Thesis Title: Post-compulsory Curriculum Reform and Teachers’ Work: A Critical Policy Ethnography in a Western Australian State Secondary School

Fiona Coble-Neal

Bachelor of Arts, Post Graduate Diploma, Master of Arts,

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Education

2008

School of Education

Murdoch University

Perth Western Australia
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

.................................................................

Fiona Coble-Neal
Abstract

This thesis set out to examine how teachers understand, experience and respond to mandated curriculum reforms in English in years 11 and 12 at a Senior High School in Western Australia over the period 2004 – 2005. The time period is significant as it is a halfway point between the commencement of the new policy driving reform of senior secondary education and the partial settlement of the policy and curriculum reform. The research is conceptualised using labour process theory as a means of analysing how teachers are being separated from their intellectual work throughout this curriculum reform process. The methodology chosen to inform this research is a dual approach using critical ethnography of lived individual experiences and critical policy ethnography to analyse the changing landscape of education policy in Australia. This dual approach offers a system level of understanding of mandated curriculum reform with an emphasis on the individual experience of expert teachers implementing the contested curriculum reform.

Several central themes emerged over the course of the research: growing deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work; intensification of workload and curriculum creation; technocratisation of teacher roles; diminishing autonomy, increased accountability and responsibility; and heightened external surveillance and control. Significantly, the data also captured and analysed in this research demonstrates how teachers are continually experiencing the processes of reprofessionalisation as a consequence of sustained critical reflective practice and the imposition of mandated curriculum reform. The data also relates the need for an authentic consultation
between teachers and policy makers/government authorities in order for curriculum reform to be successfully established and taken up in secondary State schools. The processes of reprofessionalisation are a source of continued professional renewal and reinvigoration for the teachers involved.
Table of Contents

Declaration .......................................................................................................................... ii
Abstract ........................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................... x
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  A personal note ........................................................................................................ 1
The Courses of Study-English ....................................................................................... 5
The research question .................................................................................................. 8
Significance of research .............................................................................................. 8
Thesis structure .......................................................................................................... 15
Chapter One- The broader policy contexts ............................................................... 15
Chapter Two- The evolution of the Post-compulsory Review (1998-2002) in
Western Australia – Critical policy analysis ............................................................ 16
Chapter Three- Labour process theory and teachers’ work .................................... 16
Chapter Four- Critical policy ethnography methodology ....................................... 17
Chapter Five- Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work – data analysis ............ 19
Chapter Six- Reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work- a sense of the future ........ 19
Chapter One - The broader policy context ............................................................... 21
  The neo-liberal economic reform agenda .............................................................. 21
  Marketisation of education – the neo-liberal agenda ............................................. 23
  Globalisation .......................................................................................................... 23
  International agencies’ impacts on Australian education .................................... 27
  New managerialism and performance management- social influences .......... 34
  Outputs model of Australian education ................................................................ 40
  Competition in education ...................................................................................... 43
Chapter Two: The evolution of the post-compulsory mandated curriculum reform in Western Australia – Critical policy analysis

Introduction

The Australian policy context

Policy and critical policy analysis

Critical policy analysis

Coordinate federalism: Towards a national agenda in education

MCEETYA – evolution and role

Historical contexts of post-compulsory education in Australia 1960-2005

Historical overview

The 1960s: uncoordinated state- based education

The 1970s: Social change

The 1980s: Technology boom

The 1980s –1990s: Vocationalisation of education

2000-2005: Towards a national curriculum

Western Australian policy responses 1998-2005

Curriculum improvement plan (CIP) One (1998-2000)

Curriculum improvement plan (CIP) Two (2002-2005)

Discussion of the new post-compulsory education system in Western Australia

Impacts of post- compulsory reform in Western Australia

Surveillance and control impacts

Social impacts

Conclusions
| Chapter 3: Labour process theory ................................................................. | 104 |
| Introduction .............................................................................................. | 104 |
| Labour process theory ............................................................................. | 110 |
| Labour power ......................................................................................... | 111 |
| Labour power control ............................................................................. | 116 |
| [i] Regulated market control ................................................................. | 117 |
| [ii] Technical control ............................................................................. | 119 |
| [iii] Bureaucratic control ....................................................................... | 120 |
| [iv] Ideological control ......................................................................... | 125 |
| [v] Disciplinary power .......................................................................... | 127 |
| Individual agency and structure ............................................................ | 131 |
| Understanding teachers’ work ............................................................... | 135 |
| Exposition of whose values and interests are perpetuated by education reform | 136 |
| Universal market .................................................................................... | 137 |
| Deprofessionalisation ........................................................................... | 137 |
| Conclusions ............................................................................................ | 139 |

| Chapter four: Critical Policy Ethnography methodology ......................... | 141 |
| Introduction ............................................................................................ | 141 |
| Critical policy ethnography .................................................................... | 144 |
| Education policy backdrop ..................................................................... | 146 |
| Critical ethnography ............................................................................. | 151 |
| Cultural production .............................................................................. | 153 |
| Context .................................................................................................. | 156 |
| Specific methods .................................................................................. | 159 |
| Research design .................................................................................... | 165 |
Post script

Post-compulsory education as a term for year 11 and 12 education in Western Australian schools was replaced by Senior Secondary education in 2008.
Acknowledgements

This research could not have been possible without the assistance and support of many people. I am very grateful for all of the help I received during the six years this research required to be completed.

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for Professor Barry Down for all of his patience, supportive and valuable advice throughout my candidature. I am also grateful for the input by Dr James Bell as another voice of support. I am very grateful for the assistance of Dr John R Hall in the proof reading of this thesis. Secondly, I am very grateful to Murdoch University for supporting my research by awarding me with a Women’s re-entry Scholarship (2003-2006), without this financial support the research would never have been possible.

Thirdly, I owe a debt of thanks to my parents, Frank and Rita Horgan for their unswerving belief in my efforts and for many hours of happy babysitting, I will never forget your love and support. I would also like to thank my sister Marguerita Wilson, Ron Wilson and sister in law, Linda Wilson for their encouragement to ‘get it done’. I also wish to thank my dear friend Michelle Burford for her endless positive thoughts and support of my research over the last six years.

Lastly, I want to thank my husband, Dr Grant Coble-Neal for being the bedrock of belief in my ability to get this research completed and for his many hours of caring for our two children. To Tara and Ryan, I am eternally grateful to your wisdom beyond your years to let me complete this research even during school holidays. I owe you both a great holiday!
List of Abbreviations

1A/1B/1C/1D Stage One units to replace Senior English in years 11 and 12
2A/2B Stage Two units to replace year 11 TEE English
3A/3B Stage Three units to replace year 12 TEE English
ACACA Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authority
AEC Australian Education Council
ANTA Australian National Training Authority
CAF Common assessment framework subjects
CC Curriculum Council of Western Australia
CF Curriculum Framework
CIP ONE Curriculum Improvement Programme One
CIP TWO Curriculum Improvement Programme Two
COAG Council of Australian Governments
CoS Courses of Study
DO District Office
FPP Funder-Purchaser-Provider model
Glasheen SHS The case study Senior High School
HCM Human Capital Model
HOLA Head of Learning Area
IMF International Monetary Fund
MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
MSE Monitoring Standards in Education tests
NAPLAN National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCM</td>
<td>Public Choice Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLATO</td>
<td>People Lobbying Against Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS</td>
<td>Student Outcome Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states</td>
<td>states and territories of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEE</td>
<td>Tertiary Entrance Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WADET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training of Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALNA</td>
<td>Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSA</td>
<td>Wholly School Assessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where indicated in the thesis, the above abbreviations will be used.
Introduction

