DECCD, 1997). The expectation that the school staff and the broader school community were to be involved in the process of the writing of the PA and its subsequent Annual Review created additional work for teachers.

**Literacy documents: KILOs to TLOs**

In 1993 the Department of Education and the Arts (DEA) released its new literacy document, *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes, Kindergarten to Year Eight* (DEA, 1994). This document became known by the acronym KILOs and was updated and revised in 1994. It provided Tasmanian teachers, K–8, with a working document that

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6 In 1995 the DEA (Department of Education and the Arts) changed its name to the Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development (DECCD).
offered outcomes towards which students were to be working. Supporting materials were also produced to assist with teaching, learning and intervention strategies, classroom-based assessment procedures and references for professional learning. While the document was generally welcomed amongst the early childhood teachers, the implication for teachers was that they needed to reassess the ways that they recorded and reported students’ progress. Ultimately schools were required to report to parents against the outcomes in the KILOs documents. Records of Development, the official documents that record a student’s progress throughout their Primary years of schooling in the state system, were changed to reflect students’ literacy progress against these new outcomes. This also meant that individual teachers, for their own record-keeping purposes, needed to make changes to how they planned and recorded what they did.

Teachers were managing this radical change in focus and practice when in 2000 a new version of the KILOs was introduced. The new *Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes* (DoE, 2000c), which became known as the TLOs, was similar to the KILOs but still required a level of change on the part of the teaching population. This change from one policy to another was happening at the time of data collection in this study. Some schools had chosen to adopt the newly released TLOs mid-way through the school year, necessitating changes to the *pro forma* for reporting to parents as well as the data collected and recorded for that information sharing. Other schools had decided to leave the changes until the following year. All schools and teachers were to acquaint themselves with this new information, before the end of the 2001 school year, in ways that suited them best. The Department wrote and provided the curriculum documents, but without specific support for professional development in terms of time or funding.

**Curriculum Consultation to Essential Learnings**

In 2000 the DoE launched a three-year plan to focus on the development of a new curriculum framework. This commenced with a review of the purposes and state of existing education and involved consultation with educational stakeholders. The DoE’s aim was to develop a new framework that would support major curriculum reform throughout the state. Numerous documents with which teachers were expected to become familiar were produced along the way. In October 2000 the
Office of Education produced the *Curriculum consultation report: The values and purposes draft* (DoE, 2000a). This document, as part of the work in progress, reported on the proposed values and purposes for the education provided within the state. It included ‘values’ and ‘purposes’ and a list of the schools and stakeholders involved in the consultation to that point in time.

The process of change continued with both consultation and development of documents, culminating with the production in December 2000 of the *Values and Purposes* statement. This led in rapid succession to the production in early 2001 of the *Emerging New Essential Learnings* and the *Working New Essential Learnings* and the final *New Essential Learnings* (NELS) documentation was planned for the commencement of the 2002 school year in February (DoE, 2001). The first formally released and much celebrated document was the 61 page *Essential Learnings Framework* (DoE, 2002a). In 2003 the final *Essential Learnings 2* (DoE, 2003c) was published and the folder of information disseminated to all teaching staff over the course of the year.

There was considerable disparity between understandings about these issues as some schools were closely involved in the three-year processes and teachers at these schools had a deeper awareness of both the rationale for change and the underpinning logic for the establishment of this new way of conceptualising curriculum for the 21st century (Watt, 2001). Other schools had not been involved in the process and by the end of 2002 were planning to become acquainted with the concepts—with relatively poor support for this process in comparison to the support that the project schools had received (Watt, 2001). There was much to learn and new ways of doing things which teachers were, and still are in 2005, struggling to come to terms with in relation to changes in their classroom practices. This change in focus for curriculum was a major reform of the ways in which schools and teachers had been required to plan, deliver and assess the curriculum. It was based on a new vision of the role of the teacher and the ways of practising their profession. New knowledge, understandings, terminology and concepts were to be amalgamated with new teaching foci and practices. Technological changes, in the form of computers and emails, centred on the assessment and reporting of student progress to both the parents and to the DoE.
Inclusion of students with a disability in mainstream classes

The last decade of the millennium saw the gradual closure of most of the ‘special schools’ in Tasmania. As these schools closed and/or severely reduced their student intake students with disabilities were integrated (or ‘included’, hence the use of the term ‘inclusion’) into mainstream, regular schools. In 1995 the DECCD released its two policies outlining the dual issues of equity in schooling and how students with disabilities were to be catered for in the mainstream system (DECCD, 1995a; 1995b). In effect, students with disabilities were to be catered for under the equity policy in regular schools. This allowed the DECCD to finalise the closure of most of the ‘special schools’ and those which remained open were reserved for smaller numbers of students, with ‘dual’ enrolments becoming more common. This has meant that students with serious disabilities are currently enrolled in regular schools and that teachers are required to support their educational needs with little if any additional training (see King, 2002 for more details). This situation, understandably, has added to the workload of teachers and made further demands on the resource allocation of schools (King, 2002).

This section has addressed the innovations and broader system-level changes that have been occurring in the Tasmanian education system over the last 30 years. The next section looks in detail at more of the specific documents that have been produced over the last two decades. It predominantly covers state documents, but includes some national documents as they relate to early childhood teachers in the government education system.

2.2.3 Policies and documents in use in Tasmanian schools

This section contains a synopsis of the documents and policies that have been influential for primary and early childhood teachers in Tasmanian government schools since the end of the 1970s. The Tasmanian branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU), in a statement to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in support of a wages application outlined more than 250 documents and policies that were produced and presented to teachers in Tasmania from 1992–

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7 ‘Dual’ enrolments are when students are enrolled part-time in both a ‘regular’ and a ‘special’ school.
1997 (Cocker, 1997, p. 6). The list produced here is not comprehensive as there are some policies and documents that have not, for brevity’s sake, been included in this summary. Those listed in Table 4 were selected because of their influence or because they were mentioned directly or indirectly in the interviews with teachers. This tabulated selection extends from 1979 to 2000.

Table 3 Overview of major policies and documents relevant to Tasmanian early childhood teachers in the years 1979–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title/s</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td><em>Pathways of Language Development</em></td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Highlights the individualisation of literacy teaching and learning. Indicates the beginning of the movement towards outcome-based education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| DEA      | 1991       | *Our Children: The Future* series  
  *An Introduction to the Primary Education Policy.*  
  *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.*  
  *Teaching and Learning.*  
  *A Curriculum for Children.*  
  *Successful Schools*  
  *Monitoring and Assessing Children’s Learning.*                                                                 | Series of booklets | To “provide a cohesive sense of direction to our schools and a framework within which they can develop programs” (p. 2); the onset of the use of five ‘capabilities’ and competencies as indicators of students’ success; foregrounded ‘essential learnings’, the issues of resourcing and self-management and schools’ accountability.                                                                                                                                 |

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## Chapter 2

### Review of the relevant literature and background information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title/s</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td><em>Learning to Read and Write. From Theory into Practice: Critical principles for teachers</em></td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>A theoretical book about literacy, aimed at teachers, with 49 key principles and their implications for schools and teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td><em>Framework for curriculum provision K–12</em> (interim statement)</td>
<td>Folder</td>
<td>Outlines the DEA’s curriculum requirements for schools, including implementation, and the types of learning opportunities, the eight key curriculum learning areas, schools’ responsibilities and five areas of students’ ‘capabilities’ within the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td><em>Literacy Policy</em></td>
<td>Booklet—6 pages</td>
<td>Contains a definition of literacy, a rationale (based on the ‘Hobart Declaration’(1989)), a set of governing principles and provisions, a section on literacy outcomes which refers readers to the <em>Key Intended Literacy Outcomes</em> (KILOs) and the National Profiles for English, a section on implementation of the policy and references to the documents to assist teachers in the process of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>1993 Revised in 1994</td>
<td><em>Key Intended Literacy Outcomes, Kindergarten to Year Eight</em> (commonly referred to as KILOs)</td>
<td>Resource folder</td>
<td>Intended to complement the DEA’s <em>Learning to Read and Write</em> and <em>Literacy Policy</em>. It was a set of outcomes towards which students were expected to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Educational Policies</em> folder containing the ‘Literacy Policy’ document</td>
<td>Folder with series of policy statements</td>
<td>Contains a series of policies on selected areas and intended to be added to when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian government</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Directions for Education</em></td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>A state government-developed framework, a set of statements, about the future of education in Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/s</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title/s</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECCD</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Tasmanian Literacy Plan</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>A practical budgeting document which also discusses six key strategies to ensure the achievement of literacy outcomes; outlines the priorities and target populations with a detailed financial plan for both Primary and secondary schools; and was based on and built upon the Directions for Education document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECCD in conjunction with MacNaughton; Davis &amp; MacNaughton,</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Early Years Curriculum Framework The Early Childhood Review: Curriculum Issues in Research and in Action (MacNaughton) Early Childhood Review: Structural Issues in Education and Childcare (Davis &amp; MacNaughton)</td>
<td>Pair of books</td>
<td>Sought to establish current models of curriculum; outlined the content of the curriculum; delineated the learning outcomes in the early childhood years and discussed the role of teachers in this process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education (DoE)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Learning Together</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>“a draft vision of education, training and information systems in Tasmania” and a “set of goals and principles for the 21st century” (p. iii).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Tasmanian State Literacy and Numeracy Plan, 2000–2002</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>Similar to the Tasmanian Literacy Plan, but with a theoretical framework and information about programs and budgets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes (TLOs)</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>The revised version of the KILOs document known as TLOs; a set of outcomes for stages of students’ literacy development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Devonport Primary School Work Samples</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Support materials for the Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes (TLOs); sets out 72 samples of student writing from K–6, linking them to the outcomes in the TLOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Flying Start Refocus Report</td>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>The document reviewed the Flying Start Program, its purposes, goals and targets, structure, implementation and management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 Later in 1999 the DECCD was re-named the Department of Education (DoE)
The following is a more detailed explanation of some of the most influential of the above documents. These were all documents with which Tasmanian teachers were expected to familiarise themselves and were in some way influential in determining the direction and focus of teachers’ work.

The year 1987 saw the publication and dissemination of the DEA’s *Pathways of Language Development* (DEA, 1987). This contained a practical and theoretical guide to the teaching of language in Tasmanian schools. It echoed the practice of the individualisation of teaching and learning programs evidenced in the *Children and Language* series of booklets (1982–1985) and sought to “provide teachers with a sound basis for a serious examination of their educational philosophies…” (DEA, 1987, p. v). *Pathways* also signalled the advent of an outcomes-based education, with its use of indicators and characteristics of language development and, in this sense, was influential in the progress towards the creation and acceptance of later documents.

The years 1993 and 1994 saw the dissemination of the nationally produced *Statements* and *Profiles*. This step towards a national curriculum produced a series of documents in eight of the key learning areas to provide a framework for curriculum for schools and systems throughout Australia. The literacy documents, *English—a curriculum profile for Australian schools* (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a) and *A statement on English for Australian schools* (Curriculum Corporation, 1994b) were then issued to Tasmanian teachers and were used to direct classroom practice with a specific focus on achieving outcomes. This was a formal embodiment of the shift to an outcomes-based education system. The *Profiles*, a set
of learning outcomes, “describe the progression of learning typically achieved by students during the compulsory years of schooling (1–10)” (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a, p. 1) and the Statements are frameworks of what might be taught to achieve those outcomes.

The DEA’s Literacy Policy (Department of Education and the Arts [DEA], 1993b) became public in that same year. It contained a definition of literacy; a rationale, based on the ‘Hobart Declaration’ (1989); a set of governing principles and provisions; a section on literacy outcomes which refers readers to the Key Intended Literacy Outcomes (KILOs) and the National Profiles for English (see below); a section on implementation of the policy; and references to the documents to assist teachers in the process of implementation.

In tandem with the Literacy Policy (Department of Education and the Arts [DEA], 1993b), the DEA also published the Key Intended Literacy Outcomes, Kindergarten to Year Eight (DEA, 1994). This was a set of outcomes towards which students were to progress. They were stated in two-year levels and were “identified as the minimum that Tasmanian students need to achieve in order to become independent learners,” (DEA, 1994 p. 2).

It was in 1997 that the Tasmanian state government released its framework for the future of education in the state. Called Directions for Education it stated that all schools were to monitor and report their progress in achieving improvements in students’ literacy outcomes. The government had undertaken to be involved in a national plan to improve student literacy. This plan included assessment of literacy

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9 In April 1989, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education met in Hobart as the Australian Education Council (AEC, which has since been subsumed into MCEETYA). Ministers made an historic commitment to improving Australian schooling within a framework of national collaboration by agreeing to address the areas of common concern embodied in the ten Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia. The national goals for schooling provided, for the first time, a framework for cooperation between schools, States, Territories and the Commonwealth. They were intended to assist schools and systems to develop specific objectives and strategies, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment. The Hobart Declaration, which included the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia, was released by Ministers following the Hobart meeting in 1989. The Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia were then reproduced and reported against each year in the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (http://www.mceetya.edu.au/hobdec.htm 22nd February, 2005).

10 The original draft was published in 1993, revised and then disseminated to schools in 1994.
needs, early intervention where appropriate, assessment against national benchmarks, at years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and from 1998, reporting against those benchmarks. A series of less formal policies and initiatives stemmed from this, including the expectation that schools were to form Partnership Agreements with their local communities, setting out goals and achievements for each year. These were to be done in consultation with the whole school community and were registered and formalised agreements upon which Principal’s Incentive bonuses were to be based (DECCD, 1997).

The DECCD published the *Early Years Curriculum Framework* in 1999. Driven by the conflicts created when teachers were faced with official documents which effectively excluded the pre-compulsory years and drawing on the ideas of capabilities, it was an attempt to link and relate together outcomes from the KILOs, maths outcomes, social skills and from the ‘Kindergarten Development Checklist’\(^\text{11}\) (DoE, 2003e).

Two documents relating to the Early Childhood Review were published in 1999. These were *The early childhood review: Curriculum issues in research and in action* (MacNaughton, 1999) and the *Early childhood review: Structural issues in education and childcare* (K. Davis & MacNaughton, 1999) and both were published under the banner of ‘discussion paper for consultation’. They sought to establish current models of curriculum, outline the content of the curriculum, delineate the learning outcomes in the early childhood years and discuss the role of teachers in this process. The *Early Childhood Review* (K. Davis & MacNaughton, 1999) addressed such issues as the optimum chronological age for starting school, class size, program hours and approaches to grouping children in early childhood. As a discussion paper to promote further discussion it had potential, however many early childhood teachers have felt that, perhaps because of changes in government and personnel, it failed to reach its potential.

\(^{11}\) The Kindergarten Development Checklist was originally developed for Tasmanian Government Schools in 1994 as a diagnostic screening test to assist in the early detection of Kindergarten students not achieving expected developmental outcomes. It was revised in 1999 and republished in 2000 (Department of Education [DoE], 2003e).
Several documents that impacted on teaching, and specifically on the teaching of literacy, were produced during 2000. The now renamed Department of Education (DoE) produced a “draft vision of education, training and information systems in Tasmania” (p. iii) called *Learning Together* (DoE, 2000a). This booklet establishes a “set of goals and principles for the 21st century” and contains a section that outlines why learning is important. Essentially it is a government publication outlining a plan and direction for education. Probably because it followed the previous *Directions in Education* documents, it was viewed somewhat cynically by teachers and only given cursory attention.

The revised KILOs document was produced during 2000 and was re-named as the *Tasmanian Literacy Outcomes* (DoE, 2000c). The TLOs document indicated that it contained reviewed and modified outcomes from the previous KILOs (Department of Education and the Arts [DEA], 1994) document. It contained seven organising strands and claimed to be “[d]eveloped by classroom teachers, program managers and departmental officers” (p. 1). It outlined the outcomes for the end of Prep, years 2, 4, 6 and 8 and indicated that “eighty-five per cent of students across the state will achieve the TLOs by the end of [the respective years]”, (p. 1). Each of the outcomes was accompanied by indicators of achievement and schools were encouraged to develop their own indicators for these outcomes.

Developed as a companion document to the TLOs the Devonport Primary School’s *Work samples: Support materials for the Tasmanian literacy outcomes* (DoE, 2001c) set out 72 samples of student writing from Kindergarten to Grade 6. With each of the authentic samples of student’s work was an annotated description of the activities that generated the work, teacher’s notes with reference to the specific TLOs and indicators, summary comments and an indication of the focus of future teaching for that child.

The following section looks in greater depth at the most common literacy programs

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12 This document became known as TLOs. The hard copy of this document, in a loose folder form, contains no official information about publication date or place, however it was disseminated to schools during 2000. It is currently available online.
and projects in use in contemporary Tasmanian schools. It discusses the *Flying Start Program, Program of Additional Support and Structure (PASS)*, the *Spalding Method* and *Reading Recovery*, describing the basic elements of the programs and how they have been utilised in the Tasmanian context.

### 2.2.4 Literacy programs and projects in use in Tasmanian schools

The DoE has endorsed the use of several literacy programs for use in Tasmanian schools over the period of this study. At its website in 2003, under the heading Classroom Literacy, the DoE listed four programs—*Flying Start, Reading Recovery, Bridges* and *Spalding* (http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/literacy/). In addition to these, there were other literacy programs and projects in use. These included: the *Program of Additional Structure and Support (PASS)*, pilot programs for the *Stepping Out* and *First Steps* programs, some use of *Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills, (THRASS)* and *LetterLand* and variations of the Victorian government funded Early Literacy Research Project’s publications the *Early Years Literacy Program P–4*. The following is a brief summary of four of the main literacy programs and projects in use in Tasmanian schools during the data collection period.

**Flying Start**

From 1993 the Education Department in Tasmania introduced a program to provide additional support for literacy in the early childhood years. Initiated as the ‘Prep Literacy Program’ it provided additional teachers to assist classroom teachers in the teaching of literacy. It was extended, and in 1996 encompassed not only the Prep year through to Grade 2, but also enlarged the scope beyond literacy. By 1997, when it was known as the *Flying Start Program*, it included students from Prep to Grade 2. The program essentially provided an extra, fully-trained teacher for each early childhood classroom for about 40 minutes every day with the specific focus on teaching of literacy (DoE, 2001b; 2003d). From its inception the program was recognition and acknowledgement that the work of early childhood teachers in the initial stages of schooling sets the tone for success throughout a student’s education. Establishing a solid foundation and supporting the teaching and learning in the early stages of schooling was seen to be an advantage for students’ life-long learning.
A folder entitled *Flying Start Support Materials for the Essential Learnings: Exploring Effective Literacy Teaching and Learning, A Tasmanian Perspective* (Tasmanian Department of Education) was produced during 2002. This folder, under the banner of the Flying Start Program, made explicit links between the teaching of literacy through the Flying Start Program and the *Essential Learnings Framework* (DoE, 2002a). It was aimed at improving students’ literacy outcomes through encouraging and assisting teachers to explore ways to make the teaching of literacy more effective in their classrooms and their schools (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2002, p. 3).

**Program of Additional Support and Structure (PASS)**

Originating in 1998 and working within the *Flying Start Program*, the *Program of Additional Support and Structure (PASS)* was designed to provide a “structure within which informed, focussed explicit teaching can take place to cater for all children’s needs and provide more intensive support for those children ‘at risk’”, (DoE, 2000d). In 2001 elements of PASS were absorbed into the *Flying Start* program. PASS was based on a combination of literacy practices including the *Early Literacy Project* (funded by the Victorian state government and supervised by Peter Hill and Carmel Crevola, which in turn drew on the ‘Success for All’ program developed by Robert Slavin in the USA). Essentially this was another support structure for the teaching of literacy skills in the early childhood area.

In 1998 the main elements of PASS included a whole staff commitment to the program, a daily two-hour literacy block, co-ordination of the personnel involved in student learning and the establishment of professional learning teams. It also included a three-wave attack on the teaching of literacy—good teaching in Prep year; intervention for those ‘at risk’ in Grade 1 (through *Reading Recovery*); and further referral and special assistance for those still struggling in Grade 2 (DoE, 2000d).

As a result, considerable timetable changes were required in those schools with the two-hour literacy block, students needed to be assessed individually, Guided Reading was introduced as a basic strategy for teaching, reading texts were ‘levelled’ so teachers could match texts with the reading skill level for each student and
appropriate target outcomes were established. The assessment processes involved
the Marie Clay (Reading Recovery) observations survey that included letter
identification checks, running records for reading, concepts about print and writing,
and word checks. Testing was also carried out using the Morrison McCall and South
Australian Spelling Tests. Although PASS was ‘absorbed’ into the Flying Start
Program at the beginning of 2001, elements of PASS remain prominent in
Tasmanian schools. These teaching and assessment practices were adapted and
adopted by early childhood teachers state-wide.

**Reading Recovery**

*Reading Recovery* is an early intervention program to help low-achieving six-year-
olds learn to read. Originally developed by New Zealand educator and psychologist
Marie M. Clay, *Reading Recovery* provides an alternative to traditional reading
practices for educationally disadvantaged and learning-disabled students (Lyons,
1991; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). There are three main components: a diagnostic survey,
the teaching/tutoring sessions, and the teacher training. Students are selected into the
course—designed for students at risk of literacy failure—and given a daily, one-on-
one session with a teacher for a specified number of weeks (Wade & Moore, 1998).

The *Reading Recovery* program emphasises meaning in reading and focuses on
students’ strengths. Students reading and writing are thoroughly analysed and
ongoing diagnosis is part of the program. Strategies are taught to help students
connect with the text by using meaningful decoding. Teachers are trained in the
theories and practices of effective reading instruction (Education Office of Research,
1992). In the Tasmanian context, Reading Recovery is used in a variety of ways, but
was originally aimed at Grade 1 students who were assessed as struggling in their
literacy development. Many of the elements of the *Reading Recovery* program have
been used in the PASS program. Most schools, in the period of this study, were using
elements of the *Reading Recovery* program in conjunction with the *Flying Start
Program*, but some had a more specific focus on *Reading Recovery*.

**Spalding**

The *Spalding Method* of teaching is a total arts program. It integrates the teaching of
speaking, listening, spelling, reading and writing in a supportive and stimulating
classroom environment. It combines auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses through
spelling, which forms the basis of reading and writing. “The Spalding Method is a total language arts approach because it provides explicit, sequential, multi-sensory instruction in spelling (including phonics and handwriting), writing, and listening/reading comprehension” (Spalding Education International, 2001).

Designed to be effective for all students, the Spalding mission states that its aim is to develop skilled readers, critical listeners, accomplished speakers, spellers and writers who are life-long learners (Spalding, 1957, 2003). Originally intended for students from Grades 3 and 4 in Tasmania it is frequently used in the early childhood years, either as the main literacy program or as a program for remediation of ‘at risk’ literacy learners. Training staff in how to use the method is costly, with teachers being required to undertake an intensive two-week course which includes training and practice and lasts many months. Specific funding has been available for schools who wish to use Spalding as a whole school, ongoing project in literacy. When used in these contexts, Spalding provides a structured timetable for students and explicit teaching of fundamental literacy skills in spelling, writing and comprehension.

**Summary of changes in Tasmanian teachers’ work contexts**

This section about the specific nature of the contexts of Tasmanian teachers’ work lives has discussed the broader contexts of changes, narrowing to more detailed information about the state-based changes that are most relevant to this study. These have included the effects of the Cresap report (1990), the transfer policies, teacher registration, Principals’ appointments and contracts, Partnership Agreements, changes in the literacy documents from KILOs to TLOs and the Curriculum Consultation processes that have resulted in the Essential Learning Frameworks. The review then focussed on these specific government programs and documents with which teachers have been required to engage. This has covered the vast array of policies and documents, with a focus on those applicable to early childhood teachers and to literacy. This discussion has indicated that teachers have experienced overwhelming changes in policies, programs, practices, structures, foci and expectations.
Summary of literature about change

This section of the review of the literature brings together information about the kinds of change evident in the broader educational community, narrowing to the specific policies, programs and practices that have been introduced in the Tasmanian government education system. The literature reveals that broader societal and economic trends have had implications for education. The economic rationalist approach has been applied to education, creating a situation where the focus is on the accountability and performance of both students and teachers. Education is groomed to accentuate testing, national benchmark scores, reporting and recording student progress, productivity, research-based programs, statistical authority and an all-pervasive drive for educational accountability. The literature reveals that this situation has created immense changes for teachers—the what and how of their teaching practice. With this change has come increases in the implicit and explicit expectations of performance, pressure to adapt to these changes and increased workloads and stress. The amount of change in policy, program and practices has been unprecedented in the history of Australian education.

2.3 Power and teachers

The heading “Power and teachers” implies a simplistic perspective on what is a far from simple topic. The ‘power’ discussed here is restricted to the kinds of power issues that are directly connected to teachers’ working lives. The kind of power that impacts on teachers’ lives relates to the employer–employee context of teachers in the work place, and includes authority and control. There is also a variety of associated issues related to what happens for teachers in the contexts of school life. These issues include: control and management; the nature of and the consequences of power in leadership; the power implied and imposed through the use of the terms ‘professional’, ‘professionalism’ and ‘professionalisation’ as they relate to teachers; power as it is evident in the concepts of teacher autonomy and the trust that is expected in power relations in a work context; and finally, issues of empowerment and disempowerment.

Much of the literature on these issues relates to both power and teachers in a secondary manner. By this I mean the ways in which, for example, Tyler and
Kramer (1996) and Misztal’s (1996) work on trust in organisations is related to issues of power, but the discussion is primarily about issues of trust. Power relations are implicit in much of these discussions and are related to this research study in that it is issues of power—in the guise of trust and trusting relationships between employer and employee—that are pervasive in teacher’s work lives. Secondly, much of the literature is also related indirectly to this study in that its focus may not be explicitly about teachers or education—rather, for example, about management or leadership in a corporate sense. The parallels are drawn and noted throughout this literature review, linking the literature to the contexts and issues of this study. It also needs to be stated that the issues that are addressed and ‘teased out’ in this review are done so for clarity of discussion. However in the data they are integrally connected to each other and are not ‘stand-alone’ issues as this review may imply.

Table 4, Overview of the selected literature on teachers and power, indicates a selection of the literature covered in this review. This information is listed alphabetically for ease of viewing, and the pieces of literature have been included because they relate to the issues of power. The focus and points of interest for each are noted in the right-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Focus, as it relates to this study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Education and power</td>
<td>Sees power from the perspective of the “holy trinity” of race, class and gender (p. x) yet acknowledges the role of teachers in the power relationships. States that there are “gritty realities out there” (p. xiii) which ought not to be lost sight of, as well as “recognizing the dangers of reductive and essentializing analyses” (p. xiii).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batallan</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Power and authority at school: Conflicts in school relationships from the perspective of early childhood teachers</td>
<td>Outlines the opposition between the logic of bureaucracy and pedagogic logic evident in schools; positions power as problematic and the emergence of power in “problematic situations that are resolved unsatisfactorily” (p. 683); power though is discussed primarily as the power over students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blase</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The micropolitics of teaching</td>
<td>Defines the micropolitics of teaching; acknowledges the links between teachers’ work lives and this micropolitical power; sees teachers responses to issues of power as important and teachers relationships with Principals, students, parents and other teachers as a dynamic part of this scenario.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheater (Ed)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Power in the Postmodern era</em></td>
<td>Discusses ‘power’ and ‘authority’; sees empowerment as the right to ‘voice’, to be vocal; links professionalism to sets of rules, to partial or mediated empowerment, and to dissatisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis &amp; Wilson</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td><em>Principals’ efforts to empower teachers; Effects on teacher motivation and job satisfaction and stress</em></td>
<td>Investigates the effects of teacher empowerment programs (which are viewed as greater involvement in decision-making processes) on teacher motivation, stress and job satisfaction. Empowerment is seen as effected through set programs and the efforts of Principals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society</em></td>
<td>Discusses the Foucaultian concept of ‘governmentality’—the conduct of conduct—which is something that begs deep analysis; sees empowerment in a social sense as empowering the marginalised through structured programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee, Henkin &amp; Druemer</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td><em>Structural antecedents and psychological correlates of teacher empowerment</em></td>
<td>Links teamwork and leadership with empowerment; sees empowerment as a top-down construct, that is used as a tool for employers to maximise productivity, rather than as a right of employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindess</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td><em>Discourses of power: From Hobbes to Foucault</em></td>
<td>Extensive and clear discussion about the types and kinds of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingersoll</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td><em>Who controls teachers’ work?: Power and accountability in America’s schools</em></td>
<td>Has two views of educational systems—the disorganisation perspective and the disempowerment perspective. Seeks to reconcile these views; discusses control of education and teacher autonomy; foregrounds teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td><em>A circle of empowerment: Women, education and leadership</em></td>
<td>Study of one educator’s leadership style; discusses power over versus power with styles of management. Views empowerment of teachers as something that happens through the leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (in Cheater)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Empowering ambiguities</em></td>
<td>Defines power and empowerment—as responsibility delegated from above, without any direct control of resources—and that it has become a buzzword in management circles, indicating what management can gain through the empowerment of its workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kincheloe</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td><em>Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment</em></td>
<td>Sees research foci as a means to empower teachers; highlights the need for better links between research directions, policy makers and teachers; seeks to reclaim control of teaching from the technocrats; acknowledges that teachers’ voice is weakened through outcome-driven research and standardised testing; discussion around power issues, but not about power issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kramer &amp; Tyler (eds)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Trust in organisations: Frontiers of theory and research</td>
<td>Recognition of the importance of trust; sees an increase in self-protective behaviours as synonymous with the decline in trust and risk taking; sees the expectations of reciprocity as a moral duty and commitment as integral to trusting relationships; when trust is violated there are effects for workers at cognitive and emotional levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maeroff</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The principles of teacher empowerment: Status knowledge and access to decision making</td>
<td>Links teacher empowerment with professionalisation; asserts that knowledge, status and access to decision-making are the three guiding principles towards empowerment; acknowledges the important roles that Principals and teacher unions can have in strengthening teachers’ voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misztal</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Trust in modern societies: The search for the bases of social order</td>
<td>Extensive discussion on definition of trust; sees trust as a form of social capital, as significant and resulting from contemporary social changes; the production of trust is increasingly problematic and difficult to attain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozga &amp; Lawn</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Teachers, professionalism and class: A study of organised teachers</td>
<td>Discusses ‘organised’ teachers in the sense of professionalism and unionism; sees professionalism as both a mechanism for control of teachers by the state and as a way for them to protect themselves from ‘dilution’; the negatives and conflicts about professionalism are often ignored in the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfeffer</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Power in organisations</td>
<td>Views power from a sociological perspective as context and relationship specific, underpinning actions within organisations; differentiates power from authority and defines organisational politics; views power in the sense of politics in institutions and with close links to bureaucratic decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice &amp; Schneider</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>A decade of teacher empowerment: An empirical analysis of teacher involvement in decision making, 1980–1991</td>
<td>Contains an analysis of the empowerment of teachers through the processes of involvement in decision-making in school; links levels of teacher involvement in decision-making, their interest and expertise with job satisfaction; power is viewed as empowerment through involvement in decision-making processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennett</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>The corrosion of character: The personal consequences of work in the New Capitalism</td>
<td>Views social changes as ‘the New Capitalism’; while focus is not specific to teachers/education, he does reflect on the importance of personal consequences and impacts of work; sees power as linked to freedom and flexibility in the workplace; notes the importance of ‘bonds of trust’ in organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short, Rinehart &amp; Eckley</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The relationship of teacher empowerment and Principal leadership</td>
<td>Sees empowerment as a basic element of school reform; Principal/leadership is a key element in the degree of empowerment evident in schools; explanations of powerlessness as an absence of empowerment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Review of the relevant literature and background information

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Focus, as it relates to this study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Smyth</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Critical politics of teachers’ work: An Australian perspective</td>
<td>Views power issues from the perspective of ‘work’ i.e. labour, but with some acknowledgement of the person of the teacher; sees teacher empowerment as taking charge of aspects of their lives from which they have been prevented from gaining access and critical reflection as a means of empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zigo</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Constructing firebreaks against high-stakes testing</td>
<td>Power/empowerment is implicit throughout discussion. Reports on a researched example of teacher agency in the face of “testing madness” (p. 216) where teachers use professional development as a means of maintaining teacher integrity and resisting teaching to the test; acknowledges the pressure that standardised testing places on teachers and the way that standardised curricula disempower teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following discussion deals with the literature on the following issues: power and control, leadership and management, professionalism and professionalisation, teacher autonomy and trust, and empowerment and disempowerment.

### 2.3.1 Power as it is evidenced in this study

It is widely acknowledged that the term ‘power’ is far from simple (Batallan, 2003; Galbraith, 1986; Hindess, 1996; Lukes, 1986). Notable authors from the last century have written extensively about issues of power—its production, acquisition, maintenance, legitimacy and so on. These include Bertrand Russell, Max Weber, Robert Dahl, Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Talcott Parsons, John Galbraith and Michel Foucault to name a few. The nature of power—be it domination (Simmel, 1986; Weber, 1986), authority (Cheater, 1999a), privilege (Lenski, 1986) or control (Dahl, 1986)—and its origins, maintenance, uses and legitimacy are complex issues that are much debated and considered (Apple, 1995). The focus of this study, though, is on the kinds of power that are evident in teachers’ work lives, with a specific focus on the contexts of change, and the impact of the power relationships on their identities.

The kind of power that is inherent in the systems of governments, organisations, bureaucracies and corporate systems of management (Cheater, 1999b; Dean, 1999; Galbraith, 1986; Ingersoll, 2003b; Misztal, 1996; Pfeffer, 1981; Tyler & Kramer, 1996) comes closer to the kinds of power relationships that are evidenced in this study. Elements of the power relationships that are integral to these monoliths are
also evident in the lives of teachers. Much of the literature on the issue of organisational or bureaucratic power is principally written from the perspective of ‘top-down’ power—that is, the role of power over employees (Apple, 1995; Batallan, 2003; Kincheloe, 1993; Sennett, 1998). This perspective incorporates concerns about how to lead, how to empower staff, how to control and manage, how to resolve conflict, how to best use power and so on. This top-down power perspective, however, renders invisible the workers and the effects on staff are deemed inconsequential to the goal of improved productivity and performance.

In the last decade though, the area of the human costs of a managerial approach to ‘human resources’ has begun to be highlighted. The effects on the workers who negotiate and manage the power relationships of the workplace have become an arena of increasing interest and research (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985; Batallan, 2003; Borko, Davinroy, Bliem, & Cumbo, 2000; J. Davis & Wilson, 2000; Ingersoll, 2003b; Poppleton, 2000; Rogers, 1992; Sennett, 1998; Smyth, 1998).

The interconnectedness of the issues in this study is further compounded when one considers the generic issue of power in relation to change issues. Change in educational contexts, in the form of changes to policy, practice and programs, is usually implicated with power that is imposed upon teachers through the vertical hierarchy of the system (Bell, 1994; Cheater, 1999a; Ingersoll, 2003b). Teachers engage with the changes at a variety of levels and with varying degrees of gusto. However, it is an aspect of their work that they have generally accepted as inevitable (Batallan, 2003). In this sense, without the power relations behind the expectation of taking up change initiatives, perhaps there would be far less change. Teachers have an overt obligation to accommodate changes that are directed by their employer. The reality of the degree to which these changes are accepted and implemented leads to the more covert issues of resistance and non-compliance (Blase, 1990).

### 2.3.2 Issues of power

Ball and Goodson’s initial work on teachers’ lives and careers (S. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985) furthered investigation into teachers’ work and led to the conception of the micropolitics of the school, opening debate on what happens at the micro-level.
in schools (S. Ball, 1987). The ‘what happens in schools’ research has led to questions about what this change, reform, restructuring and micropolitical activity does to teachers at the educational coal face. The effect on teachers in contexts of change and power is becoming an area of interest for researchers. However, research into the kinds and levels of effects that go beyond teachers’ knowledge or classroom practice is still an area which begs further investigation. That there are personal effects on teachers is mentioned in studies about specific instances of change, but not with the focus on power relationships in this change process and rarely acknowledging effects beyond changes to teacher knowledge and practice and before the effects become issues of stress and burnout. The extreme effects of teaching and education, in the form of stress and burnout, have received the attention of researchers, but no research could be located that investigated the kinds of effects that change and power relationships created for teacher’s identity before they were labelled as ‘stressed’ or ‘burnt out’.

As mentioned above, much of the research about power relationship issues in this reform and micropolitical landscape is positioned from the ‘how to do it’ perspective. That is, a top-down power stance is assumed, which positions the issues of power from the viewpoint of instructions or calls for managerial variations that lead to improved productivity and ease of reform process. Employers and leaders are called upon to share power with workers, rather than controlling staff through authoritarian mechanisms (Dee, Henkin, & Druemer, 2003; Dowding, 1996; Hindess, 1996; Irwin, 1995). Leaders are encouraged to empower through a range of mechanisms, structures and programs, primarily utilising increased involvement in decision-making processes (J. Davis & Wilson, 2000; James, 1999; Kincheloe, 1991; Pfeffer, 1981; Rice & Schneider, 1994; Short, Rinehart, & Eckerly, 1999; Zigo, 2001). The effects and implications at cognitive and emotional levels (Tyler & Kramer, 1996) are secondary though to the issue of achieving the goal of empowered workers who will improve their productivity and accommodating reform and restructuring through their enhanced sense of empowerment (Hursh, 2000). This empowerment of workers is frequently viewed as a management tool to maximise the engagement and productivity of workers (Dee et al., 2003) rather than as a right of the employee to experience a sense of empowerment and autonomy (Robertson, 1997; Sennett, 1998). It also implies that the empowerment can only come through effective
leadership (Irwin, 1995), a change in focus such as critical reflection on the processes of teaching (Smyth, 2001), or through structured programs designed to give power to staff through their perceived involvement in decision-making processes (Ingersoll, 1996).

Blase’s (1997; 1998) work on the micropolitics of teaching has been revealing in that it looks at what happens to teachers in the micro-environment of school contexts. He defines ‘micropolitics of teaching’ as “how teachers use formal and informal power to achieve their ends in school organisations” (1997, p. 939), recognising the organisational, hierarchical structures of the teaching worksite and the informal and formal mechanisms that are available for teachers to use to achieve their “ends”. He acknowledges the following points, from his own and others’ research, that have relevance to this study:

- there is a political aspect to teachers’ work that goes beyond the feminist (Lather, 1992) or critical (Apple, 1986) perspectives
- this area of study—“how individuals and groups use power and influence to achieve their interests in organisational settings” (Blase, 1997, p. 941) is important because:
  - teacher relationships are at the core of the micropolitics of teaching: teacher-Principal, teacher–teacher, teacher–student and teacher–parent relationships
  - the research (Blase, 1990) indicates two types of leadership styles of school Principals—closed (authoritarian, inaccessible and inflexible), with the teacher response of “accommodative, reactive and protective political responses,” and manipulative (control-oriented, self-serving and dominating) with the teacher response of strong negative outcomes of anger, depression and sense of resignation
- effective Principals’ strategies can “enhance teachers’ political efficacy, expression or voice and involvement in decision making” but “teachers role in decision-making was typically advisory and was limited to giving opinions on a narrow range of issues defined by Principals” (Blase, 1997, p. 945)
- strategies such as building trust, developing democratic decision-making processes, encouraging autonomy, innovation and risk-taking were able to
“contribute significantly to teachers’ sense of empowerment in schools”
(Blase, 1997)

- there was a correlation between ineffective Principals (inaccessible, indecisive, lack of direction and follow through, authoritarian and non-supportive) and teachers’ feelings of frustration, anger, insecurity, confusion and apathy (p. 949)
- “Principals tried to control teachers by manipulating their concept of ‘professional’ behaviour” (p. 950)
- citing research, Blase (1997, p. 950) notes the range of teacher responses to Principals, including: unhappy compliance, standoffs, silent non-cooperation, open challenges, exchange, bargaining, threats, bluff, flattery, exercising influence through significant others, providing biased information and dramatising involvement, and that teachers formed alliances, coalitions and took stands on issues that were important to them
- teachers expected Principals to “use their authority to support them in conflicts with students and parents” (p. 950)
- “some school Principals routinely violate the rights and professional norms of teachers and this usually results in stress, alienation and role conflict” and that “efforts to restructure schools often result in a façade of democracy with little if any positive effect on teachers’ individual or collective political power in the school” (p. 951)
- there are external and internal political actors and their accompanying structures, policies, processes and practices that “are demonstrably control-oriented and reflect a strong ‘power over’ approach to teachers” (p. 961)
- teachers appear vulnerable to those with overt power and authority, they exhibit protectionist strategies against those who have the capacity to harm them, and tend to overtly comply, seldom confronting powerful others, using diplomatic tactics and passive and often private forms of resistance (Blase, 1997, p. 961).

Blase makes the following observation, acknowledging the ways in which teachers comply, in submission with the power inherent in the bureaucratic school system, for their own benefits:

Teachers’ traditional subordinate political role in schools—the legacy of a long history
of domination by societal and school organisational factors—is partly responsible for the failure of many efforts to restructure school governance along democratic lines. Teachers’ traditional expectations for Principals, their need to ‘please the Principal’ and maintain working relationships, norms of propriety and civility and fear of reprisals undoubtedly contribute to a form of collusion inadvertent in part, that reinforces the structures of domination and works to maintain the micropolitical status quo in schools (Blase, 1997, pp. 961-962).

Blase’s definition of the ‘micropolitics of teaching’ as teachers using power “to achieve their ends” (Blase, 1997, p. 939) portrays a constrained use of their power. While noting the ways in which teachers use their power as a form of self-preservation in protecting their interests against the authority and control of the educational system, he has not included the vital aspect of the motivation for teachers’ micropolitical actions in his definition of ‘micropolitics.’ What is it that motivates teachers to be self-protective in utilising their power? In what instances do they choose to act or choose to ignore their capacity for action? These issues remain invisible in this definition of the micropolitics of teaching.

There also is a sense in Blase’s writing that teachers are considered in relation to their political behaviour, reactions and purposes and that the identity of teachers—the core of their humanity, the personal-level messages they receive from their interactions in their professional lives—is not overtly evident. Utilising the lens of identity permits a deeper understanding of the effects of the micropolitical dimension of teaching.

**Power and control in education**

Much of the literature about power issues accepts that the ‘top-down’ control of teachers and the necessity for managing teachers’ work has become increasingly apparent as accountability, at all levels of bureaucracy (Bartlett, 1993; Humphries, 2001; Ingersoll, 2003a), escalates. Politicians need to be seen to be managing the resources of education—they are overtly accountable to their electorate for spending public monies—and need to be seen to be making teachers, schools and Principals accountable for the learning outcomes of all students (Shannon, 1984). Politicians also need to be seen to facilitate and initiate educational innovations that enhance both accountability and increased learning outcomes. The accountability and focus on the need for change and innovation have resulted in a variety of subtle changes that can be seen to be forms of control over teachers (Apple, 1995; Ingersoll, 2003a;
Robertson, 1997).

Ingersoll (2003b) notes that there are two pervasive views that dominate educational thought and policy on the issue of control in education. One perspective sees schools as loosely organised, lacking in control of teachers’ work structures and generally disorganised. This leads to low standards—of teachers and teaching, lack of coherence and good management. The remedy is to tighten the control of schools through increased teacher training and professional development requirements, standardised curricula, goals, standards and testing, teacher licensing and registration. The other perspective is its anthesis. Schools are too centralised, controlled and there is evidence of too much bureaucracy. The result of this over-control is poor performance on the part of students and teachers. The over-regulation of teachers’ work is top-down focussed and undemocratic and teachers, parents and students are disempowered, distrusted and de-motivated through the overt agenda of bureaucracy and control. The antidote for this perspective is decentralisation and increased power to schools, teachers and communities. For teachers this means increased autonomy, motivation and professional trust (Ingersoll, 2003b). Ingersoll places the teacher squarely in the middle of the debate about educational control. The control of teachers’ work is the basis of his focus, supporting his assertions with empirical data. He states:

> Teaching is an occupation beset by tension and imbalance between expectations and resources, responsibilities and powers. On the one hand the work of teaching—helping prepare, train and rear the next generation of citizens—is both important and complex. But on the other hand those who are entrusted with the training of this next generation are not entrusted with much control over many of the key decisions of their work (Ingersoll, 2003b, p. 221).

However the effects of this control are not well defined in his research. While he acknowledges the difficulties of teaching as a profession with respect to the contexts of education, the effects of this conflict are not discussed at length.

The range of issues that link directly with power is long and complex (Hursh, 2000; Ingersoll, 2003b; Shannon, 2001). Some of these issues, which can be seen as bureaucratic and political mechanisms through which teachers are controlled, are briefly noted here:

- the expectation of generic change necessitates better and more specific professional development programs (Corcoran, 1995)
• the expectation that teachers will ‘keep up’ with educational developments through active engagement in these professional programs, thus proving that they are capable of good teaching practice (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Slee, Weiner, & Tomlinson, 1998)

• the use of tighter curriculum control, usually in the form of centralised curricula (Apple, 1995; C. Harris, 2001; Ingersoll, 2003b)

• the requirement for teachers to be ‘registered’, ‘licensed’ or ‘certified’ (DoE, 2000b; Ingersoll, 2003b; Office of the Tasmanian Teachers’ Registration Board, 2003)

• the use of standardised testing and benchmarked levels of student achievement that is linked to teaching standards and accountability issues (Alloway & Gilbert, 1998; Hargreaves, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003a; Luke & van Kraayenoord, 1998; Ohanian, 1999)

• the introduction of electronic methods of recording student outcomes (DoE, 2005)

• moves towards establishing what it means to be an ‘effective teacher’ (Medwell, Wray, Poulsoun, & Fox, 1999; Slee et al., 1998) and the push to ensure that all teachers are teaching ‘effectively’ (Reynolds, 1998)

• increased interest in quantifying the notion of ‘best teaching practice’ (Department of Education Science and Training [DEST], 2002; Slee et al., 1998) in a ‘world class education system’ (DoE, 2004; Tucker & Codding, 2000)

• reviews of salary scales and markers as indicators of teaching performance (Holt, 2001), using performance-based rewards as incentive for teachers to achieve greater productivity (Harvey-Beavis, 2003)

• the heightened role of the mass media in informing and controlling public opinion about educational issues (Day, 2000; Wallace, 1997)

Hargreaves (1997) envisions the kind of bureaucratic, top-down power relationships evident in education when he notes that teacher cultures are often ‘colonised’ by educational leaders and management in the processes of educational change and restructuring. Cultural colonisation, he asserts, can be seen in four ‘domains’:

• In the literature of school leadership, which places high value on the culture-building behaviours of school Principals or head-teachers;
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- In the creation and regulation of cultures of collaboration among teachers that are bureaucractic and managerialist in form;
- In value-laden representations of teacher cultures and of cultural change in teaching that highlight their positive, optimistic elements and neglect or suppress their more troubling or disturbing dimensions;
- In treating the cultural lives of teachers as a kind of ‘bounded irrationality’, that should open to management and manipulation by school leadership

(Hargreaves, 1997, p. 1308)

Hargreaves goes on to assert that this “top-level culture is a predominantly masculine one that mandates system-wide changes, cuts jobs, shrinks budgets, imposes testing requirements and demands detailed paper-work for administrative accountability”


there is little in education that has remained untouched by governments in their attempts to raise the quality of educational achievements … So far four outcomes can be seen: more work for teachers, increased stress levels, fewer attracted to teaching, and a rise in the numbers of students who are alienated by schools (Day, 2000, p. 110)

Ozanne (1997, p. 43) notes that in the UK the pressure on teachers and schools has increased with the result that “the real goals of education or of research are being distorted by a competing model of professional accountability and economic discipline as measures of performance.” Again, it can be seen that what teachers do in the course of their profession is determined by those outside of the classroom. Susan Robertson (cited in Goodson, 1995, p. 13) sums up the situation “Clearly educators have been eclipsed by a core of interests from the corporate sector and co-opted in the corporate settlement.”

These issues about the kinds of power and the ways in which teachers are controlled link directly to a discussion of the literature on issues of the management of education, schools and teachers and leadership in schooling contexts. This is what follows.

**Leadership and management issues**

Issues about leadership and management in schools have been much researched and debated (Garvey, 1997). This includes the macro and micro levels of leadership. The styles of management that Principals and school leaders adopt have been linked with the uptake of change and educational changes (S. Ball, 1987; S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985; Blase, 1998; Boardman, 2001; J. Davis & Wilson, 2000). It is
widely held that, in school contexts, the role of the Principal is vital for empowering teachers (Blase, 1998; Dee et al., 2003; Irwin, 1995; Maeroff, 1989; Short et al., 1999). The literature and research about the issues of Principal leadership orientations or styles and their effect on elements of school life, for example, on student reading achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996), has indicated that there is a broader dimension of effect than simply leadership issues. Some of the areas that research has indicated may be affected by the style or orientation of the school leader including:

- the level of uptake of change initiatives (Blase, 1998; Midthassell, 2004)
- the morale of staff, including for example, job satisfaction, levels of teacher empowerment and teacher stress, support mechanisms within the school contexts (Lok, 1997; Short et al., 1999)
- students’ levels of learning (Hallinger et al., 1996).

Boardman (2001) in a study of Tasmanian early childhood teachers’ perceptions of the role of the Principal notes in her study that the Principals are viewed positively in regard to trust and empowerment issues, but the teachers are generally “far from satisfied with the role their Principal plays in K–2 [Kindergarten to grade 2]” (Boardman, 2001, p. 8). Her research acknowledges the importance of trust and empowerment for teachers in relation to their Principals.

Blase (1998) has also researched and discussed the role of the Principal in a school’s micropolitical climate, noting that it was not just the Principal’s leadership style but their “political role” (p. 550) which was able to facilitate the uptake of change processes or its reverse. Blase notes: “School Principals’ unwillingness and inability to enact approaches to leadership consistent with democratic processes and principles have been a major impediment to successful school restructuring” (Blase, 1998, p. 551). Thus, power issues are here seen to be directly implicated in school restructuring. The effects of Principals’ approaches to leadership will be discussed further in the section on teacher autonomy and trust.

**Professional issues: Professionalism, professionalisation and professional development**

There are a raft of issues that relate to the terms ‘professional’, ‘professionalis
‘professionalisation’ and ‘professional development’ which will be discussed here. Being a ‘professional’, having ‘professionalism’, ‘professionalisation’ of the work force and engaging with ongoing ‘professional development’ are some of the uses of these terms as they relate to this study. That teachers are, or should be ‘professional’ has implications for how they see themselves in the course of their daily working lives (Sachs, 2001). Whether teaching is in fact a ‘profession’ and what it means to have your work ‘professionalised’ has repercussions for one’s status in the community and for expectations of behaviour and accountability. The expectation that teachers will undertake ‘professional’ development has implications for one’s existing knowledge and skills and the reasons that underlie the expectation of ongoing ‘professional’ development. It also has implications about who controls what teachers ought to learn and why this is positioned as valuable, to whom and for what reasons. Arriving at a common understanding about what is meant in each of their uses is a far more complex concern (Hoyle, 1997).

The ongoing call for higher standards of education links to the notions of teachers needing to be ‘professional’ (Ingersoll, 2003b). The ‘professionalisation’ of teaching implies that increased levels of ‘professionalism’ will lead directly to improved student outcomes. This turn towards becoming more ‘professional’, the ‘professionalisation’ of teaching as a job through more and improved ‘professional development’ activities, includes:

- raising teacher standards through ‘professionalising’ teaching as a career—i.e. making teachers more professional and raising teaching beyond being a skills-based job (Hursh, 2000; Ingvarson, 1998)
- ‘professionalising’ teaching in the expectation of raising and monitoring standards of teaching and teacher education—i.e. patrolling new teachers and their standards of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003b; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994)
- improving and increasing the expectation and delivery of ‘professional development’ programs—i.e. teaching teachers more about teaching and keeping them abreast of current innovations (Little, 1994; Smyth, 1998)
- developing the notion of what it means to be a professional—i.e. developing a sense of professional teacher identity amongst those who are teachers (Sachs, 2001; Sachs, Dempster, & Logan, 1996).
However, in addition to this account of ‘professional’ issues is the desire by teachers to be treated like professionals (Maeroff, 1989). This encompasses notions of autonomy and respect. This is not something that teachers can do for themselves, but rather something that is done to or for them. In this scenario teachers are trusted by their employer and their parent community, respected for their knowledge, skills and values and trusted to value students’ needs highly. They are given the autonomy to make decisions about how best to establish and maintain a professional teaching practice that effects change in the lives of their students. Maeroff (1989, p.8), when discussing the difficulties of raising teacher status, comments:

Think about how difficult it is for a teacher to leave the building to attend a pertinent lecture during the school day. Think about the rushed lunches in horrendous lounges that some teachers must endure. Think about the lack of secretaries and files and desk space and the need to beg to use the copy machine. Think about trying to consider oneself a professional and then being asked to spend part of the day guarding the toilets, walking patrol in a parking lot or disciplining kids who throw food in the cafeteria.

Sachs (2001, p. 150) notes that: “definitions of ‘professionalism’, what constitutes a profession and so on, have been sites of academic and ideological struggle between union leaders, bureaucrats and academics that are currently being played out in a variety of settings”. In acknowledging this though, she fails to mention teacher involvement in this process of resolving the struggles with shared understandings about issues of professionalism. Rather, she notes that the parties—academics, unions and bureaucrats—claim they are “acting in the best interests of teachers individually and collectively” (Sachs, 2001, p. 150). Sachs goes on to consider two types of discourses about professionalism—managerial and democratic—linking these with the notion of a professional identity. This professional identity she sees as “a set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the teaching fraternity itself” (p. 153). Thus this is another example in the literature of the role of power—in the guise of a determined set of attributes about what constitutes ‘professional’ identity. This identity—as different from the kind of identity discussed later—is to be developed and maintained by members of the teaching ‘profession’. This is another form of control, dictated by others about individual teachers’ practice and sense of identity.

This notion of a code of practice is also acknowledged when Stronach, Corbin,
McNamara, Stark, and Warne (2001) discuss the “inside-out, outside-in riddle”. They see that there are two forms of professionalism “‘inside-out’ professionalism resting on Aristotelian qualities [of a virtuous person], and ‘outside-in’ professionalism which relied on the prior specification of rules and procedures” (Stronach et al., 2001, p. 17). The idea here is that one can be labelled as professional if one fits a set of criteria about knowledge of the profession itself, has a set of designated ‘virtuous’ characteristics, and follows a set of rules of conduct. Some of these criteria are set by parties outside the classroom and others are determined by the person-ality (Stronach et al., 2001) or character of the teacher. Thus, the power to determine whether teachers are deemed to be ‘professional’ in their behaviour and teaching practice is assigned to those who are outside the classroom and distant from classroom practice.

Corcoran (1995), in linking the need for higher standards of teaching practice with the call to improve the quality of professional development efforts, implicitly views professional development as a form of control. Teachers are to be engaged in quality professional development activities in order to change their practice because someone somewhere says their practice is not acceptable.

In virtually every state in the country, reform efforts are dramatically raising expectations for students, and consequently, for teachers. In response to these reform initiatives, educators are being asked to master new skills and responsibilities and to change their practice. To meet these new expectations, teachers need to deepen their content knowledge and learn new methods of teaching. They need more time to work with colleagues, to critically examine the new standards being proposed, and to revise curriculum. They need opportunities to develop, master and reflect on new approaches to working with children. Historically, state policymakers have paid little attention to the form, content or quality of professional development. Such matters have been left to the discretion of local boards of education and district administrators. However, if today's teachers are to be adequately prepared to meet the new challenges they are facing, this laissez-faire approach to professional development must come to an end. The needs are too urgent and resources too scarce to simply continue or expand today's inefficient and ineffectual arrangements (Corcoran, 1995, p. 1).

The assumption implicit in Corcoran’s view is that teachers’ current “skills and responsibilities” and “practice” is in some way not acceptable. That with the “raising of expectations” there has been a perception that standards in education (schools, teachers or students) have been falling and therefore staff must undergo “these reform initiatives.” This implies that by facilitating improved professional development programs, reform and restructuring will happen with greater ease, teachers will be better equipped for effective teaching and the problems associated
with falling standards will be resolved. This idea of a linear and simplistic equation seemingly resolves the issues about falling standards in education and improved teacher professional development. The reality, it appears, it far more complex.

There are many examples in the literature of concerns about standards in education and equally as many solutions which have been posited. The notion of a crisis in literacy or in education (Berliner & Biddle, 1995) is not new and has been a recurrent theme in some social and educational circles (Brock, 1998). Teachers, schools and education in general frequently bear the brunt of a simplified cause-and-effect scenario. Teachers teach poorly and students fail to learn so if teachers taught better (presumably with ‘best practice’ to become ‘effective teachers’ in a ‘world class education’ system) then students would learn better (more easily, more effectively). The links with improved student outcomes are tenuous but frequently observed in generic social media—that if all students learned what they should, unemployment issues would be solved and the economy would be more productive and life in general would improve (Ingersoll, 2003b). This kind of distorted logic has relevance for this study in that it implicates standards of teaching with professional development, teacher autonomy and trust and importantly with how teachers see themselves in the public’s eye. Being implicated with social and economic woes is a burden that teachers wear uneasily.

The questions that have been raised about the standards of teaching, linked directly with the call for professional standards, professional development and the general professionalisation of teaching are also addressed in the literature about ‘new professionalism’ (A. Harris, 1997, p. 61). This moves the traditional notion of what it means to be ‘professional’ to a new conception of the use of the term. This, Harris claims, “has to embrace and encompass the potential for individuals to manage discontinuous and fragmentary social change”, allowing teachers the “scope for individual professional response or behaviour” (A. Harris, 1997, p. 61). This view of teachers’ work as “practical action informed by knowledge and judgement” is incompatible and at odds with “the technical–rational view of teaching” (A. Harris, 1997, p. 62). Thus, she asserts conceptions of professionalism are changing. This she identifies as a change from a technical–rationalist model of professionalism to one which embraces the “conception of the reflective practitioner, whose knowledge
is directly constructed through engagement with problems encountered in the field and built through successive stages of hypothesizing, testing and reflection” (A. Harris, 1997, p. 62). Once again this links to issues of power when what is determined as ‘professional/ism’—how teachers and teaching is perceived outside of the classroom—becomes a potential site of conflict for teachers.

**Teacher autonomy: Trusting teachers**

Power is directly related to the issues of teacher autonomy and trust (Apple, 1995; Ingersoll, 2003b). The degree to which teachers experience autonomy and trust in their workplaces is directly linked to the kind of management they encounter at the micro-level and the position they hold within their educational systems at a macro-level. The levels of control of teaching, teachers and education in general are discussed above, but the out-workings of this degree of control over not only the outcomes of teaching but the finer details of teaching practice are multifarious. Two issues closely linked to these controlled environments are teachers’ sense of autonomy and degree to which they are trusted. The next section links these two notions with the broader sense of empowerment or disempowerment.

Teacher autonomy is generally considered to be the state of teaching independence—the right to make individual decisions about classroom matters—“the right to manage themselves and their job environment” (Pearson, 1998, p. 33). Raelin (1989) suggests that there are three types of autonomy—*strategic autonomy* that belongs to the top levels of educational hierarchy, *administrative autonomy* that belongs to Principals and school leaders, and *operational autonomy* that “gives teachers freedom to use means and methods they decide on to pursue the school system’s goals in their classroom” (Raelin, 1989, p. 16).

Hoyle (1997) asserts that, while complete autonomy for teachers is not “practically possible, politically viable or morally acceptable” (Hoyle, 1997, p. 52) there remains the need for some degree of autonomy. In a discussion on teaching as a profession, he notes four possible traditional criteria to be applied in labelling teaching as a ‘profession’. These include: autonomy (the degree to which teachers are able to control their own work practices), knowledge (the nature of the knowledge that informs classroom practice), responsibility (linked to accountability to, as well as
responsibility for), and influence (teachers’ role in shaping policy and practice) (Hoyle, 1997, pp. 53-54). Hoyle states (1995) that there are four levels at which teachers’ autonomy can be limited—at the state level, by administrators and Principals, by local community and by peers (p. 14). In acknowledging the changing nature of control of education, Hoyle asserts that conflict in the areas of control and autonomy arise:

Although conflict between the Principal’s authority and the teacher’s autonomy is an ever-present possibility and can become acute, in practice actual conflict is constrained partly by the structure of the school and partly by a widely accepted norm. … Teaching is not an activity amenable to close control. Thus there tends to be a balance between control and autonomy underpinned by the acceptance that administrators and teachers have their proper spheres of influence (Hoyle, 1995, p. 14).

This conflict is also noted by Dondero when she states: “The problem of providing autonomy to the professional educator is based on the inherent conflict between professionalisation and bureaucratisation” (Dondero, 1997, p. 221). This links teacher autonomy to power issues in that the degree of autonomy that teachers are able to experience is determined by the bureaucratic powers at a variety of levels, and the level of control has the potential to place teachers in conflict with Principals, administrators and the bureaucracy (Hoyle, 1995, 1997).

In researching the contexts of educational reform, Dondero (1997) noted that teachers’ individual autonomy is critical in processes of educational reform and that “the organisational climate appears to be a critical factor in the study of teacher autonomy” (Dondero, 1997, p. 218). She links this individual autonomy to teacher empowerment, teacher confidence and a sense of ownership, and to teachers who teach to the needs of students. The issue of autonomy has close links with many associated areas of teachers’ work experiences. These include teacher efficacy, “the belief in one’s capability to execute the actions necessary to achieve a certain level of performance” (Deemer & Minke, 1999, p. 3), student performance, teacher motivation, job satisfaction, the role of the teacher, teacher self-esteem, work environment, issues of leadership and management just to name a few. All these issues are integrally connected to issues of change, power and teacher identity in this study.

It is difficult to separate many of these power issues as they relate to teachers’ working lives and how teachers see themselves, however many of the issues are
linked to the issue of trust, the kind of trust, or more correctly mistrust, that is sensed by teachers. The organisational trust that is discussed in a managerial paradigm (Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Misztal, 1996) somehow fails to accommodate the personalised accounts of what workers feel—and in this instance, teachers—when the managerial practices, innovations and mechanisms for accountability, demand for standardised curricula and tighter testing regimes all escalate (Churchill et al., 1997).

The issue of trusting teachers is linked to the notions of ‘good will’, teacher commitment and status. Lieberman (1988) calls for the reshaping of the “role of teachers to give them greater autonomy, responsibility and status” (Lieberman, 1988, p. 4) and the need for increased trust and rapport-building in school relationships. This notion of trust in school relationships—that is, between school leaders and teachers—brings with it the same connotations as the kinds of trust that were discussed at organisational levels by Tyler and Kramer (1996). These kinds of trust—the systemic trust of teachers by bureaucracy, school leaders and society—need to be worked towards rather than assumed as an automatic by-product of macro or micro processes (Misztal, 1996). Trust of this kind implies a mutual obligation and Misztal (1996) sees it as a ‘public good’ rather than as a regulatory mechanism. She links this kind of trust with the search for cohesion and cooperation in societies but also acknowledges the tensions that exist between the moral, economic and political dimensions of trust.

On the issue of trusting teachers to make professional decisions about students, Daley (2003) remarks that there is an assumption in the California State Auditor’s declaration about a crisis in US charter schools that “trusting teachers to make decisions about their students” (p. 2) will in some way lead to low student achievement. This he claims is an oversight and needs re-examination. Lieberman (1988), in calling for a restructuring of the profession, notes that there is a need for “greater recognition and status for teachers, who have suffered too long from mythological and over-simplified definitions of their work.”

Day (2000), in his discussion about change and professional development, notes that the curriculum reform of 1988 in the UK brought with it “a loss of good will” (p. 117). The result of these changes was that teachers, who had previously been highly
committed to their jobs, were experiencing a loss of “good will.” This good will is evident when teachers, despite costs to themselves and against adverse conditions, continue to give time and energy to their teaching. He goes on to discuss the cynicism and stress levels that resulted for teachers and the sense that their professional judgements had been undermined in the processes of change. He concludes by noting that despite the mass of changes that teachers in the UK in this period experienced, they still remained committed to the “moral purposes of teaching” (p. 125) despite the “considerable personal cost” and the “costs of sustaining professionalism over a career” (Day, 2000, pp. 127-128).

**Issues of empowerment and disempowerment**

As noted previously much of the literature about empowerment views it from the perspective of something that is achieved through the mechanisms of changes in leadership styles (Irwin, 1995), managerial practices (Rice & Schneider, 1994; Short et al., 1999) or structured programs (Dean, 1999). At times the literature on empowerment assumes the position of a shedding or sharing of power from those with the most to those with the least—a top-down perspective of empowerment—frequently with the best interests of the corporation or system as the motivation. James (1999) notes the ways in which, in the corporate world, the call for greater ‘empowerment’ of staff is used as a euphemism for “shedding unnecessary jobs and ‘empowering’ those that remain” (James, 1999, p. 17). Rice and Schneider (1994) discuss empowerment through the mechanism of increased involvement in decision-making processes. In these senses then empowerment is something of a gift to staff—with the best interests of others at heart, or a tool for management to better control staff, or an expectation that accompanies change that staff will be better employees as a result of the imposed change; not something that is achieved through the actions of the disempowered. Empowerment is an ambiguous term that can have conflicting implications depending on the perspective from which it is viewed.

In defining what is meant by the use of the term ‘empowerment’, Cheater notes that it has become an integral part of the discourse of bureaucracy and is usually associated with those groups who have been marginalised from acquiring power in social contexts—for example, women, the unemployed, racial minorities—all of whom would benefit from ‘empowerment’ (Cheater, 1999a, p. 1). Smyth (2001)
sees empowerment as “teachers taking charge of aspects of their lives over which they have been prevented from gaining access.” Cheater (1999b) asserts that empowerment implies an element of ‘voice’—the right to be vocal and to be heard in the processes of empowerment. This ‘voiced’ element of empowerment is also reflected by Maeroff (1989) in his assertion that union leadership should be guiding efforts towards greater empowerment for teachers. He states: “To some extent the emergence of teacher empowerment will depend on the directions of collective bargaining” (Maeroff, 1989, p. 9). Here he views empowerment as something yet to be achieved and dependent in part on the effectiveness of the unionisation of teachers. Sennett (1998), while not labelling it as empowerment, also notes the connection between voice and speaking out with ‘strength of character’—questioning why people might be “willing to keep arguing and deliberating even to their own detriment” in the face of power-based conflicts (Sennett, 1998, p. 145).

Smyth (2001) comments that teachers can avoid ‘being done to’ through the mechanism of ‘critical reflection’ on their teaching practice. He labels the critically reflective stance that teacher practitioners can take as a form of empowerment, linking it to the call for teachers to “embrace the possibilities” (p. 189) and engage in a process that leads to a deeper understanding about the work that they do. While this is a notable and worthwhile call, I would assert that this is only a small part of the kind of empowerment that teachers seek. The self-knowledge and an awareness of who we are, what we do and why we do it that are at the core of a critically reflective approach to teaching are the beginning of empowerment (Smyth, 2001). Beyond that, teachers need to know that any decisions they make about their working lives can be realised through support and genuine action (Avalos, 1997). For the most part teachers position themselves against the power of the bureaucracy. The kinds of empowerment they seek are about autonomy—having the right to teach in ways that suit them and their students best and gaining a sense that they are able to make a difference in the lives of their students.

In her discussion Avalos (1997) links professionalism and empowerment and comments that the position teachers take towards change cannot or should not be ignored when considering change processes. She links the two themes of empowerment and professionalism together in “bringing the discussion closer to the
teachers’ side rather than that of the politicians, policy-makers or educational theorists” (Avalos, 1997, p. 68). She links power with the two themes of professionalism and empowerment with this statement:

While teachers may have … knowledge and insight …, the possibility that they will be able to act on the basis of their judgements does not necessarily follow—and therefore the issue of power is a crucial one. Power can be seen on the one hand as the potential of a person to influence situations due to knowledge possessed and capacity to judge how to apply it. On the other hand it can be seen in relation to the opportunities provided to the person actually to influence situations. Thus the power to act has a subjective side to it (the teacher’s side) and an objective, external component (the educational and socio-political system) (Avalos, 1997, p. 69).

This important differentiation between the teacher’s side and the system’s side is one which, Avalos claims, determines whether or not teachers are truly empowered to act. She asserts that on the teacher’s side of the empowerment equation are the issues of knowledge, personal concepts and beliefs about their tasks and reflective and analytical capabilities. On the system’s side are the working conditions, support structures and the general school and educational environment. She goes on to connect the ways in which the public views teachers (which in itself connects with the teacher’s role and status) and the systemic structure and its organisational rules (Avalos, 1997), discussing their respective role in the empowerment of teachers.