*A personal note*

I experienced continuous education reforms as a secondary teacher in the late 1980s and 1990s in Western Australian government metropolitan and regional schools, a senior campus in Perth, and a New South Wales high school. During this time, I noticed various teacher attitudes towards curriculum reform, ranging from apathy, to partial acceptance, to outright rejection. Although at first I was willing to accept reform as part of my everyday work duties, and to work with reform, I found that my attitudes changed as I gained more experience as a teacher. My professional experience of curriculum change affected my workload, and left me disillusioned because my unpaid work in designing curriculum was repackaged by central office and disseminated as the work of others with no recognition of my intellectual effort. I have drawn on these experiences in my teaching in analysing the policy impact of curriculum reform on the work of other teachers in this thesis. My experiences with mandated curriculum reform in Western Australia include the following: Unit Curriculum (1989-93), Competency Based Training (1993-1996), the Stepping Out Literacy Program (1993-1996), Curriculum Frameworks and Student Outcomes Statements (1993-1995, 1998-2001), Progress Maps and levelling of student achievement (2001-2005) and New Courses of Study English year 11.

In addition to my professional work I completed a Masters Degree thesis in 1995, which examined the impact of the National Training Reform Agenda on Western Australian secondary schools. I utilised a hybrid historical policy narrative research approach in this thesis: this approach was based on an analysis of education
policy as an historical experience to enable a comprehensive review of policy and its impacts on schools in Western Australia (1965-1995). As a result of this research, I realised that the examination of policy after the event only provided a one-dimensional perspective on the development of education policy and its associated impact on schools and teachers. In the subsequent period of 1995-2003, prior to my doctoral research, I worked as an English Teacher in two senior high schools and a senior campus in Perth. I reflected on and questioned the methodology I had used in my Master’s thesis. I wanted to understand more about how education policy affected the work of teachers. During this time I also did sessional teaching and supervising in the Faculty of Education at both the University of Canberra and Murdoch University.

This work experience, combined with my own reflections on my Master’s thesis, led me to question how I could examine the impact of curriculum reform in ‘real time’ on teachers in schools within an overall educational policy context of global and national reform of education. Eventually, I realised that I could use a critical ethnography methodology to capture the lived experiences of teachers as they dealt with mandated curriculum reforms of their work. In addition, I wanted to integrate my analysis of how educational policy affects the work of teachers with an analysis of whose interests are promoted and protected by education policy reform. The major benefit of using critical policy ethnography in this thesis is that it enables me to capture individual experiences as they occur and to analyse how education policy is impacting on teachers’ work.

According to Prunty (1985), critical policy analysis is useful in examining education policy because:
… education policy analysis must attend simultaneously to the workings of the school and the workings of society… [and] conducted within a moral and ethical stance…[by] the very role of transmitting values, and selecting people for or excluding them from social and occupational positions, is far from a neutral and objective activity…[that] the notion that curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation are impartial must be dispelled…[and] it must be realized that values, interests, and power permeate these dimensions of schooling…[and] as a result, select groups and social classes benefit or suffer… (p.135)

This comment indicates the extent of control exerted by policy as mandatory reform in education. Moreover, Prunty (1985) explains how policy “… must be recognized that much of the power and control exerted by the school administration over classroom practice issues from, and is legitimated by, educational policy ….” (p.135). Prunty (1985) criticizes current education policy as lacking social justice and equity dimensions and a lack of educational criteria.

The issues that concerned me in 1995 have come into sharper focus as I have endeavoured to understand the evolving nature of teachers’ work under reform in Western Australia. The current climate of education reform reflects the globalisation of education policy decisions through the agendas of neo-liberal organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the increased national presence of the Federal government’s agenda to coordinate education in Australia; and the role of outcomes based education in Western Australian high schools. The result of these multi-dimensional pressures on teachers is the intensification and technocratisation of teachers’ work, putting it under increasing surveillance, and workloads and expectations of accountability and responsibility of teachers.

There has also been a significant change in teacher roles in schools from teaching practices which supported a general liberal education philosophy for students
to an increasingly commodified, vocational and outcomes based focus on teaching and learning. Awareness of these developments, led me to explore the changing role of teachers and schools as they endeavour to meet the demands of post-compulsory education (renamed Senior Secondary education under legislation 2007) and the workforce, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) and universities. These concerns are placing more pressures and strains on schools with already crowded curricula to the point where teachers and students have to engage with more curricula in less time.

As a former senior staff member involved with the initiation and implementation of numerous whole-school reforms, I am keen to examine in this thesis the experiences of my colleagues’ understanding, experiences and responses to mandated curriculum reform in schools. Hence my interest in pursuing the stories of teachers working with the processes of mandated curriculum reform in post-compulsory education in Western Australia.

Through the personal experiences of teachers involved in this research, I now realise that how individuals understand, experience and respond to mandated curriculum reform is an integral part of the reform process. The identification with, or orientation to, curriculum reform by colleagues is typically influenced by their previous experiences. Each individual teacher has his/her own unique way of understanding and making sense of their part in mandated curriculum reform.

I am particularly interested in examining how the new Western Australian post-compulsory English learning area reforms impact on teachers and their work in schools. The reasoning for the reforms of English has not been clearly articulated by the Curriculum Council (CC) to teachers or the public. This was evident in 2006 by
the high profile public debate, and growing concerns of insecurity experienced by both teachers and the wider community about the changes to years 11 and 12 English. As a teacher and a parent, I have experienced insecurity and misgivings about the changes in the way English is taught in high schools and the impact of these changes on teachers’ work. I became a participant observer of this curriculum reform as a student teacher supervisor at the case study school, Glasheen Senior High School. It appears to me that teachers’ work and professional judgements have been significantly undermined by education policy makers, who have attempted to completely overhaul every aspect of teaching and learning English in years 11 and 12.

This mandated curriculum reform of English infer that any lack of success by students completing year 12 English TEE (Tertiary Entrance Examinations) can be attributed to their teachers. It is interesting to note that some universities are not accepting the outcomes levels of the Courses of Study (CoS) for university entry and are only using the current English score (a mark out of 100). This is one example of the doubts and misgivings of different educational sectors in the community, as they do not appear to be convinced of the need for benefits of having a complete reform of English from a criterion referenced system of assessment to outcomes based system.

The Courses of Study-English

The CoS commenced in 2006-07, with all year 11 students having to undertake the new courses in English. The new outcomes-based system is the result of the Post-compulsory Review (Curriculum Council, 2002) (hereafter to be referred to as the PCR (2002) of Western Australian education). The PCR process took three years to establish the position that there was a need to overhaul the current post-compulsory
system. Underpinning this agenda for school and curriculum reform were national imperatives’ as outlined in the ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ policy statement (Curriculum Council, 2002). The purpose of this policy ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ was to reinforce the recommendations made by the PCR (2002). The national imperatives mandated in this policy were decided by the national Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and demonstrated the first articulation of coordinated State and Federal Government policy making in secondary education. The review was based on imperatives relating to Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) in the Twenty-first Century (April, 1999, MCEETYA). This included: national imperatives for improving access to post-compulsory education and training requirements to increase the skills of young people entering the workforce; a consensus on the school leaving age; and the National Agreement on Post-Compulsory School Qualifications Certification to provide a consistent framework for secondary education in Australia (Curriculum Council, 2002).