Zigo, in her research (2001) into professional development as a line of defence against the pressures of high-stake testing, looks at a group of teachers “maintaining their professional integrity by resisting the strategy of ‘teaching to the test’” (Zigo, 2001, p. 216). She notes that many of the recent educational changes which include “‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches to educational reform … assume generalisability of policy across setting, dismiss the value of contextualised knowledge-making and disenfranchise teachers of their right to make professional judgements about their own classrooms” (Zigo, 2001, p. 222). Thus, the disempowerment of teachers is linked to both educational reforms and to their implementation, effectively disempowering teachers in the process.

The literature also revealed the point that power is most evident in instances of conflict (Batallan, 2003; Ingersoll, 1996). Blase (1997), in seeing schools as sites of conflict, hints at what Batallan (2003) takes up—the conflict in power relationships that empower or disempower teachers. Batallan views the “bureaucratic logic” of schools—that is, the ways in which schools are bound to do the bidding of the
bureaucracy— as being in opposition to the “pedagogic logic” — that is, the power that comes from pedagogical knowledge and teaching experience (Batallan, 2003, p. 680). This situation, she asserts, places teachers in conflict with the system and this is most evident “in problematic situations that are resolved unsatisfactorily” (p. 685). This kind of conflict—which “constrains teachers as subordinates” (p. 680)—further serves to disempower teachers in the workplace.

**Summary of literature about teachers and power**

In summary then, there is a complex interweaving of issues that relate power to many constructs in the educational literature. The issues of power are primarily about the control of teachers and education and teachers’ relationships in their working lives. The kinds of power that are referred to in the literature relate primarily to top-down, bureaucratic power that seeks control of education and teachers (Blase, 1997). Few researchers were found that took the side of the teacher (Avalos, 1997) and few researched the effects of power relationships on teacher’s identity in contexts of change. There were a range of issues related to power which can be viewed under the umbrella of ‘professionalism’. These include the monitoring of teacher- and school-based activity in an attempt to ensure higher standards of teaching and therefore education, but at the same time this contributes to the devaluing and disempowerment of teachers as benchmarked standards are applied and teachers are held accountable for the outcomes of social and educational trends over which they have no control.

The literature supports the need for teachers to experience a sense of empowerment, but this is viewed mostly from a top-down perspective— empowering teachers for the good of the organisation or school, not because it might be a right of teachers to feel empowered (Dee et al., 2003). Leadership is often seen from a managerial perspective in the literature— ‘how to do it’ better; how to empower staff, form cooperative working teams and resolve conflicts. Research indicates that there are effects of leadership styles on teachers and calls for leaders in schools to share power with rather than power over staff (Blase, 1997). Empowerment of teachers is a complex construct which is used in a variety of ways— usually as a top-down mechanism for corporate and managerial purposes. In the literature, empowerment is
rarely viewed as something that workers do for themselves as a form of personal management of their working conditions. Rather, it is viewed as something that is gifted to them through managerial practices.

The next section, the fourth in this review of the literature, looks in more detail at the issue of identity. It reviews the literature about the construct of identity.

2.4 Identity

The literature in this review has been selected to showcase the ways in which identity has been researched and written about. As there are numerous understandings about the term identity, it is vital to establish a shared understanding of how the term has been conceived for this study. This clarity of understanding, in conjunction with a distillation of the literature about identity, is what is sought from the literature discussed here.

Texts discussed in this review have been selected as they ‘fit’ with the ways that identity has been recognised in this study. Much of the selected literature falls within the postmodern and educational paradigms and focuses primarily on the identity of teachers. As with the other themes within this literature review there are topics that, for reasons of practicalities and focus, have been omitted. For example, identity in the sense of psychological deficit, something to be mended to remedied, is not considered, nor does this review investigate in detail the strongly sociological and psychological senses of ‘self’ in relation to the social construction of reality, the sociology of thought and emotions, the ‘self’ and inequality and interaction in social contexts (Branaman, 2001). These related and interesting areas were judged to be incidental to the focus of this investigation—what happens to teachers and their identity in contexts of ongoing change. Whilst elements of these perspectives are evident in the identity literature discussed here, they are not central to it and so are referred to only briefly.

Identity in this study is seen as a tool, a lens that allows for the illumination of the person of the teacher. Hence, the first section summarises the ways in which identity is viewed in the literature. The next section looks at the beginnings of identity study,
outlining some of the origins and dilemmas that are evident. Section 2.4.3, Identity in the literature, covers the literature that discusses and describes identity. This is followed by the section that defines for the reader the kind of identity that is referred to in this study, culminating in a brief understanding, based on the available literature and understandings about teachers and educational change.

2.4.1 Identity

A general discussion about how identity is viewed in the literature will follow, commencing with the ways that identity began to be researched. The discussion will then show how identity is viewed and researched in the literature and how the selected literature has relevance to this study. As in other sections of this literature review, a table outlines the main research studies and their relevance to this research. This section of the literature review then concludes by coming to an understanding of how identity is conceived in this study, showcasing its main features and elements.

A search of the academic writing databases (ProQuest, ERIC, EdNA and AEI) reveals an array of topics related to identity. These include: racial, ethnic, cultural, national, gender, athletic, and criminal identity; identity conflicts, formation, development, achievements, diffusion, disorder; and feminist identity, the self, identity construction, social identity, situational identity, personality development, personal ideologies and personal philosophies. This brief listing gives an indication of the range of thinking, research, writing and definitions that have developed around this topic.

Dictionary definitions of identity highlight some of the confusion about its meaning. For example, an online dictionary (Dictionary-Online, 2005) lists four meanings for identity:

1. The collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known
2. The set of behavioural or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group
3. The quality or condition of being the same as something else
4. The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity; individuality (Dictionary-Online, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, identity is considered as a compilation of these
elements. That is, it acknowledges the “collective aspect of the set of characteristics,” the “set of behavioural or personal characteristics” and the “distinct personality of an individual.” In this sense, the preferred definition of identity, for this study, is: “The collective aspect of the set of behavioural and personal characteristics which identify a person as a distinct individual.” This is discussed in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

The profusion of meanings across academic divisions serves only to complicate the wider dialogues when the term is used without specific definition. This study views these topics that are related to identity as just that—related topics. Individually they do not give an impression of the nature of one’s identity—the person that each individual is. They each relate to an aspect or element of the whole picture of identity. For example, the study of identity formation looks at the ways in which individuals construct, form and maintain their individual identity; gender identity investigates the aspect of identity that relates to the ways in which sexual identity is considered—by individuals and by others. This study seeks to step back from these focussed views of identity to arrive at a broader view that takes into account an array of kinds of identity and sees identity as the amalgamation of elements about identity. There are then a myriad of conceptions about identity. However, because identity has varying connotations and definitions in its use across the domains of academic literature this creates certain difficulties when discussing it. Therefore, although this review highlights some of the key elements of these definitions and understandings about identity, it does not seek to come to a finite conclusion about what identity is, or to delineate categorically the nature of identity. It seeks to arrive at a shared understanding about how this study conceived of identity, for the purposes of this investigation. Using this as the basis, the discussion goes on to investigate the implications for teachers, and their identity, of ongoing educational change.

2.4.2 The beginnings of identity study

Identity studies began in earnest from the 1900s onwards when George Herbert Mead expanded upon the idea of the social self (Branaman, 2001). Mead considered that we first come to experience ourselves as “self” when we see ourselves from the
perspective of others and he highlighted the idea that language processes were essential to its development. He also asserted that each individual ‘self’ has common elements with others “in order that we may be members of a community” (Mead, 1934, p. 163), and that the “I” and the “me” of ourselves were different aspects of the self. Mead’s early research openly acknowledged the ways that language processes and social activities are instrumental in the development of identity. Mead also claimed that identity/self was a process of development, not easily defined or a fixed entity (1934). The study of ‘selfhood’ was the beginning of an acknowledgement that not only was each person discretely individual, but that studying ‘self’ can play an important role in research in the social sciences. This stance, as well as the foregrounding of language and social interaction in the processes of identity construction, is actively acknowledged in this study.

Erving Goffman argued in the 1950s that ‘the self’ was the result of an individual’s performance in social situations and that the ways that people present themselves was formative in the construction of their selves (Goffman, 1959). This was a contribution to the ongoing research into identity and self in that it asserted that understandings about ‘the self’ are important in studies of people and society. The links between ‘the self’ and identity, as it is conceived of for this study, are only loosely evident in Goffman’s work, nonetheless his work was seminal in the study of self and formative in the development of ongoing dialogues about the nature of self and identity. While the social aspect of identity is paramount for Goffman’s assertions, he indicates that his “report” is primarily about “detailing one sociological perspective from which social life can be studied” (Goffman, 1959, Preface). Hence, his perspective was a social one.

Much of the early writing on the topic of identity emerged from the modernist perspective that viewed identity as a fixed and knowable entity that we each possessed. It has been viewed from sociological (Goffman, 1959; Lortie, 1975; Walker, 1976), psychological (S. J. Ball, 1972; Lilienfield, Kirsch, Sarbin, & Lynn, 1999), anthropological (Kondo, 1990; Mayer, 2003) and philosophical (Gergen, 2000; C. Taylor, 1989) perspectives. Identity has also been investigated for the purposes of understanding how people have developed or maintained personal identities. These purposes included: various identity and personality disorders (the
psychological perspective); how identity was manifest or evident for studies of groups, cultures or ethnic populations (the anthropological perspective); and from a philosophical perspective, how or in what ways the ‘self’, ‘I’ and ‘me’ are constructed, maintained and developed (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). Across academic disciplines the conceptualisation of identity has, since the 1980s, moved away from the modernist view of a fixed, knowable and clear construct towards a postmodern and more recently a poststructuralist view of identity (Coffey, 1999).

‘Contested’ and ‘slippery’ are two terms that well describe the notion of identity when it is viewed through a postmodern lens. The postmodern view asserts that knowledge and truths cannot be adequately known or revealed; that all are open to contestation and changing and are therefore difficult, if not impossible, to define or essentialise (Coffey, 1999; Lather, 1992). Therefore each person’s identity cannot be ‘known’ and the ‘truth’ about it cannot be defined because its susceptibility to change and reformation presumes that, even as it is defined and quantified, it has again been changed by the language, social interactions and experience of living (Danielewicz, 2001). Thus, identity as a postmodern notion is not able to be finitely defined. The understanding of identity in this thesis is, broadly speaking, a postmodern one. The postmodern and more particularly the poststructuralist views of identity are complicated further by the understanding that modes of language—spoken or written—provide inadequate mechanisms for capturing a sense of identity. As Tierney asserts, “we must accept that conflict and competing interpretations of situations are inevitable” (Tierney, 1993, p. 128). The language and discourses used to define identity are open to interpretation based on the writer/speaker and listener/reader’s individual life experiences, as are the understandings taken from any dialogue about the topic (Gee, 1999).

Having acknowledged this difficulty with the notion of identity though, it would be impossible to have any kind of meaningful dialogue—or in this case monologue—about the construct of identity if no shared understanding of what is meant by the term is arrived at. It is acknowledged in this study that, from the postmodern perspective, any understanding cannot be deemed to be final, finite or in any way fixed, nor can a concrete definition of identity be determined. This thesis though seeks to allow for different and sometimes conflicting views and voices to be heard.
through the eight participants in this study—to expand rather than reduce these shared understandings (Danielewicz, 2001). It seeks to highlight the elements and features of identity that have relevance for this study, and indicate the ways that they are relevant to the research investigation.

The following discussion draws upon the information provided in Table 5, Overview of the literature relevant to identity, which outlines the major authors, their views of identity and the ways that these can be linked to identity in this study. A more detailed explanation—or at least as defined and detailed as is possible within the postmodern view—of what is referred to as identity in this study is then discussed.

2.4.3 Identity in the literature

On analysis, it appears that the most contemporary education literature on identity falls into three main categories. These are:

- the literature about teacher identity that relates to teacher professionalism, and the identity of people in their role as teachers,
- the literature that approaches identity from a narrative, storied and/or biographical perspective, and
- the literature about identity in the contexts of teachers’ lives and work.

The first of these categories contains two terms that are, at times, used synonymously in the literature—those of ‘teacher identity’ and ‘teacher professionalism’. Teacher identity literature looks at how teachers take up their professional identity, usually over time, as teachers assimilate into the culture and discourse of teaching, and how this identity is maintained and developed throughout their careers. There are also links to the study of teachers’ lives, their career paths, life styles or life cycles and how these relate to their ‘identity’. Authors who discuss these views of teacher identity include Ball and Goodson (1985),Britzman (1991; 1997), Coldron and Smith (1999), Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Danielewicz (2001), Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994), Mishler (1999) and Nias (1989). However, in these writings, identity is rarely foregrounded as central in determining teachers’ understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings about their work lives. The focus remains on how teachers acquire, maintain and develop their teacher identity.
over the course of their teaching lives. Teacher ‘professionalism’ is another term referred to in the literature and is often related to identity through the inference that teacher professionalism is based on a set of professional standards that may “shape the professional identity of teachers” (Sachs, 2001, p. 149). The literature on teachers’ work lives, some of which also refers to identity, was discussed in 2.2, Changes in Tasmanian teachers’ work contexts.

The second category into which much of the writing about identity falls is that of the ‘life history’, narrative, ‘stories to live by’ and biographical attitudes. This includes authors such as Mishler (1999), Clandinin & Connelly (2000), Goodson (1997), Goodson and Walker (1991) and MacLure (1993). These authors assert the need for the study of identity—which is variously conceived—and consider that the methods of narrative and storying, using critical incidents, biography, autobiography and life history accounts are the most appropriate for the topic. There are others who recognise the value in these types of research methods but this review concentrates on those who also make the links between these narrative methods and identity (Ben-Peretz, 1995; Tierney, 1993). When reading some of the literature that uses the biographical, narrative and/or storied methods this reader was left wondering whether the method had become the raison d’être for some of these authors’ work. In some literature it appeared that the method was at risk of usurping the researched topics themselves.

The third of these categories into which the literature on identity falls is that of teachers’ work lives. In reality it is the other way around. Discussion about identity can be found in the literature on teachers’ work lives, with authors acknowledging the importance of teachers’ identities in their teaching practices, experiences and reactions (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985; Britzman, 1997; Campbell, 1996; Churchill, 1995; Churchill et al., 1997; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Danielewicz, 2001; Juhasz, 1990; Latham, 1998; Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga, & Pollard, 1997). However, the problem for this researcher has been the secondary nature of the acknowledgement of identity’s role in teachers’ work lives. In most of the literature, identity is simply one aspect of the study, whereas, for this study it has been considered to be central to the research. In many studies there are elements, hints and glimpses of identity to be found in the writings about
teachers’ work lives. These may acknowledge the individuality and identity of teachers but it frequently becomes one of many details within the study rather than the core issue in the study of teachers’ work lives (Elbaz, 1983; Fullan, 1997; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1991b; Hargreaves, 1998a; Huberman, 1989; Lortie, 1975; MacLure, 1993; Nias, 1989; Palmer, 1997, 1998; Poppleton, 2000; Sachs, 2001). Few pieces of literature explicitly acknowledge the impact of ongoing educational change, as a feature of teachers’ work lives, on the identity of the teacher or indeed the role of identity in teachers’ perceptions about ongoing educational change.

Table 5, Overview of the literature relevant to identity, indicates a selection of literature that has been identified as relevant to this study. They have been included because they relate to either the study of teachers and/or the study of identity. The following section discusses in more detail the ways in which this body of literature about teachers and identity relate to this study.

**Table 5 Overview of the literature relevant to identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Focus as it relates to this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball &amp; Goodson</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Teachers’ lives and careers</td>
<td>Focuses on professional identity and career development and the ways that teachers achieve, maintain and develop their identity in and through a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branaman</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Self and society</td>
<td>Sociological view of self and identity, seeing self as a social phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britzman</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The terrible problem of knowing thyself: Towards a poststructural account of teacher identity</td>
<td>Development of teacher identity with the focus on a “poststructural account”; talks about teacher identity rather than the identity of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coldron &amp; Smith</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Active location in teachers’ construction of their professional identities</td>
<td>Sees professional identity as manifest in classroom practice; discusses identity location and development; acknowledges social and personal biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connelly &amp; Clandinin</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice</td>
<td>Discusses teachers’ professional identity through teachers’ stories about their work lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielewicz</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Teaching selves: Identity, pedagogy and teacher education</td>
<td>Focuses on the development of ‘teacher identity’ and teachers developing a sense of what it is to be a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gee</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Identity as an analytic lens for research in education</td>
<td>Sees identity as a lens and a tool for research analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/s (s)</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Focus as it relates to this study</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodson</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>The life and work of teachers</em></td>
<td>Espouses the need for studying the life and work of teachers; endorses the use of teachers’ ‘voice’, life cycles, background, careers paths, lifestyles and critical incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodson &amp; Walker</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td><em>Biography, identity and schooling: Episodes in educational research</em></td>
<td>Sees a need to listen to teacher’s voice and respect for “the autobiographical” and for the “life” of teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelchtermans &amp; Vandenberghe</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td><em>Teachers’ professional development: A biographical perspective.</em></td>
<td>Avoids the use of the term ‘identity’ because of multiple meanings, using instead “professional self”; respects teacher’s voice and acknowledges the importance of the “person of the teacher”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLure</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td><em>Arguing for yourself: Identity as an organising principle in teachers’ jobs and lives</em></td>
<td>Sees identity as a form of argument; uses biography, life history and a “biographical attitude” to study teachers; acknowledges that the impact of contexts on teachers is not a one-way process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga &amp; Pollard</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Work and identity in the primary school</em></td>
<td>Focus is on teachers’ work and sees identity as incidental, acknowledging the ‘person’ with regard to the implications of change—i.e., compliance, resistance and co-option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishler</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Storylines: Craftartists’ narratives of identity</em></td>
<td>Focuses on identity formation and development through narratives (storylines); grounded in socio-linguistic methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nias</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td><em>Primary teachers talking</em></td>
<td>Focus is on Primary teachers’ work from their perspective; calls identity ‘self’ and looks at teacher identity development throughout their careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>The heart of a teacher: Identity and integrity in teaching</em></td>
<td>Describes and defines identity and integrity; sees that “we teach who we are”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td><em>The courage to teach</em></td>
<td>Covers “the inner landscape of the teaching self”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sachs</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Teacher professional identity: Competing discourses, competing outcomes</em></td>
<td>Sees ‘professional identity’ as teacher professionalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>Unmasking teachers’ subjectivities in local school management</em></td>
<td>Focus is on school management, on how teachers react and how their “sense of self and work identities” are recast in school reform processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spodek</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td><em>The implicit theories of early childhood teachers</em></td>
<td>Acknowledges the links between teachers’ perceptions and beliefs and their actions and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td><em>Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity</em></td>
<td>Provides a portrait of modern identity based on historical progression and with a philosophical and moral perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulliamy, Kimonen, Nevalainen &amp; Webb</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Teacher identity and curriculum change: A comparative case-study analysis of small schools in England and Finland</em></td>
<td>Is a comparative case study with curriculum as the main focus but with an acknowledgement of identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On review of this body of literature, it has appeared that there is a wide range of perceptions and conceptions about identity. The term ‘teacher identity’ is linked to teachers’ careers, life histories and to teachers’ work. In the study of teachers and their identities it is more often the case that teachers are considered as the aggregate of all teachers rather than as individual teachers with individual needs and identities (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985). There appears to be a paucity of research which considers the impact of educational change on individual teachers while considering the impacts in the light of their identity. As can be seen from an examination of the ‘focus’ column in the above table, the notion of the identity of teachers is frequently mentioned and acknowledged—but usually in an incidental manner rather than as the main issue. Where studies were located that acknowledged the importance of identity, other issues also took centre stage with identity, linking its role to other concepts or issues. These issues will be discussed in the following section.

Gee (2000) proffers the notion of a range of perspectives for viewing identity that he links closely with discourses. Gee foregrounds identity in his work and, in this instance, he suggests that identity can be utilised as a tool for research analysis and sets out four perspectives for viewing identity. Identity itself, though, is regarded as secondary. The main issue of finding a method for analysis and the use of language in that analysis take precedence in his perspectives. His work though is significant for this study’s perspective on identity in that the framework of four perspectives, or lenses, provide a very useful way of viewing identity. He notes that the four perspectives are not separate from each other, but that they inter-relate in complex and important ways. “They are four ways to formulate questions about how identity is functioning for a specific person in a given context or across a set of different contexts” (p. 101). These are described as follows:

- Nature-Identity: we are who we are primarily because of our “natures”—that is, a “state” that is developed from forces in nature. This might involve gender, twin-ness or being blonde.
Institution-Identity: we are what we are because of the positions we occupy in society—“positions” authorised by authorities within institutions. This might involve being an early childhood teacher, a student or a dentist.

Discourse-Identity: we are what we are primarily because of our individual accomplishments as they are recognised by others—an individual trait recognised in the discourse/dialogue with/of “rational” individuals. This might involve being charismatic, being a leader or being ‘good with kids’.

Affinity-Identity: we are what we are because of the experiences we have had within certain types of “affinity” groups—experiences shared in the practice of “affinity” groups. This might involve being a church member, a “Trekkie” or a hockey club member. (Gee, 2000, pp. 3-4)

As Gee notes though, there are difficulties with the overlapping nature of these categories. For example, one’s leadership could be labelled as an inherited ‘gift’ and so seen as a Nature-Identity; the membership of the hockey club may only be for fitness/exercise reasons and one holds no ‘affinity’ with the group; or the ‘gift’ of being charismatic may be seen, by the recipient, as a curse and thus be an imposition.

Danielewicz (2001) looked at how beginning teachers develop an identity as they commence and move through their careers as teachers. She found that the process of identity development is an ongoing and unfinished work. From her study she developed a set of principles or notions for the development of a pedagogy for teaching identity, outlining the qualities that teachers in teacher education courses ought to have and use to become effective teachers (Danielewicz, 2001). Thus, she was primarily concerned with the teaching of teachers and the role that identity formation plays in the processes of moving students into the role and identity of being a teacher. Danielewicz’s description and discussion about identity is relevant to this study as it contributes to the broader academic discourse about the nature and worth of research into identity, foregrounding the importance of identity, albeit teacher identity formation and maintenance in her instance. Many of her assertions about the nature of identity are mirrored in this research:

- she interweaves dialogue, discourse and discursive practices with the construction and maintenance of identity
she sees identity as socially constructed—through social interaction—and as socially situated; who we are at a given moment is dependent upon the situation

- she claims that our identities are individually held—“attached to individuals and their physical bodies” and

- she acknowledges the multiplicity and complexities of identity, asserting that “no one has a single identity” (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10).

She asserts that, “every person is composed of multiple, often conflicting, identities, which exist in volatile states of construction or reconstruction, reformation or erosion, addition or expansion” (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10). These elements or dimensions of identity are adopted for the understanding about identity that is used in this research.

MacLure’s 1993 work sees the ways that teachers use their identity as a “resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and to the world at large”, an “organising principle in teachers’ jobs and lives” (MacLure, 1993, p. 311). In studying teacher identity, MacLure noted that, for the teachers in her study, there were “spoiled identities”—when teachers “sensed alienation from the values and practices of their institution”, felt trapped or were “no longer able to reconcile their identities with the job”, or talked of their dissatisfactions of the present in comparison to a lost past (pp. 317–318). She also labelled “subversive identities” as evident when teachers denied having, or wanting, social contact with other teachers; and denied having a sense of vocation; and claimed that they were “only-here-for-the-beer”; and teachers who indicated that their real identities lay outside the school (pp. 318–319). In this sense, MacLure further dissects the construct of identity into sub-groups. It conceives of them as compartmentalised and fragmented rather than as a unified but ever changing whole entity. The overlapping and interconnected aspects of these identities remains unresolved.

In their study, Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994) related identity to teachers’ professional identity development and took a biographical perspective that incorporated personal life history. They noted that, “Teachers’ professional behaviour, and its development, can only be understood properly when situated in the broader context of a career and a personal life history” (Kelchtermans &
Vandenberghe, 1994, p. 45). This acknowledgment of the situated contexts of understanding teachers is also adopted by this research study in developing a shared understanding about identity. Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe looked at the professional life of teachers and the resulting sense of ‘professional self’. They noted that they had actively avoided the use of the term ‘identity’, preferring the term “teachers’ professional selves”, because “this term has very different meanings depending on one’s anthropological and philosophical assumptions” (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994, p. 59). They made strong links between teachers’ sense of professional self and biography and stress the importance of the contexts of teachers’ work lives. They, like Danielewicz (2001), acknowledged the reciprocal links between the institutional contexts of the school and the teachers’ professional selves. These links between teachers’ professional selves (identities) and the context of their work lives are relevant to this study, which has also investigated the relationship between teachers’ identities and the changes with which teachers are engaged in their work lives.

Nias’ (1989) work in the 1980s into the work lives of teachers is relevant to this study. Many of her research findings have relevance for this study, and these are listed below. She highlighted the importance of the ways that teaching as a job involves the teacher as a person. She foregrounded the interconnectedness of teachers’ sense of self and the contexts of their work lives, discussing five elements that assist in the development and maintenance of the notion that the teachers are what they do for a living. Nias’ (1989) elements include:

- the affective aspect of teachers’ work, that it is “felt as well as experienced” (p. 205)
- that there are large numbers of cognitive, practical and interpersonal skills required in daily tasks;
- that teaching is a demanding but potentially rewarding job;
- that it is in essence a private and isolated career and,
- that teachers rely on the recognition of their students for acknowledgement of a job well done (Nias, 1989).

The affective aspects of teachers’ work lives, the claim that teachers invest so much of themselves in their jobs and the assertion that teachers are what they do, that is, teachers don’t just teach, they are teachers, all have direct relevance to this study.
These assertions resonated with me as a teacher and as a researcher I sought to determine whether they were evident in the lives of the participants. Nias’ work assists in the establishment of the importance of the links between the teacher’s sense of self and their work. If the affective components are deemed as elements of teachers’ identity—their feelings, beliefs and values—then Nias’ work has direct relevance for this study. It establishes the connections between teachers’ work lives and the affective and personal aspects of their work. Thus, Nias’ work has paved the way for further discussion about the notion of identity.

Nias also highlighted the perception that teachers are “self-conscious.” They are aware of themselves as teachers and it is important to them what their students think of them. This, she asserted, made it difficult to separate their selves from their jobs. The blending of teacher and teaching is evident in her work. The (Primary) teachers in her study:

- thought of themselves as ‘caring’ people;
- people who were concerned to achieve a high standard of occupational competence;
- people who placed a high value upon autonomy and scope to use their manifold talents; and
- people who were interested in educational ideas as well as practice (p. 204).

This self-conscious or reflexive view that teachers have of themselves is mirrored in this study.

Smyth (2002) researched the effects on teachers who were in the midst of self-managed school reform changes. Utilising a single Australian Primary school, he studied the “effects of school reform and the new managerialism on schools and teachers’ work” (Smyth, 2002, p. 463). His study examined “how teachers’ subjectivities are worked on and how teachers’ pedagogical selves are being disrupted and fundamentally recast as a consequence of local school management” (Smyth, 2002, p. 463). This preliminary report on Smyth’s study is relevant to this study in that it featured teachers in the Primary school, was based on Australian data and recognised teachers’ identities in its focus. The emphasis that is placed on teachers’ identities in Smyth’s study is different to the emphasis in this research in several ways. Smyth acknowledges that there is an impact of school reform changes on teachers’ identities and could evidence the ways that “teachers’ sense of self and work identities are being worked upon” (Smyth, 2002, p. 464). However the identity of these teachers appears to be an aggregate—that is, teachers are dealt with as a
group, looking for commonality, rather than as individuals (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985). Secondly, the other effects of school managerialism (cultural transformation, corruption of leadership, corrosion of teaching and misplaced trust) were foregrounded in his study rather than the specific effects of these changes on teacher’s identities. Once again the impact of change on teachers’ identity is acknowledged, but it becomes incidental to the other effects of change. A point that Smyth made that has direct relevance to this study is that, as a result of the changes in their work lives, the teachers experienced a “disruption” and “recasting” of their “pedagogical selves” (Smyth, 2002, p. 463).

Smyth also noted the complexities of the impact of change when he says:

> What is going on here ... to some degree at least, is a process of re-inventing teacher identities—some of it being driven by processes of external policy formation, but other aspects being contributed to in the way in which teachers themselves interpret, react to and adapt to the wider policy reform processes. It is not a simple straightforward process of either ‘compliance’ or ‘resistance’ (Smyth, 2002, p. 468).

This hints at the compound effects of both the external forces of policy change and teachers’ personal reactions to change, highlighting the ways in which something more complex occurs with teachers’ identities in contexts of change. This research study evidences the multifaceted relationship between the ways in which teachers “interpret, react to and adapt to” (Smyth, 2002, p. 468) the external forces of policy formation, causing a re-invention and transformation of teacher identities.

No discussion on the literature on identity could be considered complete without mention of the work of F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin. While much of their work is based around study and research into teachers’ knowledge and the practical professional “knowledge landscapes” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) it is also about teachers and their identity. They have extensively researched teacher thinking and “teachers as knowers: knowers of themselves, of their situations, of children, of their subject matter of teaching and of learning” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 1). They have concentrated on the three dimensions of knowledge, context and identity. As the impacts of ongoing educational change on teachers’ identity is the focus of this research project, the links between identity and context that are made by Connelly and Clandinin have direct relevance to this research.
Ball (1972), and later Ball and Goodson (1985), looked at “the ways that teachers achieve, maintain and develop their identity, their sense of self” (1985, p. 18). They outline two dimensions of selves or identitites, asserting that the “substantial” identity (self) is “a more stable, core self perception that is fundamental to the ways that individuals think about themselves” (p. 18). Its counterpart, the “situated” identity is “a malleable presentation of self that differs and alters according to the specific definition of the situation” (S. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985, p. 18). In this sense then, it is the “substantial” self or identity that is the deeper and more resistant to change. The substantial and situational selves provide alternate ways of looking at identity. In their writing, Ball and Goodson frequently use the terms identity and self synonymously. Their work has relevance to this study in that Ball and Goodson acknowledge that identity, whether it is a deeper self/identity, resistant to change forces, or a more flexible side of one’s self/identity that is able to negotiate and manage situational changes, is worthy of study.

Cooper and Olson’s (1996) work also reflected many of the views of identity that are utilised in this study. They saw the multidimensionality of identity (see next paragraph); they acknowledged the “historical, sociological, psychological and cultural influences which shaped teacher identity” (Cooper & Olson, 1996, p. 78) and they recognised the continuous nature of teacher identity development. They also highlighted the importance of situating the self in the contexts of teachers’ worlds, as does this research. Cooper and Olson also discussed their concerns with the “fragmentation or ‘disembodiment’ often associated with [a] dualistic view [of identity]” that separates the mind from the body (Cooper & Olson, 1996, p. 79) and tends to polarise and fragment both the concept of identity and its owners. The importance of maintaining a holistic view of identity is discussed below.

Also evident in the literature are concerns with the multidimensionality and plurality of identity. Implicit in much of the writing (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985; Danielewicz, 2001; Gee, 2000; Kelchtermans & Vandenbergh, 1994; Kondo, 1990) about identity is the conception of identity as plural—that ‘identity’ is actually identities. In much of the writings about identity/ies it/they are linked to the variety of roles which we each assume in our lives. It could be considered that the multiple identities that we each possess contribute to our sense of self. All of these roles carry
with them aspects, responsibilities, duties, values, beliefs, emotions, actions and reactions that constitute our uniquely individual identity (Gee, 1996, 2000). What is presumed here in some research is that we each possess a myriad of characteristics which converge to make the resources from which our moment-by-moment display of identity occurs. Hence, the use of the singular term identity is preferred in this thesis, as it indicates a sense of wholeness rather than the lack of cohesion in the view of identity that is sometimes evident in research and writing.

The issue of the difference between one’s roles and one’s identity remains in contention in the literature. While there are numerous authors who discuss roles in relation to identity in a generic sense (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Gee, 2000; Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves, 1997; Woods, Jeffrey, Troman, & Boyle, 1997), no research could be found that discussed with any clarity the specific links between what teachers are (that is, their identity as teachers) and what they do (that is, their role of a teacher). While this is discussed by Nias (1989) and Britzman (1991), it remains as an assumption or an assertion in their work, without discussion of its implications for teachers or for change processes. Gee’s work comes close to addressing the issue of the connection between identity and roles, in that he acknowledges the idea of dimensions of identity in discourses that are linked to roles. He goes on to use these “as a lens” for understanding and researching schools and education, rather than teachers themselves, for the ways in which people are recognised as “being a certain kind of person” (Gee, 2000, p. 100), by others external to that person (rather than by the person themselves), and with a view to determining which of these identities operates when, why and how (rather than seeing a relationship between identity and change).

The holistic, all-encompassing nature of the teacher is also mentioned in the literature. By the use of the term ‘holistic’ I am referring to the philosophical theory that “wholes” are “more than the mere sum of the parts” (Delbridge, Bernard, Blair, Peters, & Butler, 1991, p. 841). For this research, each teacher, when viewed through the lens of their identity, is considered as a “whole” being, more than the sum of the parts. While identity is considered to have components to it, the wholeness of each person’s identity is assumed. This ‘wholeness’ of the person of the teacher—in the amalgamation of personal elements—is alluded to in the
following quote from Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), and referred to in more detail below:

Teachers teach in the way that they do not just because of the skills they have or have not learned. The ways that they teach are also grounded in their backgrounds, their biographies, in the kinds of teachers they have become. Their careers, their hopes and dreams, their opportunities and aspirations, or the frustration of these things—are also important for teachers’ commitment, enthusiasm and morale. So too are their relationships with their colleagues (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. ix).

While Hargreaves and Fullan are referring here to teachers’ work lives with a view to discussion on teacher development, rather than a statement about teacher identity, it is an acknowledgement that there is a ‘wholeness’ about teachers—they are not just their practice, their career or their history. They are the totality of numerous elements which, in combination, make them who they are. Hargreaves and Fullan here refer to skills, background, biography, career, hopes and dreams, opportunities and aspirations, frustrations, commitment, enthusiasm, morale and relationships with colleagues. Goodson reflected this when he said that studying teachers’ life and work could “develop insights which locate the teacher’s life with the deeply structured and embedded environments of schooling” (Goodson, 1997). This holistic aspect implies the coming together of many parts of teacher’s lives, some of which are mentioned by Hargreaves and Fullan in the above quote, to form the whole-ness of what is referred to in this study as identity. This research study views teachers as more than each of, or the sum of, these aspects. While it is important for research purposes to investigate the ‘parts’ of the ‘whole’ much of the research literature leaves teachers as fragmented beings, failing to reconnect the parts, and in doing so to acknowledge that the whole is indeed more than the sum of the parts.

This same idea is reflected in Goodson’s (1981) statement about the teacher as a person when he claims that:

In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is critical we know about the person the teacher is. Our paucity of knowledge in this area is a manifest indictment of the range of our sociological imagination (Goodson, 1981, p. 69).

While Goodson’s discussion is about the value and importance of life history study (Goodson, 1997), he assigns value to the “person the teachers is” and decries the lack of research in this area. He also says:

Life experience and background are obviously key ingredients of the person we are, of our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our ‘self’ in our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice (Goodson, 1997, p. 146).

Here we can see the acknowledgement that the teacher’s self, as the amalgamation of
elements, is heavily invested in the tasks of teaching, a point that was asserted by Nias (1989). This adds to the complexities and depth of the issue of the self/identity of the teacher. Goodson also refers to the ways in which teachers “experience and background” have a shaping effect on teachers’ practice. In this research the focus is on the ways in which teachers’ experience of change impacts on them, through the filtering lens of their identity, and that the “experience and background” are key ingredients in the sense of self, the identity. Goodson (1997) went on to discuss the importance of studying such issues as teachers’ lifestyle (in and out of school), life cycle, career stages, career decisions and critical incidents, seeing them as influential in understanding the person of the teacher. He reflected the need to situate and locate the ‘selves’ of teachers within the broad contexts of their work lives. This situating and locating identity in the contexts of work life is both acknowledged and reflected throughout this research.

The next section gives the reader an understanding of how identity is conceived from the literature. It brings together understandings about identity, with specific reference to teacher identity, as a basis for further discussion.

2.4.4 Identity in this study

In recapping the main authors’ work about identity, the section above has shown how identity is evidenced in the literature and has related these assertions and findings to the ways in which identity is theorised for this study. However, some final understandings need to established for the discussion to progress further in this thesis. Because the construct of identity has a raft of meanings, dependent on the paradigm and discipline within which it is construed, it is essential to arrive at clarity of a meaning—at least for the purposes of this research.

The following quote by Palmer (1998) is one that has been significant in determining the nature of the term identity as it is employed in this study. While this quotation is influential in terms of a definition of identity for this study, it is not intended here to assume that it is comprehensive or definitive. It is, though, a starting point.

*By identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self: my genetic makeup, the nature of the man and woman who gave me life, the culture in which I was raised, people who have sustained me and people who have done me harm, the good and ill I have done to others, and to myself.*
the experience of love and suffering—and much, much more. In the midst of that complex field, identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human (Palmer, 1998, p. 13).

There are several characteristics of this statement by Palmer that are drawn upon in this discussion.

Firstly, it is worth noting Palmer’s use of the word *evolving*. While a modernist view of identity may have considered identity as fixed, permanent and clearly definable, the postmodern view indicates that identity is “under construction” (Danielewicz, 2001) and is continually forming and reforming. This is the stance taken in this study. Identity has been evidenced in research into teachers’ work and lives and the process of formation and maintenance of a teaching identity as teachers progress through their careers (Britzman, 1991; Danielewicz, 2001; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Nias, 1989).

Secondly, identity as it is discussed in this study is not fixed or unified but, as Danielewicz (2001) indicates, it is a “conditional, restless, unstable, ever-changing state of being” that “can never be completed” (p. 3). It is constructed from the contexts, experiences, social interactions and relationships that are brought together in each teacher’s life. Identity is ‘contextual’ in that it is dependent on the contexts and situations of teachers’ lives; it is ‘restless’ in that it is developing and evolving; it is ‘unstable’ in that it is both dependent on and created through interactions with others in the teacher’s world, and thus is ever-changing and never-completed. It is indeed, as Palmer indicated, “a moving intersection.”

Thirdly, Palmer observes that “all the forces that constitute my life converge.” This foregrounds the perspective that each person’s identity is the drawing together of all the interconnected aspects of a person’s life. These are noted by Palmer (1998, p. 13, see above quote) as the ‘inner and outer elements’ of family and ‘genetic makeup’; ‘culture’, including ethnic and religious experiences; morals and values; relationships; and the emotions that accompany social existence. This is by no means a comprehensive list of the ‘forces’ and elements that constitute one’s identity. There are others, and no list of them could be exhaustive or definitive. Palmer also indicates that identity is also determined from the deeper, more personal
responses to experiences and by choices that have wrought harm or ill to oneself and to others (Palmer, 1998). This then, like this study, sees identity as the convergence of “all the forces that constitute my life” (Palmer, 1997, p. 13), even more elements than Goodson’s (1997, p. 146) “key ingredients” or “life experiences and background”.

Fourthly, Palmer emphasises the implication of the importance of the relational and social aspects of identity. The relationships that form and determine each person’s identity include the family, friends and working colleagues with whom one is in contact (Palmer, 1997). It also encompasses, in this postmodern era, virtual people: that is, people we may ‘meet’ on the internet, as characters in films or in books who, in some way, influence our lives. Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994, p. 47) state that identity is “the result of a process of social construction that goes on throughout the life cycle.” We know ourselves and are known and this occurs in a socially constructed world (Danielewicz, 2001). We see ourselves in relation to others. But the experience of each person’s life is dependent on the nature of the contexts, culture and levels in which each of us exist (Cooper & Olson, 1996). The relational aspect of our identity and the ongoing nature of this social construction of our identity are closely linked to each other. There is a myriad of variables that determine how these social and external experiences are internalised for us and assist in the creation, reformation and maintenance of our identity (Cooper & Olson, 1996; Danielewicz, 2001).

Gee (1999), in defining the ways in which understanding is created from language, acknowledged this socio-cultural aspect, highlighting the “personal, social and cultural knowledge, feelings, values, identities and relationships relevant in the interaction” (p. 83). This linking together of identity with personal, social and cultural knowledge, feelings and values is reflected in the understanding about identity that this researcher has utilised in this study. Identity is seen as a combination of elements or characteristics that include knowledge, feelings, values and beliefs.

The socially situated nature of identity is reflected in much of the literature. This implies that one’s identity exists in relation to other people (Connelly & Clandinin,
1999; Danielewicz, 2001; Gee, 1999, 2000; Nias, 1989, 1998). We not only see ourselves in relation to others—like, unlike, with or against—but the interaction with others continues to form, transform and challenge our identity. As we exist in groups of humans, interact and converse with others, our identity is created, formed, challenged and reformed in the process of living. This inter-relational and developmental nature of identity links to the way that it forms, allowing identity to be continually challenged and re-formed as one reacts with life’s experiences (Palmer, 1997).

A similar recognition in the literature that the beliefs and individuality of teachers is paramount for the effectiveness of change is evident when Bell (1994, p. 52), in his discussion about teachers’ work, noted: “Any attempt to understand teachers’ work must therefore begin by recognising that teachers are not cardboard cut-outs. Behind what they do lie values and beliefs which are a product of past and contemporary events”. This is the basis for the awareness of both the individuality and the importance of teacher identity in the study of teachers in contexts of change.

There are then elements of our lives that are inherently interconnected. These elements are interpreted by others and by ourselves as each person’s identity. The elements include genetic disposition and makeup, personality, physical characteristics, family experiences, religious encounters, gender preferences, educational background, ethnicity and culture. In tandem with these are our understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings (Gee, 2000). Each of the ‘parts’, for example one’s religious belief system, may be similar if not the same as another person’s. However, the convergence of the ‘parts’, when considered as a whole, are what is perceived by self and others as constituting identity. This is perceived as being a holistic and discretely unique identity, even though it is created from the amalgamation of the ‘parts’. In bringing together these component ‘parts’, at any particular situated socio-cultural moment, identity is perceived to be unique in that we each have different but similar genetic dispositions and makeup, personality, physical characteristics, family experiences, religious encounters, gender preferences, educational background, culture and ethnicity, roles, understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings.
Thus, it is proposed that identity in this study is conceived of as complex, constituted through social interaction and relationships, situated in and determined by the contexts of each person’s experiences and changing on a moment-by-moment basis. Therefore, each person is perceived, by self and others, to have an holistic and discretely unique identity.

Identity, as it is conceived of for this study, is therefore the socio-culturally situated, momentary perception of a person that includes the following components and descriptors as drawn from the above literature.

- identity is comprised of one’s genetic disposition and makeup, including personality and physical characteristics; family experiences, religious encounters; gender; educational background; ethnicity and culture. One’s identity can be considered as the convergence of each person’s roles, knowledge, beliefs, values, feelings, and understandings.
- identity is socially, culturally and relationally constructed and maintained, with language and dialogue playing a major part in its construction, maintenance and development
- identity is created and recreated through experiences and is continually being reformed, challenged, transformed or stabilised on a moment-by-moment basis. It is understood that identity is ever changing and flexible
- it is holistic in that it represents the amalgamation of the ‘parts’ of our lives and
- each person’s identity is unique in that it may have similar attributes and much commonality with others’ identities, but it is never identical to another person’s identity.

This then represents the amalgam of forces (Palmer, 1997), elements, features and characteristics that combine to create what is meant by the use of the term identity in this study. This conception of identity is supported by the literature in that all these characteristics of identity are evidenced across the literature. What is important in
this study is the existence of an all-encompassing, holistic\textsuperscript{13} and discretely unique identity that incorporates the combination of elements.

**Summary of literature about identity**

This section has drawn together writing and research about identity from the literature in the educational arena that has a specific focus on a teacher’s identity. Drawing from elements and characteristics of identity as overviewed in the literature, an understanding about what is meant by the use of the term *identity* in this study has been arrived at. It is conceptualised as being holistic and individually unique, comprised of a convergence of all the elements of life experiences, physical characteristics, personality, roles and background, genetic makeup, ethnicity and culture. It includes a person’s understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. This study acknowledges that identity is socially and relationally constructed, unique to each person and comprises an array of elements that continually form and reform as each person lives their life. The remainder of this thesis employs this understanding of identity for analysis of the data and further discussion.

**Summary of the literature review**

This chapter has presented a distillation of the literature that relates to the topics covered in this thesis. The three themes of *change*, *power* and *identity* form the basis of this body of literature, and include such topics as the ways in which social and economic change globally have influenced education, and the ways in which these changes have effected policies, programs and perspectives in the Tasmanian government education sector. The impacts of change on teachers are coupled with issues of power, in that teachers are required to adapt to changes that are imposed by their employer—the bureaucratic educational system. These issues of power, which are inherent in education systems, and the effects of this ‘top-down’ power, including questions of empowerment, leadership, professionalism of teachers, teacher autonomy and trust are also discussed. The third theme, identity, is discussed,

\textsuperscript{13}The use of the word ‘holistic’ makes reference to the philosophical theory that ‘wholes’ are “more than the mere sum of the parts” (Delbridge et al., 1991, p. 841).
through a review of the literature about how identity is conceived. The conception of identity, employed for this study, is outlined, drawing on a selection of elements, characteristics and perspectives from the literature. This working understanding about identity then provides the basis for further discussion and analysis throughout this research.

The next chapter sets out the details of the research design, its methodological perspectives, the participant teachers and data collection, analytical tools and methods, and the ways in which this research is methodologically distinctive.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.
(Albert Einstein, 1879—1955, Nobel Prize winner)

Overview of the chapter

The previous chapter, Review of the Literature and Background Information, has positioned this research in the contextual framework of the available literature. This chapter sets out the methodology used in the research. The details of the data collection methods, ethical considerations, procedures and protocols are described. The process of data collection and nature of the data itself are outlined and the reader is introduced to the eight teachers who participated in this study. The techniques and procedures used to analyse the data at the three levels of data analysis are detailed. The final section of this chapter outlines the ways in which this research is methodologically significant, noting its uniqueness in design and purpose.

3.1 Methodological overview and justification

This qualitative research uses a critical case study approach to examine the effects of educational change on teachers. The research employs an eclectic blend of methods
in order to provide an appropriate range of tools for examining the issues and data involved. In part the study utilises an ethnographic approach in that it has studied the ‘culture’ of teachers’ work lives (Chambers, 2002), investigating teachers’ perceptions about aspects of change of their work lives. As a deep understanding of the effects of ongoing educational change on teachers and their identities was the aim of the research, it was decided that teachers were the best source of data for these issues. To this end early childhood teachers working in the state government school system were sourced as the participants. Talking with teachers about issues of change and its effects upon them—at both professional and personal levels—was the logical starting place. Hence, interviews with teachers about issues of change provided the data for this study. These interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed for later analysis (see CDROM Appendix 4, Interview transcripts).

The data were analysed at three levels, using a grounded theory research approach with its focus based on the stated research questions. The three levels of analysis had a compound effect, each contributing to a deepening appreciation of the implications of change for these teachers. The analysis was inductive, arriving at findings through an open-minded approach.

The first level of analysis utilised a basic narrative approach in storying the interviews (Mishler, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1988). The report of the first level of data analysis served to both summarise the information for the reader in an accessible manner and to provide background understandings about each of the eight teachers. The second level of analysis was a thematic one (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), interrogating the data to arrive at the three themes of change, power and identity, with their accompanying categories and sub-categories. The third level of analysis, building on the information and understandings arrived at from the first two levels of analysis, utilised Gee’s (1999) framework of questions that explored the ways in which identity and relationships are utilised in building understanding about our world. Using the construct of identity as a lens for viewing the teachers’ understandings about their work lives has shed further light on these teacher’s perceptions and life-worlds.
3.1.1 How this is qualitative research

As the aim of this study is to investigate what happens for, with and to early childhood teachers and their identities in contexts of ongoing educational change, it was determined that the qualitative paradigm was the most appropriate to facilitate a profound understanding of the stated topic. Scientific or quantitative methods produce facts, truths and causes, employing scientific and controlled methods. Qualitative research produces understanding, descriptions and explanations, employing methods which elicit these forms of knowing (Burns, 1996). Utilising Creswell’s (1998) list of the characteristics of qualitative research, the following features apply to this study:

- qualitative research data are drawn from natural settings,
- the researcher is the key instrument for the collection of the data,
- the data are collected as words or pictures,
- the data set is analysed inductively, giving attention to particulars,
- there is a focus on the participants’ perspectives and their meaning, and
- language is used expressively (p.16).

This set of features of qualitative research demonstrates the ways in which this research fits within the qualitative paradigm.

Creswell (1998) discusses the reasons for conducting qualitative research and the role that the researcher plays within this style of research. He indicates that the researcher must be prepared to commit extensive time to the research, he/she must be prepared to “engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 16-17), engage in substantial writing processes, and participate in research that does not have firm guidelines or set procedures and is ever-changing and evolving. These principles are applicable to this research study. Creswell also develops his own shortlist of the characteristics of a good qualitative study. These characteristics include:

- employing rigorous data collection processes,
- training the study within the assumptions appropriate to the research,
- the researcher identifies studies and employs [sic] one or more of the traditions of quality of inquiry,
- the research begins with a single focus,
- the study develops as it goes and involves detailed methods and a rigorous approach,
- the research is written well so the reader experiences a sense of "being there".
the set of data is analysed using multiple levels of abstraction, and
the writing is clear and engaging, reflecting the complexities of real-life

Adopting these characteristics from Creswell, this research has aimed to replicate them in the design and implementation of this research.

Eisner (1991) also indicates the ways in which each qualitative study reflects the personal style of the researcher. It is acknowledged that this research does indeed reflect the personal style and enthusiasm of the researcher. It was my first-hand appreciation of teachers’ work lives that initiated the research study. Existing research resonated with my awareness of the complexities of teachers’ work lives and the ways in which this complexity intensifies in contexts of ongoing change. However, I believed that there were implications beyond this, at personal levels, for teachers and that the implications did not remain at just changes to teaching practice or at increased stress or complexities of work life. I could see the potential for more profound repercussions at deep personal levels; in the ways in which teachers saw themselves and assessed their worth as a person and as a teacher.

Eisner (1991) discusses the way that a qualitative study can move from a prefigured focus through to an emergent focus using the reflexive and organic nature of qualitative study. This was the reality of this study. It commenced with a focus on literacy, and broadened as teachers discussed a wider range of issues about change and their individualised concerns. Eisner also acknowledges that qualitative reporting cannot exactly mimic reality because of the process of selectively editing material as the analysis of the data occurs. This variance was accommodated in the study procedures and focus.

Patton (1990), in citing John Lofland, indicates that there are four “people-oriented” characteristics in collecting qualitative data. These are that the researcher must:

1. get close enough to the people and situation to personally understand in depth and detail what is going on.
2. aim to capture what actually occurs—“the perceived facts” (p. 32)
3. include a great deal of pure description of people, settings, activities and interactions
4. direct quotations from people are included in the data

(Patton, 1990, p. 32 from John Lofland).

This research has accounted for all four of these mandates through its design and implementation.

Patton goes on to assert that there are interconnected “themes” in the use of qualitative inquiry. He lists ten of these themes and discusses them at length. Those that apply to this study include:

- **Naturalistic inquiry**  Studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally; non-manipulative unobtrusive and non-controlling; openness to whatever emerges with a lack of predetermined constraints on outcomes
- **Inductive analysis**  Immersion in the details and specifics of the data to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships; begin by exploring genuinely open questions rather than testing theoretically derived hypotheses
- **Holistic perspective**  The whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts; focus on complex interdependence not meaningfully reduced to a few discrete variables and linear; cause–effect relationships
- **Qualitative data**  Detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; direct quotations capturing people’s personal perspectives and experiences
- **Personal contact and insight**  The researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation and phenomenon under study; researcher’s personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon
- **Context sensitivity**  Places findings in a social, historical and temporal context; dubious of the possibility of meaningfulness of generalizations across time and space
- **Empathic neutrality**  Complete objectivity is impossible; pure sensitivity undermines credibility; the researcher’s passion is understanding the world in all its complexity—not proving something, not advocating, not advancing personal agendas, but understanding; the researcher includes personal experiences and empathic insight as part of the relevant data, which taking a neutral non-judgemental stance toward whatever content may emerge
- **Design flexibility**  Open to adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change; avoids getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness; pursues new paths of discovery as they emerge


These characteristics have been accommodated in this research study which set out to investigate the real world of the participating teachers, and has inductively developed and attended to issues as they arose. The appreciation of this phenomenon through the teachers’ eyes while allowing them to tell their own stories and relate their perceptions of their individual identities, has been a central tenet of this research. The research values the ways in which the research issues and themes are interconnected and remain more than the sum of their parts. It has respected the
individuality of the participants and their unique descriptions and analyses of the contexts of their work lives. It has remained flexible and empathically neutral throughout the process of data collection, analysis and reporting.

The next section outlines the ways in which this research contains elements of ethnographic, grounded theory methods, case study, interpretive and critical as well as discourse analytic tools. This eclectic blend of qualitative research methods provides strength to the research design and implementation.

### 3.1.2 How this research is ethnographic

This research is ethnographic in that it is about the ‘culture’ of teachers. Chambers claims that ethnography is defined not by its method, but by its content (2002)—in this instance, research into the impact of change on teachers with a specific focus on their identities. The term ‘culture’, Chambers reminds the reader, has been applied to a wide variety of contexts, but he defines culture as “apparent when distinctively shared meanings are discovered to be present in any given group” (2002, p. 852). In this research the “shared meanings” relate to the professional lives of the teachers and the many varieties of change that they had witnessed and then discussed in the interview processes.

However, in the purest of definitions, ‘ethnographers’ spend long periods of time with their participants, immersing themselves in their ‘culture’ (Tedlock, 2002). Strictly speaking, this research has not accommodated this aspect of ‘ethnographic’ research. However, as the researcher in this study is and has been a teacher with many years of teaching experience, she had already had first-hand experiences of the kinds of cultures/life-worlds with which these teachers were engaging. Spending long periods in each of their culture/life-worlds was not considered necessary because the aim of the research was to investigate the perceived impact of change in their work lives on these teacher’s identities. Observation of their practice was not supportive of this aim. It was an understanding of the lived experiences and lives of these teachers, as they were able to articulate it in and through the interview situation, which provided the data for this research.
Silverman asserts that “most ethnographic data are based on observations of what people are saying and doing (and of the territories in which this talk and action takes place)” (1993, p. 60). In this research, the general “territories”, the “patterns of behaviour, customs and ways of life” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58) had already been observed through years of teaching experience. The specifics of each teacher’s “territory” were articulated by the participants during the course of the interviews and resonated with the researcher’s appreciation and awareness of the contexts of teaching. Burns (1996, p. 297) claims that: “ethnography is a relevant method for evaluating school life, since the school is essentially a cultural entity.”

The aim of ethnographic research is to arrive at a description of the culture, territory or life-world of the participants as a basis for interpretation (Burns, 1996; Chambers, 2002; Creswell, 1998). Burns asserts the importance of the context of the life-world in ethnographic research and says that “ethnography takes [the] larger context into account” (1996, p. 298), including premises, interests, values, beliefs and presuppositions. This research begins from an ethnographic standpoint in that it sets out the contexts—from macro to micro—of the participant teachers’ professional lives. Then the research moves on to generate and develop a deeper appreciation of the intersection of teachers and their identities in the contexts of ongoing educational change. In ethnographic research the design of the research has flexibility that allows for multiple techniques and multiple perspectives and the study of social phenomena in their context (Burns, 1996, pp. 330-301). This ‘freedom’ of design was advantageous in this research as it validated the researcher being both reflexive and reflective throughout the research process.

### 3.1.3 Elements of grounded theory research

At its broadest conception, grounded theory is about theory developed from data collected in real world settings (Gay, 1996) and can include interviews as sources of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1999). Theory is developed through a “continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1999, p. 72). This study has a grounded theory approach in that it has generated understandings through the process of data analysis. However, as Charmez notes (2000), grounded theory was developed at the beginning of the turn towards qualitative research as a way to
legitimise the use of qualitative methods in educational research. Times have changed and so, asserts Charmez, have grounded theory methods. She believes that grounded theory methods need not be as rigid as they were originally conceived and that adapting strategies from grounded theory can enhance meaning and further understanding (Charmez, 2000).

Of the eleven “procedures and canons” outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990), six can be applied to this research. These are discussed here. However it must be stated clearly that the “procedures and canons” of grounded theory, while allowing for the flexibility within the research process, are quite specific and procedurally organised. In this sense, following Charmez’s (2000) advice and in an attempt to remain reflexive and open, this research has not followed strict grounded theory “procedures and canons,” but in the construction of a working methodology has drawn on the following for this research.

1. “Data collection and analysis are interrelated processes” (p. 6). Tentative data analysis began from the commencement of the first interview, with summaries of each of the interviews being sent to the participant teachers and the content and structure of each interview building on the previous one.

2. “Concepts are the basic units of analysis” (p. 7). As this research aimed to investigate the relationship between change and teachers’ identities, concepts predominate rather than events or actions.

3. “Categories must be developed and related” (p. 7). During the data analysis concepts were grouped into categories for analysis and development. These then formed the basis of theory development.

4. “Writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory” (p. 10). During the process of both data collection and analysis notations, memos and journal writing were integral to the process of managing the data.

5. “Hypotheses about relationships among categories should be developed and verified as much as possible during the research process” (p. 11). While strict hypotheses were not sought or formally developed, the process of analysis engaged with loose hypotheses or understandings about what might emerge from the data and this was an ongoing part of the analytic process.

6. “A grounded theorist need not work alone” (p. 11). While there was only one researcher working alone in this research process there were a number of
supervisors, colleagues and academic friends who were instrumental in the
process of analysis and theory building (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

These then are the theoretical principles of grounded theory research that have
determined the methodological choices in their research.

3.1.4 Elements of case study

Not only has this qualitative research project been influenced by elements of
ethnography and grounded theory, it also contains features of case study research. In
this study the case is educational change and its impacts on teachers.

Case study research in education is about people and programs. Generalisations are
not sought as the “case” can never be representative of all cases, but certain
generalisations can be drawn (Stake, 1995). While there is a tendency to generalise
across cases, the aim of case study research is to maintain the “uniqueness of the
individual case” (Stake, 1995, p. 39). This was important in this study as the
contexts and type of data meant that generalisations were not going to be sought as a
result of analysis. However some of the finding may resonate with the reader and, in
this sense, the research adds to the body of existing knowledge about the issues of
change, teacher identity and power. This research takes the stance of Denzin and
Lincoln (1998b, p. xiv) when they state that “to study the particular is to study the
general” and that “any case will necessarily bear the traces of the universal”.

As with all qualitative research, there is an emphasis on interpretation in case study
research, with the researcher permitted to make direct interpretation of the individual
instance through the aggregation of the cases (Stake, 1995). These aspects have been
utilised in this research as the thematic analysis has drawn data from across the entire
data set, but there is also the valuing of teachers as individual ‘cases’ within the
larger case of studying the relationship between change and teacher identity.

Merriam claims that:

Case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and
meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context
rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned
from case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research (Merriam,
This “in-depth understanding” was sought in this study—investigating the impact of ongoing educational change on the participant teacher’s identities. The “contexts” of the work lives of these teachers has played an important role in the study, and “discovery” of new meanings and understandings has always been the aim. It is also anticipated that the findings of this study may directly or indirectly influence further research and, potentially, educational policy and practice.

However, as well as a broad case study approach, this research has a critical case study element to it in that it became involved in issues of power. The use of the term ‘critical’ has multiple meanings and as noted above, critical case sampling implies that the case is critical in the sense of its significance and consequence. However, in this instance, ‘critical’ is used in the sense of critical theory:

The ‘critical’ nature of critical theory flows from a commitment to go beyond just studying society for the sake of increased understanding. Critical theorists set out to use research to critique society, raise consciousness and change the balance of power in favor of those less powerful (Patton, 2002, p. 548).

This research, although it did not necessarily commence as a ‘critical’ study, has adopted elements of critical theory as the processes continued.

### 3.1.5 Elements of interpretive and critical research

All qualitative research has an element of interpretation (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). As Patton notes, though, there is a need for the researcher to work “back and forward between the data and his or her own perspective and understandings to make sense of the evidence” (Patton, 2002, p. 477-478). Part of this interpretation, by definition, involves the researcher going beyond the data, and “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order on an unruly but surely patterned world” (p. 480). It is in this sense then that this research is interpretive.

Although Merriam sees interpretive and critical research as independent of each other (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Merriam, 1998 ), this research has brought them together. The critical research component—as noted above—critiques social issues of power, gender, class and race, seeing education as “a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction and transformation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). In
this study the research has led to a critique of issues of power in the lives of the teachers. Carr and Kemmis state:

> the outcome of critical research is … the formulation of … theoretical accounts which provide the basis for analysing systematically distorted decisions and practices, and suggesting the kinds of social and educational action by which these distortions may be removed (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 31).

This research has sought to inform understandings about teachers in contexts of ongoing educational change. From this informed position it becomes possible to offer suggestions about options which remove, minimise or neutralise these “distorted decisions and practices.” Merriam notes that the *interpretive* orientation to research is that: “education is a process and school is a lived experience. Understanding the meaning of the process or the experience constitutes knowledge” (p. 4). In this research, understanding the lived experience of impacts of ongoing educational change on the teachers’ identities was the aim.

Eisner (1991), in his discussion about six features of qualitative study, comments there are two meanings of *interpretive*. The first he assigned the role of accounting for or explaining why something is occurring. He believes that the second meaning “pertains to what experience holds for those in the situation studied” (Eisner, 1991, p. 35). This study has sought a blend of both of these meanings. In valuing teachers, their contexts and beliefs, it has respected their voice and opinions. In its analysis, it has sought to explain, bring meaning to and make sense of their worlds.

### 3.1.6 Elements of discourse analysis

This study has employed discourse analysis as a method of illuminating the data. Utilising Taylor’s broad definition of discourse analysis as “the close study of language in use” (S. Taylor, 2001b, p. 1) this research has understood that the language used by the teachers has been a vehicle for the communication of meaning, enabling and constraining their expression of ideas. It is through the speech act that thoughts and ideas are developed and refined. However, in this study it is not the language itself that is paramount, but rather utilising discourse analysis as a “resource for studying something else” (p. 15)—in this instance, the case of educational change and its effects on teachers’ identities.

Taylor’s discussion also acknowledges another important feature of the use of
discourse analytic techniques that has relevance to this study—namely the role of the researcher in the processes of research. She asserts that the researcher selects the topic and “influences interpretation and analysis through the knowledge and general world view which she or he brings to the data” (S. Taylor, 2001b, p. 18).

Appreciating that detachment from the project is impossible and therefore acknowledging the influence of the researcher in the process of research is an important aspect of this study. As a “self-aware” researcher (S. Taylor, 2001b, p. 17) with considerable knowledge and personal understandings about the kind of contexts in which the participant teachers are situated, I readily acknowledge the position I hold in this project, assessing and qualifying understandings rather than presenting “statements of truth” (p. 19).

Linking with elements of grounded theory research, discourse analysis encourages an iterative and inductive approach that develops understandings and direction as the process of analysis continues. It permits and encourages a method that is continually referring back to the research questions and re-evaluating, exploring and interpreting throughout the processes of analysis (S. Taylor, 2001a).

Another way in which this research is connected with discourse analysis is that it addresses the issues of word usage through a fine-grained analysis of the transcriptions of the interviews. The exploration of the data using discourse analytic tools was able to provide depth and rigor to the process of analysis. Tools such as the use of metaphor, turns of phrase, use of pronouns to position the speaker, starts, stops and self-corrections, synonyms and contrasts and the use of logic to support positions all culminated in a fresh view of the data, highlighting the impacts of change on teachers’ identities and showcasing the issues, concerns and challenges with which they engaged.

This research, as well as incorporating case study and interpretive research, also reflects elements of critical discourse analysis. Fairclough (2001) asserts that the difference between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) is that CDA “aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination, and in ideology. It is a resource which can be used in combination with others for researching change in contemporary social life”
(Fairclough, 2001, p. 228). In-so-much as this research has investigated issues of power and authority in the contexts of ongoing educational change it could be considered to be critical discourse analysis. In addition, it has utilised a range of discourse analytic tools which has included: the organisation of whole-texts, grammar usage, including clauses and phrases and combinations of them and the choice and use of words, such as metaphor, allegory, simile, and pronoun use to position the speaker with or against issues or entities, connotative meanings and more (pp. 241-245).

Further details about discourse analysis techniques occurs in section 3.3 Data analysis methods.

### 3.1.7 Gee’s framework for analysis

The final level of data analysis has utilised Gee’s framework of “building tasks” and the accompanying set of 18 questions has been employed as the basis for deeper analysis, seeking an illumination of meaning from the data. Gee (1999, pp. 85-94) asserts that discourse analysis places the focus on language and its use, through which listeners or readers interact to build six “things.” These “things” are interlinked “representations” which occur simultaneously during the course of reading, speaking or listening to language (p. 85). These “building tasks through which we use language to construct and/or construe” our world are listed below and form the basis of the third level of data analysis.

1. **Semiotic building:** This is building situated meanings about the communicative systems, knowledge and ways of knowing, and how different symbol systems and different forms of knowledge “count”
   
   I. What sign systems are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?
   
   II. What systems of knowledge and ways of knowing are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant) and in what ways?
   
   III. What social languages are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant, and in what ways?

2. **World building:** The situated meaning and value of aspects of the ‘here and now’ world, ‘reality’

   IV. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?

   V. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artefacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?
VI. What cultural models and networks of models (master models) seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?

VII. What institutions and/or Discourses are being (re-)produced in this situation and how are they being stabilized or transformed in the act?

3. Activity building: Situated meanings about activities and actions.

VIII. What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in this situation?

IX. What sub-activities compose this activity?

X. What actions compose these sub-activities and activities?

4. Identity and relationship building: Situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing, and believing as well as ways of acting and interacting.

XI. What relationships and identities (roles, positions) with their concomitant personal, social and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition) feelings (affect) and values seem to be relevant to this situation?

XII. How are these relationships and identities stabilised or transformed in the situation?

XIII. In terms of identities, activities and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

5. Politics building: Using clues and cues to construct the nature and relevance of various ‘social goods’ such as power and status (the distribution of social goods)

XIV. What social goods (e.g. status, power, gender, race, class…) are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

XV. How are these ‘social goods’ connected to the cultural models and Discourses operative in this situation?

6. Connection building: Making assumptions about how the past and future of an interaction are connected to the present and to each other (continuous coherence).

XVI. What sorts of connections—looking backwards and/or forwards—are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction?

XVII. What sorts of connections are made to previous and future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions and Discourses outside of the current situation?


This framework has provided a set of guiding and evaluative questions through which the data could be interrogated to reveal meaning about the issues of identity, change and power as well as understandings about relationships. The reflexivity of the processes of language is valued in the use of this framework of questions, acknowledging the ways in which meanings are simultaneously arrived at and adjusted as conversations continue.

Through the process of data analysis at the third level, it was noted that the fourth of
these six building categories seemed to dominate—that of the socio-culturally situated identity and relationship building. While some sections of data were relevant to the other five categories, this category was more applicable in its relevance to the content and focus of the data.

3.2 Data collection method and process

3.2.1 Data collection

This study utilised interviews as the primary form of data. As gaining an understanding about the impact of the contexts of ongoing educational change on teachers’ identities was an intended outcome of the research, it was determined that the use of open-ended and in-depth interviews was the most appropriate way to gain this understanding (Kvale, 1996). Literacy teaching was selected as the focus of the interviews as it has two main characteristics that fit well with this study. Firstly, literacy has been subjected to frequent and ongoing changes in how it is conceived—as educational theory and practice, and how it is perceived by the general public. This change indicates the changing nature of its social value. Secondly, the teaching of literacy encompasses a large amount of time in the teaching day and so is well understood and valued by early childhood teachers. Hence, information about literacy teaching was a logical introductory topic that could lead to further discussions on the impact of change on teachers.

In order to keep collection of data manageable, teachers who lived or worked within a 60-kilometre radius from the researcher’s location were sourced for interviews. No limitations or restrictions were placed upon who could be involved in this study, except that they were to be early childhood teachers who agreed to be engaged in the interview processes. As a seven schools within this area had formed a ‘literacy cluster,’ it was decided to use these as a pool from which early childhood teachers could be drawn.

The following section outlines the data collection procedures, including the identification of the sample, the ethical considerations which were applied, the interview protocols and procedures.
3.2.2 Identifying the sample

It was realised that for detail and depth of understanding to be the result only a small number of participants would be required, and therefore a small sample was sought. Patton (1990) states that if information-rich cases are sought, then purposeful sampling is an appropriate choice of sample design. The particular kind of purposeful sampling that was employed for this study was *critical case sampling* (Patton, 2002). Patton notes that critical case sampling is required if the case to be studied is ‘critical’ in the sense of making an important point. This ‘critical’ state, he indicates, can be evaluated using the statements about the phenomenon under investigation: “If it happens there it will happen anywhere” or “if that group are having problems then we can be sure all the groups are having problems” (Patton, 2002, p. 236). The critical case sample in this study was a group of eight early childhood teachers who were prepared to talk about their understandings of literacy curriculum, their personal and professional identities and any intersection of these issues.

The Principals of the seven schools involved in the local ‘literacy cluster’ were contacted by phone to inform them about the research project and to request their assistance with and permission for the data collection process. The Principals and/or acting Principals granted permission and agreed to assist the process by disseminating handouts and information to their early childhood teachers. The first of these handouts was an information sheet explaining the details of the research including the participants’ anticipated role. The second handout was an explanatory letter about the researcher and the reasons for the research. The third was a flyer with the details about the planned initial focus group interview meeting (see CDROM Appendix 2, Participant information letter and consent form).

The process of collecting data occurred during the third and final term of the school year in 2001 (November and December). The researcher was aware that, as this was a busy time of the year when teachers were inclined to be tired, asking for teachers’ involvement in a study that required both their time and energy might have produced a poor response. It was originally intended to hold a focus group interview at the outset of the data collection process, with all the participants coming together for an
initial meeting. However, the response rate for that initial request, despite there being some eighty-five ‘invitations’ sent out to teachers, produced only two responding participants, one of whom was unavailable at the designated meeting time. In order to extend the sample of participants further, the Principals and other personal contacts that the researcher had in schools in the local area were contacted in the hope of eliciting a greater number of participants. One Principal, with whom I had previously worked, agreed to give five minutes of staff meeting time for me, as researcher, to attend the meeting and request early childhood teachers’ involvement in this study. These requests had elicited a total of seven participants who volunteered their time to be involved in this study. The eighth participant resulted from a referral from one of the first interviewees.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

Formal ethical approval for the research was sought and granted by the University of Tasmania’s ethics committee and the Tasmanian state Department of Education (DoE) (see CDROM Appendix 1, Ethical approval forms). Protocols were respected in the data collection process and in contacting the Principals of the respective schools, whose verbal consent was sought as a matter of courtesy, before information was sent to any potential participants.

The participants themselves were assured throughout the process of collection and reporting of data that they would remain anonymous in the study and that neither they nor their schools would be identifiable. Any potential fears by the participants that they could be identified in any way in the writing of the thesis were allayed. Pseudonyms were to be used if the participant preferred, with some of the participants selecting their own pseudonym, and no identifying information was included in the reports of the study.

3.2.4 The interviews

Data were collected in the form of interviews with eight early childhood teachers. Each of the eight teachers participated in two interview sessions, about three basic issues. The interview pro forma (see CDROM Appendix 3, Interview schedule pro forma) was designed to allow the participants the opportunity to talk about the issues
that were important to them. Participants had been notified through the information and consent forms (see CDROM Appendix 2, Participant information letter and consent forms) that the study was about the personal and professional identities of early childhood teachers and changes in recent literacy curriculum. Three fundamental issues were discussed with the participants over the course of the two interviews. These were the teachers’ understandings concerning:

- their literacy practices, literacy policy and changes affect programs, practices and policies
- personal and professional identity—who they were as teachers and as people, and lastly
- whether they considered there had been repercussions from the changes in literacy curriculum on their personal and professional identities.

Information was sought about literacy curriculum—what these teachers used and liked in terms of the documents and programs which were and are currently available in schools and early childhood classrooms. Information about the teachers’ literacy practices and the kinds of activities and philosophy that supported their literacy programs was sought. Secondly, was the issue of their personal and professional identity. This was referred to as “personal and professional identities,” but, as the researcher, I did not define what I meant by these terms, rather encouraging the teachers to bring to the discussion their own understandings about the terms. The final question was about whether they thought there was any link, influence or effects of the literacy curriculum on their personal and professional identities.

Acknowledging that schools and teachers had been subject to a range of ever-changing government literacy policies, documents and program that could influence and affect their literacy teaching, I wanted to know whether this may have had a bearing on how they saw themselves as teachers and people and therefore what the relationship might be between change and their individual identity.

The data were collected over a two-month period prior to end-of-the-year break in 2001. Two interviews were conducted with each participant and the date, time and place for each interview were negotiated with the individual participant with a view to minimising the inconvenience to their already busy lives. Hence, interviews were
conducted in a variety of sites, ranging from the University (where the researcher was working at the time), to the participants’ schools, the researcher’s house or the home of the participant. Interviews were conducted after school or during the evening as these were the most convenient times for the participants. Where possible, the researcher tried to avoid encroaching upon teachers’ weekend time. The interviews varied in duration from approximately 40 minutes to 90 minutes. Table 6 provides information about the interview details.

Table 6 Interview details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length of interview (minutes)</th>
<th>Time of day</th>
<th>Place of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jodi</td>
<td>22/11/2001</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jodi</td>
<td>18/12/2001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>29/11/2001</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>13/12/2001</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne</td>
<td>23/10/2001</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne</td>
<td>30/11/2001</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemarea</td>
<td>30/10/2001</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemarea</td>
<td>13/11/2001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgie</td>
<td>22/11/2001</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgie</td>
<td>13/12/2001</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>after school</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>29/11/2001</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>evening</td>
<td>her home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13/12/2001</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>evening</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>weekend</td>
<td>my home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6/12/2001</td>
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<td>evening</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30/10/2001</td>
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<td>weekend</td>
<td>my home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>10/12/2001</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>weekend</td>
<td>my home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.5 Interview process

At the beginning of each participant’s first interview the information from the handouts was summarised to ensure that they understood the processes of data collection, and their rights and roles within this process. Consent forms were signed and contact details provided. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were reiterated, providing assurance to participants that neither their school nor they themselves would be identifiable in the research. I then outlined for the participant the issues to be discussed and restated my research question as it stood then: ‘How are the personal and professional identities of Tasmanian early childhood teachers affected by recent literacy curriculum changes?’
By utilising the interview *pro forma*, the content of each of the interviews remained loosely structured around the idea of firstly discussing literacy, the participants’ practices and curriculum, what the teachers knew about, liked and disliked about literacy curriculum. Secondly, the *pro forma* led the interviewee to a discussion about themselves as teachers, and about their personal and professional identities. The final aspect of the interviews, allowed the participant to discuss whether there was any impact from the literacy curriculum and its changes on their personal and professional identities and if so, what was the nature of that effect. The interviews varied considerably in both structure and content as participants were not discouraged from talking about issues that were relevant to them, even though these may not have been directly related to the stated topic. In this sense the interviews in this research could be considered to be more of a conversation than a formal interview (Kvale, 1996).

### 3.2.6 Interview follow-ups

Following each of the initial interviews, a written summary of about two pages was mailed to the participant (see CDROM Appendix 5 for a sample of these summaries). The summaries were a synopsis of the main points discussed during the interview. This document also contained some dot-points to clarify information and to foreshadow the content of the second interview. Once these summaries had been written and mailed to the participants, phone contact was made to establish the date, time and place of the second interview. After each of the second interviews, a similar summary was written and mailed to the participants. The teachers were contacted towards the end of school holidays (January or February, 2002) to verify that the summary was an accurate representation of the interview, to make any changes that might be necessary to that summary, and to qualify any subsequent issues that might have arisen as a result of ongoing data analysis. Transcriptions of each of the interviews were made during and following the process of data gathering.

### 3.2.7 Participants

The eight early childhood teachers were all females. They ranged widely in age and experience, from a teacher with four years teaching experience to one who had been teaching since 1959 and intended to retire at the end of 2002. The teacher training
background also varied widely, ranging from a four-year Bachelor of Education to a one-year teaching certificate, with at least one participant indicating that she had trained specifically for Kindergarten teaching. The places of training also varied—from the local University, to local Teachers’ Colleges and interstate institutions. At least one of the participants had been recently engaged in formally upgrading her qualifications. Three of the eight participants were teaching Kindergarten at the time of the interviews, and three were in the process of negotiating transfers to new schools for the following year.

The following section introduces the eight teachers. It provides background information that begins the process of gaining an understanding about these teachers’ work situations and identities, and briefly summarises their experiences and attitudes. These summaries include some initial observations and details that assist the reader in understanding both the participants and the researcher.

**Jodi**

Jodi is an early childhood teacher who is probably in her late 40s to early 50s. She is teaching Kindergarten and said that she is keen to see children get a sound and positive start to their school experiences through her program. She offered her help with this research project because she said she enjoys and is interested in children’s literature. Jodi spoke openly about her teaching practice, her concerns about and issues with literacy and education in general. She was happy to give her opinions and understandings about her personal and professional identity. She was very guarded, however, about giving any personal information or insights into her private life. For example, I only discovered that she did not have any children of her own because I directly asked the question.

**Sally**

Sally is a mother of two boys and was a mother when she started teaching as a ‘mature-age student’. Her passion for teaching and children was evident throughout both interviews and her opinions were honest and forthright. She had been at her current school for seven years and had been teaching Kindergarten for five years at an ‘off-campus’ site. She was transferring to a new school in the following year and was looking forward to the changes that this will bring. For some time during the year she had also been in an acting AST2, (Senior) position. She indicated that her
current school was not one that got actively involved in the innovative and new programs that were evident in some other schools. Sally’s eldest son had experienced some learning difficulties, particularly in the literacy area, and as a result this had influenced the way that Sally sees and teaches children. She also had a special affinity with boys because of her own experiences as a mother of boys.

**Suzanne**

Suzanne is intending to retire at the end of 2002. She is a mother and grandmother. She has been teaching since 1959 and indicated, “you realise that you’re talking to a rebel,” and that she “still hasn’t learned the art of shutting up.” Five years previously, Suzanne and I had shared the teaching of a class and so know each other at this educational level. We had also taught on the same staff some 20 years previously. Suzanne is employed as a Flying Start teacher at her current school and as such did not have a regular class of children of her own. She does, however spend blocks of time teaching literacy skills to groups of children in three of the early childhood classes. As a result, her understandings about literacy are both broad, from her years of teaching experience, and narrow, in that she is currently just concentrating on literacy.

**Rosemaree**

Rosemaree is in her early 50s and is looking ahead to her retirement. She is teaching Kindergarten and has done so for all of her teaching life. I was impressed by Rosemaree’s articulate and logical delivery of the information she gave me in the interviews. She had obviously thought through the issues and was insightfully reflective about her personal teaching-life journey. She gave me a very strong and explicit understanding of who she was as a teacher and as a person, her teaching philosophy, and how all this eventuated. I came away convinced that she was a genuinely caring and dedicated teacher whose concerns extended from children and parents out to the general community. It was evident to me that she was in teaching to make a difference to society, starting with the children with whom she works. Rosemaree indicated some personal information and used her husband, a farmer, as an example in our conversation. She did not give me any indication of whether she had any children of her own, but talked about the influence that her father had on her as a role model for advocacy for others.
Georgie

Georgie is a young teacher. She has been teaching for four years and this is the second school in which she has taught. She is currently teaching Grade 1 but has also taught Prep and Grade 2. She is enthusiastic about her teaching but also practical about the realities. She gave me insights into her personal life without going into much detail. I assumed that she was not married nor had children of her own, but she talked about her four-year old nephew and having him over to stay. Georgie came prepared to the interview with notes she had made about the issues she might want to discuss. She was also very articulate about the issue of her personal teaching philosophy and how she saw herself as a teacher. She acknowledged that with only four years teaching experience she had not been able to establish such a deep teaching knowledge—especially in regard to the changes in literacy curriculum—as had some of the other participants.

Pat

Pat is currently teaching a combined Grade 2/Three and had started her teaching career in 1970. She had time off from teaching to have her own children and resumed working after that time. She was, at the time of the interviews, awaiting the outcome of an application for a transfer to a new school. There was a high level of anxiety about this, particularly because there were other teachers who had received their transfers and Pat had not. She had taken this to mean that no one wanted her—for various reasons—and was understandably shaken by the delays and difficulties. Pat appeared to be a very dedicated and capable teacher but seemed somewhat unsure of herself when answering some of my queries. She was gentle and softly spoken with what I assumed would appear in her classroom practice as a positive and caring demeanour. Her responses were at times brief and I found it challenging to get her to talk more deeply about some of the issues. With some of the other participants I had difficulty in limiting the conversations to a reasonable duration. I did not consider this to signify that she had not thought about the matters, just that the discussion of them was perhaps so deeply internalised so it was therefore more difficult to get her thoughts to the surface-level for articulation. She was obviously very tired and somewhat anxious at the times of the interviews—November and December, the end of the school year, and the time when transfers are usually announced.
Barbara

Barbara is a teacher in her late 40s who began teaching in the 1970s. She had time off from teaching to have her children and is now divorced. I have worked on the same staff at a previous school with Barbara and have known her as a teaching colleague for about 10 years. Barbara was very concerned that she not be identifiable from the reading of the thesis and was aware that we live in a small educational community where everybody knows somebody. She did not want her comments to be misconstrued or to reflect badly on her, her career or her teaching practice, particularly as she had expressed some negative concerns and hesitations about the Spalding literacy program. Her dedication to teaching was evident and she did her best to accommodate the students and the changes in teaching. She spoke at length about the introduction at her school of the Spalding method of literacy. The previous year she had completed studies that gave her a Bachelor of Education degree. Her original teaching qualification was a two-year teaching Diploma.

Katrina

Katrina is in her 40s and has three children. She had started teaching in 1980. Katrina and I have taught on the same staff at two schools in our careers. She spoke at length about the problems that she was experiencing with the management and leadership styles of her Principal and the senior staff at her current school. Her criticisms were quite guarded, in the sense of not wanting to be overtly critical, and she frequently incorporated comments such as the following to back up her statements: “… and I know others feel the same way.” Her comments, though, indicated a deep level of concern and frustration with the current situation. Her response to that situation was to apply for a transfer and hope that a new school would help to shake off her frustrations and the disillusionment she was experiencing. The other thing that interested me about the conversations with Katrina was the way in which she seemed to avoid speaking with her own sense of personal authority. While she did give opinions that were personal and specific to the way that she felt she also frequently talked about “other people,” and “some of the other teachers” and used “we” a lot to support comments that she made that were more generic opinions.
3.3 Data analysis methods

The data were analysed at three levels, or dimensions, with the intention of building upon the understandings that were gained at each of the levels, and thus arriving at a deeper appreciation of the issues and concerns that arose throughout the whole process of analysis. This intense interrogation of the data provided a fine-grained understanding of the ways in which teachers are affected by the ongoing changes in their work lives.

The first level of analysis consisted of preliminary analysis of each of the eight participant teacher’s interviews. Interview transcriptions were completed from the audio-tapes, with assistance from a person with extensive transcription experience. Each of the participants’ experiences was considered individually, and then collectively, noting the content of the interviews and looking for commonality and distinctiveness. Conflicts and contradictions, turns of phrase, and specific comments were noted for further analysis. Written summaries, which are included in the Results chapter, were composed through the processes of analysis during repeated replaying of the interview audio-tapes, reviewing the content of the transcripts. These reports were written as expansions of the initial summaries that were provided for the participants. At this level, data were analysed while maintaining each of the eight teachers as separate entities, but I was aware that there were similarities and differences between and across the data sets. This first level of analysis serves several purposes. Initially it provided a broad analysis of the content of the interviews, identifying the issues and concerns that arose during the course of the conversations. Secondly, as these have been included in the thesis, it provides the reader with a synoptic summary of the content of the interviews with supporting information that individualises the participants and gives an appreciation of the contexts of their working lives. This first level or reading of the data provided an initial interpretation of the data that could then be built upon in the successive two levels.

The second level of data analysis was a thematic analysis of the whole data set. This followed the broad procedures laid out in Strauss and Corbin’s work (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, 1999). In this process, the interview
transcripts were interrogated using increasingly finely-tuned analysis, looking for themes and categories—noting the particular and the individual. From this extensive process, three broad themes were identified—those of change, power and identity. As the identity of teachers was a presumed construct in the initial conceptualisation of the research, evidences of its existence, what its role might be in the lives of the participants, and whether there was any discernable impact of change on the identities of the teachers was sought from the data. During the process of analysis at this level it became evident that the teachers’ relationships with colleagues, leaders and the education department itself were in some ways related to issues of power. This then provided the three themes of change, power and teachers’ identity. The data were further analysed with these three themes as the focus to provide categories and sub-categories that continued to illuminate the data, highlighting the ways in which these teachers were affected by the degree of continuing educational change in their work lives.

The third layer or level of data analysis provided a greater challenge for the researcher. A framework or tool was sought which would provide a way into the data, further showcasing information and understandings about the topic under analysis—what happens to teachers and their identity in contexts of ongoing educational change. Gee’s (2000) work provided a range of perspectives for viewing identity which he links with discourses. Analysis was begun to determine whether using Gee’s “four ways to formulate questions about how identity is functioning for a specific person in a given context or across a set of contexts” (Gee, 2000, p. 101) would provide further enlightenment from the data. The search for additional layers of meaning and complexity continued with a return to the notion of extending and revisiting the thematic analysis. Strauss and Corbin were re-examined with a view to a more rigorous and detailed scrutiny of the themes. However, as this was thematically focussed rather than directed to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study, this too provided little if any insightful understanding of the intersection of identity and change.

A third major analysis was then completed using a combination of broad discourse analysis techniques in conjunction with Gee’s (1999) framework of questions (expanded upon in the above section, 3.1.7 Gee’s framework for analysis).
Extensive literature research about a range of discourse and critical discourse analysis techniques had been undertaken during the extensive search for another method of analysis. A broad-brush combination of elements of discourse analysis provided a rigorous and method for examining the data with the focus on obtaining greater appreciation and understanding about what happens for teachers and their identities in contexts of ongoing educational change. My main concern about utilising a strict discourse analysis method was its inherent focus on language as the primary unit of data (Gee, 1999) therefore, analysing the language rather than using the language as a mechanism for obtaining meaning from the (language) data produced concerns for me. However, it was easy to see the benefits in using some of the focuses and techniques that discourse analysts employ. These techniques were derived from a review of the literature from Wetherall, Stephanie Taylor, and Yates (2001), Van Dijk (1985a; 1985b; 1985c), Silverman (1993; 2000), Potter and Wetherall (1987) and Lemke (2003); critical discourse analysis from Wodak and Meyer (2001), Fairclough (1992) and Luke (1995-1996) and Yule’s work on pragmatics (1996). This body of literature resulted in an eclectic awareness of the strategies, mechanisms and tools that are employed in discourse analysis.

It was intended that this body of tools for analysing the text/talk of the participant teachers would assist in deepening the understandings about what happened with, for and to teachers in contexts of ongoing educational change. This deeper awareness and appreciation was to enable the researcher to investigate the teachers’ positions (power and social relationships), opinions (values and beliefs) and understandings (knowledge and experience) as they discussed issues that were of concern to them (Fairclough, 1992, p. 238). This was achieved through a fine-grained exploration of the teacher’s talk using a combination of the 18 questions framed by Gee (1999) and a range of discourse analytic strategies. As can be noted throughout the reporting at the third level of analysis in the results chapter, this analysis included such elements as exploration of:

- fragmented and contradictory details, conflicts, differences and agreement within an individual’s discourse (Potter & Wetherall, 1987, p. 168)
- the participants’ self and other positioning—their stance on the various issues they discussed—including the use of pronouns to position themselves with or against issues or people
• the fine-grained implications, presumptions and assumptions, inferences and subtle assertions which become evident through detailed textual discourse analysis
• their stated and implied beliefs, values and value systems which are operating in and through the discourse
• the interactions between knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings—their understandings—and the ways this relates to their position
• the issues of power which position them with or against, accepting, compliant, passive or otherwise in situations of tension, apprehension or conflict, and
• Lemke’s (2003) three interdependent kinds of social and cultural meanings:
  • *Presentational meaning*—the stated activities, processes and relationships which are contextually oriented and presented to the listener/reader;
  • *Orientalational meaning*—including speech acts such as joking or insulting, evaluative, attitudinal or affective stances and
  • *Organisational meaning*—the functional aspect of language which includes a range of structures including use and choice of metaphor, genres, synonyms and contrasts, logical relationships and use of phrases, starts and stops etc. (Lemke, 2003)

In his discussion about the factors which ought to influence a researcher’s justification of their choice of possible analytical techniques, Fairclough states that consideration be given to “the extent to which analysis sheds light upon other data and provides a basis (even a model) for other analyses” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 238). This was a consideration in the selection of this range of discourse analytic tools. Potter and Wetherall (1987) claim that it is through the justification of the processes of analysis that validation can be achieved using four analytic techniques:
• Coherence—the analysis allows for coherence within the body of the discourse
• Participants’ orientations—the analysis remains true to the participant’s orientation to the phenomenon under investigation
• New problems—the analysis, as well as solving problems, also facilitates the
creation of new problems which invite further investigation

- Fruitfulness— the analytic scheme makes sense of new kinds of discourses and moves towards generating new accounts or understandings about the events (1987, pp. 169-171)

### 3.4 How this thesis is methodologically distinctive

While this thesis draws upon familiar and established research traditions and perspectives, this study is distinctive in the following ways.

1. It is research by a teacher about teachers. In this sense the researcher is able to bring to the research two bodies of understanding: that gleaned from the data gathered, and that derived from first-hand experience and its associated understandings of classroom-based early childhood teaching. This knowledge is further deepened by extensive reading of the literature on the topics.

2. Teachers in this study are respected as individuals, highlighting their individuality, rather than as some studies where teachers are aggregated, seeking commonality for research purposes (S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson, 1985) and, as Goodson comments, we need more research “that is concerned to listen to what the teacher says” (Goodson, 1997, p. 146). It respects the teacher’s individuality.

3. Likewise, the voices of teachers can be heard in these data as they discuss their concerns about change issues and the impact on their identities. As mentioned earlier, Goodson calls for educational research that “assure[s] that the teachers’ voice is heard, heard loudly, heard articulately” (Goodson, 1991a, p. 36).

4. Goodson also comments about the tendency to discount or “junk” data that “do not serve the researcher’s interests and foci” (Goodson, 1997, p. 146). This research sets out to not only respect the person of the teacher, but to accommodate data that did not necessarily ‘fit’ with the initial research design.

5. The views of the teachers in this research cover changes that have occurred at both the macro and micro levels of education, allowing teachers to air their views and voice their concerns about any educational change issues that they
deemed relevant. Thus, its strength is the range of issues about change that have been discussed.

6. The multiple levels of data analysis add strength to the thesis using Denzin and Lincoln’s (1998a) notion of *bricoleur*. This is expanded upon below.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998a), in their discussion about the qualities of qualitative research, expand upon the notion of the researcher as *bricoleur* and the research as *bricolage*. With these intertwined notions comes the idea of strength in a range of approaches and methods. Utilising “whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials are at hand” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p. 3), *bricoleur* researchers attempt to arrive at an “in-depth understanding of the phenomenon” (p. 3), assign “rigor, breadth and depth to any investigation” (p. 4). This produces the *bricolage*—“a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis” (p. 4). This notion of *bricolage* gives strength to the research in that it provides the researcher with multiple methods through which to gain “a better fix on the subject matter at hand” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p. 3). This research has utilised multiple methods in an attempt to gain a fine-grained understanding of the deeper impacts of change on teachers.

In accommodating the individuality of the eight participant teachers, this research has sought to bring together eight views or perspectives that give multiple visions of the issues of the impacts of change on teacher identity. Eisner (1991) discusses the virtues of multiple perspectives and the changing nature of interpretation, opinion and data, and says:

> Taking various perspectives is a way of examining situations from different angles. It is not so much a matter of ultimately achieving a coherent integration among many perspectives, as one of being intellectually versatile or theoretically eclectic (Schwab, 1969). It is a matter of being able to handle several ways of seeing as a series of differing views rather than reducing all views to a single correct one (p. 49).

This researcher has chosen a complex arrangement of methodologies in order to add depth to the research.

### 3.4 Limitation of this methodology

A critical case study approach had been utilised to examine the effects of educational
change on teachers. It has employed an eclectic blend of methods and a range of tools for examining the issues that have arisen from analysis of the data.

In selecting qualitative methods as the basis for the research design, the researcher acknowledges that the results of the study can not be broadly generalised. The claims and findings cannot be espoused as universal truths, applicable across all educational settings. However, as the study did not set out to establish this kind of finding, but sought deeper understanding about the issues of teacher identity in contexts of ongoing educational change, this did not represent a serious impediment for the researcher. As Burns states: “The qualitative researcher attempts to gather evidence that will reveal the qualities of life, reflecting the ‘multiple realities’ of specific educational setting from participants’ perspectives” (Burns, 1996 p. 291).

The small number of teachers who participated in the study could be viewed, in a strictly qualitative study, as a hindrance to its external validity or generalisability. However, as the study is qualitative, it relies on depth of analysis to develop understanding, providing three levels of analysis of the data. The internal validity of the study is determined by the ways in which the findings match the reality of the contexts it portrays (Merriam, 1998). Once again, as this study did not seek broadly generalisable results, the small number of participants is congruent with its intended outcome. The depth of analysis has been provided through the three levels of analysis and the understandings which have been arrived at are attributed to these teachers and their individual contexts, not to broadly generalisable claims. In this study, resonance for individual readers is encouraged, as there may be elements from this study which can be attributed to other contexts and research scenarios.

**Summary of the methodology**

This chapter has outlined the distinctive methodology and methods selected for the study. It has included details about the data interview procedures and collection methods, and referring to the ethical protocols. A brief summary of each of the eight participant teachers has been included. The analytical methods and the techniques that have been used at the three levels of data analysis have been explained, including justification of the methodological choices. The ways in which this
research is methodologically significant are then outlined. The final section of this chapter has expanded upon the limitations of the study’s methodological design. The next chapter contains the report of the results of the analysis, leading to a discussion about these results.
Chapter 4: Results

The facts never speak for themselves. What they say depends on the questions we ask. (Eisner, 1992, p. 14)

Overview of chapter

This chapter reports the results of analysing the data. As the data were analysed at three levels or readings they are set out in those three levels.

The first level is the description of the eight individual teachers’ conversations. It outlines the contexts of the interviews, the issues and concerns that were discussed and applies some initial interpretation to the data. This gives a storied representation of the content of the data sets as well as introducing the participant teachers to the reader. The researcher is present and acknowledged as present with the use of the first person in the reporting.

The second level of data analysis, the thematic analysis, outlines the three themes of change, power and identity which emerged as the thematic analysis continued. Categories and subcategories, based on the analysis of the data, are listed and expanded upon.
The third level of analysis of the data is a more finely-grained analysis using discourse analysis in tandem with the 18 questions posed in Gee’s framework for analysis (1999) that are outlined in the Methodology chapter on page 121. The aim of this third level of analysis was to seek further understandings from the data about the issues of change, power and identity, with a view to understanding the impact of ongoing educational change on the teachers and their identities.

Sections of the transcripts are included throughout the second and third levels of analysis. This has been done to maintain the ‘voice’ of the teachers, asserting that their individual identities are reflected in their own language. As discourse analysis has been an analytic method, it was deemed prudent to remain ‘close’ to the data through the use of the participants’ own words. Where this has occurred they are referenced to the participant by name, by transcript/interview 1 or 2, and the page of that transcript; for example, (Sally T2, p. 13) means that the quote can be found on page 13 of Sally’s second transcribed interview.

4.1 The first level of data analysis

The following section is the report of the first of three levels of data analysis. It gives an overview or description of the interviews, the content of the conversations and thus a ‘picture’ of the eight participants.

4.1.1 The eight teachers

The following section summarises the eight participating teachers’ conversations in the following order: Rosemaree, Georgie, Jodi, Pat, Barbara, Katrina, Sally and Suzanne. This builds on the information provided in the previous chapter.

Rosemaree

Rosemaree became involved in my study through the recommendation of an academic colleague who was aware that I was looking for early childhood teachers to talk with about personal and professional identity and literacy curriculum. She had known Rosemaree through her contacts in schools and had mentioned to Rosemaree
the possibility of involvement and received a positive response. I phoned Rosemaree at school and talked to her about the study and what I was hoping to do. She said she was interested and that she would assist. I made a time to meet with her at her school and mailed out the details and ethical consent forms.

I arrived at her school with all the gear necessary for the interview—tapes, batteries, recorder, pad and paper and consent forms and so on. It was about 3.20 pm and the children had gone home. It was the end of November and close to the end of the school year. I found my way from the car park to the Kinder block which was at the far end of the school. It was a building typical of those built for Tasmanian government schools in the late 1970s and early 1980s—‘open plan’ design with a large teaching area and teacher’s office, a generous store area, a large ‘wet area’ of non-carpeted space for messy children’s activities.

Rosemaree was obviously prepared as she said she had some things that she needed to tell me first. This comprised a summary of her teaching history as an explanation of who she is as a person and as a teacher. She spoke with passion and conviction that left me convinced that she genuinely cared about the children and families with whom she worked. The conversation flowed easily and she appeared comfortable about revealing herself to me. Rosemaree had apparently thought the conversation through ahead of time, as there was a logical sequence to what she wanted to share with me, setting the scene for any questions I may have for her. Her articulate delivery and the depth of understanding, about herself and the families and children with whom she worked, impressed me.

Rosemaree had done her teacher training “thirty years ago” (T1, p. 1) at the Kindergarten Teachers’ College in Melbourne (some 200 kms across Bass Strait from Launceston) and had been “lucky enough” (T1, p. 1) to be teaching Kindergarten all her teaching life. Launceston, like most cities, has its better and its tougher suburbs and it was to one of the ‘tough’ schools that Rosemaree was first appointed. She found it a great shock but also a challenge and this had helped to

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14 ‘Kinder’ is the familiar and abbreviated term for Kindergarten and is used throughout this study report.
shape her teaching philosophy. She ended up spending most of her teaching-life working with families and children in the needy side of town. These, she indicated, were “very humbling years” (T2, p. 7), that shaped her teaching philosophy and ideology. They caused her to question the reasons for education and how she could best meet the needs of the children in her care. Interestingly Rosemaree didn’t refer to ‘students’, but only to ‘children’ or to ‘kids’. Perhaps this indicated a closer and more informal relationship with her ‘children’ than the more distant or formal reference of ‘student’.

The teaching that she did was strongly child-centred in its focus, working from where the children are at to where she considered they needed to be. Self esteem, social skills and teaching children about thinking and life skills were essential elements of her program. Literacy curriculum and teaching a more formalised curriculum had taken second place to these social and cognitive skills and values. She indicated that she checked the content of what she teaches against the relevant teaching documents, but that she was “not someone who delves into a lot of frameworks and reviews and things” (T1, p. 3) and that she did not use any of them on a regular basis. The Pathways document she felt was “wonderful” and handy. She told me that she saw structured curricula as a framework that was necessary because of the accountability that teachers have, but that as “one gets older and braver” then the framework “can get a bit thin and has holes in it and you dive out and try something else. But if there’s not something there to lean up against then I think we sort of collapse” (T1, p. 7). Some young teachers, she thought, might need the structure of the curriculum documents; they were a guide which was important, but, “we need a vision too, as well” (T1, p. 7).

Then a couple of years ago Rosemaree was transferred to her current school—on the ‘better’ side of town—and she had to come to terms with the new culture and realise “that the expectations were really quite different” (T1, p. 1).

In order to make some organisational sense from my conversations with Rosemaree I have ordered the content of what was discussed into four main areas:

- literacy and policy
- teachers and teacher advocacy
families, parents and children
• her sense of self and identity

Not all of the issues and concerns that Rosemaree raised could be placed neatly into one of these categories and many of them are interrelated, crossing the boundaries of these categories.

**Literacy Practice and Policy**
Rosemaree’s conceptualisation of literacy was broad for her literacy encompassed all language skills and attitudes in speaking, reading, writing and listening. She acknowledged that, at Kinder level, her children are just becoming aware of all of these skills. These Tasmanian children start Kinder if they are four years old on January 1st.

Rosemaree expressed frustration and anger that much of the curriculum and literacy documentation started at the levels of five- and six-year-olds and seems to ignore the importance of the Kinder age group. She also indicated to me the battle that she had engaged in with her current Principal about what she had considered to be an inappropriate document with which to report to parents. In her opinion it was inappropriate because “there was very little that I can tick on that page and I found that quite demoralising for parents” (T1, p. 2). She had reviewed and revised it, coming up with her own version to use in interviews with the parents and she kindly shared a copy of this new document with me. She was pleased with the final product and felt that it was far more appropriate and supportive of the work that she did and the progress that children achieve during their Kinder year. With this, she was better able to report to the parents about their child’s progress and needs. On asking the Principal about it, it was sanctioned as acceptable but she was not permitted to “put the school name at the top” (T1, p. 2), as it was not an official school document. For Rosemaree this process “was scary” and frustrating and “on a personal basis that’s what hurt—because I didn’t get the recognition for it” (T2, p. 5).

In discussing the use of policies and documents she indicated that she liked the latest of these, the new Essential Learnings (ELs), because it mirrored her beliefs about the importance of social skills, reflected the value of emotional development and might help to “create worthwhile citizens” (T2, p.1). Across all the documents she
indicated she thought the “values and principles don’t change but methods [of delivery] and resources do” (T2, p. 3). She was also concerned when she learned that some Prep teachers were being asked to do two hours of literacy teaching each day (T1, p. 6). She thought this was not an appropriate teaching practice for Prep level.

**Teachers and Teacher Advocacy**

Rosemaree’s passion for supporting teachers was made explicit. Her disquiet about the two hours of literacy for Prep children was a concern for both the students and the teachers. There were other issues that were being canvassed about which she was uneasy. She saw teachers as “an instrument of our society” (T1, p. 8), replicating the prevailing philosophies and ideologies.

Her involvement in the Kindergarten Teachers Association (KTA) and Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania (ECET) groups was a way for her to both give and gain support. She said she would like to see the professional bodies with whom she worked “far more as advocates for the practitioner in the classroom” (T1, p. 9). Teachers, she thought, could be confused about much of what was happening in education in the state. She hoped that teachers would “have faith in themselves” (T1, p. 7) and at a system level she thought that teachers provided “a pool of most amazing experience, let’s tap into it” (T1, p. 6).

**Families and Parents**

Rosemaree’s experiences with working closely with families to support their struggles to do their best in raising their children had developed with time. She considered that parents often doubted what they were doing as parents, were sometimes confused and often unprepared for the task of parenting and she was working actively to “build stronger parents” (T1, pp. 4–5). Encouraging involvement in schooling, providing support and role modelling were ways that she could help to empower the parents with whom she worked. Working in this way was something that she could do to make things better for others—“But in my situation, in my small patch, in whatever small urban Kindergarten it is—it might be something small—you hope that there would be a small chance to make a difference” (T1, p. 9).
Her attendance at a recent conference in Melbourne, which had focussed on Reggio Emilio education\(^{15}\), had both reaffirmed and empowered her philosophy about children and education. Rosemaree had a nurturing attitude to the children in her class. She mentioned them as “Beautiful souls running round on two legs” (T1, p. 6) and questioned, “why are we pushing those children?” (T1, p. 8). Children, she thought, were better off if they were free to choose what they should learn and teachers, “should be developing their [the students’] sense of curiosity and love of learning” (T1, p. 6).

She also saw clearly that Kindergarten age children were the citizens of the future and she took seriously the responsibility of developing good citizens—“How do we educate these people [her students] to feel fulfilled if they don’t work?” (T2, p. 2). The idea behind her teaching was summed up well in her comment that “we need to be creating an environment of strength in their emotional strength that they will be able to handle the barbs that come” (T2, p. 2).

**Sense of Self and Identity**

A few more of Rosemaree’s comments might give a clearer image of her identity. She said, “as one get older and braver…” (T1, p. 7) and that she was “crusty and old” (T2, p. 4); that she was “lucky to have freedom in the Kindergarten” (T1, p. 6); and that she “doesn’t delve a lot into frameworks and reviews [official documents] and things” (T2, p. 4) and that she uses a child based education approach (T2, p. 5).

She also indicated that “systems really bug me” (T2, p. 5) and that she needed to “manage the system” (T2, p. 6) and to acknowledge that there are things that can’t be changed. For teachers she felt that there has been a loss of power (T2, p. 6).

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\(^{15}\) Reggio Emilio is a unique way of looking at the way children learn. It challenges our understanding of ‘potential’ and how ‘potential’ is recognised and interpreted. Reggio Emilio looks at the environment and the community and the child’s point of view as the foundation for learning. Much of the understandings and discoveries developed by children are gained through their fresh, uninhibited creativity via mediums of visual and performing arts.

Rosemaree talked about the need for recognition of what teachers were doing and said that, at times, she had to actively search for recognition and praise. When it did not happen, she needed “to seek it in other ways” (T2, p. 4). She felt “crabby” when she moved to the current school because there was no recognition of the work that she did and no presence of the senior staff in her classroom. It took her a while to adjust to the difference in leadership style. She was angry at a professional level because there was no recognition for her work in adapting the Kinder parents’ report forms (T2, p. 5). She gained a sense of worth for the work that she performed by liaising with both parents and the KTA and ECET groups.

To summarise I would say that Rosemaree presented as a passionate champion and advocate of young children, at the pre-school and Kindergarten levels. She was overt in her desire to support families in the process of raising their children and to encourage and support teachers in whatever ways were available to her. Despite her relative professional isolation she had sought ways to counter this for her own sake and for providing support of other teachers in similar circumstances. Her vision of education was child-centred and her view of the reasons for education was based on a socially reformatory model that sought to “create worthwhile citizens” (T2, p. 1). In all this, her role was one of facilitator through the processes of teaching, support and encouragement.

**Georgie, Jodi and Pat**

Georgie, Jodi and Pat were teachers at the same school and Jodi and Georgie often ‘car pooled’, travelling the 45 or so minutes to and from work in the same vehicle, sharing transport to save on the costs. They indicated that it would be convenient to be interviewed together for their initial interview. Their subsequent interview was conducted on a one-to-one basis and so was more individualised. My initial concerns with the shared interview were that they may influence each other in the content of the conversation or that perhaps one might lead the other and thus the conversation might be in some way affected. This however did not seem to be the case as they both spoke their minds quite freely, at times agreeing with one another and disagreeing at other times. On the whole, their conversation was complementary to each other and assisted well with the flow of the discussion.
The ‘shared’ interview took place at the University where I was teaching at the time as it was on their travel path. It was the end of November, at the end of the school year when we met. We had arranged to meet after school. Once we had reintroduced ourselves and completed the signing of ethical consent forms, the interview was able to progress.

First, I will share information about Georgie and then Jodi.

**Georgie**

Georgie was the youngest of the teachers who participated in the study, and she indicated to me that she had been teaching for four years. She was in her mid twenties, and seemed a keen teacher, eager to perfect her chosen career yet aware that the processes involved are complex. Her approach to the interview was professional and organised. She came prepared with a few notes of things that she wanted to mention—referring to these briefly throughout the discussion.

She presented to me as a dedicated and careful teacher. The background or personal information that Georgie shared with me was limited. She had taught in one other school before this one—teaching across the four early childhood grades. At one point in the discussion she revealed that her four-year-old nephew (T2, p. 13) “comes to stay with me a lot” and talked about the types of activities that she does when she has him to stay and the encouragement she gives to her sister to develop his learning. She did not specifically mention having a partner or children of her own, so I could not make any assumptions about those aspects of her personal life.

To share more information about Georgie, and as a convenient framework for the report, I have divided the discussion into the following sections:

- literacy practice and policy
- the stresses, pressures, concerns and issues that she mentioned and
- her sense of self and identity.
Chapter 4

Results

**Literacy Practice and Policy**

Georgie’s school had based their literacy program around the PASS and Flying Start programs. She said that she used a variety of techniques and tools in her reading and writing sessions every day. Her commitment—as was the school’s policy—was to two hours of literacy each day. The Running Records, she indicated, were for teachers’ records and could be used for reporting to parents. The school had ‘levelled’ the reading text books into developmental levels of reading difficulty. This provided a resource for teachers to guide students through sequential levels of reading materials, ensuring that the student’s reading books were appropriate for their reading ability level.

She, along with the school, use the indicators and outcomes from the KILO documents as the basis for assessment in literacy—making official records twice each year in the areas of reading and writing, the second one being used for the end-of-year reports to parents. She indicated that, although the newer TLOs had been published that year, her school had chosen to finish the year with the KILO indicators and then to familiarise themselves with and use the new TLOs for the following year.

Georgie also used a variety of teaching resources and materials. She indicated that, because of her inexperience, she was aware that she had no knowledge of literacy programs prior to those with which she was currently working and therefore she had nothing against which to compare or contrast them. This she seemed to perceive as a negative. She also was aware that there was a degree of flexibility with the delivery of the programs—particularly the PASS program—and that there was “no real pressure to carry it to the letter” (T2, p. 2). She said that she was happy with the literacy program at her school and thought that everybody was supportive of it—particularly in the early childhood area.

When discussing Professional Development (PD) Georgie said that she was looking forward to more information about the new TLOs. Georgie said that she felt cross at the expectation of doing PD in out-of-hours time because it imposed on “family time” and that for her it was sometimes, “come along to this particular thing that we want you to do and sit around and be bored for a couple of hours” (T1, p. 13).
was concerned that PD sessions were too often “talking at you,” that she felt “put upon”, that it was isolated in the sense of unrelated to classroom practice, spasmodic and that she needed to see the relevance for it to be of the most benefit to her. She talked at length about the bad timing of having PD sessions in the “after school times when all you want to do is to go home” (T1, p. 14). She thought that the PD in the PASS program though was good and was still occurring but apart from that there had not been a lot of literacy PD in the last year. She also said that there were still opportunities to go to her ‘own choice’ of PD sessions but did not elaborate on what they were or how they were offered to teachers.

Georgie also indicated her belief that teaching children to be literate and to be able to see the benefits and relevance of literacy in their lives was a challenge but that she was amazed at the process of learning to read and how some children just get it “and we don’t know why” (T2, p. 14). She also related this to her own learning experiences and the ways that learning or accepting new information could happen suddenly or slowly.

The stresses, pressures, concerns and issues.
Georgie mentioned an array of concerns that related to the teaching of literacy. Her thoughtful analysis of situations impressed me, for someone with a relatively short teaching experience. She was concerned that teachers were expected to do so much literacy and numeracy “and that it hardly leaves any time in the day for the other things” (T1, p. 10). Her concern was accentuated because literacy and numeracy teaching was required early in the school day, at the most productive teaching and learning time of the day. She said she tried to integrate other curriculum areas into this time but that it was difficult. All this seemed to create a conflict for her as she indicated that “I’d be much more easy-going, probably a little less inclined to do so much literacy and numeracy if we didn’t actually have to and there wasn’t the pressure of achieving results at the end of the year” (T1, pp. 10–11).

With regard to literacy, Georgie also expressed a concern that literacy programs may be expected to be implemented “in their purest from” and that the “sheer amount of preparation” prevented this from being a practical reality. She was also concerned at the lack of specific teaching resources available in her school for reading.
Another of Georgie’s concerns was the issue of professionalism and what was considered to be acceptable professional behaviour—especially with regard to her conversations and communications with parents. She said that she was “always very cautious about what I can actually say to parents” and that “other teachers were quite blatant in how they feel about things” (T2, p. 9).

The perceived ‘gaps’ in teacher’s personal literacy knowledge was another topic about which we talked. Georgie thought that “the nature of many teachers is that they not only felt they have gaps in their literacy knowledge but that it may cover any sort of [curriculum] area” (T2, p. 5). She also talked about the insecurity of looking as if you do not know what you are talking about—perhaps an indication of her ‘newness’ in the teaching profession. She also shared with me an anecdote about the perception that the Grade 6 teachers know more about literacy than do early childhood teachers, when she was directed to the Grade 6 teacher to get a note that was to go home ‘checked’ for grammatical and spelling errors when her concern had been with the appropriateness of the content. This she said was “an indicator to me that there is some sort of feeling amongst teachers that they are really not up to the mark” (T2, p. 5).

On the issue of the school senior staff—Principal, Assistant Principal and/or AST 2 or 3 16—Georgie thought that there was no real pressure for her that came directly from them. There was, however “the pressure of achieving results at the end of the year” and that there was “a lot of pressure and you would like to be doing other things that could be just as important but aren’t deemed as important” (T1, p. 11). She did, however, push herself and thus “put a lot of pressure on myself though because I don’t like doing home work” (T1, p. 13) and so she tries to do most of it while she is at school. When I asked her about a stress-level rating, Georgie indicated that generally it ranged from six to eight out of ten. She also said that the stress made her “feel pressured” and tense, “but not to the point where I let it bother

16 Principal, Assistant Principal and/or AST 3 or 2 were classified as ‘senior’ positions in schools, in descending order of seniority, and were usually appointed by formal application procedures. Acting positions were frequently filled from existing school staff. This situation has since been amended.
me, but I know that I’ve got lots and lots to do” (T1, p. 13). I sensed that she could control the situation, knowing that she could take work home but not wanting to because of the interference with her life outside school.

**Sense of self and identity**

I found it difficult to get a feel for Georgie’s ‘identity’. On the one hand, there was an openness about the way that she shared with me and yet there was a guardedness that was in some way professionally protective. I wondered whether it was the knowledge that although I presented myself as a teacher who happened to be working at the University, she felt just a little unsettled by my researcher status.

Georgie was very open in sharing her teaching philosophy and aims for her students. Building confidence in her students and encouraging them to build friendships was important to her as a teacher. She wanted her students to develop an interest in learning, teaching them strategies for *how* to learn, thus equipping them for life with enabling strategies. Getting students to see school as an enjoyable experience and hence being interested and motivated to learn was what she aimed for with the class. This she intended to do through managing the balance of ‘work’ and ‘free-time’ and by providing a program with a variety of activities so that students could enjoy their schooling.

Georgie’s personal traits that motivated her were that she liked to feel organised “and if I don’t feel organised I don’t feel as effective” (T2, p. 5). Towards the end of the second interview with Georgie I began to get an idea of why she has agreed to help me with the research. Her passion for ensuring that students become literate ran deep. She indicated that she placed a lot of importance on being literate.

When I asked her whether the changing nature of literacy curriculum had an effect on her, she said that she felt that she *was* affected by school. She said that she liked the challenges that it presented and that literacy affected her because as a result of it she was aware of the ways that she could apply that knowledge to help her nephew learn. The challenges she said, “make me a better person—not a better person a more fulfilled person knowing that I’m involved in these different things” (T2, p. 13). She liked to feel that she was “keeping her brain active, although not all the
time” (T2, p. 13) and that she looked for new ideas to help her with her teaching. She then went on to say that this was the reason she indicated she had volunteered to help me with the study—involving herself in different things and being challenged. She did say that “I think it [literacy curriculum] definitely does influence your life” but that the other curriculum areas do too.

On the issue of identity, she said, “I feel as though I do in some regards have a public and a private identity—because I live and work in two different places” (T2, p. 15). She went on to discuss the implications of being a publicly identified figure, as a teacher, and living and working in the one community while trying to maintain a private life versus living away from the school community.

As a summary of the conversations that I had with Georgie, it appeared that, possibly because of her limited teaching experience, she was not troubled by the same degree of cynicism about change that was evident in conversations with the other teachers. Her enthusiasm though was just as evident as those who had been teaching for far more years. Georgie was able to see that her relatively short teaching career meant that she had not yet engaged with a wide range of kinds of educational and curricula change and seemed concerned that this might be a problem for my data collection. She was reflective of her chosen career and seemed keen to do the best job that she could. There were many aspects of Georgie that I was able to link to the ‘typical’ teacher characteristics, as I understood them—she seemed sensible, responsible and dedicated. Her knowledge base was sound and it appeared she was eminently practical in her approach to her teaching practice.

**Jodi**

In reporting on my conversations with Jodi, the same format will be employed as with the discussion about Georgie:

- literacy practice and policy
- the stresses, pressures, concerns and issues that she mentioned and
- her sense of self and identity.
Literacy practice and policy

Because Jodi worked with Kindergarten children, she aimed her program at the beginning stages of literacy. Her activities were designed to help students become literate. She viewed literacy and being literate in a broad sense. She had a ‘full day’ Kinder group, where students attend for the whole school day, and a ‘half day’ group, where they attend for morning and/or afternoon sessions. The school had a policy of 40 minutes of uninterrupted literacy time in the mornings, but Kindergarten was not required to be involved in that.

Jodi also indicated that she was passionate about literacy and enjoyed seeing children learning to read. She said, “I think probably because I enjoy it I am reasonable good at it” (T2, p. 5). She also said that teaching maths was more challenging and she did have to work harder at that. On the issue of literacy policy Jodi indicated that she did not know a lot about the PASS program because she used the early parts of KILOs as the basis for her practice. This she re-worked, with adjustments to make it easier and simpler to suit the needs of the Kinder level because “you need to consider a broad spectrum of ability” (T2, p. 7) in the program.

When I asked her about her reaction to the introduction of a hypothetical new literacy policy and how she would manage that situation, she said that she would have to investigate it, and find out as much about it as possible so she could make reasonable judgements. Then, “if I was violently opposed to it I’d say so and probably pick out the best aspects that would suit children or the way I work—for the best possible results” (T2, p. 10). Another observation about this potential situation was that “you can’t go against school policy really” and that “in most cases I would be supporting the school policy” (T2, p. 6). She also observed that “if I’m comfortable with doing something then I believe that I do a better job” and that she wouldn’t do the best job if she had to implement a program that she did not like, but that she “would get around it the best way that I could” (T2, p. 11).

The stresses, pressures, concerns and issues

There was an array of topics that surfaced in our conversation that appeared to be of concern for Jodi. Parents were not always aware of what their children were capable of and helping them to adjust their expectations to accommodate children’s
development was something that motivated her.

Professional development (PD) was another issue to which Jodi referred. Having after-school sessions was “annoying,” particularly “if it’s not going to be of real benefit or of real use and just because we have to do it.” She was tired after a day’s work and it was hard to concentrate and so she said “I go in with a bad attitude” (T1, p. 13). She was “irritated” by PD sessions that were driven by the priorities of the larger neighbouring school. Child-free school days were a better option for PD but she acknowledged the difficulty of finding time to include PD in the timetable.

Jodi made comments about the pressure of not being able to get through all the planned activities and work. This pressure did not come from external forces, such as the senior staff’s expectations. Rather, for her, it was self imposed—“I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist really” (T1, p. 12). There was more pressure at certain times of the school year—for example, when Parent–Teacher Interviews were happening. She also indicated that taking work home was another pressure. She did this regularly—six or seven nights each week—to record progress, write notes, make resources, do plans etc. When asked about a rating for her general stress levels Jodi indicated that it was probably six or seven out of ten, depending on the time of year and kinds of deadlines for things like reports and parent interviews but that most of it was self-imposed stress.

On the issue of senior staff Jodi noted that it would be beneficial if they came into her room more so they could “appreciate where the children start” and understand that “they’re real little people with their own developing personalities”... “their independence and responsibility, individual little traits and sense of humour developing” (T2, p. 3) and that they are not baby-ish and immature. Jodi recalled a time in the not too distant past when she was bothered by having to regularly hand in planning that did not suit the Kinder situation. However, she negotiated with the senior staff and as a result “planning is better now because I do it for me” (T2, p. 4).

**Jodi’s sense of self and identity.**

Jodi’s teaching philosophy, reflecting what was important to her as a person and as a teacher, was focussed on the nature of the Kinder level at which she worked. She
wanted her students to try to achieve the best possible start to school life, as a sound basis for further schooling. Children in her care should have fun and learn to love school and she aimed to make learning fun. The Kinder experience should be a well-rounded one and it was important for her that the children were happy and that they did well. Children should develop at their own rate as individuals and achieve success. Social and personal skills were important and she wanted children to learn that others also have a right to learn. She had a holistic view of children’s development. Both her students and their parents should develop confidence in her teaching abilities and she aimed to work as a team with the parents. Jodi also pointed out that she enjoyed seeing how her children have developed in their confidence and security and that, by the end of the year, parents were confident of her ability as a teacher.

Jodi said that how she defined herself seems to depend on how I’m feeling at the time and I don’t know what drives this but sometimes I’m really confident about what I do and sometimes I think yes that was really great and it’s all working very well and everything’s been going really well and I’m a good teacher, and other times I am not as confident about things and I feel ‘oh god I didn’t do very well with that’ or something or rather. But basically I think I do a pretty reasonable job as a teacher. But I don’t know why sometimes I don’t feel confident about things (T2, p. 1).

She also said that she did not like ―not being well planned and well organised and well prepared because then I think I don’t feel very confident about what I’m doing‖ (T2, p. 1). For Jodi this lack of organisation meant that there was a chance that “things can go wrong” (T2, p. 1) and that “little things can throw me sometimes” (T2, p. 1). She went on to give an example of how a parent’s concerns “really hit at me” and that “that sort of thing disturbs me” and that “I sort of take it personally I suppose” (T2, p. 2). She put a lot of effort into keeping the parents informed and happy and this kind of incident caused her understandable concern to know that it had not been satisfactory for the parents of one child.

I asked Jodi about how she knew she was doing a good job and she said that seeing the progress in children was one way that she knew she was doing a good job, but that there were signs of progress that were sometimes hidden because “not everything is recordable in Kinder” (T2, p. 2). Sometimes she became disappointed and disheartened by the lack of parental feedback “at this school.” Her own program, though, added to her sense of worth as a teacher in that “I believe what I do
is good” (T2, p. 8). She also had received positive feedback from a colleague recently and that “made me feel that what I’m doing is worthwhile for those children” (T2, p. 8). Her program was also “fairly natural” and “naturally progressing” and in this respect she observed that “I like the way I work” (T2, p. 10).

We talked about job motivation and she said that she enjoyed working with children; “they are fun and I get a real buzz to see their achievement and development” (T2, p. 4) and that for her it was exciting to see them beginning to read. Some of the difficulties included children with severe behaviour problems. This she thought caused distractions, interruptions, impeded her work and upset other children and therefore was frustrating. There were sometimes “silly little things” that annoyed and frustrated her but that she had a “more relaxed attitude to things these days” and that she could say “Oh well, never mind, it doesn’t matter” (T2, p. 5). It made me wonder about another time or place in which these silly little things did matter to her.

In terms of her identity, Jodi indicated that her behaviour was different when she was out socialising, for example, because she was more relaxed than when she was at school. There was a need to be vigilant and there was always the duty of care aspect when she was at school. When dealing with the parents she could be a bit relaxed and have a bit of fun, but that there was always the need to maintain a “modicum of professionalism....probably a tad more than a modicum” (T2, p. 6) but it was because of her sense of duty to the role of the teacher.

As with all these participant teachers, the conversations that I had with Jodi provided me with just a brief snapshot of the complexities of her life. I will summarise my initial assertions about Jodi. She, like all the teachers, seemed responsible, sensible, practical and dedicated. Her conversations with me gave me the impression that she was a ‘private’ person and that the image she shared with me was somewhat guarded and there were areas that she kept hidden. This could be considered quite normal given the nature of our kind of relationship. She obviously enjoyed her work and the teaching of young children remained a source of satisfaction for her.
Pat
Pat was a mature teacher, perhaps in her early fifties. We met at her home in the evenings, as this was the most suitable arrangement for her. She made a room available for us to talk and offered me a cup of tea. It appeared that Pat was experiencing a difficult period. She had applied for a transfer to a new school and the first interview occurred while she was waiting for notification of the transfer. She was nervous about where she would be sent and how the change of school might affect her. By the time of the second interview, she was in a worse position. Most of the transfers had been completed and teachers had been notified of their new schools, but Pat’s transfer situation was still unresolved—despite the looming holidays and end-of-year conclusions. By this stage, she was quite distressed about the situation and she shared this with me.

I have used the same format for reporting these conversations as for the previous two teachers:

- literacy policy practice and programs
- sense of self and identity
- concerns, issues, stresses and pressures

Literacy policy practice and programs
Pat indicated that she started teaching reading using the Wide Range Readers and flash cards. I remember these books well myself from my own primary school education in the 1960s. They were blue and green readers that were sequential in developmental difficulty and the flashcards are no stranger to me either. She indicated that she worked from the children’s needs, teaching to those needs, so that she could see progress in their development. She acknowledged the need to negotiate and to put together a program that she felt would meet her students’ needs. She based her literacy and general planning around themes that were of interest to the students. She noted that things were “coming back full circle from when I started teaching in about 1970” (T1, p. 1) and much of what she was doing with the ‘new’ PASS program was what she did when she started teaching. Never-the-less she liked it and was thrilled to see progress with the children and they seemed to be enjoying it and could see themselves as readers. It had been a lot of extra work though—getting familiar with all the aspects of it. She was currently doing about one or two hours of
work each night in preparation for the following day as there was a greater need to be better planned and organised with this method.

The *Flying Start* program was also useful and a positive initiative for early childhood classes. Her *Flying Start* teacher did Running Records and from these they could see the evidence of the students’ learning. She was thrilled to be able to see the progress of both the more able students and those who had been struggling. “It’s been a hard slog, but there’s light at the end of the tunnel and I’ve got there and I can see that it’s all been worth it” (T2, p. 10).

When she came across a new policy or document, Pat indicated that she would be looking to see if it was realistic, manageable and whether it fitted in with what she was already doing. Her initial reaction was that it would be “something that you joke about or laugh about—‘oh not another thing’ and it’s sort of just bordering on the ridiculous” (T1, p. 9). For her there was the question of “why do we have to change?”—particularly if “it’s going to be so different that you’ve got to restart and relearn and we are quite happy with what we are doing” (T1, p. 10). She also hoped for enough PD to become familiar with the new policy/document—so she could value and understand it properly. The other thing that she looked for was an overall evaluation. “Is it going to be worthwhile or not and is it going to achieve as much as the other documents?” (T1, p. 11). Would it cover the right areas or would there be content gaps? If she found that there were gaps, then she would still work with it but supplement and fill in the gaps with what she knew would work. She also mentioned the collegiality issue of teacher discussions with a view to an evaluation, “then you’re going to discuss it amongst yourself and say ‘What’s going on here? This is not what we wanted or not … useful’” (T1, p. 11).

**Sense of self and identity**

One of the words that came to mind as I recalled my thoughts about Pat was *altruistic*. She had a love of children and of teaching that was almost overwhelming—particularly when I considered her age and length of teaching experience, as my observations are that this passionate altruism is often swamped by a cynicism that develops as teachers spend time in teaching. When I asked her about her assets and strengths as a teacher she said that she would see herself “as loving
children, as always appreciating every child, seeing the good in every child despite their difficulties…I see myself as being very tolerant and very loving with every child” (T1, p. 5). Her motivation was the

lovely times with the children. We have happy times and we have fun times and you can see the sparkle in their eyes and the thrill when they make things and they achieve good work or improved work. Or when mothers or parents come to speak to us and they say they’ve improved and you know you can see the results in the testing (T1, p. 5).

She liked to provide a safe environment for the children and she enjoyed providing love and mothering if that was needed—“even the smelly child, the one who’s unloved and I like to see myself as providing love” (T1, p. 6). These ideas of giving and receiving of positive feelings and support recurred throughout our discussions—she gave to her students and her students unwittingly gave back to her.

She often spoke using the pronoun ‘we’—obviously seeing herself as part of the teaching profession rather than speaking as an individual. “We are always castigating ourselves because we aren’t doing everything we feel that we should be doing or we are not getting it as right as we should” (T1, p. 5). When I asked her about whether she felt she had ever been guilty of quiet resistance to policies and systemic expectations she displayed a sense of compliance with “I try and follow the procedures and guidelines of the Department” (T1, p. 11)—but qualified that with an example of her quiet resistance.

Another issue that arose related to Pat’s confidence. She indicated that she felt more confident after four years of experience in her current school and was aware that, with a transfer to a new school, she would have to re-establish herself. She acknowledged that when she had started there she was:

not daring to say a word because I thought myself so unintelligent and all the stuff I’d learned before, you know on remedial and working as a resource person, millions of stuff that I’d learned was practically valueless or not valued. I wasn’t valued, you know, for what I knew anymore. Yeah, I was at the bottom level and I had to work my way to the top again. It’s nice being where I am now. I feel like I’m respected and people come to me for advice now after being there for four years (T1, p. 13).

I was interested that she had thought of herself as valueless and wondered whether there was something specific that had happened at the beginning of her time at the current school, or whether that was just her personal disposition that saw herself as power-less and status-less in a new school situation.
Closely linked in with this confidence issue is the valuing of teachers. Pat commented that she felt positive about her work because of the results in the children but that “you don’t get any comments from senior staff” (T2, p. 3). She thought, “there should be more of it. I think it’s something that we all look for but we don’t get it” (T2, p. 4). She acknowledged that “our Principal would thank you at the end of the term—but it’s only very superficial, sort of in general terms he thanks us all, you know appearing all optimistic or proud or pleased, but you’re certainly not singled out” (T2, p. 4). So, I asked her, in the light of her comments about her own confidence building and the lack of acknowledgement from senior staff, about how she knows whether or not she is a good teacher. She said there was the occasional bit of feedback from other staff members, but that:

“No, you don’t know that you’re a good teacher, you feel that you are….I have a sense that I am a good teacher but nobody’s ever said that to me …. You sort of get a sense … It’s just an osmosis” (T2, p. 4).

Pat stated that she thought that her sense of identity was the same at home as it was at school. When she was younger she didn’t tell people that she was a teacher “because you’d scare a lot of people off, but now it doesn’t concern me” (T2, p. 9). She saw herself as not having any kind of conflict between the personal and professional identities—“I don’t know whether I’ve been brainwashed but I usually go agree with everything” (T2, p. 10). She said that she had very high Christian values, “of looking after others and so forth… so I suppose I’m a goody-two-shoes but it doesn’t worry me… I think I’m pretty average … having a good laugh … so long as you’re not offending people” (T2, p. 10).

**Concerns, issues, stresses and pressures**

Much of what was revealed to me about Pat’s identity was also linked to the concerns and stresses that she felt. Pat was concerned at the way that teachers were not valued as professionals. She thought that teachers were undervalued and that she wanted them to be treated as professionals in the provision of resources and tangible forms of appreciation. As teachers, she thought, we want community respect “to improve our image” so teachers did not make a fuss in the community about the lack of professional resources and trappings. She gave the example of the staff toilets:

scungy rotten old toilets and not even a decent mirror or hand basin. We work hard as professionals why don’t we have a few nice mod cons in our school to say ‘hey you’re something special, you work hard’ and why don’t the senior staff get mobile phones in
cars and things. They work hard, they should be treated as professionals (T2, p. 8).

For her, budget restraints meant that teachers come last on the list of priorities. “Well maybe so much [money] should be granted for teachers, just to let them see their professional standing and that they’re appreciated in the way of staff furniture or like a decent dishwasher, so much [money] should be put aside in the budget” (T2, p. 9). She gave the example of the problems with the limitation on money for relief teachers when a teacher is away sick. “The teachers are told we’ve only got five more relief days left for the end of term so please don’t be sick.” “The message is that you’ve got to put up. What other member of the community is put upon to go to work when they are sick, or feel guilty because you’re letting our other staff members in your school down, that you’re using up money that could be spent elsewhere” (T2, p. 9).

On the issue of being valued in her role as a teacher, she said: “There is never any body to tell us that we’ve done a good job.” You learn “you don’t need to be like the child wait for the pat on the back … because then, hey, ‘I know I did a good job’ and sometimes you have got to remind yourself that. But you get a little depressed when you’ve put in a real big effort and you jut feel like nobody noticed” (T1, pp 5–6).

There was occasional feedback from the senior staff, but nothing much. When I asked her whether she ever gave feedback to the senior staff about the job that they were doing she said that she did. She had given gifts and thankyou cards to senior staff but that “we do it [support] for each other [teachers] but we don’t often do it for the senior staff. We should do more of it” (T2, p. 5). Her senior staff occasionally came into the classroom to visit and would come in if invited for a special event.

Pat said she was cynical about the number of policies and changes. When she looks at new documents she thinks, “If it’s going to be another Pathways [which she did not like] or something like that, well you think I’m going to be really peed off” (T1, p. 10). “Cynicism at the amount of documents. Why are there so many documents? Are we just trying to keep people in work who could be better out in the classroom and I think things are bordering on the ridiculous, giving so many documents” (T2, p. 7). When I asked her why she thought this might be the case, she also commented about the search for the best literacy scheme or program, “I imagine it’s because the
last one hasn’t worked so the government has decided something has to be done about, say, these literacy skills or whatever, so we have to do something drastic and so they put a lot of effort into a new scheme” (T2, p. 7). I asked her what the message was to her and she said that “they’re not commenting on the teachers, they’re commenting on what is taught. I mean we were almost told by Head Office to give up all the extra subjects and ‘give up the units, the most important thing is the literacy, concentrate on the literacy’” (T2, pp. 7–8). She said that she didn’t take any of this personally, that “they are trying to find the scheme that’s going to make things better and sometimes I think it is at our cost, because we are working our little butts off trying to do everything and trying to do it right” (T2, p. 8).

The impressions that I retained from my conversations with Pat was one of sympathy for the difficult situation that she was experiencing with regard to the transfer. She was managing the emotionally difficult situation, while assuming that it was her age and teaching capabilities that had caused the delay in being allocated a teaching placement for the following year. The allaying of these fears by senior management made it a little easier for her, but she still seemed bothered by the thought of having to manage a new school and having to establish her personal and professional credibility with a new staff. Pat seemed like a really caring and concerned teacher. The sense of satisfaction and pleasure that she appeared to get from her job seemed to go beyond just ‘a job’—she gave and she received.

**Barbara**

Barbara and I had known each other from working on the same staff and had also socialised at private teacher gatherings. This may well be the reason behind Barbara’s willingness to talk so freely with me. She was, however, most concerned to ensure that the information and opinions that she shared were kept anonymous and questioned me carefully about the measures that I would be taking to ensure that she could not be identified from my data or report. She was very aware of the delicate nature of teaching in a relatively close educational community and did not want to cause herself, or her career, any problems because of anything she might say.

Barbara and I met at my house and the interviews were fairly lengthy, with plenty of free-flowing discussion. Barbara was thoughtful in her responses and comments and
I sensed the delicate nature of her position—wanting to help me with my study, wanting to be honest in her opinions and yet careful not to say the ‘wrong’ thing or something that could be construed the ‘wrong’ way. Our conversations were, none-the-less, a fairly enjoyable time with lots of chuckles and light-hearted teacher talk.

Barbara’s school had introduced the Spalding method as a literacy program across all classes. As the training of teachers for the Spalding method was, and still is expensive, it has been introduced in a stepped way, with some teachers being trained one year and then the others in the following year. Barbara talked extensively about the program and its implementation and the changes that it had created in her school. She had been teaching Prep for the last seven years but this year was on a Grade 1. They were, she said, “the nicest class I’ve had in years, absolutely years” (T2, p. 9).

Barbara had also just upgraded her qualifications from a two-year diploma to a four-year Bachelor of Education. This has taken her additional time and effort and she seemed quietly pleased with herself for completing this task. I sensed it gave her a sense of assurance about her job and promotion prospects. I did not consider Barbara to be a teacher who was desperate for promotion rather someone who wanted to broaden her options for transfer and type of job within the education system. She later acknowledged that she would be “fifty in two years” and that she gets tired easily and worries that she would not be able to keep up the pace as she ages (T2, p. 2). She also said that she will not be retiring at 55 like other teachers as she was a sole parent and her youngest child had just started high school. The nature of aging as a teacher seemed to be a common concern for several of these teachers.

For reporting on Barbara’s conversations with me, I have retained a format similar to the previous reports.

**Literacy policy, practice and programs**

So much of what Barbara had to say about literacy was determined by her involvement in the Spalding method and in that sense it almost deserved a section of its own in this report. However, what she said was also integrally linked to policy and practice and hence I decided against isolating it.
Barbara’s literacy practice and general philosophy for teaching her students to read and write involved “encompassing everything that is new, but I pick out of it what I think is worthwhile, what I know I can incorporate, handle, do” (T1, p. 1). Following the school-wide decision, she did two hours of ‘dedicated’ literacy and an hour of numeracy each day.