The impetus for these reforms was the Federal Government’s broader agenda of microeconomic reform during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This agenda has at its centre a political and economic ideology promoting Australia’s global position and membership in the OECD. The requirements of OECD membership include domestic education and training reform and increasing international competitiveness within a developing global market. As a result of this reform agenda imported from the Federal level, all subjects in years 11 and 12 have been reviewed and reconstructed to reflect the national agenda imperatives of competition, efficiency and work readiness. It is important to note that in Western Australia students are now required (as of 2007) to
remain in secondary school until the end of the year they turn 17 years of age rather than having the option of leaving secondary school at 15 years of age.

The first reformed course of study to be implemented under the new system of post-compulsory education in Western Australia was English. As one of the CoS English remains the only required course for all year 11 and 12 students. As the CoS are designed to dovetail with the Student Outcome-based years 8-10 curriculum, there was a total reform of how year 11 and 12 English was taught, assessed, reported and moderated both within the school and externally. The implications arising from the form of external examinations for university entrance at the end of year 12 may be an important factor in how these reforms are received by students and teachers. Within the context of mandated curriculum reform, this thesis investigates the effect of these reforms on teachers’ work.

The former English curriculum for year 11 and 12 was underpinned by a structured genre-based syllabus with a criterion-referenced assessment system. Assessment centred on a grade-related criterion reference for all students across a set number of common assessment tasks in years 11 and 12 English. The former system marked students with a letter grade (A-D) and also provided a percentage overall score in English. The new system, based on outcomes results, required significant reforms to the assessment, reporting and moderation of students’ progress in years 11 and 12. As a consequence, the new post-compulsory system has had a significant effect on every teacher in secondary schools in Western Australia since 2007. The central focus of this research is to examine how teachers’ work is changing and what impact this is having on individual teachers.
The research question

The central research question to be examined in this thesis is:

How do teachers understand, experience and respond to mandated curriculum reforms in English?

Specifically, the research will investigate the following sub-questions:

- How do mandated curriculum reforms impact on teachers’ work?
- How do teachers respond to these reforms?
- Whose interests are reflected in these policy reforms? Why?
- What role do teachers play in curriculum reform in their schools?
- How do teachers make sense of these reforms?

This thesis will argue that it is essential to examine education policy and teachers’ work in schools as a series of complex interrelationships. In other words, mandated curriculum reforms can only be properly understood in the context of historical, political, economic and social changes over time. This entails explaining how the forces of globalisation, marketisation of education and the neo-liberal economic reforms are impacting on the work of teachers (Smyth, 2001a; Hill, 2003).

Significance of research

The significance of this research is threefold. First, it provides a space for teachers to speak about their own experiences with curriculum reform in a senior high school in Western Australia (Hargreaves, 2002; Smyth, 2001a; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). This is the first opportunity for teachers’ stories to be heard in a public way within the current introduction and implementation of the Post-Compulsory Review
(PCR) (1998-2007) in Western Australia. My research seeks to adopt an emancipatory approach where teachers are empowered to discuss the impact of mandated curriculum reform without fear of surveillance or reporting back to others in the educational system. The importance of such an approach has been explained in curriculum reform and labour process theory literature (Fullan, 1999; Luke, Lingard, Green and Comber, 1997). The research undertaken here illustrates how teachers actively engage with policy reform in every aspect of their work utilising their past experiences and professional experiences as a reference point (Sloan, 2006).

My research approach is a counter to the ‘systemsworld’ school effectiveness movement and associated New Public Management and Funder-Purchaser-Provider Models of school reform (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998; Meek, 2001). These movements and models typically view systemsworld organisational change as a segmented set of processes underpinned by an outputs-based market-driven approach rather than a complex set of interrelationships of values and lived human experiences (Comber, Green, Lingard and Luke, 1998; Gale and Densmore, 2003; Marginson, 1997; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Seddon and Caroll, 1989).

Unlike managerialist discourses, where teachers’ dissident voices are often absent from public debate, or are construed as disruptive acts (Popkewitz, 1996), a key aim of this thesis is to facilitate a research process that enables teachers to have a public voice in the reform process. Hopefully, this will liberate their communication of concerns about mandated curriculum reform of teaching English in years 11 and 12 in relation to their work and students’ achievements. According to Mosse (2004), “…what ethnography can offer the policy process is an element of critical reflection, a means to understand individual cases…” (p.667). That is, the research approach used
in this thesis aims to elicit experiences from individual teachers whose voices and experiences are not part of the official policy reform process, and to offer a critical place for reflection on education policy in schools. In addition, the research supports the teachers’ position as agents of change in a complex and often contradictory educational environment.

Second, the use of critical policy ethnography as a methodological approach allows for a rigorous and detailed critique of mandated curriculum reform in schools and its impact on teachers’ work and lives (Connell, 1985; Ozga, 1988; Prunty, 1985; Smyth 2001a). Using a critical policy ethnography approach has enabled my research to get up close to teachers as they experience reform in the moment, rather than engage in discussions with them after the event (Banfield, 2005). As well, teachers have found it helpful to discuss their experiences in a confidential and safe way through the reflective nature of my participation with them in this research over a two-year period (Hakken, 2000). Teachers have had the space to share their experiences with me, and comment on transcripts for their own use as part of the feedback to the CC trial of the CoS in English.

Finally, my research seeks to examine the interests behind the introduction of the PCR (Curriculum Council, 2002) reforms in 1998-2007 in Western Australia and the impact of these reforms on teachers’ work. Policy is not a neutral concept; rather it is a living thing that represents a contested and shifting set of decisions based on complex prevailing political, economic, historical and social conditions. Education policy is influenced by internal and external factors that are multi-faceted and affected by the above conditions in society. Moreover, my research seeks to understand how these reforms are manifested as an extension of the national curriculum, which is
itself a means of representing a ‘national common culture,’ and how this will impact on schools and the wider community (Apple, 1993). Therefore, policy is the essential backdrop for this research and will be critically analysed in relation to the impact on the work of teachers in one Western Australian state secondary school. An understanding of how policy is decided and implemented is crucial to developing an in-depth understanding of the forces affecting teachers’ work in the political and economic climate in Australia- the neo-liberal economic agenda.

According to Thompson (2002), neo-liberalism is an agenda that has been applied to education policy to control public school education:

… the (neo) Liberal response to (what it describes as) globalisation entails a commitment to privatised services rather than public, a shift in funding to the consumer, improvement in the performance of the public sector by means of competition with private organisations, and the retention of public services (in this case schools) only for those who cannot afford other options. (p.127)

This thesis argues that the neo-liberalism agenda is the main driving force to make mandated curriculum reforms a market reality in schools.

This neo-liberal economic reform agenda is based on a reduction of input costs and an increase in the outputs of production. This economic model which is framed in a political agenda has permeated all aspects of public service provision in Australia. In the period 1989- present (Pusey, 1991; Yeatman, 1990). Its political and economic rationalism agenda has gained momentum since 1996 with the then Federal government’s approach to the funding and control of State-based education.

There are internal and external influences on education that are being intensified by the current political and economic rationalism being applied to schools, students’ learning and teachers’ work. This shift in political and economic views and
values towards education is indicative of an ideological shift towards a more globally competitive, market-oriented provision of education as a production process.