When I asked Barbara about her reaction to a hypothetical new literacy program or policy that might be implemented by the education system, Barbara said she would have concerns. She said her initial reaction would be one where she wanted to know why and would be looking for sound justifications for why teachers were expected to change. She would need to be convinced. Then she would need to look into it to see if it was practical and worthwhile. From there her approach would be one of “accommodate, assimilate and adapt” “the bits that suit me” (T1, p. 11). However, she acknowledged that she may not always be able to do that because of the accountability issues that were of concern to the system. This new program or document she said would “need to stimulate me and I’d need to see that there would be academic benefit for the students” (T1, p. 12). Perhaps most telling in this hypothetical scenario about literacy curriculum change was Barbara’s comment that while she was busy “accommodating, assimilating and adapting” the new program she was also thinking/feeling the following: “Keeping in mind at the same time that your heart is saying ‘It’s bloody-well happening again. Here we go once more’” (T1, p. 11). This complex process of adjusting her thinking and feeling to what was new, appeared to be part of the reality of daily teaching life for a number of these teachers.

Barbara said that she had enjoyed learning about the Spalding method, that she “found it fascinating” and that it was “good for old bones to start bringing new ideas into the classroom” (T1, p. 1). For her though, it was too early to make judgements about the long-term viability of the program and that for her, “the jury is still out” (T1, p. 4). She was concerned that whole-class teachings seemed very old fashioned and she used the words “rigid,” “structured” and “defined” in talking about the Spalding method. She indicated that she had modified it a bit to suit her program and that she could still teach using themes within its structure (T1, p. 3). She thought that is seemed to suit the boys, “strangely enough” (T1, p. 4) and that it seemed to be helping the “high fliers” (T1, p. 3). There was a lot of additional work associated
with the new program and the initial organisation needed to set it up. It was
structured so that early childhood students across the grades were grouped according
to need level and, at the same time every morning, they would go to a nominated
teacher’s room for 40 minutes of Spalding instruction. The parents, Barbara thought,
were really keen “because they can actually see structured feedback” (T1, p. 5).
Barbara was pleased that, within the structure of the Spalding method, she was still
able to individualise the program for children with specific needs.

One of Barbara’s concerns with the Spalding method was whether the students
would, over a period of years, get bored with the 40 minutes a day of Spalding and
whether the long-term results would be worth the effort that was being put into the
program. There were certain aspects of the program that Barbara indicated that she
liked and would retain in her teaching program even if she were transferred to a
school that did not have Spalding as their main literacy focus. She thought that it
needed to be “toned down a little and take longer over it” (T2, p. 14). There was the
option for the staff to negotiate the use of the method for the following year and
Barbara indicated that she had some ideas that she planned to put to the staff about
making the use of the program more manageable for the following year.

A point that Barbara made about the introduction of the program into her school was
that before the introduction of the Spalding method she had felt “very, very
comfortable” about her whole language literacy teaching, “having children working
in their little groups with parents and this sort of thing.” Then they were told they
were going to be doing Spalding—there did not seem to be any negotiation or
discussion of the fact—and now she felt “uncomfy” (T2, pp. 20–21).

When I asked her, with all the curriculum changes, what the ‘message’ was to her,
Barbara made an interesting observation. She said “Oh very strongly, yeah. From
the Department, that what we’re doing is never good enough, which is the reason
why we have to keep trying and developing” (T2, p. 13). She went on to assert that
she had been,
fairly comfortable until Spalding... because they were suddenly implying that what we’re doing before was a waste of time, that over 50 per cent of what we were doing maybe was... could be far better if we introduced these programs (T2, p. 13).

One of Barbara’s motivating premises for her involvement in the Spalding program though was that she felt that she “can’t keep knocking something that I don’t know anything about” (T2, p. 21). Uninformed criticism was not valid, so she got involved. She was willing to try the new program but was really waiting to see and trying to “step back and judge.” She now thought that there were greater benefits for children who are “about 18 months older than mine” (T2, p. 21), that is, Grade 3 students. Another concern was the costs to the school of training the teachers, about $2,500 per teacher she thought, and what impact the transfer policy might have in taking away teachers who have been Spalding trained and sending them to other schools. One of the only reasons that she felt the school had been able to afford this huge cost was that it is a “large school” and Barbara wondered whether the cost of this kind of an outlay in funding was worth the gains made.

Concerns, issues, pressures and stresses
I have already listed some of the concerns that Barbara had with the use of the Spalding program, but there were others. She was concerned about her ability to integrate Spalding with her theme-based program and whether, with all the dedicated literacy and numeracy time, there would still be time for other things in the curriculum.

Barbara was also concerned about the emphasis on outcomes in education. “I’ve got more concerns about whether I’m meeting the outcomes now than ever before. Before it was ‘have I taught this right.’ Now it’s getting students to a level and teaching to the outcomes” (T1, p. 6). She observed, “Why, are we so hell bent on

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17 Sections of data from the transcriptions of interviews are used throughout the remainder of the thesis. Where direct quotes are used this symbol [...] indicates that a short section of transcript has been deleted. The symbol … indicates a pause in thinking on the part of the speaker. Many of these sections have been modified for use in the thesis to facilitate ease of reading, removing repetitions and false starts. However there are instances where they have been left intact to indicate the accuracy of the speaker’s comments. Where sections of teacher’s actual words are included, they are presented in the sans serif Arial font to indicate that they are the teacher’s words, not the work of the author.
academic outcomes that we’re forgetting that we are teaching children?!” (T1, p. 6).

“Meeting outcomes and also making your class an interesting, stimulating, safe and secure place to come into is hard work” (T1, p. 6). There were positives in all this change though. Barbara did not want to go back to the terribly rigid structure of teaching the whole class—that the teaching of groups and individual students was good and an important use of teachers’ time. She was keen to give the Spalding method a ‘go’, but was adopting a ‘wait and see’ attitude.

Barbara felt that her own workload—with the introduction of the Spalding method, the completion of her BEd degree in after-school time, her involvement with the ‘Count Me in Too’ maths program and the introduction of the ‘dedicated’ literacy and numeracy times all in the one year—had been a huge imposition on her personal and professional time. “It’s been an unusual year for me and the effect has been that I’m really tired” (T2, p. 12). Then there was the possibility that she could be transferred in the following year as she had been at that school “long enough” (T1, p. 14) and she was aware of the pressure that might create.

Barbara also talked about the way that teachers “are critical in the staffroom, but we’re not critical as a body, out loud” because it was “frowned upon” (T1, p. 18). The public versus private kinds of criticism in which teachers engage, the way that if a teacher is seen as being critical then they are “marked” and it’s “like you have a big red cross on your forehead” and that it can “impinge on your career” and the ways that teachers are “encouraged not to say” (T1, p. 18) were issues that Barbara mentioned. “I think that we are not brain-washed, but you wouldn’t want to stand out” and that “it’s easier to take a transfer than it is to stand out.” She noted that people who criticised, too early on in the implementation of a program for example, “they are not around” and “they don’t do well in their career.” Barbara was very aware of the implications of her actions and the perceptions about her actions (T1, p. 20). She was also aware of the ways that teachers are “silenced” and that schools and teachers are not allowed to speak to the media, and even the Parents and Friends organisation was limited in what they can publicly comment on. The disempowerment was obvious to Barbara but “you do what you can” (T1, p. 21). Barbara also noted that the disempowerment extended to the leaders in the school as well. Barbara, who had spent time in an acting senior position said that once you
were in a leadership role you no longer had a strong voice, and that: “most of the
vibrant strong leaders who used to jump up and down are either retired or they are in
positions of power where they also are not able to say too much themselves” (T1, p. 21).

This led the discussion into a topic that Barbara indicated was important—“the only
sore point about which I feel strongly” (T1, p. 21)—teachers struggling to survive. Many of her comments though had a collegial sense about them—“it’s not just me” she said, and that there were “teachers who are just trying to manage— it’s
frustrating. They are not teaching the way they would like to because they’ve got so
many behaviour management problems [students]” (T1, p. 22). Barbara was aware
of the reorganisation of funding for the range of disabled students who are now
included in mainstream classes and the effects of this on teachers. “Teachers are still
trying to do the best they can each day but that they are coming out of that day far
more stressed, far more dissatisfied with their teaching than probably ever
before...I’ve never seen them [teachers] like they are now. I’ve never seen so many
good teachers tired and feeling like they’ve failed because so much of the day is
spent trying to do behaviour management” (T1, p. 22). Barbara could see that the
problems—additional students with more complex problems, less funding to support
teachers and higher stress levels—were aggravated by the lack of funding. This she
realised was a generic problem—across schools, districts and the educational system
in general. She saw that the “clientele of schools is changing—with more children
with major behaviour problems—not just one or two children but at least one in
every class .... and we’ve got more parents on drugs” (T1, p. 23). The effects of all this—high stress levels for experienced teachers, more teachers on stress leave, poor
support mechanisms for teachers and students, large class numbers and the ultimate
potential for substandard teaching practices—were of serious concern.

Barbara also talked about aging as a teacher and the worry that it was for her. “I
don’t want to become an ineffective teacher. But it worries me what sort of a teacher
I’ll be in 10 years time ... and that does worry me very, very much” (T2, p. 16). She
realised how tired she was becoming in recent times and wondered how she would
cope in the future years.
The final issue that Barbara referred to was the way that the media had contributed to teachers’ low morale and lack of sense of self-worth. She saw that the “era of Kemp”\(^\text{18}\) had damaged teachers’ reputation in the community and “where we are useless, where he has lowered us to almost the same level as real estate agents. I think we are just sinking lower and lower [in public estimation]” (T2, p. 18).

Teachers were becoming increasingly self-conscious and stressed and “felt the need to be meeting outcomes, to justify, justify, justify every single minute of what you do” (T1, p. 6). Her statement on this is quite telling: “When you’re hit with statistics in the face and the appalling downgrading that teachers got about four years ago in the newspapers, then I think the end product is that you are searching for what you are doing that’s wrong. Because there aren’t many people in the newspapers saying that you’re doing it right” (T2, p. 7).

**Sense of self and identity**

Barbara gave me a great insight into herself as a teacher and a person. At the overt level, she said that she was “flexible,” that she enjoys and welcomes new challenges but that at times she “is my own worst judge. If anybody is going to slam me, it will be me” (T1, p. 13). She wanted to learn more and so returned to study to complete her BEd. Having fun in her classroom “is important for me as a teacher that I enjoy coming to school and it’s important for me to know that my children in my class feel the same way” (T1, p. 16).

I asked Barbara about why she stayed teaching—especially as the picture that she had painted for me was one of significant difficulties at many levels. She replied: “Because when things are going well and I know that I am teaching well and kids are learning it and enjoying it, I get a real buzz. An absolute buzz. I still do, even after all these years. And some days you can just think, ‘God that was a fantastic day.’ Well you know those days keep you going. Yeah, everything just clicks.” “I enjoy teaching and I enjoy seeing kids laughing being with me”. “If I get frustrated sometimes it’s at myself and the fact that I get tired a lot more easily now...I think it’s beginning to show—from the very dynamic person I was before” (T2, p. 5).

\(^{18}\) Dr David Kemp was the Federal Minister for Education at the time of data collection.
When I asked her what motivated her, she replied that she was self-motivating and that she “tried her darnedest” and that “she took the responsibility of her work very seriously”—so seriously “that others things have slipped, like caring for me, in order to reach demands that are placed on me” (T2, p. 5). She said she was her own worst enemy and that she was always one to criticise herself and to drive herself to do better. She also was aware that this might lead to the possibility of burnout. Frustrated by her own lack of knowledge she found herself always trying new things. “I always want to make sure I’m doing it [Spalding] properly” (T2, p. 6). She thought that she would lose motivation and get bored if she did the same thing every year and that was why she was always looking for a better way of doing things. She sets tough standards for herself and acknowledged that she “didn’t want to become a real old hen” (T2, p. 7). Self-enjoyment and self-motivation were important. She was, though, in awe of teachers who did not have to work as hard as she did, “but I’d hate to be in their class”, “I envy them the fact that they don’t care, but I feel really sorry for the kids in their classes” (T2, p. 8).

When I asked Barbara to describe her ‘assets’ and strengths as a staff member and teacher, she thought that she was able to be taken at face value—what you see is what you get; that she’d be doing the best that she could; that she’d go to the Principal with any problems and that she was not one to talk behind anyone’s back. She thought that different people have different ideas about what makes a good teacher but that usually she liked the career that she had chosen. She acknowledged that she was not good at ‘selling herself’, but that she has good communications skills, was good with parents and handled difficult parents well. She was a loyal supporter of people and felt that she formed fairly accurate assessments of people quickly. She was, though, extremely sensitive to what people say—“ruminating over things for a long time—to see if I did anything wrong” (T2, p. 11). She wished that she was not like this, “But I can’t help it.” She was always concerned about how people feel about what she said and she thought that this might be her Achilles heel as it may undermine her ability to deal with tough children. She was, she thought, trying to do it all perfectly. “I’m trying to do my darnedest and hardest to keep up with everything and pride myself on being a good teacher” (T2, p. 17).
On the issue of identity, Barbara considered that there was “just one persona.” She thought that she was a child of the 1950s and 1960s—brought up conservatively: “I was a flower power child with the swinging apple seeds [necklace]. I’ve encompassed all sorts of changes going through, but what you see is what you get” (T2, p. 12). Somehow, I thought this might be a picture of Barbara that was too simplistic.

Katrina
Katrina had children who were similar ages to my children. I had known her for some ten years as she and I were on the staff at the same school when I returned to work after having my children. We had both taken transfers since that time. Katrina appeared guarded in her comments and gave opinions and concerns in an impersonal, distanced way. These were opinions and ideas that were supported by “other teachers”. She frequently added that it was not just her thinking or doing this; others were too. She used the experiences of others to support her assertions. This was, in one sense, a wise move because it gave me an indication that the issues and concerns that she was raising may extend beyond just her. It also gave her the security and protection of support—she could hide in the crowd of “others.”

I will use the same format for reporting about our conversations, as it seemed appropriate for Katrina’s data.

Literacy policy, practice and programs
Katrina’s school did not have a specific literacy program to which they subscribed. Katrina had put together her own literacy curriculum based on past experience with what she knew worked. She had picked out parts of a variety of programs with which she had come in contact over the years and combined them. She tended to look at the individual children to see what their needs might be and then worked towards meeting those needs. She liked it that way, and was happy with being able to put together her own individual program. Her ownership of her own teaching program seemed important.

When I asked Katrina about a hypothetical new literacy document or policy and what her reaction to that might be she said, “well personally I think it’s re-inventing the
wheel and that it’s just using different words and that there are a wealth of ideas that people put together. But in the end if you read through all the fine print a lot of it is the same, similar and re-written in a different form” (T1, p. 2). Her reaction was also: “I’ve got a bit cynical over the years and now I think that my first impression is that ‘gosh there’s someone in an office who’s needing a promotion, here we go again’. There’s something else to read through” (T1, p. 3). There had been some research done to indicate that this new one was better than the old “and some of it [research] is good and some of it is bad” (T1, p. 3) and that meant that things had to change.

When she was a younger teacher she would have spent more time on familiarising herself with the new—“I was really motivated to try and please and to think ‘well this is what is to happen, so I should include all these things’. However, at the end of the day I think the results are whether the children are achieving and happy in the classroom. So I think that over the years you get driven into doing what you know works best” (T1, p. 3). She seemed very confident in her ability to teach reading the way that she knew best—“I think I’ve got enough strategies worked out now that there’s not going to be a lot to change my opinions for things like reading” (T1, p. 4).

Katrina was concerned that some of the programs expected children to be taken too quickly through a series of outcomes-based steps. Then she said you have to “use your educational experience and take a child across ways, rather than elevating them. I’ve done that this year with a couple of children. I’ve talked to the parents and the Flying Start person and we’ve made the decision together that the child should be kept at a certain level but extended in a different way” (T2, pp. 8–9)

**Issues, concerns, stresses and pressures**

Professional Development (PD) was an issue that seemed to cause Katrina concern. There seemed to be a lot of it that was “irrelevant, really meaningless” and that she needed to “pick and choose” (T2, p. 9). “In general, if people are offered a variety of things that are interesting and relevant then they will enjoy going” (T2, p. 9). She also noted that there was a lot of PD that was only available with specific literacy programs. She thought that PD needed to be relevant to what teachers were doing and that if it made the job easier or teachers more knowledgeable then it was worth
it. However, “some of the problem with the PD is that it’s at the end of the day when you’ve just had enough. I mean most other jobs can have an element of their day put aside for staff development” (T2, p. 10). She felt that the PD must be relevant to her teaching experiences.

Katrina thought the fun had been taken out of school with the pressure to achieve outcomes and that this set up conflicts. “We’re distanced from the relationship with the children because we’re so busy having to do these prescribed tasks that a lot of the fun has been taken out of the classroom because we’re so pressured to achieve this baseline data” (T1, p. 5). She also rued the loss of the “good old singing, nursery rhymes, circle games that are really important for lots of reasons” (T1, p. 5). Lots of behaviour problems she thought were the result of putting pressure on students to achieve outcomes. Teachers were struggling to make the curriculum fun and this could contribute to students not enjoying school and so misbehaving. These were social and behavioural problems that in turn added to the pressure on teachers.

Katrina also confessed to feeling a personal level of stress about getting her students to achieve the outcomes. She gave the example of the teacher in the classroom next to her feeling so intimidated by being spoken to by the Principal about the lower-than-expected end of year results from her students’ tests. This was a kind of contagious stress—firstly that the results might not be acceptable and then that a teacher might be spoken to about this by the Principal. Katrina said: “It’s a hard job, you put in numerous out-of-hours work and the stresses do tell on people” (T2, p. 5). Her personal stress levels had been at eight out of ten for most of the year—“probably higher than they’ve ever been” (T2, p. 11). Katrina’s way to manage this high level of stress was to take a transfer. She had applied and by the second interview she had been offered a teaching position at another school in the same city. She had been to the new school and was welcomed by the new Principal and felt it was a positive start to her new appointment.

**Sense of self and identity**

Katrina’s general philosophy of teaching reveals much about what is important to her as a person and teacher. She aimed to have a warm and positive learning environment for her students. She was receptive to parents and had an ‘open door’
policy, welcoming parents into her room. She was, she said, always available for people to talk to. Children, she considered, needed to be motivated as well as happy and secure in her care. She also acknowledged the importance of updating your knowledge and to not have a ‘closed door’ policy about new ideas.

Katrina’s identity was evidenced through her unhappiness at the management style of the Principal and the implications of this for her. She said “I need to move on for my sake”, and that “lots of issues have clouded my happiness” (T2, p. 3). “I think it’s time to make a clean cut. I need to build myself again into a new situation where I can be comfortable” (T2, p. 6). The Principal’s management style and the cliques that had developed had affected her at a personal level. “I’ve tried not to let it affect how I feel as a human being, but I think once it started to get to that stage I knew it was time to get out” (T2, p. 6).

One of the issues that I spoke about with Katrina that was related to this was the sense of satisfaction that she got from teaching. She said her “motivation in the school was definitely the parents. I think they do appreciate what you do” (T2, p. 3). Katrina had experienced support from her senior staff at a previous school at which she’d taught. They would come into her room, talk to the students and comment on her displays. She did not get that kind of support at this school. “Sometimes just a couple of words of appreciation from senior staff would make all the difference” (T2, p. 3). She would like just some small, verbal, incidental appreciation but “I haven’t had one piece of interest in anything that I’ve done. Nobody looks at displays—apart from the parents and children” (T2, p. 3). This made her feel unappreciated, “why do I bother?” and “I’ve been very undervalued by the senior staff” (T2, p. 3).

So I asked her about her sense of satisfaction and how and why she kept going. She indicated that she did get a sense of satisfaction from “the parents and children and my other peers”, but that “I think that everybody needs senior staff appreciation to a certain degree” and that “I don’t think they [teachers] need a lot”, “but if you’re not getting that positive feedback from the senior staff you do wonder where you fit into the big picture, and you don’t know what they really believe” (T2, p. 4). She said she felt “driven to a decision to move” [transfer] and that she had been looking for a “Principal that will acknowledge the value of the staff” (T2, p. 4). Perhaps the most
telling comment about her sense of worth as a teacher at this school was this: “I don’t think I’m going to feel any value as a person if I stay here any longer. It’s just easier to move on” (T2, p. 5).

Katrina also commented about her self-confidence. “It’s funny, sometimes when I’m put under stress my self-confidence improves and other times it diminishes, but this time I feel strongly that my self-confidence would be diminished if I stayed because my opinions wouldn’t be valued”, “there’s no point in having an opinion because it doesn’t really count for anything” (T2, p. 5). There was a definite sense of not being able to be heard or valued. The decisions were made without consultation or consideration of staff.

Sally
Sally and I introduced ourselves but, in reality there was no need for introductions, as we soon realised that we had known each other from a distance for a number of years, but had never taught on the same staff. Sally has a bright, charismatic and outgoing quality about her, that made conversation easy, and both of the interviews ran over time. We went through the ethics and consent procedures and I set up the tape recorder and we were off and talking. As the discussion progressed I determined that she has spent time as Acting AST2, in the school. The time in the senior position had altered her stance about some of the issues we discussed and she gave a broader perspective on things because of the experience. She was also the mother of two boys and later revealed that she was already a mother when she started her teacher training. One of her sons had experienced some learning difficulties and the implications and lessons that she had learned from this entered our conversations.

The structure used to share what Sally and I talked about is slightly different to some of the other participants and is as follows:

- The issues of literacy practice and policy
- issues, concerns, stresses and pressures
- teachers and leadership

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19 An AST2, position was one with minor additional senior responsibility within the school.
• her sense of self and identity.

**Literacy policy and practice and programs**

Being “on Kinder” has influenced Sally’s current literacy practice. She focussed on “where the children are and where they can go” (T1, p. 1). She took their progress slowly, step by step, acknowledging that “some children may not get there”. She got involved in their conversations, asked questions and dialogued with the children. The boys she found were more difficult to engage in conversation. There was a wide range of reading material available for the students and she writes with them as a group every day to demonstrate the process of writing. Demonstrating the proper pencil grip is important. Slowly she begins to group the children according to the needs that she observes and teaching happens through working with small groups and individuals. She does not engage in any whole-class formal teaching but works from where the children are at because as she says, “if you focus on whole group stuff you’re always missing kids” (T1, p. 5). The school had been involved in the process of levelling of texts, but Sally had avoided this process for the Kinder children’s books.

Sally had concerns about the KILOs document because it did not have a specific Kinder focus—rather it started at the compulsory years of schooling, for children from six years of age. She did employ it as a guideline, using the outcomes in the “Working Towards” section. Not all of her students would achieve these outcomes. There had at her school been a minimal exposure to policy documents because of the school’s lack of involvement in the latest innovations from the Department of Education.

The levelling, or grouping of texts according to their level of difficulty, for literacy teaching and learning was a concern for Sally. While she acknowledged the usefulness of having reading books that are in sequential levels or steps she also could see problems with the system and its potential to view children’s abilities too narrowly. Sally said that the school had used the TLOs as a basis for their reporting to parents documents and that she had devised her own, parent-friendly set of outcomes that she used for reporting to parents. Records of Development, another of the DoE’s initiatives, were a lot of work and additional stress but she could see the
benefits of them in that they were helpful in the process of reporting-to-parents. SAMS, the computer-based program, into which teachers enter data about students’ progress, had created a lot of work and stress for her and she spoke about the additional work that she found herself having to do to enter data for her 44 Kinder students. She felt that it added to the pressures and was a “trauma.” It seemed to be for purposes outside of teaching and what she saw as her role as a teacher. This was a frustration and she thought she was being expected to do a job that was basically office work or administration

When I turned the conversation to specific literacy programs, Sally said that she liked the Flying Start program. When it came to the point of implementing a specific school-wide literacy program Sally could see that, for some teachers, there might be a level of stress because of philosophical differences. Her school, she said, was considering the implementation of Reading Recovery in combination with other programs. She was positive about Reading Recovery and thought that extra support for remedial students was useful.

On the more general issue of the Curriculum Consultation process that has been occurring in Tasmania, with the development of the Essential Learnings Frameworks, Sally liked the idea but had concerns about how it was to be implemented and used. She liked the collaborative process that had occurred as schools were involved in its development.

**Issues, concerns, stresses and pressures.**

There were so many issues about which Sally had concerns that it was difficult to sort them without minimising or reducing them. She started by pointing out that “certain schools get a guernsey”\(^{20}\) to try out everything and our school’s not one of those” (T1, p. 1). That seemed to set the limitation for what was or wasn’t happening at the school and the issue arose several times in the conversation. Sally later noted that the teachers at her school “felt left out because their school isn’t doing the latest fad” (T2, p. 9). She was concerned that the staff feels that the literacy experiences

\(^{20}\) “To get a guernsey” is a colloquial term meaning to win approval, originally referring to the processes of selection onto a football team.
they are providing “aren’t quite good enough” because of the push towards the “program mentality” but “if you look at their data our students are achieving some really good outcomes” (T2, p. 8).

Sally could also see that she was doing “heaps more assessment-type stuff for the Department” (T1, p. 2) and the amount and duplication of this work bothered her. She could see the influence and impact of the Partnership Agreements in the area of assessment, with the need to track children’s progress and report it to the Department and the way that all this detracted from the work of classroom teaching. It “doesn’t complement classroom teaching” (T1, p. 2) and was data driven. All this extra workload added to teachers’ stress.

She then went on to talk about the issue of teacher burn-out and the impact on teachers’ health. The middle of winter was a particularly difficult time. However, it was not just the teachers who were feeling the pressure of the additional assessment. Children too were feeling pressure she thought. When I asked her about the source of all the pressure, Sally was not sure where it came from. Certainly there was a pressure for higher literacy standards and from parents wanting to ensure future jobs for their children. But all this pressure on young children means that there is a chance that they may view themselves as failing—especially with the structure of some literacy programs. This was of particular concern for Sally as she was always careful to protect her students from anything that may damage their self-esteem. If their confidence was at risk, she was concerned.

This led to the notion that some literacy programs have the chance of being more damaging for some children’s self-esteem than others. The Spalding method she considers was based on whole-class teaching, something that Sally had already established she did not engage in at Kinder level and that it enabled the better students but didn’t help those who were struggling. The Department, she noted, gave a one-sided view of the programs they endorse. Reading Recovery at least waits until Grade 1 and was restricted to working with those students who were identified as having problems. The professional development that is available for some of the programs though was useful to teachers.
Much of the pressure seemed to be applied by the government to the Education Department and flowed on to teachers and students. The “bandwagon on literacy” was a main focus for this, and the community was mirroring what was in the media. She indicated that the ‘system’ was “under pressure to be showing that Tasmania is making this sort of progress” and that “the community want to know about, well, how everyone is going” (T2, p. 10). The pressure she considered was driven by the education system’s accountability to the State government and in turn to the Federal government for the spending of funds and the outcomes of students. There were, though, teachers who felt that with all the accountability, measurement and assessment that it is they themselves who were being measured and evaluated and not just the students.

When I ask her about her general levels of stress and frustration, Sally indicated that it fluctuated greatly from between three to ten out of ten. This was probably because of the extra workload associated with teaching Kinder. She said it affected her health as she has had trouble sleeping sometimes. The importance of having the regular holidays was noted in our conversation and she said that the long Christmas break was wonderful because it “made the rest of it manageable” (T1, p. 4).

**Teachers and leadership**

Sally seemed to have a passion for supporting teachers and commented extensively about teachers, leadership and the management of teachers.

Despite being in the position of acting AST2, Sally noted that the senior staff were not involved in classrooms and therefore did not really know what is going on. She had tried, in her acting position, to support the staff, writing them notes of thanks and appreciation where appropriate—because “I think people need that sort of feedback and we don’t get enough of it from each other and I think we need to be much better [at supporting each other]” (T2, p. 4). It was, though, a two-way process, as the senior staff, she noted, needed support too. Some teachers needed more feedback and support than others who had “very strong self-esteem. They’re happy in their lives outside of work. They’re just people who aren’t as needy” (T2, p. 5). She felt that all teachers had the need to be valued and supported and that teachers do go through tough personal stages. “It’s easier to get through those times if they’re
supported and feel valued for what they do” (T2, p. 6). Sally had obviously had an ‘incident’ with the Principal and she spoke indirectly about it. “The Principal at the school, he’s protected. So, he can upset any of us or offend us and it’s not a problem. It’s our problem because we’re offended at what he’s said” (T2, p. 7).

She believed, as an early childhood teacher, that there was a lack of organised advocacy situations and support for teachers from within the system. The variety of different senior staff situations in schools didn’t help this as teachers seemed more isolated. She felt that there was a definite disempowerment of teachers, and especially of younger teachers. They were not able to express their views and opinions and there seemed to be a lack of understanding by the senior staff. Some leaders she thought associated ‘equity’ with sameness—for all staff or students—without taking individual factors into consideration. She obviously had a different understanding.

Sally also was concerned that passivity in teachers was being actively rewarded and that teachers were not critical and evaluative enough. It seemed to her that they just “go along.” Speaking-out was frowned upon and going along without questioning or debating was “being a team player” (T1, p. 16). This was a serious issue for Sally: having the courage and freedom to speak out and debate issues she saw as important. She understood the fear of speaking out in staff meetings, that teachers “may feel judged in a particular way or treated differently because they’d spoken out” (T2, p. 5). She realised that “it’s not good for your career sometimes to have opinions” and that it was “easier to go along with the flow of things and not make waves” (T2, p. 5). And yet, she had done so and had taken the consequences. Open debate she thought was helpful as it makes you develop professionally. She thought that teachers felt that they were not free to express themselves privately but “there’s certain personalities of people that find it easier not to express opinions” (T2, p. 6). The kind of dissent that was only expressed behind closed doors was a problem because “it really should be out in the open” (T2, p. 6). Teachers needed to feel that they have an open forum for that kind of discussion and “have their opinions listened to and valued and heard” (T2, p. 6).
**Sally’s sense of self and identity**

Sally was generous in sharing her opinions and views on a range of educational issues and through these opinions and values it was relatively simple to arrive at an understanding of what inspired and irritated her and a sense of who she is as a person and as a teacher.

In her classroom philosophy, she anticipated that her students would leave Kinder thinking that they were readers. Because of her own role as a mother, she was aware of the importance of reporting and communicating with the parents. Teaching children to believe in themselves and to develop in confidence helps to protect them from negative views of themselves. It was vital that they see themselves as successful. Sally spoke often of the importance of students having positive self-esteem and confidence in themselves.

Teacher alienation and lack of support was another issue that surfaced in our conversation. Sally indicated that she had never been personally alienated and that “it’s personality to an extent” (T2, p. 3). She said, “I don’t think I’ve ever been in a situation where I haven’t felt valued but there are moments when I don’t feel valued but overall I get more of that from the parent community than I do from my actual senior staff or peers” (T2, p. 3). When pressed on this Sally indicated that probably only five per cent of her sense of ‘valuedness’ came from senior staff and that most of her sense of self-worth, and successfulness came from the families and the children themselves. She also said that she did not feel that she personally needed lots of support because she got so much from the families and students. She did expect support in the staff situation when she was being outspoken in staff meetings. “I’m quite vocal and if I’ve got an opinion I will often express it” (T2, p. 5). She acknowledged that feeling valued “makes you feel better about yourself or whatever you are doing and I’m sure that impacts on the job that you do because I know the more valued I feel the more I will do in my work” (T2, p. 5).

Sally said that, “some of us are more resilient than others though. I’ve had my opinions basically shut down on numerous occasions but I tend to still say it” (T2, p. 7). She went on to give an example of how she had gone to speak with the Principal but had gotten nowhere. “I sometimes feel unsupported by the staff. At times I
actually put myself out on a limb and I don’t get the support quite often. It’s quite a regular thing that happens to me” (T2, p. 8). She qualified this with the assertion that the issues that she raised were not selfish ones and were often on educationally sound grounds, “it’s about advocacy for the kids that I’m teaching and that’s what I’m fighting for. So I’ll keep putting my point of view forward. But a lot of people don’t and that’s what the problem is” (T2, p. 8).

When I got to the issue of whether Sally thought there was any impact by literacy curricula on her personal and/or private identities she said that it had:

... put me in a harder place in terms of my philosophies and things like that, in trying to speak out and express my opinions about what I believe is right. In terms of learning and on testing and evaluations, and things like that. Because there are more and more people advocating all the new stuff which I’m not totally anti [against] but I’m anti [against] the idea of it taking over. And so I suppose I find it hard (T2, p. 12).

She went on to say,

Not so much just in my school but when I’m outside of my school sometimes that I feel, yeah, that you’ve got to be careful about what you say. Because you might look like you’re bucking the system. And that puts me in a difficult situation and yet I know that you can read research right throughout all sorts of different areas and find the information that backs up totally different [chuckle] perspectives on what's important and what gives success for children (T2, p. 12).

I was not sure she had answered my question, but she certainly indicated some of the dilemmas, tensions and concerns that changes created for her.

**Suzanne**

Suzanne was an older teacher who indicated that she has been teaching since 1959. This was the year I was born. A sobering thought for me, as I no longer considered myself to be a young teacher. Suzanne and I had taught on the same staff some twenty or more years ago and then again some five years ago—this time sharing a class. She eagerly volunteered to help me with the study and willingly gave of her time. She could be considered to be an ‘old school’ teacher—and certainly would be by those who are just beginning their careers. I could sense in her a stubborn refusal to change the things that were important to her and to resist in whatever quiet or otherwise ways that were available to her. On the other hand she had ‘kept up to date’ with the latest educational innovations and had embraced change while conscious of what was important for her.

For this discussion I have used the following format to report on the discussions that Suzanne and I had:
literacy practice, policies and programs

concerns, issues, stresses and pressures

her sense of self and identity.

There is, though, much ‘cross-over’ in what is discussed as not all the comments, observations or concerns can be neatly slotted under just one heading.

### Literacy practice, policies and programs

Suzanne’s literacy practice was based around the Flying Start program as she was currently engaged as a Flying Start teacher at this school. This meant that she had specific classes with which she worked each day, with an express focus on literacy skills. She negotiated with each of the class teachers about how this was to be done, but it usually involved working with individual students or a group of students on a specific skill. The groups might change when and how the teachers and Suzanne determined. She indicated that her basic premise was that she interacted with the children and determined where each child was ‘at’ and took them to where they needed ‘to be’. This knowledge of where they needed ‘to be’ had been acquired over a period of teaching years. She said that she individualised her program, adapting it for each child’s needs. In this sense, she considered herself to be an intuitive practitioner who kept trying to help children to learn. She also said that she enjoyed working in the Flying Start program and that “it’s an education” and that “I think that everyone should have a turn at it” (T2, p. 6).

Apart from this, Suzanne did not share much with me about her actual classroom literacy practice or personal literacy teaching philosophy. She did have a lot to say, though, about policy and programs. With all the policy and program changes, Suzanne thought that Department was trying to identify what was happening and to resolve problems as they arose (T1, p. 10). The outcomes push was a way that the Department could “define what they are trying to do, trying to adapt it ... but it’s sort of like you never get it right” (T1, p. 2).

Suzanne was very ‘up front’ about the issues. After only a few moments of the first interview she said: “After all these years ... every time something new comes in I probably shrug my shoulders and say, ‘Oh, again?’ because, I mean, I’ve been through so many. I’ve seen the circles come and go” (T1, p. 2). So, for her, the
changing nature of policy meant that she had to engage in more soul searching about whether or not she was doing a good job. It meant that she had to look at the new policy or document to determine “what it really means” and this meant that “you can never take anything at face value” (T1, p. 2).

The new policies, programs or documents she thought were usually of value and that she would familiarise herself with them and then check the new policies, programs and practices against what she was already doing (T1, p. 3). New policies and documents, Suzanne thought, were to reflect what was already happening in classrooms, not necessarily to change the practices. They were “putting what you’re doing into a form that’s required from above” (T1, p. 3).

Suzanne thought learning the jargon of the new policies, programs and documents was a lot of hard work. “I mean you get the frustration because you go through the PDs and you do all the work and then a year or two later that one’s out the window and something new has come in” (T1, p. 4). She mentioned the Pathways and KILOs documents. The KILOs was “putting what we’re doing into different words” (T1, p. 5) and Pathways she thought was helpful for her as a teacher but she thought that it might be too broad for newer teachers who may need more obvious progression, steps and skills.

When Suzanne was faced with a new policy or document, she acknowledged that she avoided “throwing the baby out with the bath water” (T2, p. 4). She would look at it to assess it, recognising that “there is usually a lot of it that you can agree with, so it’s a matter of filtering” (T2, p. 5). She looked reflectively back on when the whole language came into schools and acknowledged that a lot of it made sense and that she did try to accommodate parts of the new programs, “but you didn’t stop doing the other stuff so you just kept on doing the other things” (T2, p. 5). She saw that the new program or policy needed to make sense to her before she could incorporate it. Otherwise, “you do it very reluctantly” and “superficially” (T2, p. 6). She could see that there were parts of the Spalding program that made sense to her and so she would probably use them. The notion though, of a school locking itself into using one literacy program, scared her. It reminded her of the days when the Cuisennaire-style of teaching maths was common and “its sort of like recipes, if you get the
person who believes in them, well they work, but making every body believe in them making clones, so no” (T2, p. 7).

Suzanne also thought that the use of outcomes in the curriculum was a problem as, to her, outcomes should only ever be a guide. She was bothered by the use of the word ‘outcomes’, “because there is an expectation that you’re going to reach it” (T2, p. 13). She could also see that “they’re trying to find the magic way that’s going to work and no one way is going to work. They all work for some of the people some of the time” (T2, p. 13).

**Concerns, issues, stresses and pressures**

There were a number of Suzanne’s concerns to which I have already referred. In addition to these, she also mentioned the following things.

There was, she thought, extra work that was being “forced upon you through PD [professional development]” (T1, p. 2). This impinged on her lifestyle and she resented that. “The biggest issue is that there’s more work” (T2, p. 1), and “We haven’t got the time to do the theory and the work and all the things” (T1, p. 13). Suzanne was also concerned that all the time needed to learn and evaluate new programs and documents erodes the time for teaching. She thought that “we do a lot of unnecessary work ... and that I think we’re wasting good teaching time” (T1, p. 10). Suzanne was also concerned at the additional time that it takes to familiarise yourself with new programs and that if they are to be “done properly”, then more time needed to be allowed for teachers to get to know the policies and documents.

The expectation from federal politicians that every child would learn to read and write was unrealistic, she felt, and did not take into account the ages and levels of children’s capabilities. “A lot of this stuff that we’re getting [expectations] is coming from our dear David Kemp, who really doesn’t know a thing about teaching children how to read or write or how to be literate...” (T1, p. 3). “Politicians are making decisions without really knowing about the practice and the children we are teaching” (T2, p. 4).

There were mismatches between what teachers could do and what parents and
politicians expected of teachers. She was critical of the federal push for measurable education—“this is what David Kemp is wanting, he wants the measurable thing, that every child in Grade 3 is able to do such and such”, and that she could see that it often “depends on the intelligence of the child; it depends where the child is at and to me, it’s not clear” (T1, p. 5). The idea of a measurable standard of education where each grade has a level and set outcomes and children are expected to reach those outcomes was irritating for Suzanne. “I get angry,” she said, when she saw parents who want measurable outcomes and stages for their children because she knew that it was not that simple. She saw it as more complex than that: “parents don’t realise all the things that can affect where their child is at” (T2, p. 10). It appeared to her that parents did not seem to clearly understand about their child from the report information that went home. Parents didn’t see the same picture about their child that she did and “matching parents’ expectations with what is realistic” was often difficult if not impossible (T2, p. 10). “Either something is wrong with my thinking or there’s something wrong with what the general public want to know” (T1, p. 5). She considered that reporting measurable standards to parents was not useful. This was in direct conflict with the kind of intuitive, child-centred and individualised teaching Suzanne had indicated was important for her.

The issue of accountability and having a uniform standard of teaching and teacher were ‘hot’ issues for Suzanne. She saw that much of “what is happening now” was driven by the need for accountability—“everything is on an accountability factor” and “I still get angry. I mean it’s sort of like we’re trying to make everyone uniform, a uniform standard” (T1, p. 6). “There is a directive given and the senior staff are trying to fit themselves in with what is being asked of them” (T2, p. 2). All of this added to the pressures of classroom life. She considered that sometimes this pressure came from the management style of the Principal or senior staff and sometimes it was from the education system’s expectations. She also considered that “I am sure we are breeding more children with problems than we’ve ever had before … or that more children are surviving with problems” (T1, p. 10).

Suzanne said that there were pressures that came through the use of ‘research’. Educational expectations were too high for students and for teachers and were often unrealistic. Pressure came with the introduction of new things and she talked about
the “pressures coming from ‘without’” (T1, p. 10) and “from the Uni who are suddenly doing all these things” and from having to accommodate a new program and then the frustration when “two years later it’s down the drain” (T1, p. 11). There was, she thought, an “overload” and that “you’ve got pressure followed by frustration” and then “you become resentful that you’re being asked to do this” (T1, p. 11).

Policy and changes were stressful for Suzanne. “You accommodate what you can and you ignore what you can’t. It’s sort of like you’re getting direction from outside when inside you feel as though you know what needs to be done” (T2, p. 4). Being forced to change was stressful she acknowledged, “but you can’t say because it’s stressful you shouldn’t be made to do it sometimes ... every time you get forced into doing one of those things you’ve always learned” (T2, p. 8). So, there were some benefits from all the stress.

**Sense of self and identity**

There seemed to me to be so much of Suzanne’s personality and sense of identity revealed through our conversation. Her view of herself as a “rebel” came very early on in the first interview—“but you’re probably talking to a rebel” (T1, p. 2). She identified herself as someone who didn’t accept things at face value and was always questioning. I am still pondering the implications of this self-revelation.

Changes, and the sense that there was “too much change in too short a time” (T1, p. 8), had implications for her. It led to the soul-searching and self-questioning. It affected her confidence and made her “very cynical” (T1, p. 8). She was angered by the overload.

Suzanne saw teaching as a practical skill: she spent time in the classroom ‘doing’ her teaching. But that practical skill was diminished when time and effort was required to be spent learning new programs and evaluating children for assessment (T1, p. 9). She saw herself as an intuitive and flexible teacher, “doing it by gut feeling” (T1, p10). Using her analogy, she teaches the way she gardens: “I get ideas as I go along.” She thought that teachers were “trying too hard to do the right thing and to be accountable” (T1, p. 10). This was especially notable because she thought that
“all [the parents] want us to do is to teach their kids” (T1, p. 11). There had been a change since the time that she started teaching: “all you had to do then was to plan and to teach and now you have to do so much more” (T1, p. 12).

One issue that reflected how Suzanne saw herself concerned being labelled as ‘a professional’. She did not like the label. She said that it devalued her as an individual and she saw it as a generic term that assigned to her certain qualities that she did not like or value. For her it implied being “a goody two shoes” and meant that you are a “person who fits into a mould” (T2, p. 2). She does not want to be forced to fit into a mould or to be a particular way. She asserted her right to be the way she wanted to be. “I want to be someone of integrity and someone who cares about children … and I want to bring my own way of—my own personal way—the way that I operate. And I don’t want to operate in a way that isn’t me. And sometimes I see a difference between what people see as professional and the way that I want to be” and “If someone says ‘that person is professional’ that doesn’t tell me anything” (T2, p. 3). She saw herself as a practitioner not as a professional. To be labelled as a professional denied the importance of the practical knowledge and experience that she had. She was happy to stay “just a classroom teacher” as sometimes taking a leadership position might compromise who she is and she wanted to retain her integrity (T2, p. 5).

She also indicated that she was opposed to the idea of uniformity of teaching style, “because every teacher has a different style and you make people teach a certain kind of style and it doesn’t work because you can only teach in the way that fits your personality” (T2, p. 8).

She acknowledged that you never ‘arrive’ as a teacher. “I don’t think that there ever comes a point where you can say that you know everything but you’re still open to new ideas” (T2, p. 8). “No one can ever get it all right” (T2, p. 13). Children, she thought, “need more nowadays”, “the needs of the children are wider”, “to fit into our society—it’s the social and affective stuff that’s equally important” (T2, p. 14). She considered that teaching was primarily about building and maintaining relationships with children and she was scared about the inflexibility of working with outcomes. She also revealed, “I couldn’t work with someone who didn’t get back to
basics and have the interests of the children at heart” (T2, p. 14).

When I asked her about being a good teacher, Suzanne indicated that “I don’t know whether I’m a good teacher or a bad teacher and I’ve been teaching since 1959” (T2, p. 11). She said, “I don’t know whether I’m a good practitioner or a bad practitioner, but I’m the best practitioner that I can be with the knowledge and experience that I have” (T2, p. 9). So, I asked her about the assets and strengths that she felt she has as a teacher and she mentioned that she cared about children; that she liked children and enjoyed teaching them; that she enjoyed learning about who the children were and listening to them and understanding what they say. She also considered that, for her, teaching was still an enjoyable career path.

Suzanne said that she would speak out against things if she did not like them. She also confessed that “I haven’t learned the art of shutting up yet,” and that “most of the time I think people have admired me for my honesty—respected me” (T2, p. 13).

When I focussed the discussion on whether she felt that the changing nature of literacy curriculum had affected her identity and sense of self, Suzanne said that the “literacy curriculum probably affects me more than any part of the curriculum” and that the “frequency of change in the way of looking at it is almost putting down my knowledge, my experience and what I know works.” “It [change] undermines my confidence in my ability to teach—it’s the confidence, not the ability” (T2, p. 11). As a result, she rated herself lower “because not meeting all the things that I perceive are in the various curriculums that are handed out to me” (T2, p. 11).

**Summary of the first level of data analysis**

This first level of data analysis gives the reader some images of these eight early childhood teachers. It is intended that this level of analysis has several functions. Firstly, it seeks to introduce each of the teachers to the reader, identifying them as individuals with personalised concerns about issues that relate to but frequently move beyond the stated issue of literacy changes in early childhood teaching. At this level of analysis it is also anticipated that the reader gets a sense of the freedom that was given to the teachers to discuss the issues that were of concern to them. Secondly,
this level of data analysis contains a summary of the information that was revealed, showing the concerns and issues which were discussed in the interviews, thereby highlighting the similarities and differences between the eight teachers’ conversations. Thirdly, it commences the data analysis, working the data towards themes and categories, and prepares the reader for the following two levels of deepening data analysis.

4.2 The second level of data analysis

Introduction to the thematic analysis

This is the report of the second level of the data, the first being the introductory report of the conversations with the eight participant teachers. This second level of data analysis is supported with more extensive references to the transcripts of interviews with the teachers. These ideas and assertions relate to the stated research problems about the implications of change for teachers. The data set—the transcriptions of two interviews each with eight early childhood teachers—was thematically analysed to reveal three themes: change, power and identity. While these themes were developed through the processes of data analysis and are dealt with as individual entities, it is also apparent that they are interlinked in multiple ways. The separation of the themes from each other, while essential for analytical purposes, was a convenient method which detracts, in one sense, from the overall impression of the impact of change on teachers.

The first section reported on here, Types of change, is not a theme in the strictest sense of the term (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1999), but is essential background information for the subsequent analyses. The types of changes with which these teachers indicated they engage are expanded upon in this section. While literacy change was the stated orientation for the interviews with teachers, the data analysis revealed a range of types of changes that these teachers discussed. The second section, entitled The impact of change on Teachers, reports on the first of these themes and covers the kinds of impacts and effects of change that are revealed in the data. This includes the ways in which the teachers’ practices and behaviours had been affected by processes of change, the professional conflicts with which these teachers indicated they struggled, as well as the more general array of teachers’
concerns and issues. The third section of data analysis, Teachers in contexts of power, illustrates where power was either implicitly or explicitly an issue for these teachers. This section examines the kinds of power that are evident in the data and their effects on the teachers. The final section of the data analysis deals with the theme of identity, and evidences the ways in which the data have revealed a challenging, transforming and/or stabilising of the teachers’ identities through their interaction with changes in their work lives.

4.2.1 Types of change

There was a range of types of change to which teachers referred in conversations. Although the professed issue of changes in literacy policy and practice was at the forefront of these discussions, other changes were discussed in the interviews. After interrogation of the entire data set these types of change have been collated and listed with an explanation below. They are expanded upon in the following section, with no significance assigned to their order of reporting. The types of change with which the teachers indicated they engaged included

1. Changes in policies, programs and documents
2. Changes in expectations
3. Age, aging and length of teaching service
4. Changes and transfers
5. Changes in leadership
6. Changes in professional support structures
7. Societal changes
8. Behaviour management changes

Changes in policies, programs and documents

The most common type of change that was discussed related to changes in literacy policy as this was the stated and initial focus of the interviews with teachers. This literacy focus encompassed specific textual documents—such as Pathways (DEA1987), the KILOs and TLO documents (DoE2000c; 1994)—as well as the specific named literacy programs—such as Spalding, Reading Recovery and THRASS—and the less formalised PASS program (Department of Education [DoE], 2000b). This also included not just policies and programs but literacy foci as well. This was most evident when the older teachers talked about the range of literacy foci
stretching from teaching phonics through to the Whole Language approach to literacy and back to the skills-based approaches evident in today’s teaching emphasis.

However, the discussions were not limited to literacy, and also referred to a range of educational documents. These included the national Statements and Profiles (Curriculum Corporation, 1994a); the Early Childhood Review (MacNaughton, 1999); Our children: The future (DEA, 1991a), series of booklets; the Curriculum Consultation processes (DoE, 2000a), most recently known as the Essential Learnings Frameworks (also referred to initially as the New Essential Learnings, NELs) (DoE, 2001; 2002a; 2003c); and other non-literacy documents such as the Maths and Curriculum Frameworks folders (DEA, 1993a). Both state-based and national documents were included in discussions as were some of the school-based versions of these more formal texts.

**Changes in expectations**

It became evident during data analysis that these teachers were acutely aware of changes in teaching with specific reference to outcome-based educational expectations and the ways that the pressure of these expectations had intensified. There were the more formal and overt expectations—stated explicitly in policies and documents—through to the more informal expectations where teachers somehow knew what was expected of them and their students. In this sense teachers were, it seemed, frequently functioning on assumptions that were loosely acquired through the social processes of teaching. No questions were asked in the interviews about how these teachers knew what they were ‘supposed’ to be doing. It seemed implicit in their individual professional understandings.

These expectations and the subsequent changes in expectations seemed to come from two main sources. Firstly, they were derived from the aforementioned policies, programs and documents. Secondly, there were changes in expectations that were delivered through the agents of the education system, senior staff and/or principals acting on the behalf of the education department. The range of types of leadership and managerial styles of these educational personnel seemed to have some impact on how the expectations were given and received by teachers.
Age, aging and length of teaching service

As the range of years of experience among the teachers in this study varied from four to forty years, age and time spans seemed to recur as topics throughout the discussions. Firstly, there were perceptions drawn from comparisons across time—the past with the present. The longer the length of teaching service the further back in time this could stretch and hence the wider the range of changes in foci. This was evidenced with repeated phrases like “coming full circle”, “going back to what we were doing” and “the wheel turns yet again.” There was also a brief comment by Katrina about what her planning and expectations were like when she was a new teacher. Hindsight, in this sense, had given these teachers a depth of understanding about change processes.

Secondly, with the age issue was the concern about how the process of aging would affect their teaching life in the future years. Concerns were expressed by Barbara, Sally and Katrina about what they were going to be like as older teachers. Tiredness and uncertainty were issues of concern. Suzanne was already foreshadowing her retirement at the end of the following year and Rosemaree commented that she was looking for ways to remain active in education in her retirement and/or as she approached retirement. Pat had concerns that her age was against her in the process of acquiring a transfer and that perhaps nobody wanted her because she was too old.

Changes relating to staff transfers

At the time of data collection for this study (2001–2002) the transfer processes were a contentious issue for teachers. A teacher desiring a transfer to another school had to submit a request to the District Office stating one of several authorised reasons for transfer. These requests were processed en masse towards the end of the teaching year. Usually most of the transfers were arranged by early December prior to the teachers and students departing for the annual Christmas holiday period (usually about 20th December to 10th February). Traditionally, teachers were allowed time to visit their new school before the end of the school year, but this was at the discretion of the respective Principals.

Comments were made about transfers as it was a pertinent issue in several of these teachers’ lives. Sally had been transferred to a school that would present her with
plenty of challenging students. She was positive about this move and had accepted it as an opportunity to stretch herself professionally. It was also a transfer that she could refuse if she wished. Choice in the matter seemed to be a positive factor here. Pat was in the very difficult situation of waiting for her transfer to be confirmed when many of her colleagues who had applied for transfers had had their transfers finalised. She was acutely aware of the changes that this would create. Katrina had applied for a transfer and had, over the course of the interview process, been granted a transfer and visited the new school. Barbara said she was looking forward to taking a transfer for the following year, but had not yet applied. Georgie talked about the desire to transfer to another school that was closer to her home.

These changes in school placements were accompanied by some emotive concerns about what it was going to be like at the new school. Changes in workplace meant potential changes in teaching grade, leadership style and personnel, changes in program and policy focus and in some instances the potential for required changes in teaching content knowledge, and changes in the type of student and parents and social status of the school area. All of these changes were referred to in conversations with these teachers.

**Changes in school leadership**

Leadership in schools was discussed from various perspectives. There were the inevitable comparisons between the current leadership and the styles of previous leaders. These changes were generally accepted, but not necessarily appreciated. Katrina’s transfer to another school was attributed to the struggles that she experienced with the management styles at her current school. She was in that sense looking forward to ‘better’ leadership in her new school. Others commented on how the current situation was different to previous situations. Principals’ roles and agendas were mentioned as were their style of leadership and the decision-making processes within the schools. While the discussions about leadership were frequently comparative, matching present with past or this kind with that kind, there was the understanding that teachers in the education system needed to manage the different kinds of leadership styles. The frequency of transfers for teachers and changes in Principals’ appointments meant that teachers were likely to encounter a variety of styles of leadership across their career.
Educational leadership beyond the boundaries of the school was also an issue for discussion. Rosemaree had commented on the changes in District level leadership over the last decade or so and her desire for strong leadership. Leadership from the upper levels of the educational hierarchy was discussed in more general terms, but usually referred to members of the education system who were responsible for curriculum and policy decisions. Sally and Barbara both expressed the idea that these people were out of touch with the reality of classroom practices.

*Changes in professional support structures*

Comments throughout the interviews indicated a range of ways that teachers were supported in their teaching. There had, however, been significant changes to these support mechanisms. Some of these kinds of professional support structures included: Professional Development (PD) the ways that funding was allocated to support teachers of special needs students and the more informal support and recognition that teachers received in their teaching lives. This also included the ways that teachers indicated they felt appreciated and valued in their professional tasks of teaching.

There was an interesting array of comments about the nature, timing and amount of PD with which these teachers had engaged. Some teachers indicated they had experienced more PD in recent times, some less. Georgie stated that, while she considered that the PD was too finely focussed on one area of literacy, it had still been beneficial for her. Most teachers indicated that the timing of PD activities was generally inappropriate and not conducive to teachers’ capacity for concentration and participation in the PD sessions. Changes in the available types of PD, costs of providing and attending the sessions and the timing of PD sessions were mentioned in the conversations. Being able to govern which kind of PD sessions they were to attend seemed an important factor in determining relevance for the individual teachers.

The funding of, and support for, the teachers of special needs students was an issue about which Barbara spoke passionately. She had been involved in the situation where the special needs students in her school were receiving only minimal support.
The funding of specially trained personnel for developing individual educational programs (IEPs) for these students and the provision of teacher assistants for care of high needs students was, in her opinion insufficient and unrealistic. She felt that this impeded the learning for those students, disrupted the general running of the class, and added an unfair burden to the teachers concerned. Behaviour management for these kinds of students was also an issue.

Other teachers talked about the ways in which they gave and received support from parents, colleagues and senior staff, indicating that both the need to give and to receive and the amount of such support had changed in recent times. The ways in which teachers sensed their worth and value in their teaching situations also arose in conversations, evidencing a range of opinions and concerns on this issue.

**Societal changes**

Across the eight participants there was evidence of acknowledgment that ‘things’ were changing in society and that this had implications for these teachers. Awareness of, and direct comments about, the changing nature of the school clientele—the students and the parents—was evidenced in interviews with Rosemaree, Suzanne, Barbara, Sally and Katrina. Changes over time in what was expected of teachers and schools and the resulting emphasis on accountability, measurement and statistics were seen by these teachers to be caused by changes in society. Managing the changes in the nature of the needs of students was an issue that was mentioned by Suzanne as were her concerns that society was producing more students with more problems that the school was expected to address. Also along these lines was Barbara’s lengthy and heartfelt discussion about the cuts in funding for students with moderate and severe disabilities. She felt these changes were directly related to funding issues and that it added to teachers’ stress. These changes resulted in an unnecessary burden on teachers.

Also under the umbrella of ‘social’ changes was the acknowledgement of the links between the changes that occur in education and politics. Six of the eight participants mentioned the political nature of changes either directly or indirectly through the constraints on funding provisions and the ways in which educational agenda were altered to suit the needs of governments and the educational
bureaucratic system.

**Behaviour management changes**
Managing the behaviourally challenging students in their care has been, and I suspect always will be, an integral aspect of teachers’ work. These teachers talked about the issues concerning the changes in teachers managing both the students themselves and the school’s policy for dealing with challenging students. This was not such a big concern for Suzanne as her role as Flying Start teacher meant that she did not have the same group of students every school day for a year. But the increased number of behaviourally challenging students was discussed at length by Barbara. Her concern was not so much for herself but more for what she saw other teachers being required to cope with, without realistic support mechanisms. Changes and inconsistencies in the way that the schools dealt with these students were also mentioned by Barbara, Georgie and Katrina. It is also noted that the issue of behaviour management could be considered by some to be less of an invasive issue for the teachers at the Kindergarten level than for teachers at, for example, upper Primary level.

**Summary of types of change**
This section has briefly reported on the kinds of changes with which these teachers had indicated they engage. The types of changes discussed varied between participants but encompassed changes that were unavoidable, normal or to be expected within both teaching and life in general (aging and its implications, the repercussions of societal changes, modification to Departmental expectations, and changes that occurred when transferring to a new school). There were also changes that teachers seemed to indicate could be handled in ways that caused less stress and problems for teachers (school leadership changes, behavioural management issues, changes related to professional development, transfers, and issues of change with policies and program). It can be seen from the data that the range and types of change is broader than just literacy-based change.

The next section of the second level of data analysis investigates in greater detail the impact of change on teachers. This is followed by the theme, teachers in contexts of power and lastly, the theme of teacher identity.
4.2.2 The impact of change on teachers

Change for the teachers in this study has a range of effects. What happens in schools and in government has repercussions for teachers. At times, these effects are at a personal level and relate to the ways that teachers felt about and reacted emotionally to change. In other instances, the teachers commented about changes to their teaching practice, knowledge and understandings. In yet other instances, change had brought about professional conflicts and created concerns and tensions for these teachers. This section of data reporting shows the ways that teachers were affected by change, highlighting the impacts and conflicts that it created for them.

The first sub-category in this section, Behaviours and teaching practices, reports on the ways that teachers’ professional actions, practices and behaviours were required to change and the impacts of these changes on the teacher’s identities. It covers such issues as PD activities and time constraints, transfers and managing required changes. The second effect of change on the teachers notes the kinds of Professional conflicts that change had brought and gives an indication of ways that teachers managed and perceived these conflicts. The third sub-category in this section on the effects of change for teachers, Teacher’s concerns, details other issues and concerns that the teachers thought had repercussion for them.

**Behaviours and teaching practice**

While there has been considerable research into the effects of change, particularly curriculum change, upon teachers’ teaching practice and knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996), this was not a primary area of investigation in this study. It was evidenced in the data though, when teachers indicated that the changes with which they engaged in their teaching lives affected their teaching practice and knowledge and subsequently their actions.

A repercussion of the changes within schools was the resultant pressure and stresses that they appeared to cause. In Katrina’s case, this pressure had driven her to request a transfer to a new school. Katrina had arrived at the decision that taking a transfer was essential because, “I’ve tried not to let it effect how I feel as a human being but I think
once it [...] started to get to that stage I knew that it was time to get out." (Katrina, T2, p. 6)21. Barbara was hopeful of a transfer, “I hope with all my heart that I could be transferred next year” (Barbara, T1, p. 13) and discussed the frustrations that had led her to that position. Although Sally and Pat were transferring, it was not stated that this was as a result of dissatisfaction or frustration within the school or as a result of changes.

Katrina talked about the transfer situation, stating that: “I felt that I needed to move on for my own sake” (Katrina, T2, p. 2) and that: “I think it's time to make a clean cut. I need to build myself again into a new situation where I could be comfortable” (Katrina, T2, p. 5). There were obvious repercussions from her work contexts for her sense of self-worth, which had motivated her to seek a change of school for the following year. She appeared to have set personal boundaries, realising that she needed to change school in order to protect her self-esteem.

Georgie indicated that her reaction to the requirements for change in her teaching was that she was more pressured and that perhaps, if things were different, she would be:

much more easy going and probably a little less inclined to do so much literacy and numeracy if we didn't actually have to, and there wasn't the pressure of achieving results at the end of the year. But sometimes you can feel as though there is a lot of, as I said, a lot of pressure and you would be like to be doing other [...] things that could be just as important but aren't deemed as important. (Georgie, T1, p. 9).

Her reaction to this kind of expectation was an increase in perceived pressure and this had repercussions for her teaching. Her sense of what was important in teaching seemed to be at odds with what those in power deemed to be important. Her identity, based on her personality, beliefs and experiences, indicated that she was more pressured to achieve literacy and numeracy outcomes with her students than might otherwise be the case.

21 Sections of data from the transcriptions of interviews are used throughout the remainder of the thesis. Where direct quotes are used this symbol [...] indicates that a short section of transcript has been deleted. The symbol … indicates a pause in thinking on the part of the speaker. Many of these sections have been modified for use in the thesis to facilitate ease of reading, removing repetitions and false starts. However there are instances where they have been left intact to indicate the accuracy of the speaker’s comments. Where sections of teacher’s actual words are included, they are presented in the sans serif Ariel font to indicate that they are the teacher’s words, not the work of the author.
Chapter 4

Results

The frustration of irrelevant PD sessions was mentioned by Georgie and Jodi. Although both Katrina and Pat said that there had been some positive effects of PD sessions, they also talked about the frustration of attending PD sessions that they considered to be irrelevant to their practice. Georgie commented that with the increased workload came the frustration of being dictated to about after-school-hours activities. She and Jodi had been required to attend sessions from which they had failed to make any practical connection to their classroom practices. They had been required to attend long after-school sessions. Jodi indicated she was tired and had difficulty concentrating at that time of the day.

"It was early in the year, and I couldn't see how that was going to benefit me very much. Sometimes I have to say I do feel some of the PD is a waste of time. I would really like it to be something hands-on that was going to be really useful in the classroom" (Jodi, T1, p. 12).

The issue of frustration caused by the PD sessions was mentioned by Suzanne, Georgie, Pat, Jodi and Katrina. Their educational priorities and identities, in the form of their values, beliefs and understandings, were challenged by the requirement to attend PD sessions that were seen as a waste of time.

Professional conflicts

There were a number of instances where teachers indicated that they were experiencing conflict and tension about what they thought, knew and felt and what they were expected to do as part of their teaching tasks. This conflict impacted on teachers’ sense of well-being and caused them to re-assess their teaching practices, beliefs and values.

Sally discussed the issue of the sense of feeling overloaded with work, often with tasks that she considered to be of little value to the teaching/learning processes and often duplicated for the purposes of the educational system. Change had meant that:

"I think we do heaps more assessment type stuff for the Department. Um, and even though those tools can be useful in what you’re doing in the classroom as well you usually have to duplicate" (Sally, T1, p. 2). Conflicts in the expectations and understandings about teachers’ roles were evident in the teachers’ talk, for example:

I’m collecting data for the purpose of something outside of what my role I believe as a teacher should be. I believe my role as a teacher should be about trying to improve […] things for the kids in my classroom. Yeah, so I do find that sort of thing very frustrating, doing jobs that are more … I almost think they are office administration (Sally, T1, p. 3).

Sally thought that she was required to do too much work that had little to do with
teaching and learning. She determined the relevance of aspects of her teaching role against her professional knowledge, beliefs, understandings and values. The result was that these ‘administrative’ tasks were deemed to be outside of what she considered acceptable. This led to conflict in perceptions about her teaching role and responsibilities and resulted in professional and personal frustration.

Conflicts were also evident when Suzanne indicated that she knew what needed to be done, yet was being told to do something different. “I guess you do what you can but it makes the pressure. […] It's sort of like you're getting direction from outside when inside you feel as though you know what needs to be done” (Suzanne, T2, p. 4). Suzanne could also see conflicts with what she understood about her classroom practice and teaching and what politicians and bureaucrats indicated should be happening: “I guess what I'm thinking is that some of the 'withouts' like the politicians and the whatever, are making decisions really without knowing about the practice and the children we're teaching” (Suzanne, T2, p. 4). This created personal and professional conflict for Suzanne.

Katrina could see that educational changes had meant a variation in teaching roles and responsibilities and resulted in the imposition of additional tasks. For her this had effects on her teaching. Now she needed to concentrate more on “prescribed tasks” than on her relationship with her students.

We're distanced from the relationship with the children. Because we're so busy having to do these prescribed tasks a lot of the fun has been … I've heard other teachers say that … that a lot of the fun has been taken out of the classroom because we're so pressured to achieve this baseline data (Katrina, T1, p. 5).

This was at odds with what she understood to be the core task of her job. Her professional awareness dictated that the relationship with her students was important, but change meant that she was not able to give this the time that she felt she ought. Personal and professional conflict was evident in a loss of “fun” for students and pressure for both students and teachers.

Katrina expressed frustration at the leadership style in her school and its implications for her and the other staff members. She said she had been “spoken to” about the results of her mid-year student tests (Katrina T1, pp. 5–6) and the intimidation and its effects for the teacher in the room next to her. She could see that “it didn't do much for staff morale” (Katrina, T1, p. 6). Changes in the ways that the system of education
was managed had, she considered caused the Principal with whom she now worked to be more distant from staff and students in the school and that had created problems. These problems had affected her to the point where she felt that a transfer to a different school was the best option: “I've tried not to let it effect how I feel as a human being but I think once it got, started to get to that stage I knew that it was time to get out.” (Katrina, T2, p. 6). Change had created these conflicts and another change, Katrina’s decision to transfer to another school, could potentially resolve them.

Katrina’s situation, with the change in Principalship and the imposition of data gathering, was not necessarily positive, as these changes had created conflict about her educational values and priorities.

They're more looking at children as numbers. […] [W]e're becoming a business rather than a centre for caring and educating children. I believe that children are becoming numbers, that we are manipulating figures all the time that we're not the caring and sharing—well we try and be the caring and sharing people but a lot of that they are trying to stop because we're distanced from the relationship with the children. (Katrina, T1, p. 5).

For her this mismatch of expectations created problems. Her professional understanding and values seemed to be in conflict with the school’s new regime and its accompanying values and actions.

Sally talked about the situation whereby, with her transfer to a new school for the following year, she might be required to implement a program of testing with which she did not feel comfortable. “I actually think that it really, really sits wrongly with this whole idea at the moment that we are doing, this Curriculum Consultation […] It just doesn’t sit right with me” (Sally, T1, p. 12). The conflict, in the form of her concerns and perceptions about the implementation of the testing program, was evident. A resolution to this situation was never revealed.

Barbara was affected by the change from teaching Prep to teaching Grade 1. For her there was additional pressure for “meeting the needs” of the students, of the Department and of the Commonwealth government. The effects of this change had “staggered” her and this pressure to achieve outcomes had its impact.

Parents in Grade 1, they want to know about the reading and writing and so does the Department and that’s what you feel through them, as I felt when I was a Prep teacher, that I could still run a program where I was meeting the needs of the children just as much as the needs of the Department. Now I feel I’ve got to meet the needs of, the demands of the Department now, both State and Commonwealth, […] I mean after having spent the last seven years of the Prep teaching, the last one, I’ve been
absolutely staggered by the difference in expectations (Barbara, T2, p. 1).

The often self-imposed pressure of managing time at school and fitting everything that was required into the school day and still achieving outcomes with students was an issue about which Jodi and Suzanne spoke. Jodi indicated that she was “bothered” by not being able to fit it all in. Her professional knowledge and understanding pressed her to get it all done, but the reality was quite different, creating conflicts for her. “And I just find it very difficult to get through all the things I really want to do with the other children. […] it bothers me that I don’t [get it all done]” (Jodi T1, p. 10). Suzanne emphatically expressed her concerns with the issue of time, priorities and expectations with this assertion:

we’re probably trying too hard to do the right thing and to be accountable. All right you want to know what I think? I think we’re doing a lot of unnecessary work. You want to know what else I think? I think we’re wasting a lot of good teaching time. Doing this. We need a certain amount of it. But, the pressure that comes … Right, the moment that you put a new thing in you put pressure on the school staff that we don’t need. So there’s pressure coming from without (Suzanne, T1, p. 10).

On the one hand was the desire “to do the right thing” and “be accountable” and on the other hand was the pressure of sensing that she was “wasting a lot of good teaching time” and “doing a lot of unnecessary work.” This over-emphasis on imposed accountability, from “without.” resulted in pressure for teachers. In Suzanne’s view this pressure arose from a conflict between educational priorities and expectations. Changes created conflict between the system’s expectations and the teachers’ roles and responsibilities.

**Teacher’s concerns**

In addition to the above repercussions of change for these teachers, there were other concerns that related to change issues that arose in discussions with teachers.

Rosemaree’s anger and frustration were evident when she said that she felt the education system was distant and that communication was not what it should be. She was also concerned that the Department was losing touch with teachers.

Well, from the Department I guess that there has been an angry bit that comes out again and frustration because they are losing the contact with us. Just by the physicality and not being near them.[…) I feel very frustrated because I don’t see the Department is able to change how it is going as far as having more liaison and links with the practitioner and that frightens me as far as where education philosophy is going (Rosemaree, T2, p. 9).

For her the ramifications of the changes that she was witnessing were not just a
concern, but caused her to be “frightened” about the direction of education. Her educational knowledge and understandings determined how she saw these changes and were also challenged by the “directions” in which the system was moving. This necessitated a re-assessment of how she saw herself and the system.

Rosemaree also expressed her concerns at the issues that were evident in the educational system’s agenda and their need for data. She saw it as a “heavy push down” and that it reached as far as Kindergarten, which was sometimes immune from such pressure.

I just really get so concerned at the feedback that we’re getting at times. At the state meeting that there seems to be a real heavy push coming down through the Department into Kindergartens and right into Prep too that is saying this is what is expected now and we need to be able to assess what you are doing and we need to get you telling us (a) and (b) about these children and I am really concerned with what issues they are canvassing. (Rosemaree, T1, p. 3).

Her reaction to the “heavy push down” was to be concerned about the required assessments. Once again her identity, based on her professional judgements, understanding, knowledge and values, were mediating how she perceived these changes.

These teachers also talked about the issue of managing the impacts of growing older. They wished to remain effective teachers, yet wondered about managing the tiredness that might come with aging.

And I think when you’re looking at me as a teacher for the future the one thing that scares me is that I will become, I could become an ineffective teacher, you know and that’s the one thing that really worries me because I don’t want to become an ineffective teacher. But it worries me what sort of person I will be in 10 years time, […]. And that does worry me very, very much (Barbara, T2, p. 15).

Sally and Rosemaree talked about the elevation of younger teachers because of their youthfulness, not necessarily their ability, and wondered about the potential for being unwanted and undervalued as they grew older. They were also looking ahead to the ways for managing retirement. Personal opinions of this nature were also mentioned by Barbara, Suzanne and Pat.

**Summary of change and teachers**

This section has reported on the ways that these teachers indicated that changes in their work lives has repercussions for them. The first section reported on the effects of change on the behaviours and teaching practices. This was followed by sections
reporting on professional conflicts that these teachers experienced as a result of change, and about any other teachers’ concerns in relation to change. In the main, the focus has been kept to the relationship between teachers and their identities and the effects of change.

The following section discusses the ways that these teachers are influenced, affected and shaped by the kinds of changes they experienced. This is based on the kinds of changes already indicated in the section on types of change.

4.2.3 Teachers in contexts of power

Introduction to the theme of teachers in contexts of power

This is the second of the three themes that is discussed in this section. The first theme, change, has been covered in the section above, and the final theme, identity, is reported on in the next section. This theme discusses the evidence from the data about the theme of power under three sub-categories: imposed power, the disempowerment of teachers and the empowerment of self (teachers) and others. These sub-categories emerged during the process of data analysis. It became evident that teachers were working with three dimensions of power relations. These included top-down power, i.e. imposed power; power from the bottom of the educational hierarchy, the reactionary ways that these teachers and their colleagues sought to empower themselves, i.e. empowerment of self (teachers) and others; and the dimension where the power that teachers may have had was actively eroded serving to disempower them, i.e. disempowerment of teachers.

Power, although not initially identified as a potential theme for this study, became evident after analysis of the data commenced. Much of the information about which these teachers talked related to the power issues that are inherent in teachers’ working lives. Many of the conflicts mentioned in the theme of change also relate to issues of power because the changes were power-based instigations from the system and imposed on teachers. These teachers were aware that they were employees of the state system, and as such were required to be responsible for employer-stated tasks and to abide by tacit and overt expectations. There appeared to be no conflict in this assumption. However, conflicts arose in instances when there was a mismatch
of expectations and values, which served to challenge, transform or affirm their identities.

There were situations where the teachers indicated that they were aware of the imposition of power through their senior staff or Principal’s requirements. This was usually related to the specific circumstances of their school or to the individual personality or agenda of the Principal, but not always. There were many instances of the ways that expectations were imposed through the education system itself. These were usually tacitly understood assumptions about what was required of these teachers and instances of imposed power at work. There was also the use of research and the need for statistics and accountability as a means to enact the will of the education system. The teachers also acknowledged their awareness of the political nature of the requirement for them to act as agents of the education department and that its agenda had political overtones. Then there were the instances that the teachers discussed that were evidences of their reaction to the imposition of power.

The power that is referred to in this thesis as ‘the Department’ or ‘the education system’ signifies the power-based relationship of employer/employee; in this instance the Department of Education as the employer and the teachers as its employees. It implies power that is imposed through the bureaucratic system in a hierarchical manner and is based around the assumptions that the state employer has implicit and explicit expectations of its employees. These issues are reported on under the heading of Imposed power.

The second of the three sub-categories within the theme of power is that of the disempowerment of teachers. This sub-category reports on the ways that these teachers indicated they were devalued or undermined in their work relationships. There were, of course, degrees of this devaluing—some relatively minor, some quite confrontational and overt. This devaluing appeared in the form of the ‘sins of commission’ for teachers as they were aware that it was a direct action, not just ‘sins of omission’; that is, someone failing to value them. The use of the teacher’s length of teaching experience was also an issue that was evident in the ways that teachers were disempowered. There was evidence of the ‘sin of omission’ when teachers were treated carelessly, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and thus sensed they were undervalued. A lack of support in the form of a lack of resources and
funding and the paucity of observable support from the system itself and its agents, senior staff and Principals, was also noticeable in these teachers' discussions.

The final section, the Empowerment of self (teachers) and others seemed to be a reactionary one as teachers found ways to empower themselves in the face of conflicts and sought to empower others in ways that were available to them. There was a wide range of mechanisms through which these teachers indicated that they sought empowerment for themselves and attempted to empower others. These empowering mechanisms were enacted through transferring to a new school, involvement with teacher organisations and associations, teachers’ own learning or development, being free to make their own decisions within the school, being experienced enough to have the confidence to tackle senior staff, seeking empowerment for students and their parents and feeling supported and valued by other teachers.

**Imposed power**

Many of the teachers’ revelations indicated they were subjected to the control or limitations imposed by the kind of top-down power that is ‘normal’ in an employer/employee context in educational systems. The imposition of power came through conduits within the Tasmanian Department of Education. These included the education departments’ agents, Principals and/or senior staff at the individual schools, and the more distant curriculum and policy makers or authors of policy documents.

These teachers were not necessarily ‘subjected’ to power in the sense that they could be seen as victims of the education system’s unyielding power. This implication is not intended. It seemed that the teachers were quite accepting of the situation where they were required to act for the education system in ways which, at times, created conflicts for them because of their understandings about educational matters. The section below on the empowerment of self (teachers) and others gives more of an indication of the ways in which these teachers stated they managed these conflicts and sought self-empowerment despite difficulties or concerns. Their empowering actions evidenced the fact that they are not victims in this relationship with their
employer. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines *subject* (n), as one who “owes allegiance to a government and live under its protection” and who is “under the control or influence of another” (Delbridge et al., 1991, p. 1741). These teachers did not always agree with what the education system decided, but they chose to abide by it in ways they could manage.

This section on imposed power covers the ways that these teachers have stated they were required by the education system to act or behave in the course of their employment as teachers. This imposition of power was usually implemented through senior staff or the Principal, through the system’s expectations of the teachers, and through the use of ‘research’ and statistics as a mechanism for accountability. The teachers also acknowledged the political nature of the imposition of power, not necessarily blaming the education system itself, but seeing the bigger, political and societal connections as well. Lastly, this section looks to the ways that these teachers indicated they reacted to the expectation of action, especially when it fell outside of what they considered to be acceptable, thereby creating levels of conflict for them.

**The imposition of power through senior staff or Principal**

The Principal and members of the senior staff team were often deemed to be the instruments of the imposition of power for these teachers or their colleagues.

Katrina’s account related the additional work that had been imposed when she and her staff had adjusted to the new TLOs documents. For the staff it had meant re-writing the *pro forma* for reporting to parents, learning how to and entering data into the computing assessment program, SAMS, and moderating their assessments of the students’ learning outcomes with a view to consistency across the school (Katrina, T1, p. 1). This example shows the way that the Principal, on behalf of the education system, required her and the other staff to make changes to the monitoring and recording of assessments and the reporting of the data to the Department of Education and to parents, all within a short space of time. She was also aware that other schools had chosen to leave these changes until the commencement of the following school year.
Barbara claimed that, although she liked the Principal as a person, she queried his management style: “he’s a most lovely guy. I like him very much, but as far as making decisions for staff that are democratic he’s far more autocratic […]” (Barbara, T2, p. 3).

Rosemaree recounted the attempts she had made to change the school-based *pro forma* for reporting to parents at the Kindergarten level. Her changes were superficially accepted, but were not acknowledged as an official school-based document. To her it was an issue of power:

and this was extremely difficult for some senior staff to accept because it wasn’t a school document it was a classroom teacher’s document and I was not allowed to put the school name on the top of it (Rosemaree, T1, p. 2).

The explicit use of power by the Principal had repercussions for how Rosemaree saw herself and her role as a teacher.

**The imposition of power through the education system and its expectations**

Similar to the imposed power seen in the previous section where the Principal or senior staff derived their authority from the education system, there were also instances where the teachers talked about the ways that, directly or indirectly, the system itself placed impositions on teachers. There were more instances of the general system imposing power than of the imposition of directives or expectations from Principals or senior staff.

In discussing the additional work that seemed to be required as a result of recent changes, Suzanne considered that this came in the form of professional development expectations, and was not optional: “So most of the stuff, the extra work, is being forced on you through professional development.” (Suzanne, T1, p. 2).

Suzanne could see that, when she had been required to change the way she taught, she had learned through the experience:

I’ve been teaching the way I like, it seems to me, forever. So last time I had to teach the way I didn’t like and it was probably quite good for me was when I was at [school named] and we had to have an integrated day and we had to teach to a certain … The day was set out in a certain kind of way and, I mean, I probably learned heaps from being forced to do that. But um, so being forced to teach a certain way can be a learning experience (Suzanne, T2, p. 8).

The system had required her to make changes to her teaching practice, but this had implications at a deeper level than simply teaching behaviours or practice.
Rosemaree was concerned at the requirement from the education system that Prep teachers spend blocks of time doing literacy and numeracy. This imposed time requirement was a worry for her, despite it not directly impacting at her level of teaching. There seemed to be a conflict between what she thought was best and what the education system was endorsing.

Sally and Katrina commented on the link between accountability, and the resultant record-keeping required of the school and teachers, and the Partnership Agreement that the school had with the community. The increased accountability and additional workload were seen as administrative work that was not useful in classroom teaching or learning. Perhaps Sally’s most notable comment was about the reasons for the record-keeping:

because of […] the Partnership Agreement. So, we have to track. At the end of every year we have to pull out these outcomes on every child. So there is a lot more of that, which is Department expectations. […] It’s not just about … once upon a time it was about keeping records and things for … to actually complement the classroom teaching in terms of guide where you are going next, where now it is about keeping records so the Department has got statistics and data as well as the other … as well as reporting to parents (Sally, T1, p. 3).

This imposition of power, through the intensified levels of accountability and the Partnership Agreement, meant that teachers now had to keep records, show progress and prove their students learning.

However, Katrina’s perspective on this accountability and power issue was a slightly different perspective. She saw that the Principal was being rewarded for teachers’ collection and recording processes and students’ progress: “and the Principal’s role is seen as she’s achieved something really good if the children have achieved” (Katrina, T1, p. 4).

Sally also recounted an incident where she was engaging with the forces of hierarchical power.

I feel like they very nicely put me in my place quite quickly when I bring up any concerns or issues. I feel that there is almost a thing of ‘yes we are listening, yes, yes, yes’, but we have to do this anyway. That’s how I feel. (Sally, T1, p. 10).

It appeared that her opinions were nominally accepted but not actually considered. At least that was the way she saw it.

Sally also stated her concerns with the education system’s implementation of the
PIPS\textsuperscript{22} testing. In this instance, she was not able to get her voice heard, despite her best efforts.

I mean what they want the data for is to, you know, compare what kids are doing in Prep and then Grade 3 and then Grade 5 (Sally, T1, p. 11).

I took [the concerns] along to this meeting and basically I was told that, well, [...] we need to accept [...] this information. [...] I’m not convinced about that [pause] and I actually think that it really, really sits wrongly with this whole idea at the moment we are doing this Curriculum Consultation [...] (Sally, T1, p. 11–12).

In this situation, Sally was made aware of her ‘place’, that is, her powerlessness, and the inevitability of some situational changes. “I mean, that's a Department expectation too that we're all going to reach these outcomes by this age, you know, no matter what” (Sally, T2, p. 13). The requirement that she implement the innovation caused Sally to experience some conflict and tension. “Oh it worries me. I don’t like having to implement something that I probably don’t agree with, like I'm really concerned about the PIPS testing” (Sally, T2, p. 13).

Katrina told of her first-hand experience with the Principal’s power when her class results were of concern and she was “spoken to” about them.

[...] last year with my mid-year results. The children seemed to make a really big gain and the end year results they're not really not made big gains and the Principal spoke to me about where she thought my results should be and really … as a group of children they were quite slow. They were quite difficult, so they’d come … and while some had made big gains the rest had just plateau-ed out and I thought that they’d made a bigger gain in the first part of the year with a big push and there was nothing. I mean there was no consequence or anything like that for the class, but I was spoken to about it (Katrina, T1, p. 6).

However, Pat, Georgie and Jodi, who all worked at the same school, did not seem to have the same levels of concern about the exercise of power as did the other five participants. That is not to say that they seemed more comfortable with the way things were managed in their schools but it did seem that they had a greater role in the decision-making processes. This was summed up well when Pat stated:

Well, we weren’t even told we had to do it. Really, we just received the professional development and I think most of us headed into that direction because we could see it was valuable (Pat, T1, p. 2).

\textsuperscript{22}The Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) program is designed to assess all Tasmanian State School Prep students to help identify those requiring specific intervention in order to achieve expected standards of literacy and numeracy (http://www.education.tas.gov.au/oer/pips/index.htm Retrieved, 23\textsuperscript{rd} February, 2005)
**The imposition of power through research and statistics**

The education department’s requirement that teachers be held accountable for their teaching and schools for their students’ results has already been referred to. That there were significant systemic expectations that related to teacher and school accountability is evident in the data. The need for schools to provide baseline data, the implementation of national and state-based testing programs and the expectation that teachers would gather and enter information on the computer were changes that caused teachers to feel an intensification of pressure and tension.

Sally noted that the role that ‘statistics’ played in this intensification of pressure had developed from the measurement of student performance. This also had implications for consultation and implementation procedures.

> And their consultation is statistical just like everything else is statistical in the Department now. So if 75 per cent of teachers say that they agree with, let’s use this, then we use it. So, 25 per cent might have problems with it but they’re going to have to use it anyway (Sally, T1, p. 11).

Pressure was applied, through the strategic use of statistics, by those whose agendas were served in this process of change. It seemed to Sally, like a mechanism to silence the unwilling minority. Sally also saw that, through gathering data on students’ progress, individual teachers’ performance could then be monitored and she wondered how they felt about that.

> I know some teachers feel like they’re going to be measured too, by these yardsticks. I mean that, you know, when they send all the data back they now actually can tell you which classes have done better than other classes and yeah that’s … How does that make people feel? And sometimes there are all sorts of issues that will impact on that. You might have just got a group of kids that are not quite as bright as the other teachers’ group of kids or whatever but there are a whole, I mean obviously teachers do make a difference. But how’s that going to affect people’s feelings about, I mean, I don’t know if that information is going to get shared or not (Sally, T2, p. 13).

Barbara noted that the education system was able to use the weight of statistics and research as a mechanism for encouraging the compliance of teachers.

> But whenever anything new comes in we are told that ‘research has told us, Spalding research has shown, that such and such a number of children’ you know … research has shown us that. (Barbara T1, p. 19).

Again, when recounting the situation in the 1970s when she was expected not to give students lined writing paper, she could see that, even in the 1970s, research was used as a control mechanism.

> It didn’t worry me, because I would have been quite willing to have said why I felt it. I don’t know if anybody would have listened because you have to remember that research is that big heavy body of … and research at the time said that we were stifling
children's creativity. (Barbara, T1, p. 18).

Suzanne could see the link between the expectation of literacy for all, the research-based observations and assessment, and the need to be able to measure students’ progress.

So the expectation is out there that everyone will become literate. So therefore you have a measurable thing and the observations and the scientific stuff that the University has done has found that the …on that continuum sort of thing (Suzanne, T1, p. 3).

Thus teachers were aware that both research and statistics were used as mechanisms by the educational hierarchy to engender compliance with their designated agendas.

**Political nature of imposed power**

There was, woven through these teachers’ comments, an understanding that *change* and *power* were integrally linked, not only with social changes, but also with what was happening in the political arenas, at the Federal and state levels. Barbara, Suzanne and Katrina all directly mentioned the recently replaced Federal Minister for Education, Dr David Kemp. The links between what was happening in the social and political arenas and the imposition of educational expectations was evident. Teachers seemed aware that there were social and political, rather than educational, reasons for change.

Suzanne, when discussing the imposition of power in the form of policies and expectations and where these expectations were coming from, said:

 [...] from where-ever it's come from in the first place and usually it's political isn't it and I mean to say lots of the stuff that we've been getting comes from our dear David Kemp who really doesn't know a thing about teaching children how to read or how to be literate and having the expectation that every child is going to be able to learn to read when that is not true because umm of what—you know—peoples' brains you know sometimes are not equipped to easily learn to read; in fact, what is an easy task for some is a practically impossible task for another. So the expectation is out there that everyone will become literate (Suzanne, T1, p. 3).

Sally thought that the pressure for accountability was sourced from outside the education department.

Oh, it's coming from the government and the … originally, I mean I think that's where it comes from. Government having a bandwagon on literacy standards, community, I suppose in terms of literacy standards. Children coming out of school in terms of their literacy standards. So I suppose it's community, government and the Department (Sally, T1, p. 5).
Rosemaree shared her view about the reasons behind the push for greater accountability in education. She stated:

I think it’s very involved and very convoluted and it’s not easy to unpack. I think there are a lot of confused early childhood teachers out there. I think it’s coming from the concept of accountability and I think umm I doubt it would matter which political party was in. I think it’s part of the ruling party, the ruling government saying we need to be able to say to our electors that we’re doing a good job and we need the evidence to be able to say this. And the evidence will be if you’ve done some assessments and can tell us that the children in Grade 3 are doing really well and we want to know what Threes can do, how are the Grade 2 are getting on and how are the Preps and it’s coming from that (Rosemaree, T1, p. 3).

Her awareness of links between education, society and government were evident. Teachers, then, were aware that the pressures, tensions and conflicts that they experienced through the changes in education were partially the result of political agendas.

*Teacher’s reaction to imposed power*

There was also a range of reactions to the imposition of power in these teachers’ working lives. A selection is discussed here, but the most common reaction was that of seeking empowerment through a variety of mechanisms and strategies. This empowerment reaction is discussed in further detail in the following section entitled Empowerment of self (teachers) and others, which concentrates on the other kinds of reactions to imposed power that are evidenced in the data.

Perhaps the best kinds of insight into how these teachers thought and felt about the way that power was used in their situations was when they were asked about the introduction of a hypothetical new literacy program, policy or document. Most indicated that they would manage it as best they could, utilising the aspects of it that they were comfortable with and leaving other parts of it behind. However, it was not that simple.

Oh, well if we had to use it, if the Department said we had to use, we have to use it, but we go back to the bits that you like, which is what we do anyway, we pull together (Pat, T1, p. 11).

Jodi’s comment seemed to imply that when forced into doing something, compliance was superficial and it camouflaged a degree of quiet resistance.

If they were absolutely adamant about, that I had to do it that way, then I would do it but I probably wouldn’t, under duress, do it to the best of my ability but if it was something that I wasn’t comfortable and happy with and didn’t believe in, totally (Jodi, T2, p. 11).
Another reaction to the imposition of change was an awareness that the assessment data collected for the system’s monitoring purposes failed to reflect all levels of the learning that may have occurred—teachers felt that the testing was not necessarily measuring what needed to be measured. The repercussions of this also reflected on the effectiveness of teachers as educators.

I’ve often heard Grade 2 teachers saying, ‘well goodness me, you know, my results aren’t going to look really good because we’ve just—even though they’ve learned effectively and consolidated skills—they haven’t made great gains’. So that could be a reflection on the teacher. And they [those who view the data] are failing to look at that—children’s developmental level (Katrina T1, p. 5).

Katrina’s reaction to the power relations within her school was one of cynicism. She saw the leadership in her school as being at odds with what she considered was needed and thought that its agendas were driven by self-interest rather than by “what you know works.”

so you get a bit cynical because you, what you know works […] They won’t appreciate it I suppose. They, [senior staff/Principal] they’re so busy trying to push themselves up a corporate ladder because it’s, it’s become a situation where they’ve had to fight for positions and they have to just keep moving ahead, so it becomes almost cut-throat (Katrina, T1, p. 4).

Katrina told of the situation where she was “spoken to” by the Principal about her students’ results. She was asked how she felt about this and responded:

It made me feel intimidated. Yeah. It made me feel that, um, you know that, what had I done wrong, even though I knew that I’d given it the best shot with that class. It also had a flow-on effect with the teacher next door who was really stressed umm … because with her personality being as such that she’s really quite highly strung and she was actually off on stress for a week over the fact that her results may be questioned. […] It doesn’t do much for staff morale (Katrina, T1, p. 6).

Not only were there repercussions of this for her, but also for her colleague as well.

Barbara also witnessed intimidation of teachers. In her case, it was the teachers who were not involved in the Spalding program in its first year. The insecurity came, not as a direct result of the imposition of power, but through the sense of being ‘left out’ when the parents were keen on the new program in which the teachers were not able to be involved. Her senior staff team made the decisions about the implementation of the Spalding program of literacy at her school. Parental pressure was the mechanism that engendered the teachers’ involvement in the literacy program.

The teachers in our school who didn’t do the Spalding training this year were threatened. They felt very threatened and they said so. They were most uncomfortable because the parents were impressed with the information that they were
getting about this (Barbara, T2, p. 18).

The subtle pressure for teachers to become involved indicated the ways that power was utilised in her school.

Rosemaree’s reaction to the imposition of power in her situation, where she had redesigned the Kindergarten reporting to parents *pro forma* and had not received the kind of acceptance that she had hoped for, was reported in the following manner.

> On a personal basis and that's what hurt because I didn't get the recognition for it. [...] because I knew that was the right thing to do and yet they [senior staff] couldn't see that or couldn't give me the recognition I thought I deserved. So, on a professional level, I didn’t mind the personal stuff because I knew [...] I was digging away where I probably shouldn't have, but on a professional level I thought, okay, you know, that's fine, don't like me for having a go, but recognise me for the professional thing I've done. So on looking back I was angry on that level (Rosemaree, T2, p. 5).

She felt that she had done the right thing, and yet had not received professional recognition for her efforts. Rosemaree was able to differentiate between the personal and professional level of her feelings and understandings. She knew the boundaries about what was acceptable for her in educational and professional contexts and she could articulate what she felt about this at a personal level.

**Summary of imposed power**

From this thematic analysis of the data it can be seen that the eight teachers were engaging with the power that had been imposed upon them through and by the educational system. This power was evidenced in the following ways: in the actions of senior staff and/or Principals as agents of the education system; through bureaucratic power in the form of expectations; and the use of ‘statistics’ and ‘research’ as a mechanism for control. Two other related issues that are noted from the data included the acknowledgement of the political nature of this imposed power and the teachers’ responses to instances of imposed power, including cynicism, intimidation, hurt and frustration. Nonetheless, despite the range of reactions, the teachers developed strategies for managing the pressure, tension and conflict.

**Disempowerment of teachers**

Within the data, incidents of disempowerment took several forms. Firstly was the more passive devaluing and lack of appreciation of the teachers themselves and their work. This was a matter of degree, with some incidents being more obvious in their
disempowering effects than others. There was evidence that teachers were
disempowered through the level of their teaching experience and in their subsequent
level of confidence about tackling issues of power. This was not always in the form
of tightly imposed power, but certainly in forms of power about which teachers were
conscious. There were intentional and sometimes unintentional incidents that
actively undermined teachers, and the sense of value that they attributed to their
work, through the specific actions of persons within the education system. The lack
of resources—material or personnel—that were available to support teaching and
learning was another way in which teachers felt they were disempowered. Without
the support of tangible resources or personnel, teachers experienced a sense of
disempowerment. Finally, there was the lack of support from the Principal or senior
staff within the school that caused teachers to feel disempowered. These aspects of
disempowerment were closely linked to the issue of how worthwhile or valued these
teachers felt.

Although the literature refers to empowerment through decision-making, this was not
strongly evidenced in the data. Teachers engaged in the processes of teaching and
made decisions based on their educational understandings. When this was in conflict
with those in authority, either at a system or school level, a sense of disempowerment
was experienced by the teachers.

**Disempowerment through devaluing and lack of appreciation**

These terms are used here to denote the ways in which the actions of those in power
resulted in teachers feeling devalued or under-appreciated. The feelings resulted
from explicit behaviours which may or may not have been intended to devalue
teachers and the work that they did, but none the less had this result.

For example, Sally noted that she had witnessed the use of the Principal or senior
staff’s power in focussing positively on one or two staff members. This had
alienated other teachers and had the effect of diminishing the self-confidence of
those who were not the ‘chosen few’:

> the alienation one, I probably haven't ever been in a really strong situation where [...] I've felt like that, but I've watched others, definitely where they've been alienated in terms of the hierarchy in the school doesn't, yeah, leaves them out basically in terms of some teachers are focussed on much more strongly than others in terms of ‘oh they're fantastic and we're going to talk about them all the time and their programs and what they do’ (Sally, T2, p. 2).
Chapter 4

Sally went on to acknowledge that all teachers are different and have different skills and there was a need to work together, not against each other.

...There are Principal's pets and senior staff pets and then [...] there's a definite thing where some teachers are stronger than others and have better skills, that's absolutely real, however you don’t help anyone by alienating them you help them by supporting them and you know working with teams of teachers together and that to try and share ideas and things like that. [...] I've worked in a number of schools where alienation has actually happened and, and I've worked in one situation where it's pulled a teacher down in terms of stress and not being able to cope (Sally, T2, p. 3).

This use of position and power had significant repercussions for teachers.

Katrina commented about “being spoken to” by the Principal about her students’ test results. This was another example of the ways in which the actions of the Principal caused a sense of devaluing for herself as a teacher (Katrina, T1, p. 6). Katrina also talked about how she felt unappreciated by the senior staff team in her school.

But I felt a lot of the frustration has been, not that I want bells and whistles, because I’m not that sort of person, but sometimes just a couple of words of appreciation from senior staff would have made all the difference I think (Katrina, T2, p. 2).

She went on to mention the demonstrable lack of respect she felt for her opinions:

There's no point having an opinion because it doesn't count for anything [...] If it was the right opinion as far as what the leadership wanted, yes. But if you had any aspirations to have something different; for example, we were asked to vote two people onto a leadership team and we were asked to nominate people and it was just thrown upon us and I made a comment that I wasn't happy to nominate somebody without asking their permission. To which I was taken aside and was told you know that wasn't the right sort of thing to say, because she [Principal] wanted a result that night (Katrina, T2, p. 5).

This was an example of the ways that power was used not only to undermine one teacher, but to manipulate the staff decision-making process.

In the dialogues with these teachers, there was a sense that they or their colleagues had experienced a lack of appreciation or had felt undervalued. These actions may or may not have been intended to lower the self-esteem of these teachers, but this was the consequence. The intentions of those in power were not investigated in this research. What is noted, though, are the ways in which these teachers experienced a diminished sense of being valued and appreciated by the educational system in general and by their senior staff in particular. Although specific incidents were mentioned, there was also a sense that these had a compound effect, resulting in a sense of being undervalued. In Katrina’s case, this led her to request a transfer for the following year. In others’ cases it was a more generalised sense of being undervalued, under-appreciated and unsupported in their teaching.
In some instances the under-valuing of teachers could also be seen to be a form of manipulation and control.

I've worked in schools too where if you actually are being an advocate for the needs of the children at the age that you're teaching you're basically looking out for yourself, not for the kids, and that really upsets me when I … I mean I've heard that done to others and it's been done to myself where you're actually made to feel like you're being self—interested (Sally, T1, p. 13).

Sally felt educationally justified in her advocacy for her students, but these actions were seen as self-interest and she failed to get the recognition or results that she desired.

Sally could see that, because the senior staff or Principal were not spending time in teachers’ classes, they had little idea of what the teachers were doing and so, through ignorance, were not able to give teachers any appreciation for their work.

I think part of it is that because the senior staff I've worked with in recent years don't actually spend any particular time in the classroom. You even wonder if they said anything whether it would be, whether it would mean anything to you because you sort of feel like well they don't even know what I do really, anyway so what are they basing their judgements on (Sally, T2, p. 4).

Teachers were disempowered because of the actions of their senior staff. They were not able to be valued for their work because senior staff were not aware of what was happening in classrooms.

Pat, on the issue of valuing or appreciation from the Principal or senior staff, thought that all teachers sought it and that there should be more of it.

You don't get any comments from the senior staff […] I think there should be more of that. I think it's something we all look for, but we don't get it (Pat, T2, p. 3).

Katrina could see the reverse situation where, when no feedback or valuing was happening, it caused her to wonder about what the senior staff thought of her:

But if you're not getting that positive feedback from senior staff you do wonder where you fit in the big picture. And you don't really know what they believe. They don’t check your written planning. They don’t check your philosophy, so they don't really have any understanding of what you're doing so I guess as far as that's concerned that's sort of driven me to that decision to move on (Katrina, T2, p. 4).

These teachers encountered various instances of devaluing, under-appreciation, and lack of support in the work that they did through the actions of their senior staff and Principals. This took the form not only of failure to recognise the work that was being done, but numerous incidents where teachers were actively undermined and
devalued by the actions of senior staff, Principals and the broader educational system. These actions led to teachers experiencing a broad sense of disempowerment as teachers, and diminished their capacity to commit to the tasks of teaching.

**Disempowerment through lack of resources and funding**

In the interviews with these teachers, there were comments about the ways that the lack of funding, personnel or material resources induced a sense of disempowerment. Rosemaree thought that if funding was available, then initiatives and innovations could help to support teachers and schools.

> And we all need more experience at doing it [supporting other teachers] and the more we articulate it the easier it becomes and there’s so much that could get done if we had the funding to put it together (Rosemaree, T1, p. 9).

The lack of funding to put together programs of support for teachers meant that this kind of support was not able to be achieved and teachers were further disadvantaged, undervalued and disempowered.

The use of the funds that were available for teacher and student support in schools was another way that teachers sensed power at work. When the students in schools with a broader socio-economic base did well, the schools were rewarded with funds. When students in schools with a low socio-economic basis failed or barely achieved baseline data benchmarks, rather than providing more funding to the schools to help address the social issues creating problems for these students, they were at risk of having funding withdrawn. Sally saw this as nonsensical.

> I mean Kemp [the then federal Minister for Education] did mention it at one stage didn’t he. His big thing was if you’re failing you’re not going to get as much money, and that’s actually what happened in Britain. So the schools with kids who were hugely disadvantaged became more disadvantaged. It was just, you know, ridiculous (Sally, T2, p. 10).

Not only did this situation further disadvantage students who were under-achieving according to the benchmarks, but it disempowered teachers from being able to potentially assist these students to achieve outcomes. Further funding was needed but not provided.

A lack of sufficient funding for PD for all the staff at her school was cited as the reason only some of the staff were able to be involved in the extensive and expensive training for the Spalding method: “The school didn’t have the funding for everybody, [to
do the Spalding training‖ (Barbara T2, p. 18). The repercussions, as mentioned, were that some teachers felt threatened and pressured because of their lack of involvement in the program. It was, in fact, an issue of the provision and allocation of financial resources to assist schools, through PD, to implement change.

Pat mentioned the ways in which she thought teachers were undervalued in the kinds of tangible support that was available. She linked this provision of resources to being “treated more like professionals” and saw that because senior staff work hard that they should be treated better because they “bloody-well deserve it”.

Sometimes I think we're undervalued. I mean why haven't we got a nice little toilet say? Where we are, at our school, with just the scungy rotten old toilets and not even a decent mirror or hand basin. I mean why don't we get a little bit of pampering. We work hard as professionals why don't we have a nice, a few nice mod cons in our school to say 'hey you're something special, you work hard'. And why don't the senior staff get mobile phones in cars and things. They need it, they work hard, they should be treated more like professionals. Maybe they get their holidays too, one or two days down to Freycinet Peninsula, or something. Well they bloody well deserve it because they work hard and there should be more of that. They should be treated with a bit more um, not respect, more … just, just indication (Pat, T2, p. 7)

This lack of tangible appreciation for their hard work as professionals served to disempower teachers. Because teachers invest so much of themselves in their teaching, this lack of appreciation erodes their personal sense of self-esteem, sending the self-doubting message that perhaps they are not considered worthwhile in the educational system. Evidence of professional respect from their employer in the form of funding and resources to support the tasks of teaching and learning was not sufficiently visible for these teachers, serving to diminish them and the work that they perform.

**Disempowerment through lack of support from Principal, senior staff and the system**

Another mechanism of disempowerment was through a lack of direct support from the Principal, senior staff or from the education system. Teachers were actively seeking, but not necessarily receiving support from their employer or its agents.

The expectation of some kind of occasional positive comment from the senior staff team was evident in Katrina’s comments:

It doesn't have to be monumental but it has to be just one sentence to say >gosh you've done a good job there' or even if a suggestion of >I tried this once how do you, you know you could incorporate that' and gives you another idea or even as far as I
can remember once I was doing a money theme and the senior person oh just came in with a game, a money game; >oh I knew you were doing this and this might help’. And just little things like that that show that yes they are thinking you’re doing something worthwhile. Whereas, I haven’t had one piece of interest in anything that I’ve done. Nobody looks at any displays you’re doing apart from the parents and children. Nobody is interested in us, or anything that you’re doing in the classroom (Katrina, T2, p. 3).

This was a reflection on the lack of feedback from the school leadership team. It sent the message to Katrina that, because the senior staff were not interested in what she did, perhaps her teaching was not worthwhile.

Barbara could see that, although professional teacher associations had been able, in the past, to effect change and have a sense of empowerment, this had changed. This kind of empowerment had been lost. Disempowerment came not only through the lack of group empowerment, but through the loss of strong leaders who had been advocates for teachers’ causes and had provided a voice for them.

We’ve still got ECET or KTA/ECET 23, um, I think most of the vibrant strong leaders that used to jump up and down are now either retired or they are in positions of power where they also are not able to say too much themselves. They also are a little sheltered by political hindrances (Barbara, T1, p. 21).

Barbara’s comment also indicated her awareness that sometimes strong leaders were rendered ineffective in empowering teachers because they were experiencing conflict and tension as a result of their new responsibilities in a leadership position.

The 1980s saw the removal of the position of Infant Mistress in the primary school. These positions were replaced by new leadership positions that did not provide the focus on the specific needs of early childhood students that had previously been evident. These changes were interpreted as diminished support for teachers of young children. Rosemaree could see that these changes had led to a lack of personnel empowered to support teachers and students in the area of early childhood.

I find it quite frustrating because (a) there’s not enough people around like ourselves who need to be outstanding and you know really radical. […] And so, you know I realised over the last 20 years there were […] some very articulate good leaders who could make a difference within the concept of what teachers felt, who they were and how they articulate who they were and that somehow has dissipated and disappeared and I feel that there are a lot of teachers out there that don’t feel that they have got

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23 ECET (Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania) and KTA (Kindergarten Teachers Association) are the only two early childhood teacher associations in Tasmania. Membership is open to all early childhood teachers in the state.
anyone that like we used to have. They can't have the support and as far as I was concerned I knew that with the Infant Mistress that there was this huge great big support there (Rosemaree, T1, pp 8–9).

Rosemaree was able to see that the sense of power felt by teachers had diminished with time as a result of continuing changes and that teachers no longer felt they were able to effect any real change of their own.

Because there are certain things, sadly, as an early childhood teacher, I keep hearing, we can't change that and that makes me sad because I feel we did have a sense of power ten, twenty years ago (Rosemaree, T2, p. 6).

Summary of disempowerment of teachers

From this overview of the analysis about the disempowerment of teachers it can be seen that there are several dimensions to the ways in which these teachers indicated they were disempowered in the course of their teaching lives. This section has evidenced the ways in which teachers have sensed they have been disempowered through the direct or indirect actions of the education system or its agents.

Disempowerment occurred when teachers sensed that they were not appreciated, valued or recognised for the work that they perform. This caused several kinds of responses from teachers, all of which resulted in a sense of disempowerment for them. The activities that contributed to this included under-appreciation and devaluing of teachers by the education system or its agents; the lack of resources and funding for teachers, which conveyed the message that they and/or the work that they do was not valued; and the lack of active support from senior staff and/or Principals in the form of encouragement and recognition.

Empowerment of self (teachers) and others

These teachers indicated a strong desire for support, for themselves or for others whom they deemed to be in need of empowerment. They talked about a range of mechanisms and strategies that were used in this quest. It would be difficult to determine from the data whether these teachers were reacting in a defiant way.

There was an element of resistance and defiance, but not a pervading sense of it. For the most part, these teachers’ desire for empowerment appeared to emanate from their response to treatment by the educational system. They were able to provide measured educational explanations for what they considered should, or ought to, be
happening. In order to effect changes to what they saw as intolerable situations, they needed to act. In seeking redress in certain contexts, they used mechanisms through which they anticipated greater empowerment in their working lives. Few of these instances were overt conflicts. They were generally conflicts about an individual’s opinion, or position on educational matters, about which the education system had acted or failed to act. Their response usually took the form of more passive and subtle strategies to work around the conflicts rather than utilising a direct, confrontational style.

The following discussion indicates the ways in which the teachers were seeking empowerment. These include seeking a voluntary transfer to achieve a more manageable work context, teacher’s involvement in professional organisations, teachers length of teaching experience acting as both empowerment and disempowerment, through personal learning or program development. In addition to these mechanisms there was also the implicit desire to empower students and the students’ families and parents.

**Empowerment through voluntary transfer: Seeking a more manageable situation**

Katrina, Sally and Barbara had been, or would be, involved in transferring to a new school. Katrina had indicated a definite sense of the need to empower herself through this course of action. It was not a pleasant choice for her, but one which she had made as a result of the unhappy situation at her current school. Katrina was the most outspoken of the participants, stating that: “I felt that I needed to move on for my own sake.” (Katrina, T2, p. 2), and that: “I think it’s time to make a clean cut. I need to build myself again into a new situation where I could be comfortable” (Katrina, T2, p. 5).

In discussing her desired transfer, Barbara said: “I hope with all my heart that I could be transferred next year. I should have been transferred this year. I don’t know why I’m in the school still now, but that’s okay” (Barbara, T1, p. 13). For Barbara the impending transfer was not one that was of her making, but something that would happen to her because of standard transfer procedures. This meant that there was not a lot of empowerment in that for her because she had little choice in the matters. However, because of the difficulties at her current school, she indicated that perhaps this might prove a better option.
Sally also indicated that although her first teaching posting was a positive experience with a strong leader:

> after three years of working at that school I felt like I needed to spread my wings and be able to experiment and I wasn’t being given the opportunity to explore with any other type of way of working with children. So I actually resisted by leaving the school and having a change of school (Sally T1, p. 10).

So for Sally the move to a new school provided her with the opportunity to spread her professional wings and experiment with her teaching practice, something that she felt she could not achieve in her first school.

Transferring to a new situation gave these teachers a chance of a more manageable situation. They considered that the working environment of their teaching lives needed to be changed and empowerment through transfer was a mechanism that was available to them.

**Empowerment through teachers’ associations: ECET and KTA**

Of the teachers involved in this study who indicated they were involved in professional associations, all saw it as a forum for discussion about significant issues, with potential for lobbying for the empowerment of teachers in the educational decision-making arenas. Two teachers indicated that they gained empowering benefits for themselves and witnessed empowerment for others in and through their involvement in these professional associations.

For example, Sally indicated there were benefits for her that were empowering.

> So I get a lot of that [sense of value] at work, have been you know on an association with a group of women that have been just great to work with and we feed off each other’s ideas and support each other and that’s great (Sally, T2, p. 3).

> we’re still pushing that one in terms of the associations but things like class sizes I hope will become an issue because the working party is happening and they are actually reporting back to the Minister on that by June next year (Sally, T1, p. 21).

Rosemaree emphasised the need for the committees to be supportive of classroom teachers:

> However I do feel that with those committees that I’m on, like the KTA, I would like to be far … to see our committees far more as advocates of the practitioners in the classroom (Rosemaree, T1, p. 8).

She also stated that, because she was a part-time Kinder teacher and was not able to “get to the staff room”, the support that she did not get from within the school she
gained through her involvement with KTA and ECET:

I've searched for that outside, but it's not until the last ten years that I've actually decided that I have enough confidence to take on more of a role within it, even in the last five and it's been really satisfying (Rosemaree, T2, p. 7).

Her sense of empowerment was achieved outside of the classroom.

**Empowerment through teaching inexperience and/or experience**

Length of teaching experience was both an empowering and disempowering issue. For a new teacher, it could act as a deterrent to speaking up. There was evidence in Georgie’s conversation that she felt that she was not yet experienced enough to tackle big issues with Principals or senior staff. The length of teaching experience could also be an empowering feature, when teachers realised that, with the years of experience and knowledge they had gained, they were sufficiently brave or knowledgeable to rely on that as a form of empowerment as a source of personal and professional confidence.

Rosemaree mentioned in her conversations the ways that “as one gets older and braver” (T1, p. 7) and that “you take more risks as you get older […] When you think ‘what the hell’…” (T1, p. 6). She also talked about the fact that it was her years of teaching experience that led her to a sense of bravery in following what she knew to be right: “after all the years of teaching I’m foolish enough or brave enough to use my gut feeling” (T1, p. 2). Sally also acknowledged the bravery that experience gave when she said:

> And there’s no way as a teacher that you feel empowered enough to go and do that [to speak to the Principal about changes that need to be made] until you’ve been teaching for a while and you’re more experienced and feel you can express your opinions and points of views (Sally, T1, p. 13).

Rosemaree also mentioned the empowering benefit of changing the Kinder reporting documents: “at this time in my career where I was strong enough to hang in there and if it happened twenty years ago maybe I couldn’t have done it” (Rosemaree, T2, p. 5).

This was supported by the empowering sense of self-confidence that she had acquired over the years of her teaching experience.

Georgie had been teaching for four years and was aware of her comparative lack of length of teaching experience. With that came the awareness that others had a greater depth of experience and more ‘power’ as a result of that experience. Georgie made repeated references in our conversations about her lack of experiential teaching knowledge: “in the schools that I’ve been in, there’s only two so far” (Georgie, T2, p. 2).
For Georgie then, the awareness that her teaching experience was relatively brief meant that she was disempowered in comparison to those with whom she worked. Her use of the phrase “so far” indicated that she was looking ahead to times when she would have gained experience in more than just two school contexts.

**Empowerment through personal professional development**

There were several instances where teachers noted the ways in which their own learning regime had contributed to their sense of empowerment and professional self-worth. In these instances knowledge, or more particularly being seen to have further knowledge, was equated with power.

Pat indicated that her sense that she was a valued staff member at her current school had come about through the process of reading and learning:

> Well when I first went into the school everybody was wonderful, they were such lovely staff and they were very supportive so it was, it was only self inflicted that sort of feeling and by my, by the professional development I went through and, and by a lot of reading I did and just by trial and error and learning from the situation and from my peers and other teachers. That’s how I gained the knowledge and so through that gaining knowledge […] So that’s where I think I’ve gained in my confidence (Pat, T2, p. 3).

In her case, she had embarked on a personal learning program to empower herself and thereby positioned herself as a more knowledgeable and valuable staff member.

Barbara experienced a similar situation. In her case, it was about upgrading her teaching qualifications and through this process she had found that the positive effects of this experience were empowering for her. “But having just done that Bachelors thing, it’s been great, you know, with [University lecturer] and the others, they’ve sparked me up and got me thinking of other areas” (Barbara, T2, p. 17). For Barbara her involvement in the training and implementation of the Spalding Method could be seen to have an immunising effect—against the disempowerment of either being required to be involved or of feeling excluded because of non-involvement. In this sense, her involvement was a self-protective mechanism against disempowerment. “and then I thought okay, I’ll put my name down for it because I thought I can’t keep on knocking something that I don’t know anything about” (Barbara, T2, p. 19).

Rosemaree’s account of the way that she felt the need to re-write the document she used in reporting student progress to parents indicated a form of self-empowerment.
She had created a new version that had greater relevance for her and for the parents and, as a result, she received positive feedback from the Prep teacher:

and I put together some documentation for my own for reading which is interesting when you think about why we do reading in Kindergarten, you know, the skill of reading but that's another issue. And, and another sheet for writing[…] I've honed it up and it's been the most useful thing and I felt good about it because last year's Prep teachers said it was the most valuable document they could have been given because there was really basic gutsy stuff, a little bit developmental and they could see where they were at. (Rosemaree, T1, p. 2.)

Rosemaree also gained personal empowerment and affirmation through involvement with Reggio Emilio\textsuperscript{24} education. She mentioned it in passing on several occasions and in this was an indication that she was personally empowered and affirmed through this learning process.

I was at a Reggio Emilio conference and I just went 'Oh!' you know it was just so amazing, so there's a lot of issues about what would happen for me in that area down the track […] (Rosemaree, T1, p. 5).

It's one of the things that I learned from Reggio that was, you say to them [children] >I wonder why ….' And you see what happens and from that. And that, to me, leads that curiosity and that interest and love to learn. Some people say that's literacy (Rosemaree, T1, p. 6).

And in a sense it was really reaffirming to hear them because I thought, yeah, I'm feeling really comfortable with this. This is my sort of, philosophy base and what we're trying to get to (Rosemaree, T2, p. 3).

Her own passion and further learning was empowering her in her teaching practice and in the ways that she saw herself as a teacher.

**Empowerment through encouraging other teachers**

Sally and Rosemaree were particularly frank about their opinions on the need to support other teachers. Both of them were involved in the KTA and ECET groups and saw this as a mechanism for supporting other teachers.

Sally wanted to support members of her staff who needed recognition and support. She also indicated that she was aware of ways to build up other teachers. In her role as an acting senior staff member she had actively sought to support her staff by writing them individual notes of appreciation:

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\textsuperscript{24} Reggio Emilio is a unique way of looking at the way children learn. It challenges our understanding of ‘potential’ and how ‘potential’ is recognised and interpreted. Reggio Emilio looks at the environment and the community and the child’s point of view as the foundation for learning. Much of the understandings and discoveries developed by children are gained through their fresh, uninhibited creativity via mediums of visual and performing arts.

(http://www.educationfoundation.org.au/full_program.asp?programID=53&programName=Children's+Learning+Fund&subPagesID=13 Retrieved 10\textsuperscript{th} August, 2005)
And I just think people need that sort of feedback and we don't get enough of it from each other and I think we do need to be much better (Sally, T2, p. 4).

So I suppose I feel that frustration at the moment that I think that our staff are doing a really good job and I try to let them know that you know. I think we've got some great teachers doing some excellent and interesting work for their kids that involve lots of aspects of all those sorts of programs anyway (Sally, T2, p. 8).

Her motivation in this task was the support of her colleagues and appreciation of both the work that was being done and an awareness that teachers need to feel valued. “If you can say something about that and make them feel like yeah there's one little thing someone said to me that makes me feel like this is of value’ (Sally, T2, p. 4). This was in direct contrast to Katrina’s experience where she received no support, valuing or recognition from her senior staff team.

Pat noted that, while she had given “gifts and thanks” to other members of staff and to the Principal, she was aware of the ways in which teachers supported each other.

I’ve given my Principal a gift and thanks for support or something like that. I’ve given other teachers gifts and I always try and give them when they do something and say oh that was wonderful and so we do, we look after each other but we don’t often do it for senior staff (Pat, T2, p. 5).

Katrina noted that amongst her staff there was opportunity for staff support through the teams that had been created. Elsewhere she noted though that this had a competitive effect for some and, in that sense, was counter-productive.

And I think there’s been teams built around people supporting each other, [...] for instance the Early Childhood team would support each other because there is nobody else to support them (Katrina, T2, p. 3).

Because of a lack of other kinds of support, the early childhood team of teachers would offer support to each other.

Rosemaree, in looking ahead to her retirement, said that she would like to be able to use that time in the support of teachers: “and I would love to have somehow that we could support our teachers " (Rosemaree, T1, p. 9). Rosemaree could envisage that, even after she had officially finished teaching, she would continue to support teachers, “somehow.”

**Empowerment through decision-making processes**

There were instances where the teachers indicated that they were empowered to make decisions that affected their teaching lives. This ability to have a voice in the decision-making processes of the school was a form of empowerment for these teachers.
It was an issue that we discussed at quite some length at staff meeting last year I know. I think it was last year. And it was decided that there were to be no bells or no interruptions of any sort during (Jodi, T1, p. 9).

Here Jodi noted that as a staff they were empowered to make this decision. This was not an individual making decisions about their own practice, but a whole staff decision about school-wide issues. Presumably, the power to make this decision was granted to them by senior staff or the Principal.

Barbara commented that her involvement in training to use the Spalding Method of literacy was her decision. "No, there's still flexibility, um, whether Spalding, it's my choice to do it or not. It is not something that we are all going to do. Um, it's early days there. I'm still open and willing" (Barbara, T1, p. 16). It could, however, be noted that this was not a truly free decision as there was pressure exerted that engendered compliance with what had been a senior staff/Principal’s decision.

**Summary of empowerment of self (teachers) and others**

This section of the theme of power has indicated the ways in which teachers have sought to empower themselves and others in the course of their teaching lives. The desire for empowerment appeared to come as a natural result of their interactions with those with whom they worked. At times this empowerment was a necessary part of professional survival—as with Katrina’s decision to transfer to a new school. At other times it was a result of a specific instance or encounter from which they sought subtle forms of empowerment—as with Rosemaree’s engagement with re-writing the reporting document. At yet other times there was a broader sense of the need to self-empower and support other teachers—as with the involvement in professional associations and individual professional development.

**Summary of teachers in contexts of power**

This section, Teachers in contexts of power, is the second of three themes that were revealed through analysis. The power relationships were evident in the data in the ways in which the education system and/or its agents—either senior staff or Principals, policy and program makers through implicit expectations about teaching practices—laid claim to power over these teachers. These came in the sense of imposed power, the direct and implicit expectations of actions and attitudes about
teaching practice; disempowerment of teachers, in the form of intended or inadvertent actions or implications which resulted in teachers sensing their inherent powerlessness against the educational system and its decisions; and empowerment of self (teachers) and others, in the ways in which these teachers sought empowerment for themselves and their colleagues. Power issues created conflicts for these teachers, but the data provided no evidence about overt confrontation. Rather, these teachers were quiet in their acceptance of the power-based contexts and when driven to action did so in subtle ways.

In this, the second of the three themes that have been drawn from the conversation data, it can be seen that these teachers engage with power in many ways. Their position as employee places them in an automatic position of subservience to their employer—the Department of Education. There were many ways in which the employer enacted its power over these teachers. The senior staff and the system were conduits of this power—policy and its enactment had implications for these teachers. The use of research, statistics, benchmarks and accountability were other ways in which the education system actively controlled its teachers. The teachers acknowledged the political nature of this use of power. Their reactions to the ways in which the system used its power included a range of both emotions and actions.

The disempowerment of teachers was evidenced in the active and passive devaluing and undermining of teachers. This study did not make presumptions about whether the devaluing was intentional or accidental, its occurrence and the effects on teachers are what has been considered here. The lack of resources and funding and the minimal support that teachers perceived they were given were other ways in which this bureaucratic power impacted on these teachers’ working lives.

One of the most significant reactions to the covert imposition of power was the ways in which teachers sought to empower themselves and others through the processes of their working lives. Encouraging and supporting each other, active involvement in teacher associations, personal learning programs and involvement in staff decision making processes were all evidence of the ways in which empowerment was sought and gained for these teachers. Perhaps the most negative actions or reaction were the instances where teachers had sought empowerment through transferring to a new
school—feeling that the change was necessary for their teaching health.

The next section discusses the third of the three themes in this second level of data analysis—that of identity.

### 4.2.4 Teacher identity

The previous sections, the impact of change and on teachers and teachers under power, deal with the repercussions for the teachers and their work lives, giving evidence of the impact of change on these teachers. This section examines the more complex issue of how teachers’ individual identities were challenged, transformed and/or stabilised by the changes that occurred in their work lives. Its focus is on the impact of change and power on the individual identity of each of the participant teachers. The processes of ongoing educational change had meant that teachers needed to re-examine what they knew, felt, believed and understood in the light of the expectation of change. This process of re-examining and renegotiating their identity created tensions and conflict for the teachers.

Identity, as it is utilised in this study, provides a lens for viewing teachers, investigating their personal responses and seeking a deeper awareness and understanding about how their identities were affected by their teaching lives. Identity in this study is the conglomeration of a range of elements which determine who we are as people. These include personality, physical attributes, life history, understandings based on knowledge, feelings, beliefs, and values. All these qualities and elements combine to make up the unique individual that is each person. This identity is not fixed, but is free to be challenged, transformed and/or affirmed through the events of our lives. It is this identity that is being reported on here.

The data reported on here included some of the instances that indicated that these teachers’ identities were affected by the changes that occurred in their work lives. Frequently these teachers expressed opinions, based on values, knowledge and beliefs, with a supporting case for why they knew, valued or believed something to be true. As with all of the data analysis and reporting it was not practical in this study to report on all the instances and hence there are some that are not reported
here. These are but a selection, covering the eight participants and showing the depth and breadth of the impacts of change on their identities.

The evidence of change and its repercussions on their work lives influencing how teachers saw themselves as teachers and as people is spread throughout the transcripts. Self-perception and self-esteem are issues that were raised and have been touched on already. Suzanne commented that when changes occurred, for her, “it means you always have to do a lot of soul searching” and caused her to question whether or not she was “doing a good job” (Suzanne, T1, p. 2). Twice she said that “it affects your confidence” and also caused her to wonder “what am I doing wrong or … what do I have to change” and the result of this was that “it makes me very cynical” (Suzanne, T1, p. 7). The process of learning about the new, accommodating it and then finding out later on that the changes have been superseded, led to frustration and cynicism. Through these changes, Suzanne’s identity was challenged. Yet, her identity simultaneously determined how she perceived the incoming changes.

Cynicism was mentioned by six of the eight teachers—Barbara, Sally, Katrina, Jodi, Suzanne and Pat. They felt that there was an element of cynicism in their attitudes to the changes and developments in education. This was typified by Katrina’s statement:

I think because we’re flooded with so much of it, so much change so quickly. And I think because we’re not given the chance to get our teeth into something. We’re not given a chance to evaluate, um, before the next thing comes along. And because a lot of it’s re-written in the same—some people say, oh, you’ve re-invented the wheel yet again (Katrina, T1, p. 3–4).

Her identity determined how she saw this innovation and at the same time the innovation required her to reassess her values, beliefs and knowledge.

Katrina’s reaction to the leadership within her school was also one of cynicism. She saw the current leadership as being at odds with what was needed in the school and believed that agendas were driven by self-interest rather than “what you know works.” She felt a lack of appreciation of her teaching skills from the senior staff team and it had the effect of causing her to be cynical.

so you get a bit cynical because you, what you know works, they won’t um … They won’t appreciate it I suppose. They, [senior staff/Principal] they’re so busy trying to push themselves up a corporate ladder because it’s, it’s become a situation where they’ve had to fight for positions and they have to just keep moving ahead, so it becomes almost cut-throat (Katrina, T1, p. 4.)
The changes in leadership and lack of appreciation of the work that she did had contributed to her sense of cynicism. Her identity—her professional awareness about what mattered most to her, her values and beliefs—determined that the senior staff’s agenda was one of corporate ladder-climbing rather than acknowledging her efforts and her students’ learning.

Barbara talked about the pressure that has built up over the previous five years resulting in the feeling of continually needing to demonstrate her students’ progress and having to “justify, justify, justify absolutely every single minute of what you are doing” (Barbara, T1, p. 6). This need to justify the content of her teaching and to be continually accountable seemed to weigh heavily on Barbara. She also talked about teachers who were “feeling that they’ve failed, and these are really brilliant teachers, because so much of the day is spent trying to, um do behaviour management” (Barbara, T1, p. 22). She observed colleagues who were catering for increased numbers of difficult students but lacked support when managing behaviourally challenging students. Good teachers who are “feeling that they’ve failed” because they lack support are significantly affected. Their identities are challenged as a result of these experiences.

Pat and Katrina voiced their concern about needing to re-learn and start again in a new school. They would have to renegotiate their position, values, beliefs and knowledge in the new school context. For Katrina though, this was preferable to staying where she was and facing further loss of self-esteem:

I need to build myself again into a new situation where I could be comfortable, and I think probably I’m aware that it will be building the foundations again but I think I’m more able to cope you know (Katrina, T2, p. 5).

The self-esteem component of her identity would be challenged as a result of the change by the potential for rebuilding herself in the new school. She faced the possibility of again feeling disempowered as a new teacher in the school and having to work at achieving personal power and acceptance in the new context.

Another reaction to change that impacted deeply was acknowledged by Katrina, who claimed that the data which they were required to collect about students failed to reflect the actual learning that had occurred. She indicated that other teachers felt that the testing was not necessarily measuring what needed to be measured. This had
repercussions for the teachers as educators—the testing data failed to measure progress, therefore the teachers were not doing their job.

I’ve often heard Grade 2 teachers saying, ‘well goodness me, you know, my results aren’t going to look really good because we’ve just—even though they’ve learnt effectively and consolidated skills—they haven’t made great gains’. So that could be a reflection on the teacher. And they’re failing to look at that—children’s developmental level (Katrina, T1, p. 5).

There was a feeling then that it was not just the students who were being monitored, but the teaching and therefore the teacher as well. This is another instance of perceived powerlessness in the system, which might not only monitor student progress, but might also use the data to assess her worth as a teacher without taking into account the factors over which she as teacher has no control. This challenged her identity in the sense that it left her feeling insecure about her ability to validate herself as a teacher. Her beliefs about her worth as a teacher were potentially pitted against these powerful forces. It undermined the value she assigned to her teaching and this cut to the core of who she was as a person and as a teacher.

Katrina told of the situation where she was “spoken to” by the Principal about her students’ results. She was asked how she felt about this and responded:

It made me feel intimidated. Yeah. It made me feel that, um, you know that, what had I done wrong, even though I knew that I’d given it the best shot with that class. It also had a flow on effect with the teacher next door who was really stressed because with her personality being as such that she’s really quite highly strung and she was actually off on stress for a week over the fact that her results may be questioned. [...] It doesn’t do much for staff morale (Katrina, T1, p. 6).

She felt justified in her teaching of the students as she had given it her “best shot,” yet being spoken to about her students’ progress made her feel “intimidated.” Power was used against her and with the effect of challenging her self-worth as a teacher. Not only were there repercussions of this for her at a personal level, but also for her colleague as well.

Barbara, when discussing the ways that change had affected her, re-asserted her ability to be flexible and adaptable about all the changes. She took on these initiatives as they came along, enjoying the challenges, indicating that she thought it was good for her, but she also was selective in what she chose to take on. Her identity, in the form of values, influenced what she believed and how she adapted to these changes.

I suppose for me, I’m flexible. One of the biggest things, though for me, is literacy curriculum has changed so much over all these years [...] I encompass everything that
is new but pick out of it what I feel is worthwhile for myself [...] I did the Spalding full course in June/July of this year and have started using it. That's really good for old bones to see; well it's not a new thing, but just to start bringing in new ideas into the classroom. I think I enjoy new challenges and things (Barbara, T1, p. 1).

Barbara could see that her beliefs about the situation led her to try to ‘keep up’ by adapting to change, and she presumed that most teachers were doing likewise. For her, ‘keeping up’ was linked to ‘incorporating’:

Because we have had a lot of change and we have tried. We are presuming that most teaching staff have tried, who are my kind of age, tried very hard to keep up and incorporate and to, you know (Barbara, T1, p. 10).

In this change context Barbara was happy to adapt the content of her teaching, but her teaching style was not open to negotiation. In this way she set boundaries about what could be challenged or changed in her working domain. Her teaching style here is characterised as “me”:

Yeah there’s a lot of me that’s never changed. The way I teach is fairly, you know, much the same. I think the way in which I put across the information is me, you know, I can’t change that, the type of information I put across does [change] (Barbara, T2, p. 7).

She was aware of what she could and/or would change and what was non-negotiable. This awareness, born out of her individual identity, was a self-protective mechanism.

Rosemaree mentioned how she felt as a mature teacher with some years of experience behind her. She sensed that “as one gets older and braver” (Rosemaree, T1, p. 7) “you take more risks as you get older, I don’t know, when you think ‘what the hell...’” (T1, p. 6). She used her identity, in the form of her teaching experience and the emotions that she felt, as a lens for viewing the experiences that she had gained throughout her teaching life.

Rosemaree also mentioned the fact that her changing of the Kinder reporting documents and subsequent approach to the Principal for support happened “at this time in my career where I was strong enough to hang in there and if it happened twenty years ago maybe I couldn’t have done it.” (T2, p. 5). Strength and teaching experience went hand in hand in this context. This was also referred to when Rosemaree talked about the fact that it was her years of teaching experience that led her to a sense of bravery in following what she knew to be right: “after all the years of teaching I’m foolish enough or brave enough to use my gut feeling” (Rosemaree, T1, p. 2).
Another example of the ways that change was mediated by the teacher’s individual identity was when Barbara talked about her decision to become involved in the Spalding program at her school. Her motivation was driven by the knowledge that without first-hand experience and knowledge, her criticisms were not valid. Her beliefs about herself and her work facilitated her involvement: “and then I thought, okay, I'll put my name down for it because I thought I can't keep on knocking something that I don’t know anything about” (Barbara, T2, p. 19).

Jodi, when talking about the situation where she revised the Records of Development documents for her Kindergarten level students indicated the ways that she used her understandings and professional knowledge to manage change. Her identity dictated how best to manage this for all concerned.

And so I developed those, the Records of Development taking the Kinder bits out of the Kinder/Prep section really, or any Prep bits that were more pertaining to Prep that I thought some children would achieve in Kinder. Because you need to consider a broad spectrum of ability, and I've got a couple of little people actually who are well, I suppose they'll sort of fit well into the Prep program quite easily now I suspect so. Yeah, so I think I needed to put some of the other outcomes in that would cater for those children (Jodi, T2, p. 8).

Rosemaree had a similar manner of mediating how things would be through her understandings about what was best—based on aspects of her identity, in this instance, her professional beliefs. Rosemaree also found personal and professional affirmation through her involvement with Reggio Emilio. Because it was aligned to her own educational philosophies it had an appeal for her that was empowering. Her identity, made up of her beliefs about children and childhood, were supported in this endeavour. The way that she perceived this change was determined by her identity.

The following excerpt from Pat’s first interview highlights the ways that identity and change are interlinked. She talked about going to a new school and having to re-establish herself in a new environment and the ways that her beliefs and emotions would determine how she might conceive and respond to this kind of change.

I think that would be very demoralising, seeing yourself as not quite up with what's going on. I have considered that going to a school that maybe they don’t even put an emphasis on literacy and being in a school that’s so … we’ve got our resources so well tuned it would be so disappointing, going to school that hasn’t, and when you can see this vast need. But then if it’s a Spalding school, personally I haven’t … I’ve only done a bit of professional development on Spalding and I can see it satisfies one area but I can’t see it satisfying everybody, I mean, all the children's needs. I would say it was more of a remedial method. Yes so it’s going to be difficult if that happens (Pat,
Her appreciation of the benefits of currently being well-resourced and ‘tuned’ into the literacy area is evident. This was important for her, and the potential for not having that at her new school, in conjunction with the way that she perceived the Spalding method, and the knowledge that this might well be the case for her next year, caused her significant concern. Her identity, being the amalgam of her beliefs, knowledge and experiences, was determining how she received and perceived these changes.

The following excerpt from Barbara’s interview shows clearly the interaction between change and her identity.

Okay so if I had [District Superintendent] sitting in front of me here and saying Barbara how do you feel? Okay [pause] I wanted to learn more. I wouldn't have gone on and gone back and done my Bachelor of Education if I didn’t think there was more to learn. So most of me has been keen to learn more [...] Um, that's true. But there is still the side of me that is ready to stand back and say, okay now what has worked here. Because a lot of it is still in the early research stage. So, I’m prepared to try it out and look at things, that’s fine. But I’m always prepared to drop them like a red mullet25 if I find that research has suddenly shown that, no it doesn't work. But I will then turn around and say, hey, so what works? (Barbara, T1, p. 15).

Barbara’s identity was such that she was willing to take on new challenges and was keen to learn, but at the same time she used her professional judgement to assess the new Spalding program with a ‘wait and see’ attitude. The change would be accepted or rejected or mediated according to how its results were seen in the future. Her identity in the form of her educational understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values worked together to determine how she assessed the change. In the process, she was simultaneously experiencing the need to re-assess, renegotiate and redefine her own sets of knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values in the light of the changes.

**Summary of teacher identity**

The concept of identity that is employed in this study refers to an amalgam of qualities and elements that include personality, physical attributes, life history, understandings based on knowledge, feelings, beliefs and values that has been

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25 ‘Red mullet’ is a colloquial phrase, similar to ‘hot potato’, meaning she would drop it quickly because it was useless.
proposed as a way of viewing identity in this study. In this sense then, teachers are the product of their individually constructed identities; the amalgam of all the elements, characteristics and forces that combine in an holistic view of identity. The teacher’s identities were integrally involved in the processes of responding to change and power relationships in the course of their working lives. Their identities, usually in the form of their educational knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values, determined how they viewed events and people and were simultaneously challenged, affirmed or transformed as a result of their experiences. Their opinions and positions about issues of change and power were created from their understandings that, in turn, were formed from the amalgam of these identity qualities and elements. These teachers’ identities then, acting as the filter or lens through which they viewed their teaching lives, had a dual role. They determined how events were received and perceived but they also acted as a mechanism for self-protection, determining how teachers felt and acted in response to events and people. Through this complex process, the teachers’ identities were simultaneously being challenged, affirmed and/or transformed.

**Summary of the second level of data analysis**

This second of the three levels of data analysis is the report of the interrogation of the data that arrived at the three themes of *change, power* and *identity*. The theme of *change* revealed the kinds of change with which these teachers indicated they engaged. Change for the teachers in this study had a range of effects and repercussions. At times, these effects were at a personal level and related to the ways that they felt about and reacted emotionally to change. At other times the teachers commented about the resulting changes to their teaching practice what they were required to do or to change. In other instances, change had brought about professional conflicts and raised concerns for these teachers. This section has foregrounded the ways that teachers were affected by change, highlighting the impacts and conflicts that it created.