The political and economic backdrop of policy is influenced by what Mosse (2004) describes as ‘system goals’ to ensure the central goals of the organisation are enforced, adhered to and met (p.653). According to Mosse (2004), system goals are perpetuated through the development of policy in organisations in order to control the agents of the organisation. In relation to policy, Mosse (2004) sees this reinforcement of system goals as being “translated” by the agents (in this case English teachers), as they work and interpret the policy over time and between themselves (p.653). It is here that the tensions arise between the goals of the system and the work of teachers because reform is given a higher importance than effective schoolwork in schools.

The concept of system goals (Mosse, 2004) can be understood in this research as the main outcome required by the work of teachers to implement the CoS in English. The system goals of creating a completely outcomes-based education system in Western Australia from kindergarten to year 12 are central to the implementation of the new system. According to Sloan (2006), the drive to entirely remove the current system is indicative of “The systemsworld of school [which] comprises instrumentalities usually experienced in schools as administrative or management systems.” (p.120). It is this systemsworld dynamic that perpetuates how system goals are reinforced and dictates to teachers how they should work in schools and how they should act as part of a process of system-wide reform. The systemsworld goals are directed at outputs not inputs, or even dialectic of both, into systems. In the case of education, this has been reflected in a global shift to outputs-based education, which involves the minimisation of inputs (Sloan, 2006). In addition,
Sloan (2006) describes how “The lifeworld of school, on the other hand, involves “…culture, meaning and significance …” (p.121). Lifeworld of individuals is where the research in this thesis posits a perspective of examining how individual teachers experience and understand their own place as part of the educational reform process. The work of teachers can be understood in terms of agency and what their roles are in the new education system. It is the intersection of system goals policy of education reform and teachers’ lifeworld of experiences, agency and meanings of their work which shall be examined in particular in one case study school in Western Australia. I will call the school Glasheen SHS.

The research undertaken here comes from a critical ethnographic perspective of an ‘agency orientation’ (Sloan, 2006). Sloan states that ‘agency orientation’ is:

…curricular and pedagogical practices related to the creation of socially productive and inclusive classrooms. Unlike the research generated from an administrative, systemsworld orientation, lifeworld-orientated researchers typically focus on lived experiences of children and teachers, and most often work in promotion of cognitively complex and culturally informed curricular and pedagogical practices. (p.121)

My research adopts Sloan’s approach and is deliberately positioned to discover the lifeworld experiences of eight teachers as they experience and make meaning of their changing work culture as a direct result of system goals.

The most significant effect in Australia of this systemsworld orientation upon teachers has been the vocationalisation of education in high schools. The push towards a hyper-competitive job market, where young people are pressured to be job ready and skilled at the end of secondary school for work, has increased stresses on both students and teachers. The fallout from this pressure includes the intensification of teachers’ work by the expectation that schools are part of a training system to meet
employers’ needs for productive and compliant workers. The interests and values espoused through the vocationalisation of education in schools is in line with market-driven reforms by meeting output targets than focussing on providing a general education for all students to develop their own interests, abilities and skills. Therefore, the backdrop and overriding influence of the global arena of policy formulation and control over states’ rights as decision makers and providers of general education requires thorough discussion in this thesis. This thesis is situated within research into how teachers’ work is changing as a reaction to mandated curriculum reforms within a broader context of globalisation, marketisation and neo-liberalism.

I examine these broader contexts within a critical policy ethnography methodological framework (Lawn and Ozga, 1981; Ozga, 1988; Smyth, 2001a). The theoretical basis for this research is labour process theory (Braverman, 1974, Kesson, 2002, Rikowski, 2002, Smyth, 2001a). Labour process theory allows an analysis of the historical, political, economic and social changes that have been driving curriculum reform since the early 1990s in Australia and corresponding consequences for teachers’ work.

In order to examine how mandated curriculum reform is implemented in schools, I was a participant observer in a secondary school in Western Australia on a fortnightly basis from February 2004 to December 2005. Throughout this time I met with a focus group of four teachers and with the other four teachers individually (these were all of the English teachers involved with the trial of CoS English year 11 courses), and two administrators involved with trialling the CoS in English to observe and to listen to their stories. The meetings totalled approximately 40 visits to the
school. The research has provided a means of examining teachers’ work in-depth and up-close over an extended period of time.

**Thesis structure**

*Chapter One- The broader policy contexts*

In Chapter One I map the broader contexts of educational reform in terms of political, economic and social change occurring globally, nationally and locally. To do this, I use policy genealogy (Gale, 2001) as a method to trace the genesis of current education reforms. The basis for the education reforms encompasses four themes:

First, globalisation has had an impact on education policy making in Australia since the 1990s. Of particular interest is the way education policies of international agencies such as the OECD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been imported and adopted in Australian education. I believe the driving force behind all of these international organisations has been the rise of neo-liberalism and marketisation of education on a global and national scale (Apple, 1993; Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Prunty, 1985). Second, the discourse of new managerialism has had a focus on performance management of education and the neo-liberal economic reform agenda of successive Australian governments since the 1980s. Here the emphasis is on how marketisation of education is steering policy on curriculum reform in post-compulsory education. Finally, the encroachment of national curriculum policy agenda in Australia is a driving force for change and control of teachers’ work in Australian schools. A major argument was that the Howard government’s policy was framed around market concepts of management and control, using surveillance as a means of increasing accountability in schools and its influence on teachers’ work.
Chapter Two-The evolution of the Post-compulsory Review (1998-2002) in Western Australia – Critical policy analysis

This chapter examines the Post-Compulsory Review (PCR) (1998-2002) in Western Australia using a critical policy analysis approach (Ball, 1994) and a policy historiography of educational reform (Gale, 2001). The Chapter is organised around four topics. First, I examine the history and nature of education policy and how post-compulsory educational reform occurring in Australia has impacted on schools, with particular reference to critical policy analysis of post-compulsory education. Second, I consider the changing Federal and State relations within the context of coordinate federalism and what it means for control over education policy. Third, I conduct an analysis of education (1960s- 2005) to examine whose values, interests and needs are served by the national agenda for the standardisation of education across Australia. Finally, I examine how the implementation of the mandated curriculum reform in post-compulsory education, specifically the PCR (1998-2002) is a blueprint for vocationalisation of education impacting on teachers and school communities in Western Australia and other States. The origins of the PCR (1998-2005) as part of the Curriculum Improvement Plan (CIP) phase One and Two (Western Australia) were a reaction to the push by the Federal government. The PCR (2002) is a policy being implemented and directed by the Curriculum Council of Western Australia. It is the first major curriculum reform in post-compulsory education in 20 years in Western Australia.

Chapter Three- Labour process theory and teachers’ work

This chapter focuses on how teachers’ work is changing in relation to post-compulsory education reforms in Western Australia. In this chapter, I draw upon
labour process theory to explain teachers’ work as labour in the production of capital (Braverman, 1974; Conti and Warner, 1993; Kesson, 2002, Rikowski, 2002; Smyth, 2001a). That is, in this chapter I examine teachers’ work through the lens of labour process theory in three main ways. First, I explain what labour process theory is and how it can inform the role and value of individual workers as part of the production process. Second, I reflect on how labour process theory can help us to develop understandings and meanings of teachers’ work today in relation to curriculum reform and neo-liberalism. Third, I expose whose interests are being perpetuated by the ongoing changes in teachers’ work in secondary schools in Western Australia. In the process, I investigate the intensification, commodification and deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as a result of mandated curriculum reforms occurring in Western Australian secondary schools.