The second theme of *power* has indicated the three levels at which teachers engaged with power. The imposed power—top-down instances of explicit and implicit expectations, actions and directions—was evident in their understandings and interactions with their employer and/or its agents. The ways in which these teachers
felt disempowered through the direct or indirect actions of their employer or its agents had also become evident. The teachers’ reactions to this sense of disempowerment has been one of quiet self-assertion in subtle or low-impact confrontation in an effort to self-empower or to empower those around them. This sense of collegial support and empowerment was important to these teachers.

The third theme of teacher identity has been explored in the data analysis by looking at the concept of identity as an indicator of the humanity of these teachers. In acknowledging that they were working in contexts of change, the analysis sought instances of the impacts of change on their individual identities. These identities, in the form of the amalgam of the elements of personality, physical attributes, life history, and understandings based on knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values, determined how they viewed events and people. Their opinions and positions about issues, including issues of change and power, were created from their understandings which, in turn, were formed from the amalgam of these identity qualities and elements. Their identities were simultaneously challenged, affirmed and/or transformed as a result of the experiences and events in their working lives.

The next level of data analysis continues to unpack the issues of change, power and identity by using a framework of questions to further interrogate the data for understanding about the impact of change on teachers.

4.3 The third level of data analysis: Change, power and identity using Gee’s framework for analysis

Gee’s (1999) framework for analysis, as outlined in Chapter 3, Methodology, is used to further illuminate meaning and understanding from the data about the three interrelated themes of change, power and identity. Each of the themes is analysed using passages of data and relevant questions from Gee’s framework. For the themes of change and power, the sub-categories that were identified from the second level of data analysis have been used to structure this final level of analysis. As no specific sub-categories were determined for the theme of identity, none were used. As stated in the Chapter 3, Methodology passages of data were selected for this level of analysis on the basis that they evidenced the themes and/or sub-categories. Selection
of passages was made to provide a cross-section of participants and passages of transcripts of the data.

The six kinds of world or reality building that are identified by Gee (1999) and provide the basis for his 18 investigative questions that are used in this section of the analysis are listed under 3.1.7 Gee’s framework for analysis on page 121 of this document and are referred to throughout this next level of data analysis.

4.3.1 Change

The eight kinds of change that were identified from the whole data set and reported on in the second level of data analysis are:

1. Changes in policies, programs and documents
2. Changes in expectations
3. Age, aging and length of teaching service
4. Changes and transfers
5. Changes in leadership
6. Changes in professional support structures
7. Societal changes
8. Behaviour management changes

These provided the structure for the analysis of change and were analysed in sequence. Gee’s framework was used as the lens through which further illumination of meaning and understanding were sought from the data.

1. Changes in policies, programs and documents

Barbara—“Never good enough”

The first passage of conversation analysed is a segment from Barbara’s second interview where she talked about the Spalding Method of teaching literacy which had recently been introduced in her school. While much of her conversation over the two interviews related to the changes that the introduction of the Spalding method had brought, this segment indicates a link between her opinions about change, the Spalding method and her reaction to her Assistant Principal’s (AP) comments. This change in literacy program had a variety of repercussions for her. The extract is copied here and discussed in the following section.

Interviewer: Does the, does the literacy curriculum, not just, not just the … Spalding program that you’re involved in, but literacy curriculum across the last couple of years and including Spalding, does that send a message to you, do you get a message from the Department to you, Barbara?
Barbara: Oh the Department, that we’re never doing, that what we’re doing is never good enough, which is the reason why we have to keep trying and developing.

Interviewer: Okay so that’s it?

Barbara: Oh very strongly, yeah. Very strongly.

Interviewer: Does that affect you, does that bother you or do you just take that in your stride and say it’s always going to be that way?

Barbara: No, I was fairly comfortable until, I must admit until Spalding and Count Me in Too and all those other things came …

Interviewer: So over the last couple of years…?

Barbara: Because yeah well only until they, because they were suddenly implying that what we’re doing before was a waste of time, that, you know, over 50 per cent of what we were doing maybe was, could be far better used if we introduced these programs. That doing spelling, like I remember when [Assistant Principal] first came to the school and I was doing the usual spelling you know you have your different groups doing different words each day.

Interviewer: Yeah, ‘Look Say Cover Write Check’?

Barbara: Yes, ‘Look Say Cover Write Check’, you know and your at-risk kids might be doing maybe five or six words in the week because they’re really trying to get to know it. Whereas the better kids might be doing 14 words in the week and this sort of thing, and [names AP], and I didn’t really know her much but walked in here I was you know my first Grade 1 in over a decade, and here I am with my Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check, and [names AP], ‘Oh,’ she said. ‘Oh’, she said, ‘I know a much better way than this’, she said. ‘I know where they can learn 30 words a week’. And then looked at a couple and then walked out. Well, I was pretty staggered because [chuckle] you know here’s me as I sort of mentioned trying to do a bloody good job and having this new person coming in telling me that what I was doing was old hat, waste of time, and that in many schools they’re now learning 30 words a week, you know. And I must admit that hit me hard because I didn’t know what she was talking about, because she didn’t mention Spalding and I just felt silly. Because here was the new AP telling me that what I was doing was old-fashioned and that research had shown that it was a waste of time, yeah so you sort of:

Interviewer: And have you recovered from that?

Barbara: Oh well it’s, [chuckle] oh yes you see in some ways because now I’m the person who is looking around and saying okay well I want to use it in this way already. As I was saying before, this is Spalding, and you know since then I’ve learnt enough and seen enough to think that there is, there is quite a bit of it that I would recommend. But there’s also parts of it that I would tone down a little and take longer over, given the age group I’ve got and that is exactly what I’m going to do. And I’ve just got to convince the other Grade 1s, [chuckle] yeah, but because you see we did it at the end of this year, we did it with children who were older. Whereas next year we’re supposed to start with children just coming out of Prep.

Interviewer: At the beginning of the year?

Barbara: Beginning of the year.

Interviewer: Okay.

Barbara: Yeah and so that’s why I want to initiate some meetings with the other Grade 1s and say hey hang on, what are we going to do here with kids who aren’t reading and writing yet, and who still aren’t …? (Barbara, T2, pp 12–13)

As this passage of data explores Barbara’s relationship with the Assistant Principal and the subsequent impact of a range of changes on her identity, as well as her
relationship with her employer, the most relevant of Gee’s (1999, p. 93) questions (as outlined on page 121) concerned Identity and Relationship Building:

11. What relationships and identities (roles and positions), with their concomitant personal, social and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values, seem to be relevant in this situation?

12. How are these relationships and identities stabilized or transformed in this situation?

These questions will be addressed in order. Firstly, what are the relationships, identities, roles and positions that are evidenced here? Barbara’s relationship with her employer and/or its agents is evident in the first exchange about the teacher’s work activities being “never good enough”.26 This was, for Barbara, the rationale for the need for change.

The initial question that was posed to Barbara in this segment was part of the ongoing conversation about changes to literacy programs, policies and documents. When asked about her response to these changes, she indicated that the message, at a personal level, was that “what we’re doing is never good enough.” The rationale or justification for why the education system kept changing its policies, programs and documents was not a chase for the elusive best way of teaching, but indicated that “what we’re doing” was not only not good enough, but “never” good enough. It seemed that no matter what “we” do, it was never going to be “good enough” for change to stop happening. Barbara’s use of the personalised pronoun “we” brought it closer to home. It was not the methods that the education system expected teachers to use or the Education Department itself (distant and responsible for change and curriculum) that were not “good enough,” it was “we” (teachers, at the coal face, the deliverers of the curriculum), and that what “we” have been doing was “never good enough”. This, though, remained at the collective “we” level and Barbara did not personalise it to the extent of stating it in the first person, “I”, that what she, personally was doing was “never good enough”. This left her the safe position of being able to assert that if she was “never good enough” then neither were the other, collective “we”, the teachers.

26 Double quotations marks are used to indicate that these are participants’ actual words and phrases.
This was followed by the statement that this was why “we” have “to keep trying and developing”. There was a frustration about this rationale though, an endless cycle of change because teachers were “never good enough.” If teachers were considered to be “never good enough” then why did they have to keep trying so hard and developing, as no amount of presumed “trying and developing” would produce the effort or results that would be considered “good enough”. Perhaps this gave a hint of the cause for some of the cynicism that was present throughout much of the conversations with these teachers.

Barbara’s relationship with the education system was based on the employer/employee reality of an imbalance of power. What was noticeable was the almost invisible assumption that somehow the work that teachers engaged with should be considered to be “good enough”. How though were teachers to know whether their work—their efforts or student outcomes—was going to be deemed acceptable. This notion of getting some kind of recognition or feedback from the employer that indicated acceptance of the work that was being done was implicit here. Yet the feedback that was given to Barbara was that teachers’ performance was “never good enough” and that change must continue to happen as a result of this failure to reach what were invisible and unstated criteria that determined when a teacher’s work was “good enough”.

The next relationship evident in this section of data was between Barbara and the then new Assistant Principal. In this segment Barbara retold the main incident where she was informed that there was a better way of doing things. Barbara stated her relationship with her Assistant Principal—“I didn’t really know her much”—locating herself in a position of uncertain knowledge and therefore less sure or empowered in the relationship. In relating the story, Barbara noted that her AP “walked in here” and “then walked out.” I took the “here” as being her classroom as the context implied and that this was a senior staff member coming into Barbara’s classroom territory. Again, she situated herself in an inferior position, almost caught unawares: “I was, you know, my first Grade 1 in over a decade.” This further insecurity about her teaching position and her uncertainty about not yet “knowing” her new AP was compounded with the following statement attributed to the AP: “‘Oh’, she said, ‘I know a much better way than this’”. It was Barbara’s perception of this incident
that, having observed Barbara’s literacy teaching practice briefly and “looked at a couple,” presumably a couple of her students, the AP made a judgement on the effectiveness of Barbara’s literacy teaching practice and left the room.

Barbara’s reaction, relating to Gee’s “personal, social and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values” (1999, p. 93) in the situation had multiple dimensions. Firstly, she “was pretty staggered” because she considered that she was “doing a bloody good job” and that here was a “new person”, newness in this instance indicating the AP’s lack of proven status, in Barbara’s opinion. Secondly, the AP was in effect insulting her observable teaching practice by “telling me” that “what I was doing was old hat, waste of time”. This notion was repeated when Barbara said: “that what I was doing was old-fashioned.” Not only was she told that there was a “much better way than this” but this was supported with the weight of “in many schools” and that “research had shown that it was a waste of time” and the assertion that “over 50 per cent of what we were doing was, maybe was, could be far better used if we introduced these programs.” Again, statistics were used as a powerful mechanism to engender compliance and support a senior staff members agenda.

Barbara had accepted the actions of her AP. Despite the overtly insulting incident described by Barbara, she had no unkind words about her AP or the Spalding Method. Her criticisms, when they did appear, were couched in professional terms and were evaluative in nature. She had accepted the implementation of this program as inevitable and although she repeatedly stated that it was “too early to judge,” she wanted to make informed opinions about its effectiveness. Her first-hand involvement was essential for this evaluation to occur.

Gee’s next question is about whether these relationships and identities are stabilized or transformed in this situation. This is difficult to ascertain. The relationship that Barbara had with her employer the Educational Department was confirmed through this discourse. Her beliefs that what teachers were doing was “never good enough”, and that this was the reason that changes needed to happen, were supported by the fact that changes were still occurring. Interestingly, this assertion was acknowledged by Suzanne: “but they’re always trying to adapt it [the curriculum] so it sort of like, I
mean, it’s sort of like you never get it right” (Suzanne, T1, p. 2). Thus, it is argued that this understanding about the relationship between Barbara and the education department—their respective roles and positions—was confirmed in this instance.

The relationship between Barbara and her Assistant Principal though had a transformative effect on Barbara’s identity and ultimately on her attitude to the Spalding program. The incident described here led her to become involved with the program, which then gave her a basis for informed opinion about it. Prior to this incident she was concerned about several aspects of the program (indicated elsewhere in the interviews). For her the sense of feeling “pretty staggered” and “hit hard” by the incident had the effect of encouraging her to become involved in the program. She was able to move through the emotions of feeling “hit hard” to personal empowerment through her involvement. Her personal relationship with the AP did not appear to suffer any serious consequences as a result of this incident. She did not ‘shoot the messenger’, but accepted the message that was given and its consequential changes for her teaching program. Barbara experienced a process of re-evaluation and redefinition of her knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values and this allowed her to arrive at a position from which she could move forward in response to these changes.

**Summary of changes in policies, programs and practices**

Barbara’s identity was affected in that as a result of the AP’s intervention she became involved in the Spalding program. The interaction though could have gone the other way, causing her to reject the method and her AP as its proponent. Barbara’s identity—her understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values in conjunction with the way she perceived and received the experience—mediated and negotiated the changes. The degree with which she adapted and accommodated these changes was also influenced by her identity and its accompanying understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. Her identity is both affirmed and shaped as a result of the incident and its subsequent changes in literacy teaching methods.

**2. Changes and expectations**

Most of the participants reflected the changes that confronted them with respect to
what was expected of them as teachers, their students or their schools. Many of these were connected to other issues, for example, PD, power, literacy policy changes, and identity. The following passage was selected because it highlighted the difference between perceived expectations and the reality of what actually occurred.

**Suzanne—“That's what I should do”**

The following passage is taken from the first interview with Suzanne. The conversation was about how she managed the changes in literacy policy, programs and documents. There are three main points made in the first part of this segment: what she felt she *should* do with new policies, programs and documents; the use of time; and what the documents were for. The last passage is less easily labelled as there are multiple topics covered in this segment.

Because of the multiple issues that are discussed in this segment it has been analysed using Gee’s questions 16–18 on Connection Building (1999, p. 94):

16. What sorts of connections—looking backwards and/or forwards—are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction?

17. What sorts of connections are made to previous and future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions and Discourses outside of the current situation?

This analysis looks at the intersection of changes and expectations and the ways that connections are built, leading to coherence in meanings.

**Interviewer:** So you get a new policy and you … you analyse it yourself—you take it home and read it?

**Suzanne:** No, no, no necessarily—that's what I *should* do but I'm, I,—there's also a time restraint because every time something new comes in, if you're going to do it properly, you would take it home and you would spend hours perusing it and making notes on it and finding out what you think about it but in practicality you have a class, you have jobs to do and so you have to get on, you have to go to the coal face [mmm] and you have to … So, most of the stuff, the extra work, is being forced on you through professional development.

**Interviewer:** Right, so you're not allowed time … so ideally would you have that time to do it?

**Suzanne:** Well I would … if I have to do it I would prefer to be doing it in time that isn't my own home time. So, so I see that a lot of this, if it was to be done properly and to be evaluated properly, umm … you have to give away more of your own personal time [hmm] and as a teacher too many of us are spending too much time doing that instead of living the way people are supposed to live.

**Interviewer:** Yeah—so you get a new policy document in and … you don’t really have time to absorb it sufficiently but yet you’re supposed to be in doing it in your classroom?

**Suzanne:** Yes—but I mean usually it's of value and you find out that whatever is
within … the document—when you look into it closely you can say —OK, but yes, we are doing that, and we are doing that. It's fitting it in to the language that the document is ummm how …

Interviewer: Using?
Suzanne: The document is using.

Interviewer: So it's, it's a umm terminology thing as well—you know the way that this document puts what-ever it is that you've already been doing.
Suzanne: Yes—but are you putting words into my mouth now?

Interviewer: Oh, I'm asking—is that what you mean?

Suzanne: I think that's what—I mean I'm pretty sure that's what I mean. I mean it is, it's sort of putting what you're doing in the form that's required—from above—

Interviewer: OK So ... Yeah ... from above being ... ?

Suzanne: Being, well, from where ever it's come from in the first place [mmm] and usually it's political isn't it. And I mean to say lots of the stuff that we've been getting comes from our dear David Kemp [the then Federal Minister for Education] who really doesn't know a thing about teaching children how to read or how to be literate and having the expectation that every child is going to be able to learn to read when that is not true because umm of what—you know—people's brains you know sometimes are not equipped to easily learn to read; in fact what is an easy task for some is a practically impossible task for another. So the expectation is out there that everyone will become literate. So therefore you have a measurable thing and the observations and the scientific stuff that the University has done has found that the … on that continuum sort of thing—the one that's making a progress at that rate [indicating line on desktop] keeps going and the one that's making a progress at that rate … That never the twain shall meet—that this gap keeps getting wider (Suzanne, T1, pp 2–3).

The initial question posed to Suzanne was about how she managed the changes in policies as they were disseminated in the system. I made a statement about how she may have gone about the process of managing a hypothetical new policy, program or document and she corrected my presumption with a repeated ―No, no, no, not necessarily…‖ She then indicated the first of several expectations that occurred in this segment—“that’s what I should do but…” (the should is italicised to indicate strength of emphasis in speech). She did not though indicate whether this should came from an internal, personal expectation, or one imposed from external, departmental forces. This expectation was connected to the last sentence in this section, “So, most of the stuff, the extra work, is being forced on you through professional development.” It could be surmised from this that she perceived the extra work as imposed by the education system. She was in the receptive position of accepting this change and the educational system was in the more powerful position of delivering change.

This expectation of how she should approach new policies, programs or documents was connected to the second topic evidenced here, that of time and its management.
Suzanne used the phrases—in order of appearance—“a time restraint”, “every time”, “you would spend hours”, “doing it in time”, “my own home time”, “give away more of your own personal time” and “spending too much time.” Ownership of, or use of time, appeared to be linked with expectations for Suzanne. As new policies appeared, she had struggled to make the time to learn what she needed to do with them. This was linked to the issue of professional development, given that “the stuff”—presumably new policies programs and documents—“is being forced on you through professional development.”

The interlinking or connecting of the issues of power and expectations was evident here. Suzanne had earlier made it clear to me that she was a rebel:

Interviewer: […] So if there’s any of those [documents, policies] that you use or that you’ve got on your shelf and that you’ve never looked at—then I’d also like to know about that. Umm … and yeah I think that’s about it [pause] so …

Suzanne: But you’re probably talking to a rebel.

Interviewer: A rebel? Hmm, that’s good. [chuckle] I’ll take whatever you want to say to me Suzanne.

Suzanne: Yes, yes but because I mean to say because I just … I probably … after all these years … Every time something new comes in I probably shrug my shoulders and say ‘Oh, again?’ Because … umm … see I mean I’ve been through so many. I mean I’ve seen the circles come and go. But now, but now we’ve got to the point where they’re really trying to define what they’re trying to do aren’t they with the outcomes and … that … but they’re always trying to adapt it so it sort of like I mean it’s sort of like you never get it right (Suzanne, T1, p. 2).

She saw herself as someone who did not necessarily go along with everything that came along and so her attitude to these kinds of changes was fairly casual, “I probably shrug my shoulders and say ‘Oh, again?’”. In this sense she was aware that she was supposed to act in one way—“if you’re going to do it properly you would….”—but qualified this with her knowledge of classroom experience: “but in practicality you have a class, you have jobs to do and so you have to get on, you have to go to the coal face…”. Time was the stated problem and specific actions were linked with values and attitudes about time commitment and dedication to teaching tasks. These became the expectations against which she was rebelling.

Power was integrally linked and connected to this sequence of notions as Suzanne could not be a “rebel” without some external power or expectations. She was aware of specific actions and their underlying values of “giving away more of your own personal time.” Her rebelliousness was evident in the stated attitude of “as a teacher,
too many of us are spending too much time doing that [giving away more personal time] instead of living the way that teachers are supposed to live.” The expectation implicit here was that teachers were spending too much time with this additional work and that this detracted from their ability to live “the way that teachers are supposed to live.” Presumably, this was the reality for her, or for “teachers” in the current contexts, and that she felt that she was not living as she was supposed to. Power asymmetry then, through the implicit expectations of “giving away personal time,” was evident.

Suzanne used the phrase “living the way teachers are supposed to live,” yet she did not enlarge on what that meant. She used it in the context of “giving away more of your personal time” so presumably for her there was a link with “how teachers are supposed to live” and not giving away more personal time. It is interesting that she said “more” personal time, rather than simply “personal time,” implying that she was already giving away some of her personal time to these kind of out-of-hours activities. She also indicated that “if I had to do it I would prefer to…” showing an awareness that there were activities and actions that were required of her by the education system. She indicated her preference for not doing this additional work in time that was “my own home time,” but her preferences may not have been taken into consideration: her voice may not have been heard.

Suzanne also discussed her views on what these policies, programs and documents were really for. It appeared that, when Suzanne needed to familiarise herself with a new policy, program or document she evaluated it against her existing practice. She said initially that she looked at it to see “Yes, we are doing that and we are doing that,” and judged it against her practice or measured her practice against this new yardstick. Then she indicated there was a connection between her existing practice and the knowledge, the language and terminology that appeared in the new policy. Some accommodation was needed as she re-evaluated the use of terminology and “fitting it in with the language” and “the way that this document puts whatever it is that you’ve already been doing.” In other words, she looked for ‘fit’ between the new policy and her existing practice. She did not see new policies, programs or documents as potentially shaping her future teaching practice, but rather as a yardstick against which she evaluated her existing practice. She was content though
to state that the policy was “usually of value.”

The last section of this segment of transcript was less easily analysed. There was the initial connection with “what you’re doing”—her teaching practice—and the power “from above.” There was a notion that policies, programs and documents needed to reflect “what you’re doing,” and not the other way around. Policies were not designed to determine and alter teaching practice. When I asked her about the “from above,” she indicated somewhat vaguely, “from where-ever it comes from in the first place.” “It” was presumed here to be the changes that came about resulting in new policies, programs and documents. She then made reference to the political nature of change with, “and usually it’s political, isn’t it”. This I read to mean that the changes that occur do so for other than educationally-based reasons. Instead she considered that they were about meeting a political agenda. She went on:

lots of the stuff that we’ve been getting [changes in policy and programs etc] comes from our dear David Kemp [the current Federal Minister for Education] who really doesn’t know a thing about teaching children how to read, how to be literate and having the expectation that every child is going to be able to learn to read when that is not true… (Suzanne, T1, p. 3).

There were several connections made here. Firstly, there was a connection between educational change and a political agenda. Secondly, there was a link between the then Federal Minister for Education, “our dear David Kemp,” and his position of power—the most powerful representative of the educational government bureaucracy. Thirdly, there was a link between Dr Kemp and in his position of power and yet, in Suzanne’s estimation, he lacked specific knowledge of how to teach children about literacy. This was, I presumed, a statement that was aimed at undermining his position of power and in some small way redressing the imbalance of power by reminding me that she was the teacher with the knowledge “about teaching children how to read, how to be literate.” Along with this lack of an awareness of Dr Kemp’s teaching knowledge came the stated unrealistic “expectation that every child is going to be able to learn to read, when we know that is not true.” So Dr Kemp was twice implicated: firstly because he was, in Suzanne’s understanding, not a teacher (with the requisite knowledge, skills and experience) and secondly because his statement that every child would learn to read was not based on reality in her educational understanding. She did not consider his assertions to be actual statements of intention, attainable goals to be worked towards, but rather aspirations that applied unrealistic pressure and expectations to teachers. Suzanne
went on to state her belief that this assertion that every child would learn to be literate “was not true” and therefore not possible because there were students whose brains were “not equipped” to manage the task of learning to read.

From this point Suzanne then moved to the “measurable thing” that was linked to both expectations and political agenda. Outcomes (and Suzanne talked more about her ideas on outcomes elsewhere) were linked to expectations and the need for measurement of students’ progress. She again saw the power link with “scientific stuff that the University has done” and plotting students’ progress “on the continuum sort of thing.” Her point seemed to be the final statement that referred to expected outcomes and student progress—“That never the twain shall meet—that this gap keeps getting wider.” I presumed she meant that some students would achieve the outcomes and others would not. As students progress through the school system, and work towards the expected outcomes, some students’ progress may slow down or stall. These students would then fall further and further behind what was anticipated for their age level: hence the “gap keeps getting wider.” For Suzanne this was the reality of literacy achievement. Some students would achieve the anticipated outcomes, and others, for reasons other than poor teaching, would not.

**Summary of changes in expectations**

Using Gee’s questions to analyse the connections and assumptions that are made in this passage it can be seen that Suzanne’s identity is evident in the process of determining how she managed, perceived and received the changes. Her beliefs and understandings about children and education not only determined how she received and perceived these changes but were also affirmed and transformed by the experiences themselves. Her beliefs about what she/teachers should do and what she/they actually do, as an integral part of her identity, determine her reaction to change. Connections can be seen to the past and present systems as Suzanne brings together her experience and knowledge of the situation, drawing on her educational understandings, values and opinions. These understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values were evidenced and, taken together, are evidence of Suzanne’s identity at work in the process of change. This situation created a conduit and connected her identity with her reactions and awareness of the expectations about change.
3. Age, aging and length of teaching service

This is the third in the series of eight analyses of the kinds of change with which these teachers indicated they engage. As this kind of change has multiple facets to it, passages of transcripts were chosen to highlight some of the ways in which these issues about teachers’ age intersect with educational change. Lengthier segments are included to give the reader a contextual sense of the passages.

It is obvious that the issue of age and aging is linked to change—as teachers age, they are required to adjust and adapt to the changes as they present themselves. The first two of the passages of data were from the interviews with Suzanne where she discusses the fact that she had been teaching since 1959. This was firstly a significant achievement, but secondly it attracted my attention as 1959 was the year I was born. In the first segment Suzanne discussed her reaction to new policies and indicated that it caused her to question what she was doing, which “makes me very cynical”—and that “maybe it comes from having taught since 1959…”

Suzanne, Pat and Jodi

This section uses passages of data from Suzanne, Pat and Jodi’s conversations when they discussed issues of aging and length of teaching service.

Suzanne:  You're … you're questioning … or what am I doing wrong or … what do I have to change … what do I have to change is a big one because … and umm. Mmmm. But it, as I said also it makes me very cynical. But I mean … That's not a new thing because I can remember my father sort of being, saying the same sort of thing you know. I mean maybe it comes with having taught since 1959, doesn't it.

Interviewer:  Is it an age thing? I mean, do all teachers that have been teaching since 1959 have that same …

Suzanne:  Not many teachers have been teaching since 1959, child [both chuckle] (Suzanne, T1, p. 8.)

The second passage also discussed how she felt about the issue of aging and the way she felt she was treated and how she felt about herself as a result of her age and the length of her teaching service.

Interviewer:  …so it’s saying that what you know, your knowledge and your experience isn’t quite up to scratch so here you are, have this new version?

Suzanne:  Exactly.

Interviewer:  Yep, okay.

Suzanne:  So therefore as a person, it undermines, well it undermines my confidence in my ability to …

Interviewer:  To teach?

Suzanne:  To yeah, well, it’s the confidence that’s undermined, not the ability to
Suzanne indicated that seeing new policies and programs introduced so frequently “undermines my confidence” and then went on to state that, “I don’t know whether I’m a good teacher or a bad teacher and I’ve been teaching since 1959…” There was a link between her confidence and the length of her teaching service. Not only was she unsure whether she was a “good or bad teacher” but she had “been teaching since 1959.” It could be surmised that after a period of time a teacher would have a sense of whether they are a good or bad teacher. How that knowledge or sense was gleaned, from whom it should be given, from whom it should be sought or by what stage in a teacher’s career it should be determined are interesting points for some future clarification. The answers were not evident in this conversation. But Suzanne’s implicit assumption that perhaps by now she should have that sense was noted.

For Suzanne her length of teaching service—40+ years—had not given her any assurances about whether she was a “good or bad teacher.” The new policies and documents that she had received over the course of her career had caused her to question what she was doing, leading to her being “very cynical.” This she thought could be attributed to the fact that she had been teaching since 1959.

The next segment highlights the intersection of age, aging and length of teaching service and is from the second interview with Pat. She was discussing her reaction to the fact that other teachers had received their transfer appointments and hers was still unresolved. In recounting the reasons for that delay, she reasoned that it may be related to her age.

Interviewer: So what does that, so what’s the message to you, like when other people have had their promotions approved and all excited or depressed about where they might be going next year and you’re still sitting there waiting?

Pat: Oh I was very upset about it. I’m dealing with it, I’ve sort of got used to it now, but I went through a big depression there for a couple of nights when I couldn’t sleep and I’m thinking nobody wants me and, you know, you hear tales of Prep teachers who are sent from this one to that one because nobody wants them and all that was going through my mind and I’m thinking people think, >Oh, they don’t want a 51-year-old woman in this school,’ and I was thinking >Well, perhaps I shouldn’t try to
transfer at my age’ and oh, stuck where I was. But I’ve sort of got over that now; it’s only when I feel really down that I get those sort of thoughts.

Interviewer: So does that mean then that all of those thoughts, you’ve come to terms with them or if you just box them up and put them away and said this is not healthy for me to go down this path of thinking?

Pat: Yes, when I talk to, I did sort of, I’ve hardly been eating at all for a few nights and I went to see them at Head [District] Office yesterday and that sort of put me, you know, at ease and I said, >Have I got a job here?’ and they said, >Oh, were you really thinking that?’ and I said >Yes’, but … (Pat, T2, p. 2)

Pat seemed to have found herself in an unenviable position. She thought that the reason for her not receiving a transfer was related to her age, and that “nobody wants me.” Her self-talk created a negative position for her. She was able to manage it by going to talk to those at District Office and, as a result, came away assured that this was not the case. However, it was her confidence level, her self-talk and ultimately, the data suggests, her identity that caused her initial interpretation that her age was part of the problem. She had turned the problem back on herself, suggesting that she should not have applied for a transfer “at my age.” I am unsure about why she thought her age was an issue in this instance. Did she think that she was considered to be an inferior teacher because of her age? Were Principals less likely to accept a 51-year-old teacher knowing that retirement age may be 55 and they would only have her on staff for four years? Did she view age as a barrier, and if so why? Was age linked to quality of teaching skills, to motivation, to vitality or any other qualities that may be considered to determine a teacher’s worth in a school setting? Why and how did Pat’s sense of teaching worth, and her valuedness—to herself and to the system—become so sensitised to the issue of age and aging? These questions remained unresolved in this data.

The notion of being less bothered by things as one grows older was evident in Jodi’s comments. She indicated that there were fewer things that frustrated and annoyed her “now” as opposed to “when I was younger maybe.” The ability to say, “Oh well, never mind, it doesn’t matter” had come as she matured.

Interviewer: Is there anything that frustrates or annoys you?

Jodi: I suppose there’s heaps of things, you know. Silly little things probably that are, that are just issues that you can deal with within the classroom or within the school and that are not that important when it’s all comes to, comes to the point. I suppose in some ways, I’ve perhaps got a little bit more of a relaxed attitude to things now than I used to have when I was younger maybe. Because I tend, I find myself saying more often, ‘Oh well, never mind, it doesn’t matter’, to certain things, and I can’t give you an example off the top of my head.
Interviewer: But when you were younger that may have mattered more to you?

Jodi: Yes, it probably would have done. It probably would have stressed me more, a particular thing. Though I can't think just off-hand what would have (Jodi T2, p. 4).

In applying Gee’s (1999) framework of questions to this analysis, the Connection Building approach was relevant. The issue of age and aging seemed to be linked to the issue of degrees of self-confidence, self-worth and risk taking and then, in turn to the issue of the power—when faced with either confidence or the lack of confidence as the case may be.

Thus, the following two of Gee’s questions are used as the basis for further analysis.

16. What sorts of connections—looking backwards and/or forwards—are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction?

17. What sorts of connections are made to previous and future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions and Discourses outside of the current situation? (Gee, 1999, p. 94).

The connections that were evident in these passages of transcripts have been indicated in the previous discussion. Suzanne connected her feeling “very cynical” with the fact that she had been teaching since 1959. She also made connections between the “frequency of change” and her undermined confidence. These two issues were then linked to her not knowing whether she was a “good or bad teacher” and the fact of her having taught since 1959. This progression of reasoned argument led from one point of connection to the next, combining to form an understanding about change as she continued teaching, and about her identity; how she perceived and received the changes that she associated with the length of her teaching service.

Pat on the other hand made connections between not being granted a transfer and her age. The assumption that “nobody wants me” was a personal reaction to the professional situation. Her identity—the combination of her life experiences, her personality and understandings—led her to believe that the delay in her transfer was about her age. This had repercussions on her health—eating and sleeping patterns—and on her identity—the way that she saw herself as a teacher.

Jodi made connections between her age and her ability to be less concerned and stressed about the “silly little things.” She managed these issues better now that she was older. The changes that related to aging had, in this case, provided a benefit that
assisted her to reduce her stress levels.

**Summary of age, aging and length of teaching service**

In summary then, the analysis of these sections of data about the issue of age, aging and length of teaching service using Gee’s questions about Building Connections within the discourse indicates that these three teachers were building connections and meanings as they interacted in the conversations. The issue of age and the inevitable changes that aging had brought across the length of these teachers’ teaching service had repercussions for each of them. The changes were intrinsically about connections to other emotions, beliefs and perceptions. Their understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values all were evidenced in the data as influential in the process of building connections that related to the issue of change. These connections and perceptions were unique to each of the participant teachers, yet they were united in the issue of the impact of age, aging and length of teaching service upon them.

4. **Changes and transfers**

**Katrina—“Moving on for my own sake”**

The fourth kind of change relates to the issues surrounding school placement and transfers. While one aspect of this kind of change was discussed above, this section analyses the changes that were evident for Katrina as she recounted the reasons for her request for a transfer and her subsequent visit to her new school. The conversation occurred after she had spent considerable time talking about the problems that she had encountered with her Principal and the impact of those changes on her. Once again, these two segments are just a selection of many that could have been chosen for analysis. They were selected on the basis that they would provide detail from the data that related to the nominated kind of change. The selection of the questions from Gee’s analysis was done on the basis of fit. Questions 11, 12 and 13 about Identity and Relationship Building fitted well with these passages.

The two segments following were from Katrina’s second interview where she discussed the issue of her transfer. She had applied for a transfer to a new school.
This had been granted and she had visited her new school. She restated the reasons for her request for a transfer and, in the second segment, she talked about her visit to the new school. These two segments were analysed using Gee’s Identity and Relationship Building categories because it was evident that Katrina’s identity and her relationships with parents and staff members came to the fore.

Interviewer: Now you said last time we talked, about you were going for a transfer?
Katrina: Yes.
Interviewer: That’s come through now?
Katrina: That has, yes.
Interviewer: And you’re happy with the outcome of that?
Katrina: I’m personally happy, with the outcome in that I feel that my frustration at that school has gotten to the stage where I was starting to get negative and I needed to move on for my own sake and I’m not really a negative person. So once I believe that started happening and the people around me as well that I was working with were negative, I felt that I needed to move on for my own sake. Whilst I’ve been really happy with the parents and the kids and the ease of working close to where I live, lots of issues have sort of clouded my happiness I suppose if you like over the last couple of years. I think my motivation in the school has definitely been the parents, and I think they do appreciate what you do. But I felt the lot of frustration has been, not that I want bells and whistles, because I’m not that sort of person, but sometimes just a couple of words of appreciation from senior staff would have made all the difference I think. And I know that there are several people who are following on next year that will be following on in my footsteps so, it’s quite sad when it gets to that (Katrina, T2, pp. 2–3).

Interviewer: In a new school you have staff members, you have senior staff members, you have parents and you have kids to establish yourself with?
Katrina: I initially thought I would be more nervous about it than I am, I’ve actually been for a school visit and met the Principal who welcomed me and said his first words to me were, “Welcome to the staff I’ve heard really good things about you.” And I thought well that was a really positive start, I don’t know quite where, he didn’t elaborate on how, or where, but it made me feel at ease, and I thought even if you know it is a rocky start with me feeling uncomfortable and learning to fit in and get to know everything, I feel more positive about it because he’s been a positive start to it.
Interviewer: Okay so that’s been good?
Katrina: It has and I think probably I’m aware that it will be building the foundations again but I think I’m more able to cope you know (Katrina, T2, p. 5).

An analysis of some of the terms used in this segment helps to reveal what Katrina felt and thought. Katrina twice discussed being “happy” and “happiness.” She made two mentions of “frustration” and one of feeling “sad.” Twice she mentioned negativity—for herself and for those around her, and twice she said that she needed to “move on for my own sake.” She felt both frustration and happiness. These aspects of her identity were then linked to the following assertions: she “was starting to get negative,” “needed to move on” and was “not really a negative person,”;
negativity in the people around her “had started happening”; her motivation at the
school came from the parents and that parents “do appreciate what you do”; she
didn’t “want bells and whistles” but that appreciation from senior staff “would have
made all the difference”; and that other teachers would also be transferring in the
following year.

Katrina appeared to make statements to establish what sort of a person she was—to
tell me about her identity. She was happy with the transfer, she was not a negative
kind of person, she would have liked “just a couple of words of appreciation” but
that she didn’t want “bells and whistles” “because I’m not that sort of person”, and
that she was a leader in that other teachers would be “following on in my footsteps”
in applying for transfers for the following year. In stating twice what “sort of a
person” she was or was not, it seemed important for Katrina to clarify here who she
was.

The second segment of transcript reflected a similar pattern of intertwined emotions
and feeling. Here Katrina indicated that she “thought,” “I think,” “I don’t know” and
“I feel.” Her feelings were labelled as “nervous,” “at ease” and “uncomfortable” and
that she felt “welcomed” by her new Principal. She felt that it was a really positive
start to her time in her new school—in contrast to the negativity that she had
discussed as being present in her current school—and that she felt “more positive
about it because he’s [Principal] been a positive start to it.” There were three
mentions of positive in contrast to two mentions of negative. The words of
appreciation that she had failed to get from the senior staff in her current school were
readily given in the initial contact when she was told: “I’ve heard really good things
about you.”

Gee’s Identity and Relationship Building category and its accompanying questions
(1999, p. 93) were used in the analysis:

11. What relationships and identities (roles, positions) with their concomitant
   personal, social and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings
   (effect) and values seem to be relevant to this situation?

12. How are these relationships and identities stabilised or transformed in the
situation?

13. In terms of identities, activities and relationships, what Discourses are relevant
   (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and
As already mentioned above, Katrina’s identity comes to the fore here. She was keen to establish for me what kind of a person she was, or was not, and what she expected from her school environment. For her the issues of a frustration that resulted from a lack of appreciation from her current school’s senior staff, compounded with the other problems that she had encountered with the Principal, had led her to feeling negative. With the negativity of those around her, she felt that “for my own sake” she “needed to move on.” The relationship with the parents had evidently been a positive one, for she acknowledges that she had “been really happy with the parents and the kids” and that the parents’ appreciation of her work had become her “motivation in the school.” Happiness though was important for Katrina and that had been “sort of clouded” “over the last couple of years.” Happiness—either for her or her students—was mentioned a total of 17 times over the course of the twenty pages of Katrina’s two interviews. Happiness was significant for Katrina, but the criteria that represented happiness were still vague. However, it was integrally linked to her sense of being appreciated and feeling positive about her position in the work environment.

The roles that are attributed to the people that she mentioned are the parents, in providing motivation for her, and the Principal of her new school, in being welcoming and giving her some positive feedback on her reputation. The senior staff at her current school had been assigned the role of providing her with “just a couple of words of appreciation” but had failed in this task. The other teachers were accused of being negative, but “several people” would be following in her transfer “footsteps” in the next year. She also acknowledged that part of her role in her new school was that she may be “feeling uncomfortable” and have to learn “to fit in and get to know everything”. This was manageable for her though because she was “aware that it will be building the foundations again but I think that I’m more able to cope, you know.” Was her ability to cope linked with the positive start that had occurred with her new Principal?

Gee’s question 12 relates to the issue of whether these relationships and identities were stabilised or transformed in this situation. It can be seen that the positive effect
of Katrina’s visit to her new school had transformed her belief about her ability to cope and to build “the foundations again.” In going to the new situation she was leaving behind the negativity of that context and re-establishing herself.

**Summary of changes and transfers**

Katrina clarified her position in relation to the situations that were recounted in these two segments of data. Gee’s analytical questions about identity and relationships have been used for the analysis of this passage of data. For Katrina the need to take a transfer was based on aspects of her identity: her understandings, feelings and values, were considered at risk if she stayed. Some kind of change was required as she knew that she could not change the current problematic school situation. Katrina established what was important to her—her happiness and an appreciation of her work. Her relationships with her teaching colleagues are varied. On the one hand she said their negativity was a contributing factor in her decision to transfer and yet she said that there would be several of them following her lead to transfer in the next year. Her relationship with the parents had provided her with motivation and appreciation and she indicated that she was happy with the “kids” at her current school. Her relationship with her Principal was mentioned previously but the general sense of the passages indicated that the senior staff team was accused of failing to provide her with “just a couple of words of appreciation.” The changes in leadership at her school had challenged her position in that her understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values did not fit with what she saw happening around her. Transfer to a new school was the best option available to her.

**5. Changes in school leadership**

While there were numerous mentions of a variety of types of broad educational leadership across the eight participants’ interviews, this category deals primarily with the issue of leadership and management of and in schools. Often the mention of Principals or senior staff teams was in an evaluative sense, making judgements and assessments about their performance or actions, and comparing them to previous or current senior staff or Principals. There were comments from all participants about the leadership in their schools. The following passage was selected from Suzanne’s first interview because it showcased her perceptions about comparative leadership styles.
Suzanne—“Whoever leads the school”

In the passage selected for analysis Suzanne discussed the kinds of leadership types of which she was aware and the associated repercussions for staff. While this passage is not explicitly linked to change, the implicit connections about the kinds of leadership styles that exist reflect implications for teachers. Suzanne was assessing the kinds of leadership she experienced. This evaluation was based on her identity in the form of her implicit knowledge, beliefs, feelings, values and understandings.

Gee’s meaning-building category that is applied to this segment of transcript is that of World Building—the “situated meanings and value of aspects of the here and now world” (1999, p. 85)—her reality. As Suzanne’s conversation continued, the synergy between her articulation and thinking became evident, clarifying and confirming, for herself and for me, what she thought, felt, understood and knew. The questions that relate to this category of meaning-building are as follows:

4. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?

5. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artefacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?

6. What cultural models and networks of models (master models) seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?

7. What institutions and/or Discourses are being (re-)produced in this situation and how are they being stabilized or transformed in the act? (Gee, 1999, p. 94)

Suzanne: And, and this is where I mean where you get trouble isn’t it because you get the people who are on the promotion scale who want to do what is requested of them and they want their staff to do what is requested of them [mm] and then you’ve got people who are more people centred [mmm] … who want to support the staff and treat them as human beings not as … machines that do what you want …

Interviewer: So the um … the idea of … do different Principals you’re talking about there … [Suzanne: Yeah] different senior staff [Suzanne: Yes] within the school have a different agenda [Suzanne: Yes, yes] if you like of what is …

Suzanne: Well, whoever leads the school has a certain agenda. Now one who might be reaching retirement really doesn’t care and doesn’t really push. Someone who’s climbing the ladder is push, push, push, pushing.

Interviewer: OK, and that, then …

Suzanne: But there’s another kind too [drawing a diagram on the desktop, indicating the different kinds of types of school leaders—tapping and pointing] there’s the kind who cares more about the affective area of the school, who treats the people—who hasn’t got unrealistic.

Interviewer: So that middle line is obviously the better one [mmm] in terms of you know the caring …

Suzanne: But, but I mean that person takes the thing because they’re not always meeting the expectations of what is being asked of them. They are caring more about
the people in the school than about the curriculum etcetera

Interviewer: Hmmm, OK, so their priorities aren’t >curriculum first’; it’s students and staff

Suzanne: Exactly

Interviewer: That takes priority

Suzanne: And that’s what should take priority I think (Suzanne, T1, pp. 4–5).

Suzanne categorised two types of leaders—those who were “on the promotion scale” and who “want to do what is requested of them—and those who were “more people-centred.” Those on the “promotion scale”—and I presumed here she meant they were hoping for and working towards promotions—were obedient to their employers’ expectations and requests, and in turn required the same kind of obedience of their staff. Those who were “more people-centred”, “want to support the staff and treat them as human beings and not as… machines that do what you want”. Presumably then, those leaders who were “on the promotion scale” had, in Suzanne’s opinion, been guilty of treating the staff like “machines that do what you want”. These two types of leaders were also further defined. There was “one who might be reaching retirement”, who “really doesn’t care and doesn’t really push”, as well as “someone who’s climbing the ladder” and “is push, push, push, pushing”. The picture here was a clear explanation about how she saw the leadership styles she had experienced.

But Suzanne compounded her relatively clear explanation by stating that there was another kind. She drew on the desktop at this point in our conversation and seemed to be using the process as an aid for her thinking. The imaginary drawing appeared to be a strategy to help clarify her thoughts. This third kind of leader “cares more about the affective area of the school, who treats people … who hasn’t got unrealistic …” These leaders were “not always meeting the expectations of what is being asked of them. They are caring more about the people in the school than the curriculum.” This third category of leader was not going to be obedient to the system’s expectations and was “caring” about people: “the affective area of the school” and placed people above curriculum. Suzanne reiterated this later in the second interview when she said:

Suzanne: I couldn’t work with someone who, who didn’t get back to the basics, who didn’t have the interest of the children at heart, who put this …. Interviewer: The literacy curriculum before the needs of the kids?
Suzanne: [nods] before the needs of the children because the needs of the children, even though that, that’s the one I relate to perhaps best of all, the needs of the children are much wider. The child … I mean this [the document] is basic, but it’s still only part of the picture (Suzanne, T2, pp. 13–14).

For her the needs of the children and the “affective area of the school” were to take priority over the curriculum and she expected her leader to mirror this value—“and that’s what should take priority I think.”

Implicit in this discussion was the chain of power and command. Above her and the students were the leaders of the school and beyond the leaders in the school were the other, unnamed people who expected Principals and leaders to “do what is requested of them.” Presumably, in this instance, the requests related to curriculum, but they may not have been restricted to that.

In applying Gee’s meaning-building categories to this segment of transcript, the World Building activity had seemed most appropriate for analysing this passage of data. Suzanne’s conversation not only articulated her stance on what she considered to be appropriate leadership but confirmed that for herself as well as explaining it for me. The implicit nature of the chain of command and the connections that she had made were also revealed. Her statement that “whoever leads the school has a certain agenda” showed an awareness of the often hidden agenda of leaders.

For Suzanne the situated understanding seems to be that there were a range of styles of leadership and she attempted to categorise those using her own criteria for what was important in a leader. This process revealed not only her beliefs about what she considered to be acceptable in leadership and her understandings about others’ agenda. The need for her school leader to be interested in the people-oriented areas of school management mirrored her own identity. She stated that she valued the affective, caring and nurturing aspects of the job that she did. Relationships were important: “you would know that I cared about the children in my class” (Suzanne, T2, p. 10) and “I still think teaching is about relationship more than anything else” (Suzanne, T2, p. 9). In and through the process of the conversations she was reproducing her beliefs and stabilising her identity by articulating her position and beliefs.
Summary of changes in school leadership
Suzanne had revealed her understanding, beliefs and values about school leaders. Using Gee’s analytical questions to view the way that Suzanne built her world it can be seen that she was aware of kinds of school leadership styles. She had categorised the types of leaders, outlined what they were like and made implicit assessments of them. She had stated her values and expectations about what the school leader role should be. Suzanne’s understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values were all connected in the evaluation of what she saw as different kinds of leadership styles, and her assessment of the repercussions for teachers of the different leadership styles.

6. Changes in professional support structures
This category of change related to the ways in which teachers saw the kinds of supports that they received—directly, but usually indirectly—from their employer. While this sometimes related to equipment and physical resources, it generally related to the support received as a result of personnel and financial decisions that were driven by changes in policy. At times teachers discussed the issue of professional development and the way it was implemented and delivered to teachers. It is this kind of support which is the focus of these sections of data.

Georgie and PD—“Feel a little bit put upon”
The first two extracts were from the interviews with Georgie about the issue of Professional Development which, in its simplest form, is about “developing” teachers in a professional direction or manner. Hence, it is about change and teachers—changing them to make them more professional or to continue their “development” in the professional sense or direction. It is designated that Tasmanian state teachers have five days a year as PD. Often, to accommodate this systemic requirement, schools allocate time in after-school hours to make up these five days per year. For example, a school may have two days per term where the time from 3.30 to 7.30 pm is allocated to some kind of school-based PD—thus equating to half of one of the five days. This passage is about Georgie’s concerns with the issues that she had experienced with PD. Georgie had already mentioned her concerns about the relevance of PD, so I sought further clarification:

Interviewer: Being asked to do something that you can’t really see the relevance of or it's too much of something and you don't feel that it's fair, how often does that happen and how does that make you feel?
Georgie: Well it doesn’t happen a whole lot. I guess in some regards I can accept that we have to do this PD, this extra late night PD. But it’s just on occasions it turns out that its tomorrow night or perhaps its next week on a night that you’ve planned to do, you know, you’ve got something planned with your family or whatever and then it makes me feel cross. [chuckle] I don’t like being dictated to in after-school hours that ‘oh we’ve planned this and this is the day’, and you’ve got to change whatever you’ve got planned and come along to this particular thing ‘we want you to do’ and sit around and be bored for a couple of hours (Georgie, T1, p. 12).

Georgie had talked about how she felt when she failed to see relevance in things that she was required to do. Her preceding statements were:

if I take something on myself, and I take on lots of things, then I enjoy them but if it’s imposed on me and I don’t really see the relevance of it then I’ll feel overloaded and I don’t like it. If it’s something that we are made to do when you sit there and think …

(Georgie, T1, p. 12).

If she struggled to see the relevance between the PD activities and the core business of teaching, then it was more of an imposition for her. The issue of the lack of forewarning and the interruption to her personal life “made her cross.” The statement, “I don’t like being dictated to in after-school hours” set the boundaries for her. Her own time was her own time. “Dictated to” implies non-negotiability. This was compounded by her assertion that the session that she might be required to attend would mean that she was going to “sit around and be bored for a couple of hours.” The relevance of the information to her teaching was not obvious. It was a foregone conclusion that she would be bored. Experience, and only a few years of teaching experience at that, told her that it was not going to be a fun time. Cynicism seems to have crept in at a relatively young age. It could be considered likely that, for a relatively new teacher, PD was more interesting than for a teacher with longer teaching service. Georgie might have been at that stage of still learning some of the finer details of how programs, policies and particular foci were managed in the classroom and school contexts. Yet she anticipated sitting around for a few hours being bored.

This second extract adds further information.

Georgie: Yeah, people have, yeah, feel a little bit put upon or they feel as though once they go to a PD session they have to start it straight away or they are not given any time to sort of follow it up so we’ll go along to one session and then there’s … and we find that interesting, dealing with whatever content it is, and we never hear about it again.

Interviewer: Okay.

Georgie: So it’s just …

Interviewer: Is it ad hoc, in that sense, your PD, about literacy?
Chapter 4

Results

Georgie: Ad hoc?
Interviewer: A bit of this, you know and a bit of that and nothing sequential and …?
Georgie: Yeah, oh it can be, um, as far as the PASS thing went, that went for a long time and I know I did a lot of PASS PD and it was really quite good and it was fairly ongoing, in fact it was so ongoing that it just got to the point where I felt that if I ever have to go to another Running Record session I'll just scream, you know.
Interviewer: So that was run within your school from District Office?
Georgie: Oh I think we, a couple of schools got together, for those or we went to various things in town and heard about them.
Interviewer: So it wasn't just at your school sessions?
Georgie: No because we were so small.
Interviewer: Clusters?
Georgie: Yeah there were only three teachers and the Principal so we were a bit small but I don't know what happened in other places, yeah, but I mean I guess with other things it can be a little bit all over the place. I…. to be honest, I haven't really had a lot of literacy PD, over the last year or so. My PD has mainly been to do with technology and literacy and drama but we did have Lucy Wilpasso [PD provider] come to talk to us and that was just out of the blue, they didn't even know she was coming until the day she came (Georgie, T2, pp. 7–8).

This picture adds to the understanding that was hinted at in the first session.
Georgie’s assessment of the PD was that it was “ad hoc,” “out of the blue” and “a little bit all over the place.” Yet she also acknowledged that the PD she had done in relation to the PASS program (literacy) was:

[...] it was really quite good and it was fairly ongoing, in fact it was so ongoing that it just got to the point where I felt that if I ever have to go to another Running Record session I'll just scream.

This was an interesting duality of opinion—on the one hand PD sessions might be after hours, ad hoc and lack forward planning, and yet this PASS PD was good and ongoing. There seemed to be more than one reaction to PD. It was not a simple or straight forward assessment. The other point that was raised by Georgie was that some teachers might feel that some of the PD was expected to be implemented “straight away” and that there was rarely any kind of follow-up on what was delivered at a session. This would lead to her assumption that it was “ad hoc.”

When Georgie referred to being “a little bit put upon,” it was preceded with “people” and followed with “they.” She implied a degree of distance—almost as an observer reporting on what she saw, rather than recounting her own feelings. Perhaps this offered a safer position when talking to a relatively unknown person.

In applying Gee’s framework of analysis to these sections of data, none of the individual questions related precisely to this data. However the question: ‘What was it that Georgie was making relevant in this conversation, what did she value and how
did she value it?’ can be drawn from a broad group of Gee’s questions.

Georgie valued order and relevance. The ongoing nature of some PD was valued and the lack of follow-up of others was a point of criticism. She did not want PD to be boring. She valued her own time outside school hours and resented the expectation that PD might occur, without appropriate warning, at a time that interrupted her family time. Her comments indicated that she at least observed, if not felt herself, the feeling of being “put upon” by this imposition of PD in out-of-school hours. In applying Gee’s analytical questions the following question provided an analytical point of reference: ‘Is anything transformed of stabilised through this process—her identity, relationships with others, discourses about the PD situation?’

Georgie acknowledged the expectation that PD sessions would happen in the after-school time but the issue of being dictated to without sufficient warning plus the risk that her family time might be interrupted tipped the balance against PD for Georgie. For her this was a summarising statement:

if I take something on myself, and I take on lots of things, then I enjoy them but if it’s imposed on me and I don’t really see the relevance of it then I’ll feel overloaded and I don’t like it.

Her choice to do the PD made the world of difference but when it was irrelevant and she had no choice in the matter the feeling of being overloaded—one that recurred across the whole data set—returned.

In this instance, Gee’s analytical questions shed little explicit light on the situation. However, the analysis opened up the data to interpretation about what was important for Georgie and why this might be so. Her identity as a person who valued order, choice, relevance and her time outside of school hours was affirmed and sustained.

**Summary of changes in professional support structures**

The passages of data that related to changes in professional support structures have been analysed employing the lenses provided by Gee’s framework of analytical questions. It has highlighted that Georgie’s identity, in the form of her understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values, was affirmed through her comments. Her understanding about the situation in which she found herself was based on her personal knowledge, values and beliefs. Georgie recognised that PD in
out-of-school hours might be “boring” and “ad hoc” and although some PD had been positive, it had impinged on her family time. Employing Gee’s framework highlights the ways in which Georgie’s identity was challenged and required her to re-assess elements of her identity in the light of the changes and contexts of teaching.

7. Societal changes
In the discussions with these teachers there was an implicit assumption that with the passing of time “things” changed in society and that this in turn had an impact on what happened in schools, which in turn had repercussions for teachers. Under this category there were many kinds of societal changes that were discussed by teachers. The passage analysed here includes Sally’s assertions, not only about change in itself but about the broader issues of poverty and wealth distribution in society.

Sally—“Change is not always wonderful”
Sally talked about the kinds of changes that she had seen, both in teaching curriculum and practices and in relation to the broader social issues of poverty and wealth.

Sally: There are these wonderfully bright kids, the whole language is just fantastic because they can go as far as the sky and I mean some of the bright kids, that’s, I mean I have seen that, we’ve talked about that on our staff actually, how much less writing some kids are doing than they once were. Like, kids in Prep and Grade 1 that were really bright used to write ten page stories and I don’t see that very often anymore. You know, and that’s a really interesting thing for me, to see some of that stuff. That some of those brighter ones seem to be not given that opportunity to just sit and let them go on and all that developing their language and their imaginative story telling and that some of that in some classrooms has been lost a bit, yeah. I mean, I can’t just, the whole thing. I’d be interested to be able to do some statistics on what’s happening in that area, yeah.
Interviewer: It’s interesting. And I don’t know that all of the steps that we take are necessarily forward steps.

Sally: No, and that’s the thing that I keep being told and I want to say to someone, Jenny, I just want to say because with changes it’s really important that you can change and that you can … I agree totally however change is not always wonderful. For me, you know, the fact that our society is changing into a very capitalistic society where the gap between rich and poor is growing is not a positive change, you know.

Interviewer: It’s a change.

Sally: It’s a change and yes we have to cope with it but we didn’t necessarily have to cope with it, it’s been decisions by government that has actually allowed that to happen. You know the decisions we make …

Interviewer: And I see, yes, I see the same happening within the Education Department. If we are not careful, the absolutely fabulous things that we’ve got in our Tasmanian system are at risk of being sold out because we introduce something else and what we’ve got that’s precious needs to be protected and I don’t see that the Department has a view of what we’ve got that’s precious and are prepared to stand up and protect that.
Sally: No. I would totally agree with you and I actually believe that at the moment because of the societal thing we are in—the rich/poor business. The bright/slow kid business is getting more defined (Sally, T1, p. 19).

Sally’s views on social issues of wealth and poverty, the role of government in policy making, and the issues of changes in the teaching of literacy are outlined here. First, she discussed the effects of changes in the curriculum and/or teaching methods that had resulted in “the bright kids” who “used to write ten page stories” “not [being] given that opportunity”. There was a sense of loss when she discussed changes. Her choice of phrases highlighted this: “used to,” “not given the opportunity,” “some of that … had been lost,” “much less writing … than they once were.” She noted these changes and concluded that, for these “wonderfully bright kids,” it was not necessarily positive. Later she linked this with the story about a student who was leaving the school at the end of Grade Six and going to a private school:

Sally: And I can tell you now, you know I’m … we’re sending some children off to Grade 6 and they were my first kids when I came here to teach and three of them are absolutely brilliant and they were brilliant when they were in Prep and they’ve won scholarships to a private school next year and I said to Jordan the other day, I said, you know we’ll be leaving the school at the same time we started at the same time and I said I hear you’ve got a scholarship and he said yes and I said about his sister, she’s going off to … she’s Grade 11/12 next year … and she got a scholarship too, and he said she has to stay at [local prestigious private school] for Grade 11 and 12 because if they win a scholarship you have to commit to it and I said that’s because they want to brag about how clever you are and I said you just let them know it was your parents that did the job, nobody else, because they were bright when they came to school. I mean, it wasn’t me as a teacher. It wasn’t anyone else as a teacher, we’ve just guided them on the pathway, they had the skills. They, you know, genetically and family wise had the support [chuckle] (Sally, T1, p. 20).

I will come back to this passage shortly.

Sally saw change as inevitable but “not always wonderful.” For her the chance to talk with me may have provided a welcome outlet for her concerns.

and that’s the thing that I keep being told and I want to say to someone, Jenny, I just want to say because with changes it’s really important that you can change and that you can … I agree totally however change is not always wonderful (Sally, T1, p. 20).

She acknowledged the potential of change and its importance—“important that you can change”—but that there is another side to the change issue that is not as “wonderful.” She went on to link this statement with the “very capitalistic society” that she believed “our society is changing into” and the “gap between the rich and the poor [that] is growing.” For Sally these changes were linked to what was not considered wonderful or positive. Her concession that “Yes, we have to cope with it” was followed by a very clear assertion that we “didn’t necessarily” have to cope with it. It was not that the changes that had happened did not need to be managed or
“coped with” but they did not necessarily have to “happen.” It was their existence that she was querying. Social changes—such as a growing gap between rich and poor—were caused by the “decisions of government” that had “actually allowed that to happen.” The government had not directly created the problem but had permitted its existence through their decisions. Sally then positioned herself somewhat inconclusively with the statement: “You know, decisions we make …” Her use of “we” here in some way linked her personally with the decisions that were of concern to her.

The comments that were made about the gap between the rich and the poor link directly with her story about Jordan leaving the school and going, on a scholarship to a prestigious private school. Sally asserted that Jordan was “bright when [he] came to school” and that his achievements were linked not to what teachers or the school had done but to “genetics” and his family. She saw that his family and genetic inheritance were the contributors to his success, not the school or the teachers per se. Because he was bright at the beginning of his time at school she presumed that his “brightness” came from factors outside of the school’s control. This however negated any input that the school may have had in encouraging or fostering his talents. The only role that she would take credit for, personally or on the school’s behalf, was that “we’ve just guided them on the pathway, they had the skills.” The private school, she believed, wanted to and would take the credit for his achievements.

So, in applying Gee’s framework of analytical questions to this passage, it seemed that the Connection Building section was most relevant. Sally’s connections between the poverty/wealth issue and the bright/slow students were not clear, but they were evident. While she was concerned that the government’s decisions contributed to the gap between the rich and the poor her opinions on the connection between the “bright/slow business” and poverty lacked clarity. Was she asserting that as the gap gets larger between rich and poor that bright students will be further supported through private schooling and the poor students then are left behind? It was not clear. However her concerns about the capitalistic turn that she saw in society and how the bright/slow business was “getting more defined” were made evident. She went on to elaborate her concerns for students living in poverty:
Because kids living in poverty, with families that haven’t got time to think about, except where their food is going to come from, how they’re going to cope with the next dinner and day, they are not going to be sitting down reading and ... (Sally, T1, p. 20)

She saw that the focus for these families was on surviving rather than helping their children become literate. Their priorities were different and were not necessarily supportive of the students’ academic progress. These students were functioning at survival levels, because of poverty. This was the direction in which she indicated money should be spent: helping those children in the pre-school years whose families experienced poverty. Sally perhaps hoped to move these students to levels where they could begin to thrive.

Sally made connections with the past in her observations about how “bright kids” were not necessarily given the opportunity to write and “develop their language and their imaginative story-telling” as they once had been. She was able to make connections between the need for and the importance of change, but expressed reservations about the assumption that all change was wonderful. Her perception that society was becoming more capitalistic was made evident. For example, Sally also assumed that Jordan’s new school—the prestigious private school—was going to take the credit for his “brightness” despite her belief that the school, any school, would only ever guide a student; that the “brightness” related to skills that he had prior to school.

**Summary of societal changes**

These passages about the kinds of social changes that were evident for Sally were analysed using the Connection Building questions from Gee’s framework. Sally made connections about social change. For her “change is not always wonderful.” While acknowledging the importance of being able to change, she expressed concerns about some of the changes that she saw in society. Her assumption was that government decisions had allowed changes which resulted in a widening of the gap between rich and poor. There was evidence of links between this poverty/wealth issue and “bright/slow” students but the meaning behind this link was not clearly discernable. Sally’s concerns about social issues were based on her understanding of social issues of poverty/wealth and capitalism.

**8. Behaviour management changes**

As with most of these passages of data those selected could simultaneously illustrate
more than one of the designated themes or sub-categories. They were selected because they indicate the participant teacher’s opinions and beliefs about the issue of changes in behaviour management.

**Barbara—“More of everything”**

Barbara: There are certainly times when you are stressed and the only other thing that is compounding it now is the fact of what you have within the classroom, it’s not just teaching. As I said before, behaviour management is becoming more and more of an issue in the classroom (Barbara, T1, p. 7).

Barbara: I think you … teachers are still trying to do the best they can do each day but they are coming out of that day far more stressed, far more dissatisfied with their teaching probably than ever before. As I said I’ve been a lucky possum this year, but other’s that I know, I’ve never seen them like they are now. I’ve never seen so many good teachers so tired. Um, and feeling that they’ve failed, and these are really brilliant teachers. Because so much of the day is spent trying to, um do behaviour management. You know, and …

Interviewer: And do you think that’s just your school or do you think teachers state wide.

Barbara: I’m talking about this one school. No. This is teachers at other schools that I know of as well. Um, state-wide, I couldn’t comment on state wide. Just kids I know that are problems. Certainly in our school.

Interviewer: Within your District though?

Barbara: Just from the District. Which I’d imagine it would be a small slice of what’s happening elsewhere, but I don’t know.

Interviewer: So, just an indication of what’s happened?

Barbara: I mean, we at [school] are having problems because many people … we’re getting all sorts of people that used to be at [other school]. I don’t … I mean it’s awful to put an X on these spots but we have a lot of cheap rent and so we are getting a lot of students from [other schools] and so on.

Interviewer: Children coming out from difficult schools?

Barbara: Children coming from very difficult schools, with very difficult backgrounds, coming in and they’ve really made their mark. Hugely made their mark. But as I said, it’s not just those children. We’ve got children … who would have, ten years ago, you know, seen the rate of children with Ritalin, dexamphetamines … Um, I mean it’s huge. Not one or two children, but at least one in every class. But I mean that wouldn’t have even existed.

Interviewer: No, I mean they were hyper-active. They weren’t labelled and medicated.

Barbara: And drugged.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Barbara: Yeah. Sometimes it’s the drugs, you know. We’ve got more parents on drugs. We’ve got, you know, more of everything.

Interviewer: And less support?

Barbara: We have got … we have got way less support.

Interviewer: It’s funding support and it’s moral support?

Barbara: I … yeah. I mean, if we are going on to that sort of track, um, there is you certainly feel there is less there, … support of you as a teacher.
Interviewer: Okay, because it’s a big school?
Barbara: I don’t just mean from our big school. Everybody’s just frustrated. It’s the funds. You know, um, there’s not the areas to turn to. There’s not the staff, there’s not the funds to give some staff relief, until they get so stressed out that they suddenly have to go and take stress leave (Barbara T1, p. 22).

The first of these two passages from the conversations with Barbara referred to the condition of being occasionally stressed. What compounded the stress was “the only other thing” of “behaviour management” which, in Barbara’s view was “becoming more and more of an issue in the classroom.” The direct link was between classroom-based behaviour management issues and stress. She elaborated later.

The second passage continued the conversation with the assertion that “teachers are still trying to do the best they can do each day.” In Barbara’s opinion teachers were “still” working hard, “doing the best they can do.” In other words, teachers had been doing the best they could do and were still doing so “each day.” Barbara asserted that “they are coming out of that day far more stressed, far more dissatisfied with their teaching than ever before.” Her assertions implied several links. First, was the link between trying to do one’s best and being stressed. Second, was the link between being stressed and feeling dissatisfied with teaching. Third, was the link between the past and the present, suggested by “probably than ever before.” This was a circuit of connection. She continued the assertion with the statement: “I’ve never seen them like they are now.”

In claiming that she had “been a lucky possum,” [a colloquial phrase for ‘being lucky’] Barbara had distanced herself from this elevated level of stress and dissatisfaction, “implying that she was exempt because, as luck would have it, her students were not that bad. The distance between her and those who were stressed and dissatisfied gave her a spectator’s vantage point. She could see what it was like for them. Barbara emphasised that these were not just ordinary teachers, but “good teachers” and that there are “so many” of them and that they are “so tired.” Her articulation of this problem had a depth and seriousness to it. Not only were these good teachers so tired but that they were “feeling that they’ve failed.” She backed this up with another similar assertion: “and these are really brilliant teachers.” So why would it be that so many brilliant teachers were so tired, stressed and dissatisfied and feeling like they had failed—surely a serious situation in Barbara’s
opinion. She elaborated: “Because so much of the day is spent trying to do behaviour management.” It was not just doing it, it was the effort involved in “trying” to do it. Presumably these teachers were trying and yet feeling like they had failed.

The problem, Barbara could see, was wider than just her school, but she could not comment on how widespread it was. She knew of teachers in other schools who were facing similar situations. Her District she noted was “a small slice of what’s happening elsewhere.” Presumably, with the comment that “Just kids I know that are problems,” Barbara meant that it was not all kids, just some, that were problems and “certainly in our school.” Barbara went on to give her evaluation of the reasons for this problem.

There were changes in the school clientele and situation: “All sorts of people,” from other “difficult schools,” with “very difficult backgrounds,” came into the district because there was a “lots of cheap rent.” There were “more parents on drugs,” “children with Ritalin, dexamphetamines” 27 and “not just one or two children, but at least one in every class. These students who had arrived from other schools had “hugely made their mark” in her school. There were difficult students and there were increased numbers of these students who were “drugged.” Barbara summed up her assessment of the situation with, “more of everything.” This was another significantly serious situation that was related to contexts of change in social conditions and to teachers’ stress and dissatisfaction.

The result of this socially-based problem of more students who were difficult to manage and more students who were medicated was the stress levels of the staff. Barbara acknowledged that “you certainly feel there is less [...] support of you as a teacher” and that there were “not the areas to turn to” as a result of a lack of support staff or funds to give teachers relief from this daily dilemma. “Everybody’s just frustrated” was her analysis of the situation. The frustration, stress, dissatisfaction and feeling like they had failed despite trying to do the best they could, had

27 Dexamphetamines and Ritalin are drugs for children who have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD.
consequences. Barbara noted that it was not until “they get so stressed out that they suddenly have to go and take stress leave” that perhaps something might happen to alleviate the situation.

While Barbara was able to distance herself from this kind of difficult situation, using her spectator view to observe what was happening to those around her, she acknowledged later that the toll on her could be enormous if things were different and she had a difficult class. She was realistic enough to know that there was a chance that it could happen to her:

Interviewer: A difficult class. A class that causes you to go home every night and cry and question yourself and you know …

Barbara: Oh God, who can keep that going? Jeez.

Interviewer: Then you’ve got …

Barbara: I’ll be looking for another job because no job is worth that. No, absolutely not. I’m probably at the age where I won’t get another job. Um, yeah, when I look at some of the teachers and admire them. I think, how would I cope with that kid telling me I’m a fucking rotten bitch every time I tell him to please just open the book up. You know, you just, God it must pull you down. I’ve got so much admiration. There’s a difficult year coming through to Grade 1 next year so I’ll probably find out. In fact I know that it will be really interesting. It’s a very difficult Prep. I’m just thinking of others, some of these Grade 4s, how can you put up with it? You know, a kid throwing a chair across the classroom the other day and another time ripping … rushing around ripping people’s books … I mean it’s just … But anyway we digress from literacy [chuckle] (Barbara, T1, p. 23).

She relayed her thoughts and concerns quite clearly. She admired the coping mechanisms of others, wondering how they “put up with it” and considered that it might be her in the next year. Her reaction would be to look for another job.

In applying Gee’s analytical framework of questions to these passages of data on Changes in Behaviour Management, the section on World Building seemed relevant. Barbara made connections between her observations of school life with reference to changes in behaviour management issues and her values and beliefs.

World building: The situated meaning and value of aspects of the here and now world, reality:

4. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?

5. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artefacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?

6. What cultural models and networks of models (master models) seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?

7. What institutions and/or Discourses are being (re-)produced in this situation and how are they being stabilized or transformed in the act?
In Barbara’s observation the issues that surrounded behaviour management had not only changed, but had caused changes in teachers. While she was distant from this in that her conversation was about other teachers, and not her personal experiences, Barbara had acknowledged that circumstances could well be different.

This passage recounted the situation as Barbara saw it. Her views about students who had come from other “difficult schools,” “drugged” with Ritalin and dexamphetamines, and the tiredness, frustration, stress, dissatisfaction, sense of failure, and lack of support experienced teachers were all linked together in the one scenario. It was about cause and effect; one had caused the other. The world that she described was the one that she saw and lived in. Her understanding about this came from her daily experience. She admired teachers who were doing their best. She valued the fact that she had “been a lucky possum this year” in not having the kinds of problems that she attributed to others around her. It was her world-view, the ‘here and now reality’ of her experience. The links between these problems—the difficult students and behaviour management issues that contributed to the problems that teachers were feeling—were clearly stated. Barbara used her years of experience to compare the present with the past in constructions such as: “never seen”, “far more stressed”, “far more dissatisfied”, “than ever before,” “that used to be,” “ten years ago,” and “that wouldn’t even have existed.” She was able to connect the present with the past and the present did not portray such a positive picture. The phrase, “more of everything” summed up the differences she had noted.

Her claim to see “more of everything” in students’ behaviour now linked to the “more of everything” experienced by teachers. More teachers were stressed, dissatisfied, frustrated, tired. The “brilliant teachers” “feeling like they’ve failed” were linked in her mind to the issue of behaviour management and the increase in the numbers of difficult students. For Barbara the changes caused problems that had destabilised the situation for teachers. Her observations came both out of concern and admiration for those teaching under difficult circumstances, but also out of understanding that she may well face the same situation in the future. She was, at the moment, immune, but she was aware that this might well be a temporary immunity.
Summary of changes in behaviour management

Barbara had witnessed changes in behaviour management issues that concerned her. While she was not directly involved because her class that year had not contained students with serious behaviour management problems, she was aware that the situation could change in the following year. Her concerns were based on the “more” and “less” principles. There were more students with more problems caused by a raft of contributing factors. There was less support for teachers and less funding to provide resources. The outcomes of this were that the teachers around her were more dissatisfied, more tired, and more stressed, so they felt like they had failed. She asserted that these were not ordinary teachers, but were “brilliant” ones. The link that Barbara saw between the stress and the students with problems was behaviour management. Her position as spectator permitted her an observer’s degree of objectivity, yet she was integrally involved as in the following year it could be her as well. She was able to use her teaching experience to make observations across time: the situation was worse now than before. She believed that what should be provided was support in the form of personnel for relief and funds for further resources. This situation had significant impacts for her. She claimed that she would seek another kind of job if things got as bad for her as what she was witnessing for those around her.

Summary of change

In considering the theme of change as it has been analysed here, using the framework of questions from Gee, connections between it and other themes became evident. The ways in which these teachers talked about change was determined by their knowledge, values, emotions, beliefs and perceptions. Their identity—which included their individual knowledge, values, emotions, beliefs and perceptions—and their understandings about the situations in which they found themselves were integrally linked to the ways in which they reacted to change. The process of negotiating the challenges that change presented was unique for each teacher, yet there were similarities across the data set in the ways that they managed and accommodated the changes. There were repercussions of change for these teachers and the ways in which they managed these were determined by their knowledge, values, emotions, beliefs and perceptions.
While negotiating these changes it appeared that the teachers remained receptive to the general notion of change. The details and specifics that related to the individual contexts of the teachers’ work environments were what had caused concerns for them. Their identity and relationships were connected through the conduit of their understandings. Finding themselves against the backdrop of change had challenged their identity. Through this challenge they were usually able to find a position which affirmed and stabilised their identity. At times their concerns and understandings set them apart from a wholesale acceptance of all change. They were able to articulate the reasons for their understandings, basing their views on educational understandings.

Analysis of the data revealed a prevailing mood of cynicism and frustration which cut across these teacher’s attitudes to much of the change with which they had engaged. While there was an acceptance of the necessity for change within an environment of change, this was coloured by cynicism, frustration and mismatched expectations about the deeper reasons for what was occurring.

### 4.3.2 Power

Power is one of the three themes identified in the second level of data analysis. The issues of power are further investigated in this third level of analysis, using the three sub-categories of imposed power, disempowerment of teachers and empowerment of self (teachers) and others as the structure for the analysis. The tool for this analysis is the set of 18 investigative questions provided by Gee.

Much of the teachers’ discussion is simultaneously about the imposition of power through the actions and expectations of the education system and about being disempowered. These two broad categories frequently overlap and are simultaneously evident in the data. They are not discrete categories. As has already been noted, the discussions about change and identity are also related to power. None of the themes was evidenced in the data as simply one or the other. These turned out to be complex and interrelated themes for teachers.
The participants’ references to power were generally implicit. By this I mean that the issue of power was rarely directly referred to or named overtly but was evident in their relationships, roles and positions, their values and beliefs and resultant actions. Accordingly, the analysis sought to uncover more information about these power issues and the meanings from the conversations, making explicit what was implicit in the conversations.

The use of the term *power* in most of these instances refers to the imbalance of power. This could be considered to be usual in an employer/employee situation—the employer holds the balance of power, the teachers, being employees and to a certain extent duty-bound, carry out the wishes and directives of the employer. These teachers appeared to be aware that this was a normal and customary situation, however their discussions revealed more than an awareness of the usual structure of power relations. It was acknowledged that senior staff and Principals acted as agents of the employer—the Department of Education (DoE)—and that the education system had many service branches which assist with the implementation of its power: some of these attract or are assigned more power, status or validity through the actions of the education system’s own agents.

The issues of power that were identified from the previous level of data analysis are again listed here.

**Imposed power**

1. through senior staff and Principals
2. through systems, e.g. DoE and expectations
3. through research and statistics
4. the political nature of imposed power

**Disempowerment of teachers**

1. devaluing and undermining
2. undervaluing
3. lack of resources and funding
4. lack of support from the system (DoE) and senior staff

**Empowerment of self and others**

1. voluntary transfers as a means of self-empowerment
2. through professional associations (KTA, ECET)
3. self-empowerment through teaching experience or inexperience
4. through one’s own learning/PD
5. through encouraging self and others
6. through decision-making processes
These, in conjunction with the lens provided by Gee’s framework questions, were used as the basis for data analysis. For brevity’s sake not all fourteen of these categories were employed in this level of data analysis. Selection of the segments of data was made to represent appropriately a cross-section of the participants in their conversations about issues of power.

**The imposition of power**

The ways in which power was evident in the lives of these teachers has already been discussed in the previous two levels of data analysis. At this level of analysis the impact of power—in the form of expectations, policies, programs and documents that teachers were required to engage with in the course of their working lives—is further analysed. Discussions about accountability and pressure for greater involvement in assessment, reporting and recording student progress were evident across the entire data set. This section looks at Rosemaree’s comments about the political nature of the power that was evident to her.

**Rosemaree—“Political accountability”**

Rosemaree discussed links between the increasing need for teachers to be accountable for their actions and politics. Power was implicated through the expectation that teachers, schools, Principals and governments should be more accountable for their actions.

**Interviewer:** Well go back to the pressure on umm … the … expectation that usually happens … that comes from the department and the parents. Uhm, is this … why do you think this is so? You said you don’t like it and that you’re concerned because there are actually …

**Rosemaree:** I think it’s happening … I think it’s very involved and very convoluted and it’s not easy to unpack. I think there are a lot of confused early childhood teachers out there. I think it’s coming from the concept of accountability and I think ummm, I doubt it would matter which political party was in. I think it’s part of the ruling party, the ruling government saying we need to be able to say to our electors that we’re doing a good job and we need the evidence to be able to say this. And the evidence will be if you’ve done some assessments and can tell us that the children in Grade 3 are doing really well and we want to know what Grade 3s can do, how are the Grade 2 are getting on and how are the Preps and it’s coming from that …

**Interviewer:** That’s where it’s coming from; accountability.

**Rosemaree:** Yes—political accountability and umm … I don’t know enough about how the Education Department operates but I believe that there seems to be a huge, there’s a larger, stronger, more powerful force for high school teaching and their needs—secondary schools—than there is for Early Childhood. And that’s been always the way—unless we have some strong teachers … umm. Even a few years ago there were some powerful articulate vocal women—you know—past heads of districts and
Rosemaree linked the increasing pressure and expectations to political accountability. She acknowledged that the whole issue was “involved,” “convoluted” and “not easy to unpack.” She also thought that there was widespread confusion amongst early childhood teachers. She did not really enlarge on this but went on to link the confusion—stemming from the pressure and expectations that came from parents and the department—to accountability. In the same breath as accountability she went on to talk about politics—the ruling party rather than one party or another. For her, the link between accountability and politics was clear and direct. She qualified this with other links. Accountability was linked to the politics of the ruling party. It was also linked to the electors, in that the government needed to have evidence that they were “doing a good job”—they were aware that their political life was linked to the electors and being seen to be achieving outcomes. This, in turn, was linked to “some assessments” about what students were doing, in order “to tell us.”

Towards the end of this section of data Rosemaree positioned herself with those in power—the politicians: “And the evidence will be if you’ve done some assessments and can tell us that the children in Grade 3 are doing really well and we want to know what Grade 3s can do, how are the Grade 2…” She was taking the opposing stance of the politicians asking teachers what you’ve (teachers have) done, to tell us (politicians) because we (politicians) want to know what was happening across the grades. She could identify with their position well enough to use their voices. Her use of multiple pronouns indicated her ability to identify with other stakeholders in these matters.

Rosemaree then went on to assert that, despite being over 50 years old, she did not “know enough about how the Education Department operates.” She was leading to comparisons between early childhood and secondary schools, asserting that the secondary sector had, “a larger, stronger, more powerful force for high school teaching and their needs” than for the early childhood sector. She believed that the perceived imbalance of power left the early childhood sector unsupported—or less
supported than the “more powerful force” that was able to get the secondary schools’ needs attended to. The valuing of secondary education over early childhood was implicit in many of Rosemaree’s comments. It was not so much an “us and them” issue for her, but more about raising awareness about the special and essential needs of early childhood education. She went on to assert that this imbalance of valuing and support had “always been the way,” but she appeared hopeful that the imbalance could be redressed by the existence of “strong leaders.”

This led her to explain that strong leadership in the early childhood area should or could come from “powerful, articulate, vocal women.” She was referring to previous district superintendents who had risen from the ranks of the early childhood area and went on to note that, “people in power have not worked in early childhood so they don’t have that depth of knowledge and they don’t understand.” This was an assertion that those who have worked in the area of young children implicitly understand the special considerations which need to be made for students and teachers of young children. For Rosemaree, those who were in power who had not worked in early childhood did not have the depth of knowledge (implying intimate understanding), nor did they understand what should or could be done. This fed into Rosemaree’s deep-seated desire to raise awareness of the needs of young children and those who assist them—the parents and teachers. Without leaders to support this awareness-raising her self-appointed task was even more challenging.

Power aligned with leadership in the early childhood arena was what mattered for Rosemaree. She saw herself as a strong advocate for the early childhood area of education. She believed that there was a lack of strong leadership, contributing to the undervaluing of early childhood education and/or the over-valuing of secondary education by comparison. In Rosemaree’s view, the imposition of power through the pressure of demands for accountability linked directly with politics. The ruling party needed to be seen to be achieving and therefore teachers had to be more accountable. Political accountability led to teacher accountability. Increased pressure and expectations for teachers were the by-products.

When assessing Rosemaree’s comments in the light of Gee’s analytical model of 18 questions, it would seem that the most relevant are those about “politics building”—
constructing the nature and relevance of various social goods such as power and status.

Gee’s question 14 is most relevant for this section of data:

14. What social goods (e.g. status, power, gender, race, class…) are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

It also links with the questions about Rosemaree’s relationship with the Department and her identity within this relationship:

11. What relationships and identities (roles, positions) with their concomitant personal, social and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition) feelings (affect) and values seem to be relevant to this situation?

12. How are these relationships and identities stabilised or transformed in the situation?

These questions are summed up with the following query: What was it that Rosemaree valued and assigned value to—what did she make relevant or irrelevant?

In identifying a perceived increase in pressure from the educational system concerning what teachers were supposed to be doing at Kindergarten level and linking this to the expectations of the parents, Rosemaree flagged what was important for her. There seemed to be a mismatch in expectations. The parents, although well intentioned as she mentions elsewhere, were often ill-informed and it was the role of those working with young children to help educate parents by setting out more appropriate expectations about what their children should be doing and at what ages. The mismatch of expectations also extended to the education system when she stated:

At the state meeting [of the KTA] there seems to be a real heavy push coming down through the Department into Kindergartens, and right into Prep too, that is saying, ‘This is what is expected now and we need to be able to assess what you are doing and we need to get you telling us (a) and (b) about these children’. And I am really concerned with what issues they are canvassing (Rosemaree, T1, p. 3).

Her concerns were based on her understanding about what was best for the students and did not seem to match seamlessly with what the system was asking of teachers. Implicit in this was that accountability had made a sudden and unwelcome appearance at Kindergarten and Prep level. Previously Kindergarten and Prep had been exempt from this kind of an expectation. Now the educational hierarchy wanted to know “(a) and (b) about these children” and whatever it was that the system wanted to know was of concern for Rosemaree.
Rosemaree saw that the leadership of the education department—as mentioned above—was lacking in strength of support for the early childhood arena. As a result, she saw it as part of her professional responsibility to support that area herself—through her involvement with professional organisations such as the Kindergarten Teachers’ Association (KTA) and the Early Childhood Educators of Tasmania (ECET). She worked passionately in these arenas to support the needs of young children, their parents and the teachers who work with them. She valued parental input and worked to support both parents and students. Her concerns about the “confusion” of some early childhood teachers was stated—but not expanded upon—and was presumably a motivator for her involvement in these organisations.

So, for Rosemaree her identity was stabilised and supported through and as a result of her beliefs about what was important in early childhood education and in leadership of the educational system. She positioned herself as an advocate for early childhood teachers and this encompassed and permitted her concerns about the pressures and issues that stemmed from the system. Her relationship with the bureaucracy was noted. Despite acknowledging that she did not really understand the way that “the Department operates,” particularly the requirements of political accountability, yet she was still able to work with the system to further her advocacy role. She was active in the committees of KTA and ECET and sought opportunities to work with parents and principals to promote support for teachers and early childhood education. She negotiated the power that the system exerted over her. Despite her acknowledgement elsewhere that “systems really bug me” (Rosemaree, T2, p. 5) and that she really “can't bear the bullshit” (Rosemaree, T2, p. 4) Rosemaree was able to work with the system. This was summarised in the following extract:

Rosemaree: and it just has given me a much more sensible, rational view of what education ... what is it like to be a teacher and keeping some sense on that. So when I see some bullshit and I'm not good ... I'm sure I was better at ...

Interviewer: Tolerating that?

Rosemaree: At tolerating that and just not saying anything and walking away and calming down and thinking, look, this is a system, I'm a part-time Kindergarten teacher, I need to put up with it. I have to bend to the system and operate within it and find some satisfaction within it. Because there are certain things, sadly, as an Early Childhood teacher, I keep hearing, we can't change that and that makes me sad because I feel we did have a sense of power ten, twenty years ago. When we were listened to ... (Rosemaree, T2, p. 6).

She acknowledged that she worked in a system and that she needed to “calm down”
and “put up with” some things that happened and yet managed to “find some satisfaction within it.” The power issue was further enlightened through her link between the past and the present and the issue of whether teachers were able to get their voices heard in the systemic decisions that were made. “I feel we did have a sense of power” previously, which was linked with “when we were listened to.” Her relationship with the educational system had taken a turn. She no longer felt that “we”—presumably teachers—were listened to and that this was explicitly linked to having or not having a “sense of power.” Not “being listened to” equated with “no power.” Her voice was not able to be heard in the bureaucratic educational system. This observation was also mirrored by Barbara and Sally. The result of this perceived loss of power for Rosemaree was sadness. “We” are not able to effect change through being listened to as “we” once were.

**Summary of imposition of power**

This passage of data from Rosemaree’s interview indicated her understandings about the way that the education system and/or its agents imposed power. The analysis using Gee’s framework revealed that Rosemaree’s relationships and identity were both challenged and affirmed in contexts of change and power. There was an array of beliefs, feeling and values that underpinned Rosemaree’s understandings about her relationship with her employer. Her knowledge—in the form of what she knew and understood—was determined by her experiences and by how she perceived and received these events. The employer, either in the form of an agent of the system such as the Principal or a senior staff member, or in the form of the more distant policy and program makers, was an ever-present force in her working life. The issue of imposed power was also linked with the broader issues of politics at both federal and state levels. Most of the more explicit imposition of power came through to teachers as an increase or change in expectations—either for them or for their students. The relationship that Rosemaree had with the education system had taken a turn—and not necessarily a happy or positive one. Rosemaree’s beliefs about herself and her role and position as a teacher were affirmed through the processes and through her actions, beliefs, values and understandings about educational issues.

**Disempowerment of teachers**

In a variety of ways the teachers indicated they felt devalued and undervalued, unsupported, and under-funded and under-resourced. This failure to support the
teachers usually came about directly as a result of the actions of the senior staff and/or Principal in the school, but sometimes was evident in more senior level decisions from the top level of the educational hierarchy—decisions about policy, programs and, more particularly, funding. As with most of the other categories this one was not neat or discrete. As teachers talked about being undervalued, for example, they were also implying the use of imposed power and at times simultaneously indicating they were seeking ways to negate this through self-empowering actions. The passages of data that have been selected for analysis highlight the issues related to disempowerment.

**Katrina—“Bells and whistles”**

This first extract is drawn from Katrina’s second interview and is related to her assertion that she was so frustrated at her current school that a transfer to a new school seemed the only way to alleviate the situation, despite the current school being geographically closer to her home and thus more convenient. This frustration came from her relationship with the Principal and two senior staff members. She related her position of being subjected to the imposition of power through what was expected of the staff, the frustration at not being valued or supported, and the disempowering effects on her at personal levels.

> Interviewer: you said about the bells and the whistles, this idea of teachers getting some sort of recognition for the work that you do, within your school, you know some pat on the back, some word of encouragement: have you had that in previous schools, in a different context?

> Katrina: Previous schools or even in that school, in this school, in my earlier couple of years there, I’ve had senior staff presence I guess in the classroom, perhaps looking at a display or something I’ve been doing, praising the kids for the work that’s been done and showing an interest in what I’ve done in the classroom, and that’s been my appreciation. I think, just a little bit of >oh gosh that looks good’ or you know or …

> Interviewer: So it doesn’t have to be monumental or public … ?

> Katrina: It doesn’t have to be monumental but it has to be just one sentence to say >gosh you’ve done a good job there’ or even if a suggestion of >I tried this once’ how do you, you know you could incorporate that and gives you another idea or even as far as I can remember once I was doing a money theme and the senior person oh just came in with a game, a money game, >oh I knew you were doing this and this might help’. And just little things like that that show that yes, they are thinking you’re doing something worthwhile. Whereas I haven’t had one piece of interest in anything that I’ve done. Nobody looks at any displays you’re doing apart from the parents and children. Nobody is interested in us, or anything that you’re doing in the classroom.

> Interviewer: Is that just your Principal or is that the senior staff team?

> Katrina: That’s the whole three senior staff team as it stands at this stage.

> Interviewer: So do you then come away with that with a sense of … ?

> Katrina: Why do I bother?
Chapter 4  

Interviewer: Yeah unappreciated [Katrina: Yes] and not valued?  
Katrina: Yes, yes.  
Interviewer: The work that you put in is not valued?  
Katrina: Yes, basically I think yeah, I feel that I’ve been very undervalued by the senior staff. I think they really just don’t, they don’t seem to be interested at all, even having a conversation about children and coming into class to hear children read or hear, to look at what children are doing. They don’t seem to have that interest at all. (Katrina, T2, p. 2)

Katrina talked extensively about her Principal and senior staff and her frustration with their management style was clearly stated. She explained that she expected some kind of appreciation or acknowledgement of the work that she did. There were several factors that had added to her frustration at this school but here she discussed the perception that her work was undervalued. The senior staff’s lack of interest was yet another frustration for her. She acknowledged that the kind of appreciation that she would anticipate as acceptable would not have to be extreme, “monumental” or public—simple things would suffice such as an occasional presence of senior staff in the class-room, a word of encouragement or acknowledgement about her or the students’ work. Somehow, for Katrina, this was what was expected and she supported this with the assertion that she had received it in previous schools and situations, and still expected it now. Without this kind of acknowledgment she felt undervalued. Her inference was that it was not a lot to ask from her senior staff and yet it was absent. The three senior staff members here were aggregated in her view and she noted in response to my question that all three were implicated in this failure. Their lack of interest meant that she and her work had become invisible and unappreciated.

The next passage continues the conversation with a clarification of her position and understandings.

Interviewer: And is that then … where do you get your sense of satisfaction from?  
Katrina: Well I have to get it from the children and the parents and other, and my peers. I mean working with the teacher next door and we will share something or with our buddy class we’ll do something together and or a chance in assembly once or twice a term to show something really good the kids have done, is basically how I’ve got, how I’ve felt a sense of achievement. If the kids have been basically happy with what they’ve done and the parents have been happy then and we’ve been able to … And I think there’s been teams built around people supporting each other, which has essentially divided the school as far as people just getting into those little groups and supporting each other because, for instance the Early Childhood team would support each other because there is nobody else to support them.  
Interviewer: So you make your own …?
Katrina: You make your own.
Interviewer: Sense of support?
Katrina: Basically, yeah.
Interviewer: And encouragement and motivation?
Katrina: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that what you get then from yourselves, from within you and your peers, your teaching colleagues from parents and students, is that sufficient for you, Katrina to carry you through or do you need that senior staff sense of appreciation?
Katrina: I think everybody needs the senior staff appreciation to a certain degree. I don’t think they need a lot but I think for your own confidence and your own self worth in the classroom, you need that positive … In the classroom you are trying to put together a positive program for the kids and how you cope with the kids in the best positive way you can. But if you’re not getting that positive feedback from senior staff you do wonder where you fit in the big picture. And you don’t really know what they believe. They don’t check your written planning. They don’t check your philosophy, so they don’t really have any understanding of what you’re doing so I guess as far as that’s concerned that’s sort of driven me to that decision to move on, and hope that I can find that in another school (Katrina, T2, pp. 2–3).

Katrina derived a sense of satisfaction from her students and their parents. She got and gave support to her peers—her teaching colleagues—and looked for ways to acknowledge her students’ achievements. Another question, for me as the researcher, arose here. Katrina stated that she got a sense of achievement from seeking out situations through which to share the achievements of her students with others—at assemblies or with buddy classes, for example. Did this mean that her own professional sense of achievement was inseparably linked to the achievement of her students? The happiness of the students and their parents with their progress and achievement appeared to be the indicator for Katrina that her work was acceptable.

She went on to talk about the teams of teachers that had been built to support each other at her school. Presumably this was at the instigation of the senior staff, with teachers from the same or sequential grades grouped together for decision making or professional development purposes which has become increasingly common in Tasmanian state schools. However, in Katrina’s school, she saw that it had the contrary effect of dividing the school, by failing to reconnect to the other teachers on the staff. The support that the members of the early childhood team were able to give each other was driven by the fact that, at least for Katrina, there was no other form of support available. The bonding was for support and I was left wondering whether that created the problem of ‘us and them’—one team excluding another as a form of self-promotion.
Katrina’s next response elaborated on the expectation of support from senior staff. Despite the fact that I asked her whether the support that she received was sufficient for her, her response was aligned with the other teachers, positioning herself with “everybody” and speaking for the group in statements such as: “I think everybody needs the senior staff appreciation to a certain degree.” She went on, still positioning herself as a distant “you” rather than the first person “I,” in support of her assertive statement. The reason for the need was stated as “your own confidence” and “own self-worth in the classroom.” Katrina was looking to her senior staff for affirmation of her teaching value. How she felt about herself as a teacher became linked, through this appreciation, to the senior staff. For her, one of their roles was to give appreciation to those who deserved it.

Katrina continued with the argument by stating that she was trying to put together a positive program in her classroom and yet without any positive feedback from the senior staff she was left wondering “where you fit in the big picture.” She was unsure about her place in the scheme of things: “you don’t really know what they believe”—a concern mirrored by Suzanne’s statement that despite teaching since 1959 she did not know whether she was a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ teacher. For Katrina, the senior staff beliefs about you, the teacher, were obviously important. The reason “you” were left wondering, Katrina asserted, was because they did not check planning or teaching philosophy and so “don’t really have any understanding of what you’re doing.” Presumably they were not in a position to have an informed opinion about Katrina’s—or any other teacher’s—teaching and so any opinion about her worth as a teacher would be based on insufficient information. This notion was also echoed in comments that Sally had made.

This situation, along with the other issues, was sufficiently inappropriate and frustrating to Katrina that she felt “driven ... to that decision to move on” to a new school in the “hope that I can find that [appreciation] in another school.” For Katrina this decision to transfer was more about self-preservation than just simply frustration with the system for failing to support her. That failure to support and appreciate her eroded the core of her confidence in her classroom activities and self-worth. She and her work were integrally linked and a failure to encourage her in her work undermined her confidence in her teaching and undervalued her worth to the system. It
caused her to doubt herself and to re-evaluate her professional and personal sets of beliefs, values and understandings.

The power wielded by the senior staff team—in this case, the power of withholding support and appreciation—affected Katrina to the extent that transferring to a new school that was not as geographically convenient as her current school was preferable to staying and enduring what for her had become untenable.

In aligning this information with Gee’s analytical framework of 18 questions about world or meaning building, questions 11–13 about Identity and Relationship building are relevant, as Katrina struggled with the perception that her senior staff had failed to encourage or support her. For Katrina, it was important that teachers were appreciated, valued and supported: but for, her this was not occurring. This failure on the part of the senior staff team to deliver the kind of appreciation and recognition was relevant. It not only left Katrina wondering where she fitted into the “big picture” but it also impacted on her confidence and “self-worth in the classroom.” Her relationship with the senior staff was one of expectation of support. Their failure to check planning or teaching philosophy meant that any understanding they had about her was shallow and not based on an informed opinion. The relevance of this was that she felt the leadership of the school was inappropriate and her frustration and concern extended to the point of one of the few options that she had—to transfer to a new school. The failure of Katrina’s senior staff to give her any sense of being valued for her work highlighted her belief that this was an integral part of their roles in relation to her. Her reaction to the failure to receive this support was to transfer. Her identity was challenged in the current school climate. When she asserted that she felt she needed to “move on for my own sake” she implied that the situation at the school was affecting her at personal levels. “I’ve tried not to let it affect how I feel as a human being but I think once it got, started to get to that stage I knew that it was time to get out” (Katrina, T2, p. 6). Her desire to take a transfer gave her the opportunity for a fresh start: “I need to build myself again into a new situation where I could be comfortable” (Katrina, T2, p. 5). This implied a re-building process—restoring the confidence that had been compromised if not eroded through the difficulties that she perceived as a result of relationships with the senior staff at her school. Her identity and her relationship with the senior staff were explicitly linked.
She valued things that were not received or perceived in the current school climate. In taking a transfer she both acknowledged that she could not change the situation and she hoped for a better set of priorities and values in the new setting.

**Summary of disempowerment**

Katrina’s sense of disempowerment highlights the important role that identity plays in the relationships that teachers have with others around them. Katrina felt that her prospects had become so negative at her school as a result of the lack of support and interest from the senior staff that “for her own sake” she should transfer to a new school. How she viewed her Principal was based on her belief that she should get some valuing and support from her and the senior staff. This failure to show interest or support led to her feeling undervalued. This, combined with other issues related elsewhere in Katrina’s conversations, contributed to the negative feelings about herself and the school situation, prompting the decision to move. At a new school she would be able to start to re-establish herself. She valued the happiness of students and parents as indicators of her success and for a sense of teaching satisfaction. Sharing with colleagues and taking opportunities to showcase her students (and in her understanding, *her own*) work were avenues that gave her some acknowledgement of her achievements as a teacher. The role of the Principal and senior staff was integral in this situation. Her relationship with her teaching colleagues, students and parents also played a part in her sense of teaching satisfaction.

**Empowerment of self and others**

The empowerment of others seemed mainly reserved for teaching colleagues, but Pat and Sally talked about the need to also support, and thereby empower, the senior staff and/or Principal. These observations were drawn from experience. In Sally’s case, her experience in an acting senior position positioned her with the senior staff and from this position she commented that they—the senior staff/Principal—needed encouragement too.

**Sally—“I needed to spread my wings”**

A passage from Sally’s first interview was analysed to look for self-empowerment using Gee’s analytical questions. The questions that relate to Activity Building were utilised in this analysis as they illuminate the levels of activities in which Sally is
engaged. These questions are:

Activity building: Situated meanings about activities and actions.

8. What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in this situation?

9. What sub-activities compose this activity?

10. What actions compose these sub-activities and activities?

Aligned with this set of questions are the underlying and at times implicit knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values that support these activities.

Interviewer: Can you think that there would be anything that you’ve been involved in that sort of quiet resistance way or would that be something that you would do in regard to if Spalding was introduced from next year? Now can you see yourself doing that?

Sally: I suppose I grew up during all that ‘no lines on paper’ scenario and, interesting for me, my first three years of teaching was with a very strong leader who was very much Pathways orientated and was a fantastic grounding for me and she was brilliant but after three years of working at that school I felt like I needed to spread my wings and be able to experiment and I wasn’t being given the opportunity to explore with any other type of way of working with children. So I actually resisted by leaving the school and having a change of school.

Interviewer: So it was easier for you to ask for a transfer than it was to try and stand out against that?

Sally: Absolutely. This person was way too strong to stand out against. I believe I learned a lot from working with them and I was really felt that it was fantastic what I’d picked up but I thought I was really ready to try and move around. So, yeah, that was my way of resisting that I suppose. And I, as I said, we haven’t been heavily involved in any of this change at the school I’ve been at for the last seven years which is when it’s all really been happening. So I haven’t had to be resistant totally in that way but I have had to speak out sometimes because I’ve been a member of an association and a representative on Early Childhood reference groups about concerns of other Early Childhood staff, and I have felt that they don’t want to know (Sally, T1, p. 10).

Sally and I were discussing the issue of what I had termed ‘resistance’. While resistance implied an asymmetry of power relationships, this conversation turned in a direction other than the one I had anticipated. Sally saw her move from her first teaching school as a form of resistance to the kind of focus that was evident in that school. Her first “leader”—and she did not mention whether this was a Principal or Infant Mistress—was given credit for having strength and brilliance. Sally said that for three years she had received a “fantastic grounding” with this “very strong leader.” However, she felt that she needed to “spread my wings and be able to experiment” and that this was not likely to happen so she “resisted by leaving the school.” Sally’s decision to move was based on the considered evaluation of two things. Firstly, that this woman was “way too strong to stand out against”, and secondly, on her individual professional desire to “try to move around” and to
“experiment” and “explore” with other ways of teaching.

So Gee’s questions about Activities were used to analyse and illuminate what was happening. On the surface Sally transferred to a new school to engage in the kinds of experimentation that she would not have been permitted under the strong leader’s use of Pathways-style teaching and learning. But on closer examination there was a level of power asymmetry at work. Sally knew both her own needs and her leader’s capabilities. She made a professional judgement that moving was the best option for her. There was a sense that it was in her best interest to move—yet she was able to acknowledge the benefits that she had received under this fabulous leader. She had assessed her own level of development and decided that she was “really ready to try and move around.” So she transferred.

Sally stated that for the past seven years—at her current school—she had not needed to resist much because “we haven’t been heavily involved in any of this change.” Her current school was not at the cutting edge of the educational innovations and so she was, in a sense, immune from the need to “stand out against.” So as a result she had not “had to be resistant totally in that way.”

Sally went on though to indicate other forms of resistance: “but I have had to speak out sometimes because I’ve been a member of an association and a representative on Early Childhood reference groups.” This positioned Sally as someone who was not afraid to speak out and this stance recurred through her conversations. She readily identified as someone who, when the need arose, would speak out and up for those who did not or would not: “when I feel really strongly about something like that, even in my professional life, I would speak out within the school and say how I felt about it (Sally, T2, p. 1).” For her this was a necessity, “I have had to speak out sometimes.” The reason for the necessity was her involvement in advocacy and as member of a professional association. The links were clear—it was part of her duty, her role as a member. She valued this and was up to the task. She spoke out “about concerns of other early childhood staff.” The “need” that she placed on speaking out valued it, in her estimation. It was an action that was important. It was also related to power in that she linked speaking out with resistance. It was a form of empowerment for herself and for others.
The connections between overt and more implicit actions and their underlying knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values are evident under Gee’s analysis. For Sally the stated actions of speaking out and taking a transfer were caused by the underlying needs. These needs related to how she saw herself—as able to speak out and as an advocate—and were part of the self-designated role that she adopted as a member of associations and reference groups. She was able to assess her own state and act according to her determined needs. Her belief that she was able to speak out when it became necessary was also linked to the issue of need—when she felt “really strongly about something.” The depth of her feeling—based on her understandings, educational experience and knowledge, beliefs and values—was able to be accessed and acted upon.

**Summary of empowerment of self and others**

This example of data from the transcripts was analysed using Gee’s framework of analytical questions to uncover meaning from the data. From this analysis it can be seen that teachers were working from a strong sense of educational need. The need—for Sally to take a transfer so she could spread her wings—was created and driven by a combination of understandings about educational and personal issues. For Sally it was the self-awareness that dictated that she needed to move so she could experiment and develop her educational knowledge and experience. She believed that she could and at times should speak out in advocacy. Her feelings of resistance were based on her knowledge of herself and her values. She acknowledged that she had received a “fantastic grounding” in her first school but as a teacher she needed to move beyond that single way of operating and develop a diversity of teaching methods and approaches. Sally’s actions and their underlying sets of knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values had the benefit of both self-empowerment and the potential to empower others around her.

**Summary of power**

There are three broad kinds of power that have been identified in this analysis—the imposition of power through the employer or its agents, the disempowerment of teachers through their undervaluing, lack of supports and resourcing, and the ways in which teachers have sought to empower themselves and those around them. The analysis using the framework of Gee’s analytical questions has revealed the ways in
which these teachers responded to the explicit and implicit forms of power asymmetry. The repercussions are as numerous as the incidents of power. There was an impact on their identity in the form of how they saw themselves and what they did as a result. Their relationships with those around them, peers and senior staff, were affected, usually by the changes in expectations. These teachers sought to manage the imposition of power through subtle self-empowerment. This could take the form of involvement in professional associations or less formal supportive actions and conversations with colleagues and parents. These teachers’ understandings about the issues of power was one of acceptance of both change and the expectation of change, but not always whole-heartedly. This position was informed by their experiential knowledge, their beliefs about the various contexts of their lives, their feelings that were associated with events and people, and their individual sets of values. These aspects of their identity also determined their position relative to those in authority and to what was being asked of them. In this regard, their response to changes that were determined by those in authority were also determined through the conduit of their identity—their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values.

4.3.3 Identity

Using the same Gee framework as for the previous two analyses of change and power, several different passages from the transcripts were analysed with the theme of identity as the point of reference. These passages of data were selected because they are most relevant for illuminating the theme of identity. A balanced representative cross-section of participants and passages of data were sought in this selection process.

**Suzanne—“I hate the word ‘professional’”**

Suzanne did a lot of ‘thinking on her feet’ as we conversed. In the first of the selected passages she asserted that she “hate[d] the word professional”, with a brief qualification of why this was the case. Then, in the second interview, she came back to this and, as interviewer, I sought clarification about the point. She struggled to make herself clear. It was through the process of talking about her meanings, in conjunction with the ongoing discussion about the issues that arose, that clarity emerged. This was a case where she determined meaning in and through discourse.
It was also a great demonstration of the ways in which her identity built meaning for her. It was through the combination of Suzanne’s personal and professional identities, understandings, values and beliefs that her identity was illuminated.

Interviewer: All right. Do you think the document authors … the policy makers or whatever are hoping that they will produce a new document and it will drive, you know, literacy for the next three years or whatever? So that it becomes a reality rather than the reality that’s already there?

Suzanne: … well if they’ve got Buckley’s [i.e. no hope] because it gets back to the fact we haven’t got time to do the theory and the work and all the things. It takes hours and hours and hours to really study a document [mm] so we haven’t got hours and hours to do it. But they’re probably saying that as professional people—and I hate the word professional—but that’s part of our job. But I mean I say our … I still see teaching as a practical job … with practical skills. I mean it helps to know why you’re doing things.

Interviewer: Ok then—I’m just looking at things that I’ve written in terms …

Suzanne: I’d like to know

Interviewer: No, no you can see it. But I was just thinking about what you were saying about what you felt about … um … the personal and professional part of you … you know the inner most … the Suzanne, on the inside that you were feeling frustrated that you were feeling resentful about the … the … change

Suzanne: ‘Oh here’s another new one’, ‘Oh here we go again’ …”

Interviewer: Oh right—the here we go again”—the resentment, the umm … you said you felt cynical umm … and … arr … pressured and that … and angry that …?

Suzanne: That I’m being overloaded again (Suzanne, T1, p. 13)

In this passage from Suzanne’s first interview she glossed over her assertion that she hated the word professional. She arrived at this assertion through a discussion about the imposition of new policies or documents and the “hours and hours and hours” of work it took to really study a new document when “we haven’t got hours and hours to do it.” This linked directly to the expectation about being “professional people.” Her stating that, “they’re probably saying that as professional people…” positions “they” as the policy and document producers—presumably the upper echelons of the education system—and that these people expected professional people to be able to find the “hours and hours and hours” of time to absorb new policies and documents. The next statement, “but that’s part of our job”, was an acceptance of the terms and expectations that go with the territory—“they” can expect a teacher to do something that was, by Suzanne’s estimation, unreasonable. In stating “our” job rather than “the” job she also positioned herself with me, as a teacher, and closer to her own assertions about the teaching profession.

The next sentence was about her position or vision of the job that she had been doing
since 1959—“I still see teaching as a practical job, with practical skills”. Here she was reiterating the assertion that she engages in a job, not a profession, and that it was primarily a practical job that utilised practical skills. This understanding about her job had come from the 40+ years of experience. Her knowledge and understanding about her role as a teacher, at a personal level, was experientially supported. Her relationship with the invisible initiators of this hypothetical change that I was asking her about was one of acceptance of the unrealistic expectations on her time. She accepted that change must happen with a sense of the cyclical shedding of the old and adopting the new, “here we go again”, an understanding that she had been down this path before and that it was a well-worn one. The comment that “it helps to know why you’re doing things” was an acknowledgement that the education system liked to keep teachers professionally informed about the changes that happened, underpinning change with reasons. But this comment was almost an aside here, a throw-away line that failed to be convincing in the light of her comments about the additional “hours and hours” of work that this would still mean for Suzanne to “know why” she was doing it all.

Her attitude of resistance when the term “professional” was applied to her was based on her perceptions of what that meant for her. These are drawn from her knowledge, experiences, understanding, values and beliefs about her job. For Suzanne this made the term “professional” a negative if not insulting term. Her identity, in the form of these understandings, positioned her at odds with the notion of being professional. She saw herself as a technician in a “practical job with practical skills.” For her, being professional did not validate this aspect of her job, but rather presumed other things.

The second passage was drawn from the beginning of the second interview where I was seeking clarification about the written summary of the first interview that I had sent her. I was checking to see if I had an accurate understanding of what she had said.

Suzanne: Does that make it clearer? And yes this is very, very true; I do see teaching as a practical job, with practical skills. I mean, I mean maybe I’m looking at it the wrong way but …

Interviewer: But that’s the way you see it.

Suzanne: But that’s the way I see it, and I, yes, I endorse that. Alright now, so that’s covered number one. Number 2, I don’t like the word professional because …
because of the implication that professional means that you’re … you’re a goody, goody two shoes, which is a bad way of saying it, and that there’s a certain way to be professional and it’s sort of … it’s sort of labelling you as a person who fits a mould instead of um, in, um, instead of … oh what’s the word …?

Interviewer: Flexibility? Is that, I mean, fitting …?

Suzanne: It’s devaluing me as an individual, it’s …

Interviewer: Taking away you’re … the individual part of you that you bring to your teaching practice?

Suzanne: Yes.

Interviewer: And puts you into a, pre-existing mould?

Suzanne: Well it sort of, pre-existing mould.

Interviewer: That says Suzanne is like this …

Suzanne: A professional.

Interviewer: Like this …

Suzanne: Yeah and as a professional teacher she does this, this, this and this, but don’t ask me what they are at the moment

Interviewer: But it’s certainly got negative connotations then for you?

Suzanne: Yes.

Interviewer: In terms of that …

Suzanne: It’s sort of like, its …

Interviewer: Squeezing you into a mould.

Suzanne: And it’s also when they say ‘she is so professional’ it’s sort of like it’s. Well the people that they say it about, it’s doing the same thing to, it’s sort of, yeah. That there’s a certain thing that makes you a professional instead of, oh I’m not, sure but it just … To me it is a negative word and if someone tells me I’m professional I don’t feel praised in the least.

Interviewer: Okay. Is it that, is it the reverse of it though that if you’re, you can either be professional or you can be unprofessional and that the unprofessional is almost …

Suzanne: No, no I don’t want to be unprofessional either. I want to be someone of integrity and someone who cares about children and, and in that way I want … and I want to bring my own way of, my personal, I mean the way I operate um. I don’t want to operate in a way that isn’t me and sometimes I see a difference between what people see as professional and the way I want to be. So that’s not going to come across very well.

Interviewer: No, no no. That’s fine, because that implies then that in order to be professional you have to be this way and that way is not necessarily …

Suzanne: Really Suzanne.

Interviewer: A way that suits you.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

Suzanne: And it’s sort of, it, I, I would say I just don’t find it … if someone says that person is professional to me it doesn’t tell me anything. It doesn’t tell me about the person, it’s …

Interviewer: A label?

Suzanne: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay thank you for that then, what did I have …
Chapter 4

Results

Suzanne: Pressures, >pressures that I indicated that came from without’, well that’s ....

Interviewer: You talked about the pressures within bit and the pressures without bit. And you were talking about the pressures from ‘without’ and I went away and thought about it and wondered what you had in your mind about those pressures that come to you from ‘without’; where do they come from, what are they, what is the nature of them?

Suzanne: Well it’s getting back to fit the mould, fit the mould and it’s getting back to David Kemp, and it’s getting back to things like we had back here, where >every child will learn to read’ so therefore, people are saying, because every child will learn to read you will do this, this and this. So again ...

Interviewer: So you feel a sense of pressure when you ... ?

Suzanne: The pressure is, when I, when I can see a child, I nearly said kid, a child who for some reason can’t learn to read and I’m trying to force them to read .... I suppose it’s .... Ha, ha, oh this is really good, yeah, um, I almost have to use the word professional, professional, it’s that, as a practitioner, I feel instead of a professional, yes I think that’s it. I think I’ve just hit the head ...

Interviewer: Hit the nail on the head?

Suzanne: Because I see it’s a practical job and I’m a practitioner and I’m not a professional, I mean I am a professional but ...

Interviewer: You’re a professional practitioner but to say professional takes away from the practical nature of your work?

Suzanne: Yes, yes I think that’s what we were having. And I guess what I’m thinking is that some of the ‘withouts’ like the politicians and the what ever, are making decisions really without knowing about the practice and the children we’re teaching and they’re, yeah ... (Suzanne, T2, pp. 2–3)

Suzanne reiterated the statement about seeing teaching as a practical job with practical skills—her position was confirmed and we moved to the issues about the word “professional.” It was difficult for Suzanne to articulate the specific nature of her concerns with the term “professional,” but she illuminated some of her understandings as she progressed.

Firstly was the statement that a “professional” had connotations of being a “goody, goody two shoes.” This implied for Suzanne that being called a “professional” was not only a label but that the label implied that you were the kind of person who fitted into a mould. This devalued her as an individual. There was a sense for Suzanne that in the devaluing she felt that there was a degree of loss of freedom to be her own self as a teacher—to teach the way she felt suited her. This point was arrived at when she asserted that “I want to be someone of integrity and someone who cares about children” and “I don’t want to operate in a way that isn’t me and sometimes I see a difference between what people see as professional and the way I want to be.”

This dilemma, about what her teaching style was and what some people might expect
it to be if she were to be “professional,” stemmed from her belief that she should be permitted to teach in a way that best suited her. The label—while it was just a label and told her nothing about the person—was also of concern. It hinted at the threat of being told how to teach and potentially that teaching could be in a way that would not suit her. This presumably would lead to a loss of her personal and professional integrity and not being able to care about children. She valued the freedom that she had—but the term “professional” had negative connotations for her and she certainly would not “feel praised” were she to be labelled as “professional.” Hence, the “teaching as a practical job with practical skills” was a safer stance to take—she knew it, experientially, and felt comfortable with the skills that she had acquired over the years. Being professional might mean laying claim to something that she did not value. For Suzanne, professional people possessed a “certain thing that makes you a professional”, and that labelling someone as professional did something to them and for Suzanne this was not positive change. It was her knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings—her identity—that dictated her understandings about the use of the term ‘professional.’

Suzanne’s concerns and clarification about the pressures from “without” were also linked to the issues of being “professional.” There was the expectation of fitting into a mould and in this instance it was that of somehow making every child read and write. In order to achieve this goal or expectation—one imposed from the federal government level—Suzanne would be expected to “do this, this and this.” She would be told how to be and do as a teacher. She would be squeezed into that mould that was not made for her.

The next few lines of data clarified further Suzanne’s dilemma with the term ‘professional’. Her identity determined that the use of the term professional detracted from the practical nature of her job. For her, with her understandings about her job, the use of the term almost denied that there were practical skills involved in getting students to the point of being able to read and write. The difference between the upper echelons of decision-makers, the “politicians” who presumably were “professionals,” and her, was in the practical skills that she had acquired, for which they had no appreciation. The expectation that every child would learn to read and write was, for Suzanne, unrealistic as she believed that there are some students in the
system who lack that capacity. This unrealistic expectation did not accord with the reality of her teaching practice, its skills or an understanding about children. Her educational awareness was integral to her identity and her identity determined her educational understandings. This two-way process was at work throughout this discussion.

Gee’s questions about Identity and Relationship Building were an appropriate lens for analysing this passage of data because they make the connections between identity and relationships that are inherent in Suzanne’s conversations. Suzanne’s concerns about the term professional cut to the heart of her identity as a teacher. She valued the kind of freedom that she currently enjoyed—freedom to teach the way that suited her, to not be pushed into a mould of being or doing what she saw as not suiting her. This was about her teaching integrity and she linked it with caring about children. To be expected to be professional or to be labelled as professional in some way diminished or threatened this current situation of freedom. It might also mean that she was expected to allocate, for example, “hours and hours and hours” from her own personal time in order to maintain the identity of a professional person. She valued her position as a teacher—she knew about teaching and children and she had practical skills.

For Suzanne this knowledge and understanding about students and teaching was something that others who make decisions about students did not necessarily have. While she adopted this stance, with its associated set of beliefs, it enhanced her power. It was however frustrating, as she was subjected to the wishes of those who did not understand education in the same way as she did. She valued the practical skills that she had acquired and she valued not being pushed into the mould of being professional. Suzanne also valued her individuality and the freedom to teach the way that suited her. Her identity, in the form of her experiences, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values, provided the conduit for the freedom to teach in the way that suited her best. Her identity validated her rejection of the label professional and in turn was validated by her assertions that she was not the teacher that the term implied for her. Her relationships with students, her relationship with the education department, in the form of her understandings about and expectations of the system, and her identity as a teacher are integrally interwoven throughout this passage.
Using Gee’s question 13 about ‘Discourse’ as a lens for investigating the data it was evident that Suzanne’s discourse about what it meant to be a ‘professional’ illuminated her beliefs and values. Her understanding and valuing of the practical skills that she had was at odds with what she thought it meant to be a professional person. Her freedom—the flexibility to teach the way that best suited her—was, in her opinion, contrary to the implications of being professional. For her, being labelled a professional implied that one was expected to teach and behave in a pre-determined way that might not be what she wanted to do. Her identity was challenged as she went through the processes of determining what she thought, felt and knew about these issues of professionalism. Through the lens of Gee’s questions, it can be seen that this discourse also affirmed her identity as a teacher who was valued for her skills, not devalued as a result of being labelled professional.

**Summary of Suzanne and identity**

When using Gee’s framework as a lens for analysing Suzanne’s assertion that she “hate[d] the word professional” it became clearer that her identity was evidenced through this discourse. Her beliefs and values about what was important for her and for children and education in general are merged with her identity and were at odds with her beliefs about what it was to be labelled professional. Her use of the emotive word “hate” appeared to arise as a result of her beliefs and values about being, or being labelled, as a professional. For her this was not a positive label because it carried connotations of being expected to be something that was not inherently her. Suzanne’s knowledge-base and her understandings about children and education were derived from more than forty years of teaching experience. This knowledge and understanding seemed to be in conflict with what was expected of her when she was labelled as professional because of the implications that it held for her.

**Barbara, the Spalding Method and identity**

The following lengthy passage from the first interview with Barbara was broken into sections for the purposes of analysis. The conversation commences with my concerns about the ‘honesty’ of the information that Barbara might give me—my concern that she might be inclined to give me a sanitised version of her opinions and thoughts rather than the nitty gritty and frank version. She readily took up that challenge and proceeded with forthright honesty. The analysis of these passages
used Gee’s framework as the analytical lens, focussing on the Identity and Relationship questions 11–13. The analysis then looked for evidences of her identity and relationships and the knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values that were made relevant through the discourse.

“Keen to learn more”

This following section of data, although lengthy, sheds more light on the issues of relationship and identity.

Interviewer: My concern is that if I talk to you about what you think about this that you are going to give me the professional sort of …

Barbara: Oh no, no, no, come on Jen, I wouldn’t give the official line.

Interviewer: Well, be honest with me then.

Barbara: Okay, so if I had [District Superintendent] sitting in front of me here and saying Barbara how do you feel? Okay [pause] I wanted to learn more. I wouldn’t have gone on and gone back and done my Bachelor of Education if I didn’t think there was more to learn. So most of me has been keen to learn more.

Interviewer: Yep.

Barbara: Um, that’s true. But there is still the side of me that is ready to stand back and say, okay, now what has worked here. Because a lot of it is still in the early research stage. So, I’m prepared to try it out and look at things, that’s fine. But I’m always prepared to drop them like a red mullet if I find that research has suddenly shown that, no it doesn’t work. But I will then turn around and say, hey, so what works?

Interviewer: What if your own research has shown something that, the research is showing that it works and you’re using it in your classroom and you’re finding, ah hah, it doesn’t work for you?

Barbara: If something doesn’t work for me then I’ll find a different way of doing that something that will still reach that outcome. I don’t … and if my children, my main, my big indicator are the students and you know, if I’m not enjoying my time in the class then they’re sure as hell not enjoying their time in the class and that’s when I will stand back and think, well okay, well how can I do this differently. You know, and ah, the outcomes are still there, um, but I even try and make Spalding fun. It’s damn hard work but, you know … [chuckle] You can think up some good funny sentences when you’re doing your spelling dictation.[chuckle] Anything to get them laughing a bit. You know, lighten up kids, yeah.

Interviewer: So it’s important for you as a teacher that you’re having fun …

Barbara: It’s important for me …

Interviewer: and that the kids are showing …

Barbara: Having fun … It’s important for me as a teacher that I enjoy coming to school and it’s important for me to know that my children in my class feel the same way, yep. And that although there might times when we’re going to knuckle down, they are going to feel proud to be doing it and want to do it because they know that it is great and there is a reason for it, but we also … they know that if we do this then we’re all going to go out and have … you know … ten minutes free time doing this or we are all going to go work on our, you know, pirate aharr! So if, and there was a couple of times where you’re so tired and you think, oh my gosh! I would hate to have that every day. If I had that every day and I just had to do the same thing every day, I’d be looking for a Real Estate job I think.

Interviewer: Yeah. What, so … kid’s enjoyment as the primary thing …
Barbara: We're talking ... we're not talking like coming to school with butterflies and rainbows, because we all have our own little dip sticks [slang for idiots] that ...  
Interviewer: Yeah.

Barbara: Want to just ... Their idea of a nice day is totally at odds with my definition of a nice day.

Interviewer: You feel happy with yourself to think that you've tried to make the program as enjoyable as possible, within the constraints.

Barbara: The best thing to hear would be a parent saying that such and such can't wait to come to school. Yeah. And the minute they started saying, 'Oh we are not really looking forward to going to school because we're finding it ... ', you know, I think, right! I'm not having that! It's time to reassess what I'm doing.

Interviewer: Ease back?

Barbara: Yep. Ease back. Something's not going on. For goodness sake, they are only six going on seven, um, yep. What's happening here if they're not enjoying coming to school. When that starts to happen that's when I'll stand back and say which aspect, which part of literacy has caused this to come about. Is it the Spalding, is it something to do with ... and then I will change it, or drop it, or reassess it or modify it. (Barbara, T1, pp. 15–16)

Barbara posited the situation where supposedly she could honestly talk to the most powerful woman in the local educational field—the District Superintendent (DS). I had asked her to be professionally honest and she connected this with the question from the DS about how she felt. Emotions and feelings were linked to being professionally honest. Her response to this hypothetical conversation revealed her understanding about her current situation in education—that she “wanted to learn more.” This premise highlighted the values that underpinned her identity. She could see that there was more to learn so she had “gone back and done my Bachelor of Education.” She valued the addition to her qualifications, evidence for her that she was keen to learn, and she valued the extra learning she had gained. Her actions in this verified the values. Upgrading her qualifications was both an indicator of the desire to learn more and somehow linked to her feelings and professional honesty. She gave an inkling of the link with the comment: “So most of me has been keen to learn more”. I noted she said most of her, but not all of her. There was a complexity about the keenness—a double-edgedness that she went on to qualify. The other part of her wanted to stand back and evaluate what was happening. She was keen, but not to the point of giving her wholehearted approval to this innovation that had been adopted by her school—the Spalding literacy program. Professional honesty seemed to imply that part of her acceptance of the innovation and change was withheld—until later.
For her the research was the indicator of success. She was waiting, “prepared to try it” and to “look at things”. But she qualified this with the statement the she would “drop them like a red mullet if I find that research has suddenly shown that, no, it doesn’t work.” Her next question to those in the decision-making chair would be “Hey, so what works?” She connected her evaluation with external and invisible research and went on to talk about the ways in which her own evaluations of the program could happen. Barbara was seeking professional legitimised support for the innovation and yet she was aware that the research and her evaluation of the innovation might still end up being in conflict with each other. This then would require further re-evaluations of what she knew, felt, valued and understood about herself in these contexts. She was waiting to see.

I then asked her what would happen if her own research indicated that, in her contexts, this new program was not working and, presumably, not achieving the required goals and outcomes. She replied with what appeared to be the way that she managed expectations of involvement in something that had not come up to her expectations—“I’ll find a different way of doing that … that will still reach that outcome.” She accommodated the obstacle, finding ways to work around it yet still achieve the outcome. Then she went on to involve another factor that she used to evaluate the effectiveness of innovations—“my children”. They were for her the “big indicator”—she did not specify what they were an indicator of, but went on to give clues with the statement about the importance of being able to enjoy her time in the class. More on this issue of identity was revealed in subsequent statements.

Barbara assigned value to two things: firstly the presumed enjoyment of the students and secondly, and related by implication, her own enjoyment of class time. If these two related factors were missing then alarm bells rang for Barbara and she would “stand back and think, well, how can I do this differently”. She was patient and receptive of the innovation that might not be working. She did not berate it and discard it, she worked around the difficulties by looking for other ways to do what she was paid to do, get students to achieve the outcomes. Barbara then directly involved the Spalding program in the conversation with the statement that “I even try to make Spalding fun. It's damn hard work. Anything to get them laughing a bit. You know, lighten up, kids.” This was evidence that she valued the enjoyment aspect of
teaching—both her enjoyment of the job and her students’ enjoyment of being at school. She was a realist though and could see that there were times when this was not going to be the case. Barbara went on to reveal how she managed these times. She was honest with her students, offered rewards, encouraged them to “knuckle down,” gave reasons why this had to be the case so that they could “know that this is great.” Her actions were the product of her beliefs that she and the children should be able to enjoy school. She worked towards that goal, despite difficulties.

The enjoyment factor was further explored in her next statements about being so tired—and presumably with the tiredness came a lack of enjoyment. If this tiredness and/or lack of enjoyment was present “every day,” combined with having to do “the same thing every day”, she would be looking for another job. For Barbara the personal value of job enjoyment outweighed her commitment to teaching as a career. Her actions were aimed at meeting that expectation—for her and her students—and without enjoyment the job became untenable.

Barbara then continued with the enjoyment issue, measuring her teaching program, and the students’ happiness with coming to school, against the parents’ comments. If she were to discover that her students did not want to come to school—and therefore were not enjoying their time at school—then changes would need to be made. She would evaluate to determine the cause of the situation and then would “change it, or drop it or re-assess it or modify it.” She had options for action, depending on the results of her evaluation into the cause of the problem.

So, referring to Gee’s questions about identity, further analysis continued to make a determination about what was happening to Barbara’s identity as a result of this situation. It would appear that Barbara had in place some fairly tried and true mechanisms for managing her teaching practice and contexts. She valued the enjoyment factor and set about ensuring that it happened. Her identity was linked to her own and parents’ observations about the level of student happiness and if that was put at risk then she would take steps to ensure the situation was corrected. Barbara was straightforward about her approach to new programs. She accepted this change, in the form of the Spalding program, but not wholeheartedly until she could see support in her classroom for what the research indicates was so. Her identity was
linked to knowing that she was doing the right things by her students and they were achieving the outcomes. The desire to learn more personally and professionally was also a part of this self-view. She had adopted the learner position in order to take the learned position. In the contexts of change and innovation at her school, Barbara’s identity had been re-evaluated and renegotiated. She had self-empowered through achieving a Bachelor of Education at nearly 50 years of age, indicating her willingness to continue to learn. While this had provided challenges to her identity, it had served to affirm and stabilise what she knew and understood about herself.

“Keeping up”

The conversation with Barbara continued.

Interviewer: Okay. So it's important for you, um, as a person and as a teacher to keep up with incoming things …

Barbara: Yep.

Interviewer: … and to take those on board?

Barbara: No, not all of them.

Interviewer: No, to take the ones that you feel are appropriate?

Barbara: Yeah. I pick out all the bones and eat what meat I feel is on there and …

Interviewer: Quietly leave the rest alone?

Barbara: Quietly? Um, that would depend … what the worst thing is. You can’t quietly leave the rest behind if you are then going to have to look at it in reports at the end of the year.

Interviewer: How do you deal with that?

Barbara: Well, fortunately the, we’ll say the TLOs document, lets leave the KILOs behind because that’s not come … it’s a fairly good working document. Um, it is not at odds with most of what we’d be doing anyway. And I think all it’s done is to define for those teachers who weren’t quite sure where they were heading. It gives them a working model.

Interviewer: Instructions?

Barbara: Yes, yes. So I’ve got no problems with most of what they are trying to put through there, yeah. Um … (Barbara, T1, p. 16)

This passage added another layer to my understanding about Barbara’s identity. She wanted to keep up with innovations and this included her additional teaching qualification and her tentative acceptance of the Spalding program. She indicated that she was selective about what she accepted, and was prepared to “pick out all the bones and eat what meat I feel is on there.” This interesting analogy gave the picture of Barbara spending the “hours and hours and hours” that Suzanne had referred to when she was confronted by a new policy or document. Barbara presumably
familiarised herself with the incoming innovation and, using some form of criteria for evaluation, selected the part, bits, strategies or concepts that best suited her and utilised those. My question led to what happened with the bits that she did not approve of and whether she could “quietly leave the rest alone.” This did not seem possible for Barbara. Many of the innovations that were happening, the introduction of the TLOs document for example, had direct links to the ways in which student progress was reported to parents. To ignore parts of this would have ramifications for the reports.

For Barbara then there was a way out. Her evaluation of the new TLOs was: “it’s a fairly good working document. Um, it is not at odds with most of what we’d be doing anyway.” Its similarity to the previous document provided the way to manage the change. Thankfully, in Barbara’s view, the similarities between the two documents meant that the change was not as radical as it might have been. Whether this similarity was intentional or not, Barbara was not sure, but she positioned herself on the side of those who know “where they are heading” when she said: “And I think all it’s done is to define for those teachers who weren’t quite sure where they were heading. It gives them a working model.” There is an us and them positioning here. It was Barbara’s assertion that some teachers were not aware of a direction and others were. Some needed a working model and others did not. Some needed more definition than others. Barbara positioned herself with those who were accepting of the changes and less needy of assistance. Once again her identity and professional self-esteem were challenged and affirmed by her position and her acceptance of the change.

**Summary of Barbara and identity**

In utilising the questions from Gee’s framework for analysis that relate to issues of Identity and Relationship there were several things that came to light. Firstly were the ways in which Barbara’s knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values underpinned her actions. The understandings that she has about herself and the contexts in which she worked—including the relationship with her colleagues—were formed from a complex combination of factors. Her knowledge was based on her observations.
These observations, the things on which she focussed, were determined by what she valued. These values were created from her experiences, knowledge and beliefs about a raft of issues—her self, her students, colleagues, the school, broad educational issues, narrower relationships and so on. All of these factors amalgamated to form the complex person of Barbara—a teacher encapsulated in a snapshot of her conversations. It was this complex set of interlinked issues that was her identity.

Secondly, the analysis using Gee’s questions lends insight into Barbara’s understandings that were based on her knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. Barbara valued enjoyment in teaching—her own and her students’, she valued the weight of research—with some reservations, she valued her own receptive attitudes to innovations and change, she valued the flexibility and freedom that she had within the system, and she valued the tried-and-true mechanisms that she had developed for managing the contexts of her teaching life. Her identity was challenged by some of the events in her working life, but she used her understandings—that conglomeration of knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values—to position these events in a light that stabilised her identity. While she was “forever a little changed” (Barbara, T1 p. 13) by some of the changes, she was able to accommodate them so that they blended with her identity—her understandings about education and life. This complex process of blending, or re-evaluation and renegotiation of how she saw herself in the light of change and power contexts, appeared to happen seamlessly so she could continue to work as a teacher.

**Summary of identity**

What made each of these teachers unique was their individual identity. These identities were evidenced in this analysis using Gee’s framework of questions. The identities of the teachers can be seen to be an amalgamation of their knowledge—often based on experiences; their beliefs—about themselves, life, children, education and all its complicated appendices; their feelings—determined by and in conjunction with their understandings about their individual situations; and their values—also determined by and with reference to their experiences, knowledge and beliefs.
It became evident that the role of identity in these passages was one of negotiating and supporting the teachers’ existing knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. The mediation was evident in the ways in which teachers justified their positions and opinions. They believed, felt, understood and knew because of their experiences and the understandings that they brought to those experiences. The complex interrelationships between their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values were made clearer through applying Gee’s analytical questions. Beliefs, for example, simultaneously determined feelings and supported and reinforced other beliefs. These teachers’ underlying values were less explicit but were still evident. For them, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values did not exist in a vacuum—they were intricately interwoven with all other aspects of their lives, culminating in the totality of their individual identities. The role of their identity was a determining or filtering one—what they understood, knew, believed, felt and valued was determined by their identity. Identity, also fluid in its adjustment to the contexts of their work lives—their identity, in the form of their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values, could be challenged, transformed or stabilised and their understandings modified as a result of events and experiences.

4.3.4 Change, power and identity

The previous passages of data were analysed with the intention of illuminating meaning about the themes change, power and identity. This following passage, taken from Rosemaree’s second interview, was selected because it highlights the intersection of the three themes. As already noted, many of the passages of data were not discretely focused on only one of the three themes and could be used as an example for analysis of another of the designated themes. In looking at the data and the points of intersection of the three themes of change, power and identity, this example of data was selected for further analysis using Gee’s framework questions about Identity and Relationship because it showcased the complex interrelationship between the themes.

**Rosemaree—“They are losing contact with us”**

I had asked Rosemaree for more information about the two issues that she had identified as being of concern for early childhood teachers—the systemic
expectations for teachers and the parents’ expectations about their children.

Rosemaree: Well, from the Department I guess that there has been an angry bit that comes out again and frustration because they are losing the contact with us. Just by the physicality and not being near them. [phone rings and interrupts] Yes I feel very frustrated because I don’t see the Department is able to change how it is going as far as having more liaison and links with the practitioner and that frightens me as far as where education philosophy is going.

Interviewer: So do you see these senior people as out of touch with practitioners?

Rosemaree: I think so. Um … and to turn the wheel back I know is usually impossible but I haven’t really thought about it well enough to be able to help them or set up systems where there was a channel of communication and I think if we could, and I don’t think it is impossible, um, I really think we should try that because the disillusionment is getting greater and we get on with our own job and our own classroom. The Prep teacher was up a minute ago and I said, ‘By the way, I’ve got this great friend coming up and da, da, da’. And I said, >What documents do you use?’ and she, ‘I don’t really use any, I’m a Prep teacher. We go with the flow, the needs of the children, what’s going on, da, da, da.’ She said, ‘I just use what I’ve used’ and I thought that was very interesting. We are burrowing in a bit and coping within our own personal issues and our own twenty five children and we are getting on with the job and I think closing the hatch is sometimes … and then NELs comes along and we have to open up the hatches and really work at coming to terms with some things again. And I think that is good, it is dangerous if we don’t but we want to feel there is relevance and have an input and that we are going to have support if we are asked to implement it and how we are going to do that. So that is where I get … I lose my sense of, this is a good place to work. Not only in this school, but within the environment within this Department within this state that it could have a great system and it’s tiny in a sense of the numbers of people and communications could be really good, but it’s not getting it and I don’t think it is just because of finances. I think it is the way people aren’t talking to each other and trusting each other a bit more.

Interviewer: Between schools? Within schools?