Chapter Four- Critical policy ethnography methodology

My methodology in the research is based within an ethnographic tradition of gathering data from lived experiences in the field (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000; Preissle Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Van Maanen, 1988). First, I discuss the nature of critical policy ethnography and how it is used to develop understandings of curriculum reform and teachers’ work in Western Australian secondary schools (Ozga, 1988; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry, 1997).

Second, I outline the specific methods of data collection used to gather teachers’ stories and narratives and how a dual methodology can be used to incorporate an analysis of policy, a document analysis and a critical policy analysis of curriculum reform occurring in Glasheen SHS. I also discuss how this combination of
research methods provides data to illustrate the impacts on teachers’ work by curriculum reform in English. My data collection methods include recording meetings with individual teachers and focus groups to access teachers’ voices of their experiences with curriculum reform at several key stages of the trial of the CoS in English. A major technique of my research has been the gathering of teachers’ stories, voices and confessional tales over two years (Atkinson and Hamersley, 1994; Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Van Maanen, 1988). In capturing the teachers’ experiences with the curriculum reform, I have ensured that what they tell me is transcribed verbatim to produce an accurate account of the meetings. In addition, I have completed a site profile of Glasheen SHS, a document analysis of the PCR (2002), and an analysis of the media debate surrounding the CoS. Third, I consider how ethical considerations are paramount in ensuring a reciprocal arrangement with teachers. Teachers were free to discuss with me any aspect of their work relating to the transcribed materials as they were returned to individuals for their approval and editing (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Preissle Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Stake, 2000). Confidentiality of all information collected has been maintained in building a trusting collegial relationship with the participants. I have focussed on working with a group of teachers over two years of regular visits to their work place and gathered data in an ethical and reciprocal way as part of this qualitative research using a case study approach (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Bates, 1980; Prunty, 1985; Smyth, 2001a; Van Maanen, 1988).

Finally, I examine the significance of my own multiply positioned role (Weis & Fine, 2004) as teacher/researcher/parent outside of the case study school in considering my own reflexivity underpinning the ethical considerations of the critical
ethnography embedded in my research. I attempted to maintain reflexivity between teachers and myself on the experiences gained throughout this research process and how we have experienced the reforms of post-compulsory education in Glasheen SHS over the two-year trial (Banfield, 2005; Denzin, 1989; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Chapter Five- Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work –data analysis

This chapter examines the central emergent themes from teachers’ stories. It describes how teachers are being deprofessionalised as a consequence of educational reforms. Specifically, this is happening through: a process of intensification of work; surveillance and control by external authorities; technocratisation of their work; and increased accountability and responsibility as a result of CoS in English. In addition, I analyse changes such as collegial relationships over time and uncover reasons for resistance to the new mandated curriculum. The manner in which teachers understand and respond to their experiences with mandated curriculum reform and the production and reproduction of official knowledge is a particularly important insight in this thesis (Apple, 1993). My analysis of themes in this thesis aims to discover what change processes teachers have undergone when implementing and experiencing mandated curriculum reform.

Chapter Six- Reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work- a sense of the future

In this chapter, I engage with the main aim and corresponding research questions of the thesis as identified in the introduction to examine the findings resulting from the data. To do this, I examine the reprofessionalisation process experienced by teachers working with the CoS in English at Glasheen SHS. First, there is a
reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work at Glasheen SHS, occurring through their willingness and dedication to adapt and ensure the best possible outcomes for their students’ learning experiences in year 11 and 12. Second, the positive aspects of the reprofessionalisation of teachers who were involved and how this enhanced professional critical reflexivity of their work over the 2004-2005 period. Critical reflexivity relates to how teachers examine and understand their changing work situation and roles within the changes (Down, Chadbourne and Hogan, 2000; Mac an Ghaill, 1992). Third, I discuss how teachers have demonstrated resistance and reclaimed collegial space, with a greater ‘willingness to move with the times’ and update their skills and identify and act as teaching professionals in new ways in the creation of their own enunciative spaces (Smyth, 2001b). Finally, I assess the role of expert explicit teaching of English as a response to curriculum reform.
Chapter One - The broader policy context

In this chapter I construct the ‘broader policy context’ as the first stage of analysing how teachers’ work is being influenced by mandated curriculum reform. Chapter One maps the political, economic and social changes occurring globally, nationally and locally and how these effect education. The analysis encompasses four topics:

- the neo-liberal economic reform agenda of successive Australian governments since the 1980s and the marketisation of education
- globalisation, its influences and impacts on education policy making in Australia from the 1990s to 2005
- new managerialism and performance management of education
- the national curriculum policy agenda in secondary schools, with the resulting push towards a standardised national curriculum and testing as the forerunner of the post-compulsory reforms implemented in Western Australia in 2005-2008

The neo-liberal economic reform agenda

Arguably, the policy context in Australia has been heavily influenced by globalising agendas, specifically policy borrowing of international education policy to Australian education (Halpin & Troyna, 1995); the rise of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism to steer education to achieve economic imperatives of efficiency and competition (Apple, 2001); and the vocationalisation of education through marketisation to produce workers as an output of secondary education (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). These agendas are in turn driving current mandated curriculum reforms in Australian schools. Apple (2001) describes neo-liberalism as:
…initiatives [that] are characterized as free market policies that encounter private enterprise and consumer choice, reward personal responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative, and undermine the dead hand of the incompetent, bureaucratic and parasitic government, that can never do good even if well intended, which it rarely is. (p.17)

Apple (2001) asserts that this is the way governments think and act within the neo-liberal agenda of policy-making is a direct benefit to right-wing pressure and power groups in society. Thus, neo-liberalism has a groundswell of support from groups who think that the free market, through the economic rationalism of public services such as education, is better suited than the past welfare-focussed attempts at social equality in education (Apple, 2001; Yeatman, 1993).

The driving force of economic rationalism couches mandated curriculum reforms in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and quality outcomes for schools and teachers. Welch (1996) explains economic rationalism or rationality to be:

… the domination of social policy by the language and logic of economics…. it is modern ‘positivist economics’, which perceives itself as a science, and rejects value judgements about social goals. (p.4)

An additional perspective is given by Welch (1996), citing Yeatman (1993):

… the shift towards economics and efficiency, however, has broader implications, reflective of changes in the definition of the state. Yeatman has characterised this shift as the replacement of the welfare state by ‘the competition state.’ (Yeatman 1993, p.3 cited in Welch, 1996, p.4)

The commentators here all point to the common elements of neo-liberalism as a political reform agenda to activate an economic rationalist control and management of public sector services across Australia. Both the political and economic aspects of this reform agenda are linked to marketisation as a vehicle for reform implementation and monitoring.
Marketisation of education – the neo-liberal agenda

I believe the purpose of marketisation of education has been to facilitate increased Federal government involvement in state based education provisions (Reid, 1999). The effects of the marketisation of education, as part of the neo-liberal economic agenda, have been ideological changes and shifts in how education is viewed and valued in society. The neo-liberal economic agenda is an ideological shift away from the welfare state of the post-World War Two, era with the loss of emphasis on social justice, equity and equality in education and the replacement of these ideals with the market-driven, performance based-outputs-model of education (Ball, 1994). The shift has permeated all aspects of education including management, funding, and assessment.

Marketisation of education has had three significant effects on how education is viewed and valued in Australia. First, there is an increasing globalisation of education policy decisions being predicated on overseas experiences driven by international agencies, as discussed in the next section on globalisation. Second, is an increasing social impact on young people as a result of the education they receive in secondary schools in Australia as part of the outputs education model. Third, is the development of a national curriculum policy agenda by the Federal Government to embed economic rationalism into education in order to quantify students’ achievements to suit the needs of the Australian economy. I now examine each of these in turn.

Globalisation

According to Ball (1998) globalisation can be framed in the following manner:
… individual governments, even the apparently most powerful, have experienced a reduction in their ability to control or supervise the activities of multinational corporations (MNCs) and maintain the integrity of their economic borders. (p.120)

However, Ball (1998) stresses that globalisation cannot be held up as the only reason for the reduction in individual government funding of education. Ball (1998) explains the connection between “… the core-periphery structure of the global economy in which global and national labour markets appear to be closely paralleled in the emerging ‘star/sink’ school polarisations within ‘market-reformed’ education systems.” (p.120). Thus Ball (1998) directly links what is occurring in Australian education to the concurrent changes taking place as a result of economic changes globally.

An important aspect of globalisation is the ways in which the policies of international agencies, such as the OECD, UNESCO, the World Bank and the IMF, have influenced Australian education. The driving force behind many of these international organisations’ policy reforms has been neo-liberalism and its slogan of marketisation of education.

Marketisation of education is steering curriculum reform in post-compulsory education. In identifying managerialism and performance management as tools to control and change teachers’ work, I argue that the Howard Government’s policy agenda was framed around market concepts of management and control using surveillance as a means of increasing accountability in schools and its influence on teachers’ work.
Hallak (2000) explains how globalisation has different dimensions and impacts on individual nations. According to Hallak (2000), the three characteristic dimensions of globalisation are:

…the economic and financial dimension… [of] globalisation is above all an economic phenomenon that is spreading worldwide…. [and] it is spreading geographically…[affecting] …all factors of production are being exchanged: technology, the norms and means of production, labour and, especially since deregulation, of finance. (p.22)

The effects of this economic change, as a consequence of globalisation, are far reaching. They have permeated every aspect of life in Australia, especially the provision and direction of education. Hallak (2000) further explains the interconnectedness of globalisation in terms of how:

…the rapid expansion of scientific and technological innovation in the fields of communication, biotechnology and microelectronics stimulates the forces of globalisation. Technological innovation facilitates exchanges, speeding up production and allowing the sharing of ideas, goods and services worldwide. (p.23)

To this end, Hallak has traced the interrelatedness of globalisation in all facets of society regardless of international borders or cultural differences. The various dimensions of globalisation are elaborated by Hallak (2000):

…the main characteristic of globalisation is the interdependence of its different dimensions. Technological innovation has facilitated the increase in capital flow…it has weakened economic regions, affecting large numbers of countries. The increase in economic flows concerning all the factors of production has led to a growing interdependence of companies. This is tending to lead to a globalised world, a global society that must continuously produce new forms of social organisation, and assure the production of new knowledge and expertise. (p.23)

The consequences of these massive global changes to the economy, political atmosphere and public services, such as education, are immense. Globalisation exerts influence and pressure on individual countries to conform to international trends and to facilitate economic, political and social reforms. The relationships between power
and control inherent in globalisation and how it regulates society is well explained by Reynolds and Webber (2004):

…We have moved through what Foucault described as disciplinary societies in which people passed through various disciplinary institutions such as schools and factories that regulated habits, customs, and discourses to what Deleuze (1995) elaborated as control societies. These control societies operate with power in a more complex and pervasive manner (Reynolds and Webber, 2004, p.ix). It is the invisible interconnectedness of globalisation that permeates all facets of society regardless of borders and controls the reforms of social structures like education (p.1).

Edwards and Usher (2000) take a similar position when they explain how:

…globalisation is effected through exercises of power and has powerful effects….we want to argue that the increased emphasis given to location is more aptly situated in contemporary globalising trends where forms of location- of positioning and of being positioned- also and inevitably forms of dislocation- of disidentifying…(p.8).

The significance of space and location within a globalised world is crucial to the penetration of educational reforms being driven at the global level. According to Usher and Edwards (2000):

The space of (dis) location is not closed, bounded or secure, but rather constitutes what Brah (1996:242) terms ‘diaspora space’- a space that ‘marks the intersectionality of contemporary conditions of transmigrancy of people, capital, commodities and culture. (p.8)

In this thesis I regard globalisation in terms of educational reform as a continually changing space where teachers and students are experiencing what Brah (1996) calls the ‘intersectionality of contemporary conditions’ as ongoing consequences of globalisation.

According to Daun (2002), globalisation within an educational reform process can be characterised as ‘The World Model for Education’ (Daun, 2002):

Education good for all...[including ] a national curriculum…and adapted to local conditions. Education for global competitiveness...[designed] for equality, empowerment, democracy, human rights...citizenship...[and] financing...[of] Basic subsidies from the central state but major share from the local and medium levels. Private financing of education. Organization… [of a] National

Daun (2002) encapsulates the basis for the mandated curriculum reforms occurring in Western Australian schools labelled as CoS in English. This also ties teachers’ work into a market oriented efficiency driven occupation required to deliver the outputs of education- young people ready to work. The policy underpinning the ’World model of education’ espoused by Daun (2002) is derived from international agencies’ decisions on education.

*International agencies’ impacts on Australian education*

The policy making surrounding education globally is characterised by Edwards and Usher’s (2000) idea of ‘policy migration’. Policy is generated by organisations such as the OECD and is then reinvented in other locations like Australia (Ball, 1998; Levin, 1998; Usher & Edwards, 2000). The central tenet of globalisation is intricately woven into the operations of organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, the OECD and UNESCO. Another tenet is the development and funding of activities that are beneficial to the doctrine embedded within these organisations (Hill 2003; Gabbard 2003; Leher 2004).

There is a connection between how the World Bank operates in conjunction with the IMF and the adoption of similar policies in relation to education in many countries. Hill (2003) believes the inequalities which the IMF and World Bank were designed to improve have been exacerbated by the very operation of these organisations. According to Hill (2003), “On an international level, World Bank and
IMF dictates have resulted in the actual disappearance of formerly free nationally funded health and education services” (p.4) This brings into focus the influence of globalisation from an international agencies perspective that provides an interconnected network of economic and political ideology and its impacts on individual nation states like Australia.

The market-driven global response to education has its downside for some countries and their education systems. Leher (2004) suggests “The surprising fact is that the same agenda and influence of the IMF and the World Bank is maintained even by governments elected with the promise of bringing profound changes to neo-liberal policies” (p.1). The consequences of the World Bank, IMF, UNESCO and the OECD enshrining the neo-liberal economic agenda towards education is that countries like Australia are adopting a carbon copy of these policies and mandating them in local education systems. In Chapter Two, I argue that there is a mismatch between Australian contexts and policies designed for other countries with larger populations and different social and educational issues.

The principal objective of UNESCO in education policy reform is to “…assist member States in their efforts to prepare learners in both formal and non-formal settings for higher education, the world of work, and perhaps most importantly, for responsible citizenship in a changing world” (p.1). The role of UNESCO is influential on governments like Australia as they search to comply with international policy reforms.