Rosemaree: Between the Department and the schools. So that’s that one. The parent one I guess is more on the ground and I’m part of hearing about it much more and maybe I’m not quite as frustrated and have given up in that field compared to the Department because I’ve decided that it is better to work with x number of few families and try and make some input and hopefully make a difference than to spread yourself too thinly. And I’ve really decided to do that. Umm … but again it’s … when parents’ expectations are so unrealistic I really have worked at not blaming them because I think they want the best. That’s all they want. They want their kid to be happy and well-adjusted and there is a lovely saying, an American philosopher said, out in Wyoming, you know, big open fields: ‘As long as the men are good looking, the women are strong and the children are above average’. It was a sort of lovely Lake WoeBeGone saying, it happened in that Wyoming, pre-second world war stuff, and I used to think there was sort of homily in that. That, that is what most family’s want.

Interviewer: Yes.

Rosemaree: And whether they can divide well and do their long division isn’t actually what they are looking for. They want the basic stuff and that is why they are searching for the best and they grasp onto the latest media advert of the latest guru.

Interviewer: They are vulnerable.

Rosemaree: They are very vulnerable and because around them the mores are changing, I think they are feeling less confident in using their intuition and their general common sense. I just say, look, how you really feel inside? Is that what you want? And they say no, I don’t. I say you hang on to what you think, you are in control here, you’re the parent, I’ll back you, we’ll work at it together. So I try and work at it like that as a team. But we haven’t even scratched the scratch yet. You know.

Interviewer: So in terms of those two problems then it is working with the parents
where you get your sense of satisfaction and sense of achievement rather than from working against the Department?

Rosemaree: I’d hope I would say with the Department because there are some good people in there that are really wanting the best but I feel their hands are tied behind their back, you know, [District Superintendent], who was my Principal, and I grew up in the same area of [rural area of the state] and I know she is a really gutsy person and she has her feet on the ground but she has got so many things that I think she played a really good line to keep people satisfied. Yeah. But going back to the parents, just one thing that I think is really important and I wouldn’t be talking like that until I built their trust in me. So you know, six months is just building trust, just trying as many ways as I can to make them feel really comfortable and that this is their home and their place as much as it is their children and networking. But that is just vital before we get into the heavy stuff (Rosemaree, T2, pp. 9–10).

In looking first at the theme of change, Rosemaree was considering generic long-term change over the period of her teaching career. She used the term “to turn the wheel back,” as an analogy, one also used by other participants, and she acknowledged that this “is usually impossible.” She was referring to the kinds of change that occur over periods of time. She was not equating the changes that she noted with any sort of cause-and-effect. There was no justification for the changes—they had just occurred. In that sense then, her understanding of the repercussions of the changes may well be generalisable beyond this study. Her use of the phrase “where education philosophy is going” indicated a broad view over a longer period of time. If these changes were based around a broad social, economic and educational agenda rather than changes in one single program, policy or document, then Rosemaree’s understandings and position on these issues may have repercussions beyond her individual contexts. In making this connection, Rosemaree’s assertions about the implications of generic change, while belonging to her, may be experienced and understood by a far wider community. The results of these changes, as Rosemaree saw them, included the need for the opening of a “channel of communication”; the “disillusionment” of teachers that was “getting greater”; teachers were “closing down the hatch” and “burrowing-in”; parents were “very vulnerable”; leaders who were “good people” and “wanting the best” but were somehow having their “hands tied behind their backs” and yet were managing “a really good line to keep people satisfied.”

The second theme, power, was implicit throughout this passage of data. On analysis it can be seen to be present in a neutral sense—not laden with accusations against the educational system—more about statements of her understandings and associated
emotions. Rosemaree positioned herself as angry at a personal level when she asserted that she had “an angry bit that comes out again”. Her frustration that the educational system was not communicating as well as she considered it should was clearly stated. However she positioned herself as “we” in reference to being able to “help them” and to “set up systems where there was a channel of communication and that “we should try that because the disillusionment is getting greater”. She saw herself as a supporter and assistant in the process of mediating between teachers and the education system—someone who might be able to help.

This led to the third theme, identity. Rosemaree’s identity, drawn from the combination of her knowledge from years of teaching experience, her beliefs, feelings and values, were evident throughout this and the other analyses. She saw herself as being stronger now than earlier in her career and as an advocate for young children, their parents and for early childhood teachers through her involvement with professional associations. She sought self-empowerment, support and encouragement for those around her in this endeavour. She felt anger and frustration about the system and was frightened about “where education philosophy is going.” She stated that the two sides—the “us” and “them” were not “talking to each other and trusting each other” and that it was intrinsically a communication issue, not just one “of finances.” She valued her supportive role and her beliefs about children and education were evident on analysis. Her position was one of mediator and supporter in an interventionist way.

This analysis looks at the issues that Gee’s questions raise, those of identity and relationships and their concomitant knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. Rosemaree saw the education system as inflexible and her statement that: “the Department is not able to change how it is going” was linked to the perceived lack of liaison with “the practitioner.” She was “frightened” by the direction in which “education philosophy” seemed to be headed—mentioning elsewhere her concerns at some of the issues that were canvassed at her professional association meeting by representatives of the educational system. This again raised the issue of the diversity of meaning attributed to the terms professional, professionalism and professional development. She noted with concern that teachers were becoming more isolated and insular, “closing the hatch,” “burrowing-in a bit,” “coping with our own personal
issues and our own twenty-five children” and “getting on with the job.” The need to “open up the hatches and really work at coming to terms with some things” was the preferred course of action. There were provisos though: “but we want to feel there is relevance and have an input and that we are going to have support if we are asked to implement it and how we are going to do that.” “Relevance” must be perceived; genuine “input”—being authentically heard—must be present; there must be “support” and there must be an awareness of the process of “how” the changes are to be implemented. She thought that this was important; that “we should try because the disillusionment is getting greater.” Her involvement with the professional associations gave her a broader view of the issues and the responses of teachers and she was sincerely concerned. Her values of relevance, opening up to communication, feeling supported and listened to were present through this analysis.

The interrelationship between the themes of change, power and identity that was evident in this analysis was further compounded by the complexities of identity as it is conceived of in this study. The understandings that not only Rosemaree but each of the participant teachers had were supported by the complex interweaving of the knowledge—often based on experience—as well as the beliefs, feelings and values that present themselves throughout these analyses. While the analysis has investigated each of these themes and utilised the analytical framework provided by Gee’s questions, there remains an inherent bonding of these themes in the data. Breaking them down into categories and themes for the purposes of illumination has highlighted the ways in which they are irretrievably bound together in the data and therefore in the lives and discourses of these teachers.

**Synthesis of analysis of change, power and identity**

What becomes evident from these three sets of analyses, using the framework of Gee’s analytical questions about the ways in which meaning is built through discourse, is that the three themes are integrally connected. There exists a complex interrelationship between the issues of change, power and identity. The ways in which these teachers’ identities are evidenced through their individual knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values became clearer through this analysis. Through the process of analysing discourse about their lives and understandings, teachers’ identities can be evidenced. Their understandings, opinions and perceptions are
constructed through the conduit of their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values.

The integral role played by the teachers’ identities—in the forms of their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values—in the ways that they perceived and received \textit{change} and \textit{power} was also evidenced. This role takes the form of mediating, supporting and negotiating the ways that teachers perceive and receive the circumstances of their lives. The effects on their identities range from being challenged, transformed or stabilised, depending on the interplay between the circumstantial situation and identity. The contexts of change and power necessitate a process whereby teachers re-assess and renegotiate their identities.

The teachers’ acceptance of the imbalance of power in their work situations was intrinsic to their understandings about education and the system in which they work. While they accepted this asymmetry of power, there was evidence that it was not a wholesale acceptance of all the decisions of their employer and/or its agents. There was criticism of some of the kinds of \textit{change}, but it is usually related to the details of implementation. There was also criticism of the products of \textit{power}, but usually in the form of relationships with the agents of power or the lack of resourcing and support. These criticisms were couched in terms that were carefully explained, thought through and educationally justified—all of which were further evidence of the role of \textit{identity} in this study. There was evidence that these teachers sought out ways to empower themselves and others, as a strategy for managing these issues of \textit{power} and \textit{change}. This in itself speaks to the core of the issue of \textit{identity} as it provides evidence of these teachers’ need to have their voices heard on issues about which they feel strongly.

The issue of professionalism—what it means to be a professional; what the education system expects of teachers, how the education system provided professional development programs for teachers, the ways in which teachers sought their own levels of professionalism, and teachers’ understandings about what it means to be professional—has become evident through this data analysis. The analysis provides the reader with an appreciation of the wide range of perceptions about the use of the terms professional, professionalism and professional development and the implications that these diverse perceptions have for teachers.
Summary of the results

This chapter has provided a report of the results of the data analyses, which were conducted at three levels. The first level provided a report of the interviews with the eight early childhood teachers. It gave background information and a more detailed overview of the content and direction of the participants’ conversations. It was intended that this initial level of analysis would be built upon in the two successive analyses and when presented in the thesis would provide the reader with information that would introduce the reader to the eight teachers. The second level of analysis consisted of a thematic analysis that used a grounded theory approach to the data—determining the three themes of *change, power* and *identity*—and their respective categories and sub-categories. The final level was a broad discourse analysis of the data using Gee’s (1999) framework of analytic questions to further interrogate the data. This provided a fine-grained investigation of the data combining the issues which had come to light in previous analyses, the research questions, and Gee’s six kinds of world or reality building, with the focus on identity and relationship building.

Chapter 5, Discussion, findings and conclusions, provides the reader with a discussion of the issues which have arisen from the analyses. It includes a set of statements about findings and the conclusions. The final chapter, Chapter 6, Conclusion, then positions these conclusions in the contexts of their significance for further research and the implications of these findings.
Chapter 5: Discussion, findings and conclusions

Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.

(Martin Luther King Jr., Civil rights leader, 1929–1968)

Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined the results of the three levels of data analysis. The first level of analysis contained an overview of the information from the teachers who participated and was designed with a dual purpose. Firstly, it was intended that it would contain summary explanations of the content of the interviews, outlining the concerns and issues that were raised by the teachers. Secondly, in the writing of these summaries, it was intended to introduce the teachers to the reader, giving an appreciation of them as people rather than merely participants in the research. Background information was included to present the teachers as individuals, dealing with their own issues and unique combination of circumstances and personal issues. This began the process of analysis to lay the foundation for the subsequent analyses.
The second level of the analysis sought to interrogate the data using a grounded theory approach. Three themes of change, power and identity helped to organise the data and provided the focus for deeper analysis. It outlined the kinds of change with which these teachers indicated they engaged and the effects of these changes on them. Power was confirmed as a theme as the analysis revealed that much of the change and the conflicts that it created were based around power-based relationships. The ways in which these teachers accommodated, negotiated and managed the issues of top-down power led to insights about empowerment and its antithesis, disempowerment. It also highlighted teacher valuing and devaluing and the teachers’ personal and professional understandings about issues of power in their teaching lives.

The third level of analysis used James Gee’s (1999) framework of six areas through which reality or meaning is built during the processes of discourse. It utilised his set of 18 investigative questions relating to these six areas. From this deeper level of analysis, which used identity as a lens through which to view the data, greater illumination about the issues of change, power and identity was sought and gained. This level revealed the inherent interconnection of the three themes in the data. The teachers’ individual identities were evidenced through the combination of their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. Their professional awareness was based around combinations of these elements and contributed to determining their opinions and actions on issues of change and power. The role of their identities in determining the ways in which they perceived and received change was evidenced through this level of data analysis. Conflicts which arose as a result of mismatched understandings and expectations between the teachers and the educational system and/or its agents were also mediated through their identities.

The process of analysis, by its very nature, broke down the data into themes and categories for further investigation. However, the data—the conversations with the participant teachers—revealed the ways in which the three themes of change, power and identity are irretrievably bound together from their point of origin. These teachers engaged simultaneously with issues of change and power and utilised their professional understandings to make sense of their teaching world. These
understandings, based on the knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values components of their identity, were also in states of flux, being transformed, challenged and stabilised during the processes of engagement with teaching.

5.1 Discussion

This discussion section brings together the information that is available from the literature and is summarised in the Chapter 2, Review of the literature and background information, and the information that was revealed through the three levels of data analyses. It is divided into three sections based on the three themes that emerged from the analysis: change, power and identity. Although these three themes are dealt with separately, they remain integrally connected and separation is for practical purposes rather than reflecting a belief that they are three unconnected entities. Each of these three sections then addresses the research questions. The three sections are followed by a discussion about the intersection of the three themes. The final section of the chapter summarises the discussion about the data analyses, listing the findings and arriving at three succinct claims.

5.1.2 Change

There appeared, from both the analysis and the literature, to be a general understanding that change is inherent in the nature of the work with which teachers engage. The data, though, revealed a much broader range of changes than was initially anticipated. The interconnection of these kinds of changes was also evident. For example, societal changes had brought the necessity for changes in departmental literacy policy that meant the requirement of changes to classroom practice, usually through the medium of professional development. It would seem from the literature that, although there is acknowledgement that changes are inherent in the teaching profession, the literature understates both their quantity and impact.

While researchers such as Connelly and Clandinin (1996; 1999), Connell (1985), Churchill (1995) and Rogers (1992) acknowledge the existence of change in teachers’ work lives and that these changes have impacts, their research appears to be restricted and at times narrow in focus. There is a recognition of specific changes, for example the introduction of the National Curriculum in the UK; the effects on a specific aspect of teachers and their work, for example on their professional...
knowledge; and the effects of stress in teachers’ work lives, for example the work of Rogers (1992) who, in acknowledging teacher stress, causally links stress to relationships with students and staff members and offers solutions to reduce these levels of stress. However, this research has evidenced a broad range of types of changes and their deeper effects on the teachers’ identities. This occurs as change contexts undermine the certainty of how teachers see themselves. They created contexts where teachers’ identities were challenged, transformed or affirmed through the processes of re-assessing knowledge, beliefs, feeling and values.

What also has arisen from the data analysis and review of the literature is the significant issue of perspective. Few studies and pieces of literature see the issue of change from the perspective of the teacher. As this research is about teachers and was conducted by a teacher, its perspective is from the viewpoint of teachers ‘at the coal face’ of education. However, the most common perspective in research and literature is that of ‘top-down’—looking at teachers, showing them how to manage change, how to deal with conflicts, how to implement programs, how to assess students and so on—all from a power-based, leader-oriented, academic, research-based, statistical or in some way authoritative perspective. This again undermines the authority, empowerment and the validation that classroom experience could give to teachers. Where the literature is specifically about teachers, and from the “teacher’s side” (Avalos, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003b), it rarely investigates the effects on teachers from the teacher’s perspective. This authoritative position, of looking at teachers from the outside in, seems to be implicitly accepted by teachers and those in authority. However, there is a strong suggestion from this research data that teachers’ acceptance is not as simple as it initially appears. These teachers were professional in their evaluation of change and its processes, positioning themselves with their experiential knowledge as having different and in many respects more educationally focussed understandings about practical, classroom-based matters. This authoritative position, however, rendered them powerless as they could see little or no acknowledgment of the legitimacy of their understandings from within the ranks of those in authority.

These educational understandings had the tendency to produce uncertainty and instability for teachers. On the one hand, their knowledge, values and beliefs about
their practice and the students in their care produced a set of understandings. However, there were instances where this understanding was challenged by, or at odds with, the perceived agenda of their educational leaders—at federal, state, district or school levels. At times this uncertainty and instability remained at a manageable level—the teachers were aware of the conflict, but it remained as an opinion or concern. There were other instances where it became important enough to result in actions on the part of the teacher. What caused the difference between the two kinds of levels has not been determined in this study. For Rosemaree though, timing, bravery and self-esteem combined to produce action against what she perceived to be an unacceptable situation. She stated that, “after all the years of teaching I'm foolish enough or brave enough to use my gut feeling” (Rosemaree, T1, p. 2).

These teachers managed the changes within the contexts of their work lives. At times, this management meant direct actions—such as transferring to a new school or re-writing a document for reporting to parents. In other instances, change resulted in conflict, concerns and a degree of confusion—as in the implementation of the Spalding Method or concerns about the PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) assessment program or general policies that were being implemented.

The data in this study indicated there are many types of change and a wide range of reactions to the changes. While not seeking to arrive at a formula for managing change, reducing stress or resolving conflicts, it appears that there was an equally wide range of individual approaches to managing the instances of change, and the concerns and conflicts that arose as a result.

When teachers were faced with contexts of change there seemed to be a hesitancy about wholesale acceptance of innovation. While these teachers readily accepted the theory behind the need for change—acknowledging that social, economic and political change inevitably leads to educational change—they were more guarded about outright acceptance of new programs, policies and practices. They were less accepting of innovations because of issues that surround their implementation—usually time, resources and support mechanisms. This lack of support in the processes of implementing and adopting innovations was widely reported by the
teachers. This was evidenced in Suzanne’s observations about a lack of time to adequately engage with innovations and in Katrina’s comments about her perceived lack of support from her senior staff team. The teachers appeared to reserve judgement on specific changes until they had had time to absorb and experiment with the innovations. This was evidenced in Barbara’s comments about the Spalding Method of teaching literacy, Jodi’s retrospective remarks about previous literacy innovations, and Sally’s reservations about the PIPS testing program.

The reasons for educational change were also discussed in the data. The teachers perceived that educational change occurred for political, economic and social reasons rather than because it made educational good sense. The source of the need for change came from outside of the educational arena and therefore the innovation would inevitably have less credibility and validity for teachers. Suzanne mentioned this when she said that, “some of the ‘withouts’ like the politicians and the whateveres, are making decisions really without knowing about the practice and the children we’re teaching” (Suzanne, T2, p. 4). Yet, despite their awareness of the less-than-ideal reasons for change, the teachers appeared to be dutifully but cautiously accepting of the changes.

Teachers connected a range of emotions with the issues of change. They explicitly mentioned their cynicism, frustration, hesitation, feelings of self-doubt and overload, and need for personal re-evaluations of teaching practices and how they saw themselves as teachers given the ongoing need for change. All the teachers in the study discussed these issues but they were experienced at varying degrees. This was evidenced in comments such as Rosemaree’s when she said that she gets angry and frustrated “because they are losing the contact with us” (Rosemaree T2, p. 9).

The notion that change in education creates difficulties for schools and teachers is supported in the literature (Fullan, 1997; Hargreaves, 1995, 1998b; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). The contexts of ongoing educational change have created levels of personal and professional uncertainty and instability for these teachers. This uncertainty and instability resulted from a combination of elements that included the mismatch of expectations in and through the processes of change, lack of effective communication, and failure to acknowledge the voice of teachers in contexts of
change. In this sense then, the teachers perceived that they were not able to be heard, have their opinions, skills and knowledge valued and acted upon, and receive sufficient practical support in the processes of change. Any support that was given appeared to be too little and too late and did not match the reality of the time and effort that teachers required for realistic engagement with innovations. This created a disjunction between the kinds of, and the amount of, support that was given and what was required for teachers to feel that they had a firm grasp of the new program, policy or practice.

The next section discusses the research questions about change in the light of the data analysis.

**Addressing the research questions about change**

The following section addresses the research questions about issues of change. Each of the questions is re-stated and then responded to and discussed further using the information contained in the previous discussion.

1. What do teachers understand, know, feel, believe and value about the ongoing nature of change in education?

The teachers in this study had an implicit appreciation of the need for change. They reported that the reasons for the rate, amount and kinds of change, as they perceived them, were primarily for economic, political and social reasons, rather than for student learning or teacher development. They believed that change, while important, rarely came with sufficient realistic support for teachers in the processes of adapting and accommodating innovations. In these teachers’ opinions, the time that it took to learn and experiment with innovations appeared to be vastly underestimated by those controlling the resources. While there was support given, it was inadequate in comparison to the kind of support that was needed. Schools and teachers were overloaded with work, which led teachers to become frustrated and cynical about the reasons for change. Teachers were hesitant and sceptical because they understood that innovation required re-evaluation and renegotiation of knowledge, skills and practices as well as a redefinition of how they saw themselves as teachers.
2. What are the implications of the ongoing nature of educational change for teachers?

The implications of ongoing educational change are that teachers must manage these changes as best they can, without the level or kind of support that they feel they require. There was a range of responses about the processes of managing change. Some responses were more passive—such as quietly reviewing the education system’s action, policies and programs—through to the more active responses of taking a transfer or of taking an issue up with a senior teacher or Principal.

Suzanne summed up the implications for teachers of this ongoing educational change when she said: “The biggest issue is that there is more work” (Suzanne, T2, p. 1). The implication of this addition to the teachers’ workloads was the feeling of being overloaded with work. Suzanne commented that, although some changes were important and worthwhile, she was also aware of the imposition it created on the existing teaching load: “there’s a place for it [change/innovation] but, I mean, not when I’m teaching and trying to get my work done” (Suzanne, T1, p. 14). She believed that her work of teaching was more important than accommodating ongoing educational change. This kind of situation created conflicts for teachers concerning the use of their time and their educational priorities. It meant distractions from their core task—teaching—and resulted in dilemmas and tensions that led to self-protective behaviours such as developing strategies for self- and other-empowerment, and becoming cynical about the amount of and reasons for change.

The most significant implication for teachers as a result of the ongoing nature of educational change was the professional uncertainty, tension and instability that it created for them. Apart from the inevitable difficulties that these dilemmas created for teachers, there other were implications. For teachers who experienced a significant change or ongoing changes of a less noteworthy kind, there was the requirement to be checking what they knew, felt, understood, believed and valued against these innovations and changes. This process of continually re-evaluating both the change itself and what they understood about themselves in the process of mediating the change was significant for teachers. The negotiation, assessment and
evaluation of their identity against and with innovation was an ongoing process for teachers who were faced with ongoing change.

The broader implications of the impacts of ongoing educational change are discussed further in section 6.3 Implications of this research

3. What mechanisms and beliefs do teachers apply in change contexts?

The strategies and mechanisms referred to previously are some of the ways in which teachers are able to protect themselves from negative reactions to workplace stress, which can sometimes take the form of burnout. These include the closer management of their professional time; the self- and other-empowerment actions including involvement in teacher and professional associations; professional but gentle self-assertion when the contexts seemed appropriate; and some renegotiation of personal and professional beliefs, values and priorities. These teachers also needed to find ways to rationalise the changes with which they were expected to engage in order for them to manage the processes of adapting to and implementing the innovations. This involved a degree of management of the affective elements of values, beliefs, opinions and attitudes. An innovation needed to feel acceptable. It needed to be believed before whole-hearted acceptance could occur. Teachers needed to be personally and professionally convinced that there would be educational benefits that would make it worth the time and effort that it took to accommodate a new program, policy or practice. There needed to be resonance between the innovation and their personal and professional set of beliefs. For the teachers, the innovation—whether program, policy or practice—needed to be perceived as aligning with their existing educational knowledge and practice. This requirement of adopting a program, policy or practice, which may not resonate with their sense of professional credibility, had the potential to set them at odds with the educational system. It caused them to question their personal and professional understandings in the form of their knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings. This conflict, in turn, created the need to undertake significant re-examination and redefinition of their professional identity.

This process of determining the credibility of an innovation appeared to be a
complex issue that was not able to be fully researched here. However, issues of support in the implementation process—whether they were allocated time and resources in acknowledgement of the additional workload involved during initial implementation—seemed to be relevant to these teachers. Also, teachers were interested in such issues as whether the innovation appeared to be educationally robust and had some rigour and whether, from its use, they could expect to see benefits for students.

4. What happens to teachers’ identities in the processes of change?

The contexts of ongoing educational change for the teachers in this study created personal and professional uncertainty and instability. The need for change was clearly acknowledged by the teachers— their theoretical acceptance of it was evidenced. However, in these contexts, it created degrees of tension as they questioned how they saw themselves as teachers, what they believed, valued and knew and why they believed, valued and knew it. This core identity— their beliefs, values, feelings and knowledge that determined who they were as people and as teachers— was up for re-assessment, renegotiation and potentially redefinition. The processes of ongoing change and the uncertainty and instability that it created could lead to tension and stress for teachers. When they sensed that their employer failed to adequately support them through the processes of change— without acknowledgement of the additional workload, time allocation outside the teaching load, resources and personnel supports—teachers began to question their worth and value to their employer. When this devaluing of their time, existing skills and knowledge became an ongoing part of their working life, they began to question why they would continue to invest themselves heavily in the tasks of teaching.

Self-protective mechanisms can be evidenced as teachers found ways to reduce the stress and tension created by ongoing change. The goodwill that existed between teachers and their employing institution was placed at risk in these contexts. Teachers no longer wished to give endlessly to their job and this, in turn, diminished their capacity to continue to whole-heartedly commit themselves to the tasks of teaching. The implications of this reduction in goodwill between teachers and the education system are that there is the potential for teachers to no longer engage with
educational tasks as they had in the past. This disengagement, no matter what the degree, has direct implications for students. In economic rationalist terms, this results in loss of productivity in education and has wide-reaching implications for the education system.

The next section discusses the second of the three themes: power. It begins with a general discussion and closes with a section that continues to address the research questions—about issues of power.

5.1.3 Power

As briefly mentioned in the above discussion about issues of change, power is as inherently embedded in the system of education as is change. Its existence, as noted in both the literature review and the data analysis, underpins most of the teachers’ work-based relationships. However, the literature regards issues of power, as for issues of change, from a top-down perspective (Apple, 1995; Avalos, 1997). Even when there is acknowledgment of teachers, and the direct and indirect implications of power relationships for them and their teaching practice, the discussion and research continue to be from the perspective of authority and power over rather than power with (Batallan, 2003; Smyth, 2001). Through the processes of research this study has sought to highlight the position of teachers and their identity, from their perspectives, in contexts of power and change.

The overt power relationships in these teachers’ work lives were based on an authoritarian perspective. This took the form of power-based leadership, authoritative relationships within the hierarchy, and the use of research-based or statistical perspectives as means of control of teachers and their work. In that sense, teachers were positioned with less significant status and were disempowered by the explicit fact of the employment relationship. The treatment that they received from their employer and/or its agents, in terms of attitude and actions, was one of managerial control. Teachers were positioned as subordinates who were required to do as they were asked, and hence lacked a strong sense of agency in control of their own work. Teachers, and the work that they were doing, needed to be managed. In this sense then, teachers and their work are seen as one and the same thing. This resulted in instances of teacher disempowerment. For example, Rosemaree’s episode
with her Principal over the re-writing of the documents for reporting to parents resulted in further disempowerment for her when she received no recognition for the work she had done. It was the teachers’ perception that they, and their work, were undervalued and under-appreciated; they needed to be managed and controlled. They sensed a lack of trust by their employer and/or its agents in the tasks that they performed in the course of their work. The relationship between these teachers and their employer, the educational system, was not based on mutual trust.

Instances of power relationships in these teachers’ lives were also evidenced in the issues of empowerment. In circumstances of overt or implicit conflict, teachers sought avenues for empowerment. This took the form of empowerment for themselves, through direct actions, and for others, in collegially supportive ways. In acknowledging that their colleagues needed support, this support for others also resulted in the secondary effect of self-empowerment. There were other instances of teachers seeking self-empowerment through awareness of the inappropriate actions of their employer and/or its agents. For example, this is evidenced in Katrina’s critique of her Principal’s attitude and actions towards parents, and Suzanne’s comments about the agenda of school leaders. They were self-empowering and, through the processes of voicing their concerns, and as de-briefing, it may have assisted in the dissipation of frustrations or the affirmation of their beliefs about a concern. This kind of empowerment, that is, teachers supporting themselves and benefiting in the process, is not mentioned in the literature. The kinds of empowerment that are discussed in the literature are based around empowerment that is gifted to teachers through mechanisms, programs and specific actions from the educational hierarchy (Dean, 1999; Irwin, 1995; Rice & Schneider, 1994; Short et al., 1999). It also appears to be a strategy that teachers use to manage the issues, tensions, uncertainties and concerns of their daily teaching lives.

There were reactions that resulted from situations in which teachers experienced personal or professional conflict or tension and chose to act rather than accept the situation. The conflict and tension experienced were not necessarily made overt—usually taking the form of divergent opinions, values or beliefs about things that were happening around them. There appeared to be two reactions to these contexts of tension and conflict. The first was one that was characterised by an unhappy
acceptance of the situation. Teachers could and did express their concerns about the issues at the centre of the tensions and conflict, but they chose not to act on them. They quietly went on with the job. The second kind of reaction involved direct actions—teachers felt that there was a boundary which had been crossed—and that in this instance, something needed to be done. They then went about taking action. This action though, was carefully considered, followed accepted protocols and was based on educationally justifiable reasons; for example, Katrina’s decision to transfer to a new school because of unresolved conflicts in her current context. There was no evidence that these were cases of fanciful whims, stubborn insistence or displays of temper. The actions protected, affirmed and empowered the identity of the teacher and asserted their stance through means that were available to them.

**Addressing the research questions about power**

As power relationships emerged as a theme in the analysis of the data, the following three questions arose about issues of power. These are addressed in the discussion below.

5. What are teacher’s understandings about the use of power in the processes of change?

As a result of analysis, the teachers conveyed a clear appreciation of the power relationships in their work lives. They exhibited a large degree of acceptance of their position as teachers bound to do the bidding of their employer and/or its agents. In contexts of ongoing change, this power relationship was strained. Teachers acknowledged that their employer expected a lot from them and yet failed to support them with time, resources and personnel in contexts of implementation of innovations. They saw that their time was precious and that their teaching was their priority, yet their employer continued to strain the sense of goodwill between the teachers and the DoE by continued expectations of additional work without authentic support mechanisms. This unequal power relationship meant that teachers sensed their treatment was lacking in genuine respect and courtesy. The DoE did not seem to trust them, rather requiring more and more from them without giving support in return. Mutual respect and goodwill suffers under these contexts. These teachers sensed they were not recognised, heard or valued by their employer. The avenues for authentic communication with their employer, through engagement with professional
groups and associations, no longer provided effective mechanisms for getting action on their concerns. The overt expectations of ongoing, unsupported change causes teachers to doubt their worth. The actions of their employer that indicated to these teachers a lack of trust, mutual respect and professional courtesy eroded their significance to the educational system and, in turn, shaped the values they assigned to themselves in the contexts of their working lives.

6. How do teachers position themselves in these power relationships?

In these contexts of unequal power relationships, teachers seem to position themselves as accepting of the actions of the educational system towards them. They see themselves as employees, bound to do the bidding of their employer, and relatively powerless in contexts of change. Their ability to be heard, recognised and acknowledged for the work that they do is minimised. Their educational knowledge, skills and practices seem invisible in the processes of decision-making about educational matters. Where their input is called for it is restricted, by the hierarchy of the educational system, to seemingly insignificant issues. The support mechanisms that are available to them for accommodating changes in policy, practices and programs are inappropriate in terms of quality and quantity. The lack of recognition and disrespectful treatment they receive from the DoE and its agents further reproduces and affirms a position of lack of authentic professional respect for their knowledge, skills and practices. They sense a lack of professional courtesy in their treatment from their employer. The teachers in this study only sought recognition, acknowledgment and affirmation in cases where they saw an overt and almost extreme need.

7. Is there evidence that the use of power in the change process affects individual teachers’ identities?

The data analysis has shown that, when the ‘use of power in the change process’ is the way in which change is imposed upon teachers—that is, that they are required, in an authoritative sense, to adopt changes at their employer’s discretion—these teachers’ identities were affected by this use of power. The power, in this instance, is the imposition and expectation of change without due acknowledgement of how
teachers might think or feel about the innovation. Their knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and opinions on issues of change or about innovations are not able to be heard or easily acted upon. Their invisibility in the hierarchical system affects how they see themselves as teachers, and in some instances, causes personal and professional uncertainty for teachers. Their awareness of the lack of professional respect and courtesy on the part of the educational system has implications for the value they assign to themselves and the work that they do. The educational system’s expectation that teachers will adopt programs, policies and practices, without due acknowledgement of their knowledge, opinion, values, feelings and educational beliefs sends a clear message to teachers. They are not respected professionally and their relationship with the educational system is not based on mutual trust. The implications are that teachers experience corrosion of their personal and professional significance to their employer. However, the effects are more about the conduct of the bureaucracy towards them, in the perceived lack of professional respect and courtesy and lack of realistic support mechanisms, than they are to do with the use of power or the specific innovation itself.

The next section discusses the third of the three themes, identity. It begins with a general discussion and closes with a section that continues to address the research questions that relate to identity.

5.1.4 Identity

Drawing from the academic literature that was reviewed in the second chapter, identity is considered in this thesis as the holistic (Delbridge et al., 1991) combination of an array of elements that renders each person discretely unique. It is comprised of a convergence of all the elements of life experiences, physical characteristics, personality, roles and background, genetic makeup, ethnicity and culture. It includes a person’s understandings, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. While each person may be constituted from these component elements, each of the elements may vary between people. For example, you and I may have a set of religious beliefs, but my religious beliefs may relate towards Islam; yours towards Christianity. When these sets of elements or component parts are unified as an identity, each person is rendered unique in the holistic combination of these elements. This momentary conception of identity also acknowledges that it is
through perceptions that identity is recognised. This research has provided evidence that a deeper understanding about teachers can be achieved through acknowledging the existence of each person’s identity. This lens of identity has enabled an illumination of each of the participant teachers in this study and has revealed that each teacher’s identity is a combination of all of the elements that have been discussed above and is discretely unique to each person.

An important feature in this conception of identity is the inherent interconnection between each of the component parts of a person’s identity. This research has highlighted the kinds of concerns, conflicts and issues that each of these teachers faces in their work lives. These concerns, conflicts and issues are determined by their identity in that they are linked to each teacher’s set of understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings. They are also determined in conjunction with the unique combination of each teacher’s life history, physical characteristics, personality, roles and background, genetic makeup, ethnicity and culture. This convergence of elements that constitute identity becomes the lens through which these teachers view and understand their world. It is the reference point, the yardstick against which they assign value and it simultaneously undergoes a process of being “recast” and “disrupted” (Smyth, 2002, p. 463) as the person interacts in their social and cultural world. The data has evidenced the ways in which the teachers’ identities underwent processes of redefinition and re-examination as they engaged and interacted in their work environments. As the processes of change flowed on, teachers’ identities were simultaneously being challenged, transformed and/or affirmed. This process of identity renegotiation and redefinition, although possibly a normal occurrence in teachers’ lives, is accentuated in contexts of ongoing educational change. It created tensions, uncertainty and instability for these teachers and highlighted the complexity of the relationship between identity and change.

The inter-relationship of the component ‘parts’ in the construct of identity has significant implications. It can be evidenced in the data analysis that, as one aspect of identity is challenged through an experience, for example, Barbara’s engagement with the Spalding Method of teaching literacy, it can have an impact on other elements of identity. In this example, it caused Barbara to question her existing literacy practice and knowledge, with the resultant self-assessment emotional self-
doubts. It also impacted on her relationship with her senior staff and it required her to spend increased time on learning a new method, which, in turn, caused her to question her capacity to continue to commit to the tasks of teaching. When one element or component of one’s identity is challenged and requires re-examination and potential redefinition, then, as with the domino effect, many other elements are, in turn, challenged. This domino effect is evident in the data from each of the eight participants. When something happens to cause a re-examination of one element of the identity, other elements are also affected and called into question. The effect that seemingly incidental events and concerns can have, reverberating into other aspects of a person’s identity, can be evidenced from this data. The implications of this are discussed in Chapter 6, in the section, Implications of this research.

Addressing the research questions about identity

The following questions were posed at the outset of the research, seeking clarification about the role and implications of identity in these teachers’ professional lives. These are discussed here.

8. What are the implications of how identity is defined in the Literature and by others?

The literature, as discussed in Chapter 2, Review of literature, espouses an array of meanings and variations for the terms identity, self and the subject. However, for the purposes of this study, identity has been conceived of as the amalgamation of life history, physical characteristics, personality, roles and background, genetic makeup, ethnicity and culture. It encompasses the understandings, knowledge, beliefs, values and feelings that are unique to each person. This holistic view of identity is not widely noted in the literature. The literature debates and highlights many assertions and aspects of identity, but rarely are they brought together. Many of these assertions and elements have been drawn together to form the holistic understanding about identity that is used in this study. Some of these aspects include its socio-cultural nature—that it is determined, in part, by one’s culture and is socially constructed and maintained. There is a strong spoken language element to identity—in that one’s identity is created and maintained through language and through relational interactions with others. This study also draws on the understanding that the creation of identity is never finalised, is always fluid, and in a constant state of
re-examination.

The implications of this understanding about identity are that, in acknowledging a holistic view of identity that permits a wide range of elements and characteristics within identity, a broader view of the person is realised. Maintaining the position that each person’s identity is unique validates participants in qualitative research studies, allowing them to be viewed as individual people responding to issues that may be generic yet with an individually-felt response. The notion that identity is holistic confirms it as the amalgamation of an array of elements and characteristics. This holistic, all-encompassing view of identity has clarified the magnitude of the implications of change upon teachers. In analysing the data it can be seen that, when one aspect or element of identity requires renegotiation and re-examination because of issues of change in workplace contexts, many of the other elements are also challenged and require redefinition. This then compounds the effects of change, increasing the intensity of the impact for teachers and, in part, provides an explanation for the intensification of workplace stress in contexts of change that have been evident in previous studies (Churchill, 1995; Churchill et al., 1997; Rogers, 1992).

9. **How does the use of identity as a concept for studying teachers benefit research?**

From this discussion it can be seen that an acknowledgement of the concept of identity can give a human face to research. By viewing participants as holistic individuals, research has the potential to maintain respect for the contribution and worth of people who participate in qualitative studies. It is able to foreground their individuality, differences, and the unique contexts of their lives. While amalgamation and commonality make for verifiable truths in research, uniqueness, difference and individuality are able to contribute significant understandings and deepen awareness on human issues in education. After all, teaching is about teachers and students, and teachers and students are people first.

Thus, the study of identity can be utilised to gain more profound appreciations of a myriad of issues in education. When studying people—teachers, leaders and students—identity can provide both a lens and a tool for investigation into the
personal side and human perspective of research topics. These include such topics as: the effects of specific change processes on students and teachers, issues surrounding aging and early resignation of teachers, the formulation of policy about the implementation of innovation, provision of resources in processes of change, the effectiveness of teaching practices for student learning and teacher teaching, student perception and reception of change and teacher awareness of issues of leadership and power.

10. What is the role of identity in contexts of ongoing educational change?

The role that identity appears to be playing in the contexts of ongoing educational change in these teachers’ lives is significant. It is through the filter of their individual identities that teachers perceive all of the aspects of their work lives, of which change is but one. Their perceptions about the value and worth of an innovation are determined by their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values. These in turn are constituted from the amalgam of their life experiences, personality, roles and background, genetic makeup, and culture. Their identity is, in turn, simultaneously challenged, transformed and/or affirmed, undergoing processes of renegotiation and redefinition throughout the experience. This two-way process of filtering and redefinition is accentuated in contexts of ongoing educational change.

It needs to be restated though that the inherent interconnectedness of the three themes used in this study means that any separation of the themes in the above discussion is for research and reporting purposes, and not with the intention of implying that they are stand-alone issues from the data. The following section discusses the intersection of the three themes, change, power and identity, and addresses the two wide-ranging research questions.

5.2 The intersection of change, power and identity

Much of the above discussion leads towards and covers many of the issues that are at the intersection of the three themes of this research—change, power and identity. The two research questions which overarch the study are listed and discussed below.

11. What are the implications of ongoing educational change for teachers?
12. Is there an impact from this change upon their individual identities? What might this be?

For the teachers in this study there has been a wider range of kinds of change and more of it than is indicated by the literature. The constancy of changes in educational policies, programs and practices and the extent and depth of the kinds of change have had repercussions for teachers. In their discussions, teachers repeatedly referred to the lack of realistic support mechanisms to facilitate their adoption of educational change. This lack of realistic support caused them to question their value to their employer and contributed to the erosion of the significance they assigned to themselves, in the eyes of their employer, and to their working lives. Although not averse to the need or requirement for changes, teachers sense a lack of appreciation from the bureaucratic educational system for the ways in which the rate and kinds of change affects them. They discussed the issue of the time that it takes to familiarise themselves with the theory and to experiment with the practices in accommodating the expectation of new program, policy or practice. The time that it takes to do this is additional to existing workloads. The constancy of the change process has left them feeling overworked and undervalued. In order to protect themselves from the potential for excesses of stress and burnout, there is evidence that teachers are exhibiting self-protective behaviours. This then diminishes and erodes their commitment to the tasks of teaching and potentially affects their effectiveness in teaching and therefore can influence student learning.

5.3 Findings summarised

This section lists the findings in a more concise form. The findings are validated from the previous discussion about the findings from the three levels of data analysis. They are divided into two sections, the first of which indicates the findings that substantiate existing research. The second section is divided into four categories of findings—those about teachers, change, power and identity. As previously noted, the division is for practical purposes and clarity of presentation, however many of the noted points are not exclusive to one of the designated categories, but rather could be positioned in two or more of the categories. The section after this summarises the research findings into three statements about the conclusions of the research.
The following findings substantiate existing research findings:

1. Teachers invest much of themselves in the act of teaching (Nias, 1989).
2. Teachers are what they do—it is more than the act of teaching (Nias, 1989; Waller, 1932).
3. Teachers exhibit care about their students and have definite understanding about what is best for students and their own practice (Menlo & Poppleton, 1999; Teachers' Federation of Victoria, 1986).
4. The teacher’s relationships with the bureaucratic system, and/or its agents, are based round unequal power relationships (Apple, 1995; Smyth, 2001).

The data analysis has indicated the following new findings.

**Teachers**

1. Teachers’ understandings about students’ needs and their practice can create conflicts and concerns for teachers as they perceive a disjunction between perspectives on educational issues from some of the policies, programs and practices that are initiated from the educational system.
2. Teachers demonstrate an awareness of the political, social and economic agendas of those who are in control of education.
3. Teachers exhibit cautious acceptance of the status quo of power relationships and actions in schools. In certain contexts of tension and uncertainty, when they sense that the established boundaries for acceptable treatment are disregarded, they choose to act upon their concerns. These boundaries, though, are individually and contextually determined.
4. Teachers feel there is insufficient demonstrated appreciation, valuing or recognition of them and their work. Their opinions, knowledge, beliefs and values are not reliably heard or valued by the educational system or society.

**Change**

1. There is a wider variety of kinds of change, and more of it, than is evidenced in the literature.
2. Teachers demonstrate hesitancy about wholesale acceptance of innovation.
3. Teachers show generalised acceptance and compliance with the need for change, with less acceptance and approval about specific implementation issues.

4. Teachers discussed a range of emotions about issues of change—cynicism, frustration, hesitation, feeling overloaded, self-doubt, personal re-evaluations.

5. Teachers generally believe they are not given sufficient time or resources to properly implement the required changes. This leads to frustration, cynicism and overload. It also causes them to question their worth and value to the educational system in contexts of ongoing educational change.

6. Conflicts and tensions can be created when there is a mismatch of expectations, lack of communication or teachers’ opinions (their voices) are unable to be heard and acted upon.

7. For some teachers there is a significant disparity between the levels of support given by the educational system and those required for realistic accommodation of educational change initiatives.

8. Teachers believe that change is more likely to be for political, social and economic reasons rather than for educational reasons.

**Power**

1. Teachers are cautiously accepting of power relationships in their work lives, but retain boundaries about what is tolerable and what is not.

2. In contexts of conflict and tension, when teachers perceive the boundary line has been violated, teachers can react in a variety of ways. These reactions can be either uncertain acceptance without action, or measured action. These actions are usually carefully considered, follow accepted protocols and are based on educational knowledge, feeling, beliefs and values.

In contexts of change, teachers can seek empowerment for themselves and others through a range of mechanisms. This finding submits an alternate view than that found in the literature, which assumes that empowerment is gifted to teachers through programs, policies or mechanisms from the top of the hierarchy down to teachers.

**Identity**

This study sees identity as holistic (Delbridge et al., 1991) and unique to each person.
As defined in the literature review, identity is seen as, “The collective aspect of the set of behavioural and personal characteristics which identify a person as a distinct individual.” The data analysis has indicated the following new findings about identity.

1. Identity plays a role in the ways in which teachers receive and perceive change. It determines the extent to which teachers accept or reject innovation and change.

2. While identity redefinition may be a usual process in the process of living, in contexts of ongoing educational change, teacher identity is further challenged, requiring a significant re-examination and redefinition of personal and professional identity.

3. This process of re-examination and redefinition of identity in processes of change inevitably leads to some degree of personal and professional uncertainty and instability for teachers.

4. The uncertainty and instability that teachers experience as a result of the significant renegotiation and redefinition of their identities can put teachers at risk of eroding the residual goodwill that exists between teachers and the educational system.

5. The consequent loss of goodwill between the education system and teachers diminishes teachers’ commitment to the tasks of teaching and creates the need for self-protective behaviours on the part of the teacher.

6. This reduction in commitment to the tasks of teaching and development of self-protective behaviours by teachers has direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning.

7. Thus, as a consequence of the lack of adequate support in contexts of ongoing educational change, teachers experience a need to re-examine and redefine their identity.

The implications of these findings for policy, practice and research are discussed further in section 6.3 Implications.
5.4 Conclusions

From the above discussion and sets of findings the following three conclusions are arrived at. These provide a succinct set of statements that focus the findings and provide significance to the data analyses. These have been listed under three headings:

1) The effects of the actions of the education system on teachers,
2) Relationship between change and identity, and
3) Issues of professionalism, reflecting the three areas around which the data analyses have provided further enlightenment.

1) The effects of the actions of the education system on teachers

The bureaucratic system’s treatment of teachers appears to be lacking professional respect and courtesy. It is not based on trust. Teachers are aware of this corrosion of their value to their employer and it shapes the value they assign to themselves and their overall working lives.

2) Relationship between change and identity

In contexts of ongoing educational change, teachers’ personal and professional identities need to undergo significant renegotiation and redefinition. This inevitably leads to some degree of personal and professional uncertainty and instability, which puts teachers at risk of eroding the residue of goodwill that remains between teachers and their employer. In turn, the consequent loss of goodwill diminishes teachers’ commitment to the tasks of teaching.

3) Issues of professionalism

Significantly different perceptions have formed in response to issues of professionalism within the bureaucratic system. Marked disparities in how the concept is understood places teachers in a position of uncertainty and conflict and creates the need for self-protective behaviours on their part. This diminishes the ways in which they commit themselves to the responsibilities of teaching. This erosion of commitment to teaching has direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning.
Summary of the discussion, findings and conclusions

This chapter has brought together the results of the data analyses, the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2, and the research questions which arose from the initially stated research problem. It has discussed the issues that have arisen from the analyses in the light of the literature and in relation to the research questions. The final section of this chapter has outlined and summarised the research findings that lead to the concluding statements of findings.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, Conclusion, outlines the implications of the findings and addresses issues that may be of interest for further research.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

(Martin Luther King Jr., Civil rights leader, 1929–1968)

Overview of chapter

This chapter concludes the thesis. It contains a summary of the individual chapters and a summary of the conclusions and findings from the research. It discusses the implications of the research findings for research, for policy and for practice. It then discusses briefly the ways in which this research could be built upon, suggesting areas for further research and including a list of questions to drive and shape potential research projects.

6.1 Summary of individual chapters

Chapter 1, Introduction: The Research defined, outlines the research study, giving background information. It included explanations of the significance, contexts and
focus of the study and set out the research problem and the accompanying questions that have been the focus of the study. It gave definitions of some of the main terms used and a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2, Review of the relevant literature and background information, sets out the distillation of the literature on the topics of changes in education from broad, global change through to more detailed changes in the working lives of Tasmanian teachers. It discussed the literature on power as it is evidenced in school contexts and set out the literature which has been used as the basis for a shared understanding about the use of the term identity in this study.

Chapter 3, Methodology, outlines in detail the methodology and methods used in the study. It has supported the choices with information from the available literature. It included information about methodological choices in data collection, ethical issues, and has included information about the eclectic blend of methods used for data analysis.

Chapter 4, Results, reports on the three levels of analysis that were applied to the data, arriving at a detailed appreciation of the understandings about issues of teacher identity in contexts of power relationships and ongoing educational change. The first level of analysis reported on the interviews with the eight teachers, and is a summary of the interview; provides background information; and introduces the eight teachers to the reader. The second level is a thematic analysis of the data, providing information about the themes and their categories in greater detail and depth. The third level of data analysis has used a discourse analytic approach to further interrogate the data using Gee’s (1999) set of 18 research questions.

Chapter 5, Discussion, findings and conclusions, draws together the information from the literature review and the results of the analyses. It discusses the issues that have been highlighted from the analyses and lists sets of findings, some of which substantiate existing research and others that are new from this research. It concludes with a set of three significant findings from the research.

Chapter 6, Conclusion, brings to a close the thesis, setting out the conclusions and
implications of the research findings, with a section devoted to suggestions for further research. It concludes with a summary of the thesis.

These are then followed by the list of references used throughout the thesis and a list of the appendices, which are included in CDROM form at the end of this document.

### 6.2 The research conclusions

The following statements outline the findings from this study. The ways in which they remain inherently interconnected is reiterated, and the reader is reminded that these statements are supported by the lists of findings containing more detailed information that support these conclusions and which can be found on page 343 of this document.

1) The effects of the actions of the education system on teachers
   The education system’s treatment of teachers appears to be lacking professional respect and courtesy. It is not based on trust. Teachers are aware of this corrosion of their value to their employer and it shapes the value they assign to themselves and their overall working lives.

2) Relationship between change and identity
   In contexts of ongoing educational change, teachers’ personal and professional identities need to undergo significant renegotiation and redefinition. This inevitably leads to some degree of personal and professional uncertainty and instability, which puts teachers at risk of eroding the residue of goodwill that remains between teachers and their employer. In turn, the consequent loss of goodwill diminishes teachers’ commitment to the tasks of teaching.

3) Issues of professionalism
   Significantly different perceptions have formed in response to issues of professionalism within the bureaucratic system. Marked disparities in how the concept is understood places teachers in a position of uncertainty and conflict and creates the need for self-protective behaviours on their part. This diminishes the ways in which they commit themselves to the responsibilities of teaching. This
erosion of commitment to teaching has direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning.

### 6.3 Implications of this research

The key findings listed above have implications for research in the three areas of: the relationship between identity and change, issues of professionalism, and the treatment of teachers by the educational system. These are discussed in sequence, outlining the implications of the findings for policy, practice and research. Ideas for further research are expanded upon in the section, 6.4, Suggestions for further research, with a list of questions for potential research projects.

Firstly, it is important to iterate that the study of, and understanding about, identity has an integral place in research. It is central and relevant to theoretical and practical domains of study for any research that is based on people and how they act, think, understand and feel. It is a useful tool for research for such topics as effective change processes; program and policy implementation; maintaining teachers in the teaching profession; studies about teacher satisfaction, motivation, efficacy, agency and autonomy; the formulation of policy to effectively support teachers; the provision of resources for teachers; and effective teaching.

Using identity as a tool in research about people permits enlightenment about personhood, focussing on the distinct qualities that make us individual and unique. Employing the concept of identity in research can also acknowledge the interconnection of a number of characteristics and qualities which, while they can be clarified and separated for research purposes, remain inherently connected in the concept of identity. The use of identity in research also gives validation to case studies that employ small samples, as these small but distinct samples can then have resonance with larger research samples and across broader contexts. This then validates the use of identity: a significant tool in research and an enlightening lens to employ in investigating what happens with, to and for people in given contexts.

The significance of identity as a beneficial tool in understanding people can be evidenced in this research. Investigating and highlighting the ways in which identity
works—the role that it plays in determining how individuals receive and perceive information and events in their lives—has implications well beyond this research. The ways in which the elements and characteristics that amalgamate to create the whole and unified identity of each person has been highlighted in the research. The implications of the reverberating and domino effects that are evident across the elements of identity when one aspect of identity is challenged are a significant finding that requires research to further investigate the phenomenon.

The following section looks at the implications of the research findings about the relationship between identity and change. This is followed by brief discussions about the implication of issues of professionalism and the implications of the effects of the actions of the education system on teachers.

**The relationship between identity and change**
This research has established that, for the teachers in this study, when an event or occurrence causes one aspect of their identity to be challenged this in turn creates challenges for other aspects of that teacher’s identity, and this requires significant re-examination and redefinition of their identity. This domino effect in the lives of the participant teachers has implications. The role of identity in filtering and determining how change events are received and perceived by individuals can be evidenced from this data analysis.

This finding has implications beyond this research. In contexts where organisations or institutions manage people—through policies, structures and resources—it would be invaluable for enhanced productivity, through improved staff morale and job satisfaction, to understand this domino effect in the practical workings of organisations and institutions. That is, if organisations want to retain staff, keep them contented in their work tasks and enhance productivity, then an appreciation of the ways in which change causes uncertainty, instability and tension for workers may be beneficial. In acknowledging this degree of tension, uncertainty and instability, with particular reference to processes of change, policy development and resource allocations and structures can be adapted to accommodate this new appreciation of workers and their identities. It would seem that additional care and consideration of the deep-seated effects of change on individuals could have direct implications for
productivity.

This research has evidenced the ways in which there is a merging of the *person* of the teacher and the *work* that they do. This has particular significance in teaching, for, as this and previous research has shown, teachers do not just teach, they *are* teachers. The significant investment of the person of the teacher—their identity—in the tasks of teaching is evident in this data. This notion is supported by other research (Nias, 1989). What this research has gone on to show is that when teachers invest so much of themselves in their job and their identity is challenged, it requires significant identity re-examination and renegotiation. This process of continual re-examination has consequences for the way that teachers are able to continue to commit to and understand their jobs. A heightened awareness of the existence of the conflicts, tensions and uncertainties that this creates for teachers can provide the impetus of improved human resource structures. Validating the existence of tensions that are created by systemic change could go a long way towards restoring the loss of goodwill between teachers and their employer.

**Issues of professionalism**

That there is a range of disparate notions about issues of professionalism has been evidenced in this study. While the range of understandings about any concept could be considered usual, this research has evidenced concerns and tensions that are created by issues of teacher professionalism. Underlying issues about change surfaced in the research. This indicated that teachers have disparate notions about issues of ‘professionalism’—what it means to be a ‘professional’ teacher, the reasons for ‘professional development’ and why teachers are expected to enhance their ‘professionalism’.

Change is understood by teachers to be produced by social, political and economic forces. Teachers made direct links between political, social and economic rationalist issues and forces and the requirement for changes that impact heavily on their working lives. They experienced cynicism and frustration about the reason for and the mechanisms involved in the implementation of change. This process of identity re-formation and re-examination was intensified in contexts of ongoing educational change and this, in turn, created uncertainty and instability for teachers. Teachers
Chapter 6

Conclusion

experienced a sense of ongoing conflict about what was expected of them, in the tasks of teaching and with respect to the requirement of ongoing change that was, in their view, inadequately supported. In contexts where this conflict persisted, teachers were at risk of continuing to commit to a system that expected too much from them, challenging and diminishing their sense of goodwill when, in their perception, they were not realistically supported in processes of change. In these contexts teachers engaged in self-protective mechanisms that distanced them from their teaching tasks, possibly in order to develop or to maintain a sense of control over their teaching tasks. This professional distance, in tandem with the development of self-protective behaviours, eroded the goodwill that teachers may have had towards their employer, and diminished their capacity to commit to teaching. This has direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning.

The implications of this situation are manifold. Teachers, it would seem, were accepting of the need for change and accommodating of the requirement to become more ‘professional’. However, there appeared to be a desire for greater communication between teachers and their employer—at a variety of systemic levels—and this included being able to have a voice in the implementation of professional development. Teachers inferred that, while change and progress are important, they are never good enough. They desired a better fit between their existing knowledge, skills and practice and the PD they were required to engage with. In order to connect the teacher and her teaching in processes of ongoing change, teachers needed more time and support in the processes of redefining themselves and their practice. Taking up the point made strongly by Suzanne, there were teachers who did not want to be required to fit into someone else’s mould of what a ‘professional’ teacher should be. Teachers presented as independent and individual—a point noted here by McGill-Franzen when, discussing policy and program implementation, she asserted:

Teachers are independent and you cannot tell them how to think and feel … Because if you don’t believe in a program whatever it happens to be, I can tell you whatever I want [but] it’s not going to happen. Because when you go into that classroom and you close that door, you’re going to teach what you feel and believe is right and what you feel and believe you can do (McGill-Franzen, 2000, p. 906).

It is advantageous for education systems to work with teachers on issues of change rather than imposing expectations without effective communication.
Treatment of teachers by the educational system

This research has evidenced the effects of the behaviour of the educational system on teachers. The implications for policy, practice and program implementation on teachers appeared to be more profound than is evidenced in the literature. That teachers perceived they experienced a lack of support in contexts of ongoing educational change is, in itself, a concern. However, this research also indicated that teachers sensed a lack of genuine professional respect and courtesy through the actions of their employer and/or its agents. The sense that they were not valued, recognised for the work that they do, or appreciated, corroded their sense of significance to their employer and in turn shaped how they assigned value to themselves and their work. When teachers perceived that they were expected to continue to engage with change without the kinds of support that they felt they required to actively engage with change innovations, then tension, uncertainty and conflict were created. When the change was constant and the lack of adequate support mechanisms also persisted it sent a message to teachers about their perceived worth to the system.

The message to teachers was not a positive one. It indicated that they and the work that they perform are never good enough. The requirement of ongoing testing regimes, benchmarking of student progress, and reporting and assessment protocols that have been implemented by the educational system, tells teachers they are not doing their job properly. This lack of professional trust and respect has corroded teacher’s significance to their employer and shaped the value they assigned to themselves and their work. Their self-protective mechanisms, including the need to distance themselves from the tasks of teaching, diminished their commitment to teaching. The implications for teacher effectiveness and productivity are the potential for reduction in the effectiveness of student learning. The implications of this point is that if educational systems want to maintain elevated levels of student learning through the conduit of contented and committed teachers, then the goodwill that has been at risk of further erosion from the perception that teachers are not realistically supported in the processes of ongoing educational change needs restoration work. The evidence from this study suggests that goodwill might be restored by improving lines of effective communication at a variety of levels within the system, listening to what teachers have to say and acting on it, valuing their work
in ways that are acceptable to them and supporting them more effectively in the processes of change. If these issues were addressed, then through enhanced and deliberate communication across the educational hierarchy, teachers would be more likely to sense that they and the work that they perform was valued and supported. Moreover they would have a sense that their employer was realistic in its expectations of them and that their role in the processes of education—as a valued conduit for student learning—would be validated as worthwhile. This would signal a return of professional respect and courtesy. Teachers would be less protective and distancing of themselves and their work, more committed and motivated, and student learning would not be at risk of decline.

Perhaps the most significant implication that can be evidenced from this research comes from the notion that has been put forward by Michael Fullan—you can't mandate what matters (Fullan, 1997). While Fullan discusses this statement in light of how to effectively manage change, in this study I am asserting that it is the teachers that matter and that mandating—requiring and demanding—that they be and do in a particular manner does not appear to be an effective strategy for managing teachers. The data suggests that telling them how to think and feel about issues of change (McGill-Franzen, 2000) is unlikely to be effective. Working with them on issues of change, listening and valuing their input, although a more complex process, is more likely to produce the result of effective and motivated teachers and enhanced student learning (Fullan, 1997).

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This research has uncovered four areas which this researcher considers require further research. The inherent interconnection between these four issues is evident both throughout this study and in the following discussion about potential research projects. They are listed and are discussed in order of appearance.

1. The nature of teacher valuing and support
2. Teacher professionalism and professionalisation
3. Episodes of personal and professional (identity) conflict, tension or uncertainty
4. “Good” teacher-ness
These areas will be briefly discussed, and suggestions for research projects are proposed.

1. **The nature of teacher valuing and support**

An array of questions about the nature of teacher valuing and support have arisen from the results of this research. This study has evidenced the ways in which teachers perceived that the educational system had failed to adequately support and value them. Other questions have emerged that require further research to determine the perspective of teachers in regard to some of these issues. There is a disparity between the kinds of support and valuing that are given to teachers—the type of, amount, timing and delivery—and what teachers appear to need. The education system currently delivers some support to teachers in contexts of change. However, there appears to be an assumption that it is meeting teachers’ needs in this area. This research indicates that this is not the case and that teachers feel less valued and supported because of the ongoing nature of change. From the teachers’ perspective it would also appear that the support that they are given, in contexts of change, is about the system’s agenda and the control of teachers. It could be considered that much of the existing support that happens in the education system occurs because the employer desires to, in some degree or manner, change what teachers are doing or the ways in which they are doing it. Thus, teachers need support. However, this support acts to undermine and devalue the work that teachers currently perform—presuming that teachers are not performing well enough or to the liking of their employer. Thus, some support mechanisms can act to undermine and corrode teacher’s sense of being valued by their employer.

A suggested key question that could drive this kind of a research project could be:

*What is it that teachers want from their employer in order to feel valued and supported in their work?*

Such a study could investigate the nature, timing, amount and delivery of existing services to support teachers. The kinds of personalised valuing that teachers do, or do not, receive from their employer and/or its agents could be included in this study. An investigation of the dual perspectives of what is given and what is received—the employer and the employee’s perspectives—would indicate the degree of the
disjunction between the delivery and reception of support and valuing.

This kind of research project could involve a large-scale survey to determine firstly what teachers consider they currently receive, in terms of valuing and support, from their employer and/or its agents. Secondly, it could determine what teachers consider they need, in the way of valuing and support, to assist them in the course of their work. Thirdly, it would be valuable to determine what teachers themselves would consider the potential effects of receiving their desired supports and valuing would do for them in terms of work—for example: increased personal and professional motivation, enhanced teacher performance, leading to student performance and engagement, higher staff and individual morale and a more informed and engaged teaching body. In order to design an effective survey for teachers, a smaller-scale study, talking with a sample of perhaps twenty teachers across the K–12 range, could establish the focus of the content and directions of the survey’s questions. The perspective of the employer could be gathered through a range of mechanisms. These could include interviews and/or surveys of specific influential members of the education hierarchy, an economic investigation of the allocation of funds to the authentic and specific supports for teachers and an investigation of the ways in which teachers are positioned—through a critical discourse analysis of policies and documents issued from the education system. The results of this kind of a study have the potential to inform and influence the actions of teachers, teachers unions and the education system.

2. Teacher professionalism and professionalisation

Closely linked with the issue of teacher valuing and support is the issue of teacher professionalism and professionalisation. In supporting teachers and valuing them and their work, there is an inherent assumption by the hierarchical system that they need to be more professional. However, as this research indicated, there is an array of conceptions about what it means to be professional and the assumptions about why and in what ways teachers ought to become, or be made to be, more professional. Hence, a larger-scale study to investigate teachers’ current understandings about issues of professionalism would support the above-mentioned study about teacher valuing and support. The links between teachers feeling valued
and supported and teacher professionalisation are evident in this research project. However, further research could clarify the nature of these connections.

A suggested research question to drive such a study could be:

*What are teachers’ and the education system’s understandings and perceptions about teacher professionalism?*

A research project to investigate this issue could do the following. Firstly, it could determine the perceptions and understandings about issues of professionalism from a small sample of teachers. Then it could further investigate the teaching population’s understandings about issues of professionalism, utilising the information gathered from the initial small-scale sample to construct a survey for a broader cross-section of teachers. The significance of findings from this kind of a study could include the enhancement of the effectiveness of professional learning programs for teachers and education systems. An increased awareness of how teachers view being professional could lead to a re-examination of existing professional development services and a better ‘fit’ between what teachers want and need and what the education system wants and needs of and for its teachers.

### 3. Episodes of personal and professional (identity) conflict, tension or uncertainty

While this research has indicated that teachers experience significant conflict, tension and uncertainty in contexts of ongoing educational change, it would also seem that there were other contexts which engendered and created stress, conflict and tension for teachers. An investigation into the nature and effects of these kinds of episodes could add to understandings about the nature of teachers’ work lives.

It is suggested that a key question to drive an investigation of this type could be:

*What happens with, to and for teachers’ personal and professional identities in an episode of personal and professional conflict, tension, stress or uncertainty?*

This kind of qualitative study would be best conducted with a small-scale sample of teachers who had experienced an episode of significant stress, conflict or tension in the course of their working life. Locating and working with teachers who would be prepared and able to articulate the details of an incident or episode that would be
required for this type of investigation would require sensitivity and careful attention to ethical protocols. In-depth interviews with teachers could provide information about the following kinds of issues: personal and professional self-esteem, stress-management techniques and mechanisms, attention to emotional and rational thinking and actions in stressful contexts, positioning of self and others, power-based relationships in and through the episodes, protocols and support mechanisms for teachers, attitudes and values of colleagues, and long-term effects of such incidents. These in-depth interviews could provide a wealth of information that could be analysed using discourse analytic methods.

An investigation about what happens to teachers’ personal and professional identities in contexts where they experience significant tension, stress and conflict could deepen understandings about such episodes and provide information about teachers’ management strategies and coping mechanisms. This could lead to more effective management of teachers and schools, thus potentially minimising the number and effect of episodes where teachers experience personal and professional conflict, tension or uncertainty.

4. “Good” teacher-ness

Another issue that arose during the course of analysis in this study concerned what it means to be a “good” teacher. While there are links in this issue with the above-mentioned notions of teacher valuing and support and professionalism, the sense of whether or not a teacher is a “good” teacher also connects with “teacher effectiveness.” It was Suzanne’s comments that, despite teaching since 1959, she did not know whether or not she was a “good” teacher that sparked questions for me. What must it be like to go about your daily work for 40+ years and not have a sense that the work that you are performing is “good”? Did Suzanne understand this from her perspective or was she referring to how she appeared to others? Would she have known if she were not a good teacher or would self-protective mechanisms have prevented her consciously acknowledging this? What, if any, is the difference between being a good teacher, and being a good person and teaching well? In what ways is this good teacher-ness related to teacher effectiveness, teacher competencies and teacher capabilities? There were a number of interrelated topics that surfaced in
this critique of the data. These included issues about teacher “goodness,” teacher “effectiveness,” the relationship between the teacher and the tasks of teaching, and teacher self-esteem.

It would be presumed that this study would be supported by the notion that teacher self-perception is important in determining the degree of commitment that teachers bring to the tasks of teaching. Suggested research questions to underpin a study about these issues might be:

What are the factors that indicate to teachers whether or not they are “good” teachers?
Why is it important for teachers to know whether or not they are “good” at what they do?
What are the implications of these issues for teachers and for the educational system?

While there is a range of methodological options available to a researcher who was interested in these issues, it is suggested that a qualitative study that examines a smaller sample of teachers’ understandings about these issues would be methodologically appropriate. In-depth conversations about teachers’ thoughts, feelings, knowledge, beliefs and values on the issues could also determine the source of their understandings. The implications of the findings in such a study could lead to more seamless relationships between teachers and their students, their colleagues and the educational system. It would also provide information about how teachers position themselves, and thus give a deeper appreciation of not only how teachers see themselves, but how they see themselves in relation to the tasks of their working lives. Once again, the complex relationship between what teachers are and the work that they do would be highlighted. A study of this nature has the potential to shed further light on this multifarious relationship.

It is anticipated that the above four issues and suggestions for further research investigations can provide a basis for others to continue the tasks of examining issues about teachers and the work that they perform from the perspective of teachers and their individual identities.
6.5 Summary of thesis

This thesis has submitted the assertion, based on reviews of the available literature and on the analyses of the data, that the concept of identity is holistic and individual and can be used as a tool to research people: and in this instance, teachers. The use of identity as a tool, through the analyses of data consisting of interviews with eight early childhood teachers on issues of identity and change, has further informed the body of knowledge. This thesis’ contribution to the academic literature about change and teacher identity in contexts of power has evidenced that the relationship between change and identity is complex and that, in contexts of ongoing educational change, teachers’ personal and professional identities need to undergo significant renegotiation or redefinition that leads to professional uncertainty and instability. This puts teachers at risk of eroding the residual goodwill that remains between teachers and the education system. This loss of goodwill diminishes teachers’ commitment to the tasks of teaching. As a result of marked disparities in how the concept of ‘professionalism’ is understood, teachers are placed in a position of conflict and uncertainty that creates the need for self-protective behaviours on their part. These self-protective behaviours diminish and corrode teachers’ commitment to the responsibilities of teaching and have direct implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning. The actions and behaviours of the education system towards teachers appear to be lacking in realistic professional respect and courtesy and are not based on trust. Teachers are aware of the corrosion of their significance to the education system and this in turn shapes how they assign value to themselves and their overall working lives.
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Appendices

The Appendices are contained in the attached CDROM, labelled as ‘Appendices’ and contain the following appendices.

Appendix 1, Ethical approval forms from Dept of Education, Tasmania and University of Tasmania

Appendix 2, Participant information letter and consent form

Appendix 3, Interview schedule pro forma

Appendix 4, Interview transcripts

Appendix 5, Samples of interview summaries