Evidence of how the education policy is being replicated and mandated in Australian post-compulsory education can be found in the UNESCO Newsletter
Education Today (2003) where the same wording is used to describe how educational reform can be undertaken by its member nations. An example of UNESCO’s role in policy change and reform of education is reflected in the following statement:

UNESCO is drawing countries’ attention to the need to completely rethink the role of secondary education. It is advocating reform that will make lifelong learning a reality so that both young people and adults are better prepared for life in today’s world. UNESCO also argues for more flexibility and interaction between general education and vocational courses…. In 1999, the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, in Seoul made recommendations to adapt technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to the needs of employers (p.7).

The United Nations Delors Report (1996) uses the term lifelong learning as a central part of its education policy shift within a neo-liberal economic agenda. The code for this term is developing learners to become part of the workforce and be ‘productive workers’. The OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (1996) has described a mandate for education that prescribes “… the lifelong learning mandate is to serve as a meaningful map for policymakers … the challenge of meeting the resource requirements … parameters (are): the volume of learning, the unit costs of learning, and who pays for learning?” (p.23). The OECD’s policy mandate has not only influenced policy making globally, it has created a framework for the market driven policy formulation characteristic of many OECD countries, including Australia (Smyth, 2001a; Taylor, et.al, 1997). The OECD (1996) policy framework endorses:

... reducing teaching and personnel costs … [by] increases in average class sizes. Better coordination and rationalization of education provision … [can be realised through the] Establishment of qualifications Frameworks ... [by] Encouraging competition between providers ... [and by] Reducing costs and increasing flexibility (p.24).

This model of education has been applied in Australia as a framework for the Howard Government’s national education policy platform from 1996 to 2007. Daun (2002) describes how globalisation “… tends to standardize and homogenize cultures” (p.20).
This coupled with economic and managerial efficiencies expected as outcomes for education in Australia, form the basis for national education policy. Daun (2002) further examines the contradictions in the globalisation of education policy when he says that, “… globalization in itself contains a large number of contradictions and these are either affecting national education systems directly or mediated through the national state and the national economy” (p.20). This reference suited the Howard Government’s education reform agenda in Australia. The Howard Government used globalisation influences as the policy rationale as to why it needed to reform State-based education.

The borrowing of policy in order to reproduce it in a national or local setting is a source of conflict (Halpin & Troyna, 1995) reflected in the education model applied to Australia from 1989 to present (Hill, 2003). The conflicts are contradictory because a national model for education in Australia goes against the federal history of states’ right to provide and make policy decisions on education. The impacts of the globalisation of education can be likened to Taylor et al. (1997) analysis of the global integration and national fragmentation occurring in countries like Australia. The adoption of the global education model, as Comber, Green, Lingard and Luke (1998) describe, “… has simply been (under- and mis) read as the adoption of market liberal ideology being the only policy option… [and] the assertion of the market, … [rather] than the state, as…major steering mechanism” (p.32). The point here is that ideology of globalisation was being used by the Howard Government as a mechanism to bring about wholesale reforms to education, in order to facilitate greater federal government control over education funding, provision and decision making.
An important backdrop to the changes occurring since 1996 was the passing of the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance Act) (1996)* by the Howard Government, which had the power to alter how schools would be funded in Australia. According to Morrow, Blackburn and Gill (1998) “The 1996 Act removed the ceiling (restricted since 1988) on the level of Commonwealth funding…received by individual new private schools” (p.11). This has added momentum to the establishment of new private schools in Australia and was supported by the government’s ‘choice policy’ in education. This factor, in turn, is affecting the funding balance between government and private schools in Australia.

The nationally driven agenda in education reform has elements of what Thomson (1990) characterises as “steering not rowing” policy making and implementation (cited in Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p.52). The steering occurs as a result of what Osborne & Gaebler (1992) define to be governmental “…organisational structures as realigned to designate some ‘core’ units those necessary for policy, regulation and audit (the ‘core’ business … small government), separate from … that deliver actual services. This is the actualisation of government ‘at a distance’ (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p.52). This is further supported by the utilisation of the Funder- Purchaser-Provider (FPP) model discussed by Thomson (1990), which refers to the divisive nature of education provision and service delivery in Australia as a cause of concern for how education is managed and the consequences of poor services for students. The consequences of the new education model espoused by Daun (2003) and defined by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) for managing and administering education represented a fundamental policy shift away from a model of equity and social justice. It reinforced a consolidation of the neo-liberal economic agenda being
the policy framework for education in Australia (Taylor et al. 1977). According to Thompson (2002), the new policy framework of performance management within government schools is linked directly to the new form of managerialism within market-based education systems. It is paradoxical that devolution of control over education was the catchcry of the 1990s, and yet in the 21st century there is now more centralisation of power at the Federal Government level than ever before.

There is a distinct contradiction between the devolution of education in the 1980s-1990s and the centralisation of Federal Government control. The impact of this contradiction has led to the local school community becoming the implementation apparatus for a centralised, nationally derived policy framework. Improved organisational efficiencies are supposed to be an outcome of national education policy. Educational efficiencies are measured in terms of reduced inputs, increased outputs, reduced resources for staffing/professional development and generally the mandate to do more with less structural and material support. This is apparent in the UNESCO and OECD responses to education provision in a climate of globalisation.

The impact of globalisation on education policy and, in turn, education reform can be illustrated by the UNESCO and OECD responses to global issues during the 1990s. In 1996 The Delors Report, Learning: the Treasure within Report of the Commission on Education for the Twenty –First Century, was released advocating the UNESCO position on the significance of lifelong learning in this way:

The Delors Report enunciated three directions for effort in educational renewal and reforms … an holistic approach to educational reform, encompassing all sectors from basic education to university study … redefining roles and professional requirements of teachers … [and] the need for international cooperation with the concept of educating for a global society (p.25).
This report formed part of the declaration of the 1998 Melbourne UNESCO Conference to develop an international approach to education. At the Conference Dr Kemp (then Federal Minister for Schools) described how:

… all young people in Australia [should] have the necessary foundations in literacy and numeracy…maximising diversity and choice in education and training…[and,] making systems more responsive to the needs of students (p.1).

The reference to choice and diversity is described by Thomson (1990) as the encouragement of parents to actively choose a school, whether private or public, for their children to attend (p.45). The concept and greater governmental support of choice has in effect encouraged more parents to enrol their students in private schools because many perceive (with justification) the running down of public schools. As Marks, McMillan, and Ainley (2002) state, in “… 1984, 75 per cent of school students … [were] enrolled in government schools … [in] 2000 … [there were] 69 per cent” (p.12).

The drop in public school secondary enrolments could be attributed to the Howard Federal Government’s stance on consumer choice for school selection by parents. The performance approach is evident across all schools with the mandating national benchmarks on literacy and numeracy. The view of high performance schools and education introduce the notion of performativity as a central plank of the performance management approach in schools. According to the Dictionary of Human Resource Management (2001):

Performance management is the process of linking the overall business objectives of the organization with departmental objectives, team objectives, and individual objectives…. [designed] Typically, to keep people focussed on their objectives, the process is underpinned by frequent employee feedback and performance-related pay.(p.200)

Hall (1996) defines performativity as follows:
The concept places emphasis on the manners in which identity is passed or brought to life through discourse. Performative acts are types of authoritative speech. This can only happen and be enforced through the law or norms of society though. These statements, just by speaking them, carry out a certain action and exhibit a certain level of power. Something that is key to performativity is repetition. The statements are not singular in nature or use and must be used consistently in order to exert power. For the purposes of this research this understanding of the power wielded by the reinforcement of performativity as a management tool over teachers and students influences how and what is taught in secondary schools. (p.40)

There is a significant role for performance management in schools: it demonstrates their drive towards more choice, diversity and competition between individual schools in a market for resources and funding. The 2008 performance management framework is designed to affect change in teachers’ work and their role in the new markets of education. The new managerialism of private sector education is now entrenched in government schools. There are social influences of such a performance management doctrine where certain students receive a vocational – work ready or academic-university preparation education pathway in years 11 or 12.

New managerialism and performance management- social influences

The main characteristics of new managerialism are, according to Gewirtz and Ball (2000):

…customer-oriented ethos…decisions instrumentalist and driven by efficiency, cost-effectiveness, search for competitive edge…emphasis on individual relations-through marginalisation of trade unions and through new management techniques, [eg]. Total quality management (TQM), human resources management (HRM)…authoritarian…technical rationality…competition…managers generically socialised, i.e. within field and values of ‘management’. (p.256)

The language of new managerialism is widespread and endemic within the neo-liberal economic rationalism agenda of governments in Australia and globally. The language is used over and over to reiterate in education policy that schools need to reform to remain competitive and efficient. This is a further indication of the outputs model and
is discussed by Yeatman (1993) and Thrupp and Willmott (2003) as a movement away from welfare education towards a market-oriented model based on markets of education and resource efficiencies rather than on the former inputs model of “general good” (Yeatman, 1993) for all students. The outputs model can be best observed in schools as a central component to the school effectiveness and self-managing school phenomenon between the 1990s and the present.

The rise of managerialism has given impetus to the notion of the self-managing school. The idea of self-managing schools should indicate to greater autonomy of decision making at the school level; less interference from central office and more individual control over teaching and learning. The self-managing school concept, according to Caldwell and Spinks (1998) refers to “…systems of government or public schools, or to systems of non-government or private schools where there has been decentralization” (p.5). The notion of self-managing schools now incorporates a notion of the future role of schools as “… schooling for the knowledge society, … those who manage information to solve problems, provide services or create new products from the largest group in the workforce” (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998, p.12). These ideas were utilised by the Howard Government in the formulation of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA, 1999)

According to Morley and Rassool (1999), “… school effectiveness draws upon a range of theoretical approaches, including management and organization studies, to legitimate itself as a self-evidently correct framework for change” (p.59). The form of legitimisation that Morley and Rassool (1999) describe is exemplified in how schools have been required to operate in order to fulfil their role in the era of
neo-liberal economic rationalism. New managerialism is the change management tool of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism in schools today. Furthermore, Morley and Rassool (1999) describe how “New managerialism represents the atomisation of control. Responsibility is dispersed and devolved so that every organizational member is burdened with income generation, quality, standards and performance” (p.61). The confluence of the political neo-liberal agenda with economic market principles has allowed new managerialism to flourish and take over control of how schools are operated funded and monitored.

According to Gewirtz and Ball (2000, p.255), new managerialism is the ‘relay’ or vehicle for the changes and shift away from a welfare general good inputs model to the market oriented outputs of the school effectiveness and self-management model of current school management. The effective schools movement hinges on the control and surveillance of teachers’ work in schools. Corresponding measures of performance management are being enshrined in the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (1999) and the shift towards a national curriculum in Australia. According to Rea and Weiner (1998):

…the educational reforms have reconstituted the role of the teacher away from that of (semi-) professional towards that of a technician by fundamentally changing conditions of employment and professionalism…. [A]ll of which require surveillance and inspection, this role has brought with it considerable work overload, … but [with] little feeling of entitlement (p.26).

The role of performativity is explained by Gleeson and Gunter (2001) as the increasing pressures of individual accountability, teacher targets and benchmarks as part of a national curriculum. Performance is measured for surveillance and control purposes by management within the school and upward to the central office level. There is a growing conception of students and teachers as part of the ongoing
commodification of education in schools (p.142). The implication for teachers’ work resulting from performativity is that teachers need to actively participate in the process, and it is now a mainstay of their daily work lives.

The performativity management tool is influencing every aspect of teachers’ work and has been identified by Reid (1999), as having three forms of control embedded in it. They are “corporate control, the disciplinary power of a dominant discourse, and regulated market control” (p.5). These measures of control are discussed in depth in Chapter Three. These control mechanisms are echoed by other researchers, including Gewirtz and Ball (2000), Gleeson and Gunter (2001), and Morley and Rassool (1999), as different aspects of performativity that are used to control and monitor teachers’ work in schools. Reid (1999) asserts that these forms of performance management controls help to assimilate new policy or shifts in policy under the neo-liberal economic agenda of the Federal government.

The two key effects of this new system of management are, according to Reid (1999), that the power once held by state education departments has been gradually centralised to the Federal Government level. The centralisation of education at the Federal Government level is in line with the push towards a national curriculum and control of education at the state level being substantially reduced. The other key effect identified by Reid (1999) is the greater responsibility given to principals in the management and control of teaching staff. These effects add to the weight of performativity as a new means of gaining control over schools in order to make schools fall into line with the prevailing political and economic agenda.
Therefore, according to Smyth (2001a) performativity is “The new defining hallmark of teachers’ work as “individualisation” and “self-responsibility” as teachers are being held to account for performance …” (p.30). It is part of an ongoing reform process designed to create greater uncertainty, which is central to the current neo-liberal agenda embracing economic rationalism in schools. Moreover, Thrupp & Willmott (2003) and Yeatman (1990) identify the common threads of the neo-liberal economic agenda of efficiency, effectiveness and performance, coupled with managerialism and competition in a global context, as a powerful set of forces acting upon education policy making and the everyday activities of secondary schools. Yeatman (1990) relates the current policy making arena as a place where agenda setting and the struggle for meaning occurs in education. Therefore, managerialism was a tool for the control of policy making in the public arena by the Howard Government in order to create a national policy agenda. The other side of managerialism is the increasing competition in education encouraged by the Howard Government. Competition is encouraged between schools by offering schools access to more resources and funding in exchange for meeting performance standards and benchmarks set by the centralist Federal Government Education department.

The challenges to the dominant global-national benchmarks approach to education have been investigated by Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997). The main issues discussed by Taylor, et. al. (1997) centre on how education policy is constructed to reflect the instrumental outcomes of policy decision makers. The emphasis here is on how policy is developed to incorporate a reaction to global, social, cultural and economic changes by governments in Australia. Taylor et al. (1997) discuss how the social democratic settlement in education has been rejected by
many governments in an era of economic rationalism as the driving force behind education policy decisions (Taylor et al., 1997, p.3; Welch, 1996; Yeatman, 1993). Significantly, the values underpinning economic rationalism and neo-liberalism are taking precedent over the values of social justice, access, and equity for all students in Australian schools. The control over education policy decisions and implementation of changes in schools from the international and national levels (from the 1990s) has legitimised the neo-liberal economic agenda of the early 1990s in Australia (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995). Marketisation has been the vehicle of transmission of the neo-liberal agendas for reform of education policy of the public education sector in Australia since the 1990s to present.

The increasing tendency towards the transplantation of education policy from other countries into Australian education without a critical review of how these policies work or succeed in the local context is a significant effect of marketisation (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Levin, 1998). Since the mid 1970s the marketisation of education in Australia has involved the change of education provision by governments based on a neo-liberal economic rationalist management agenda in order to reduce pressures on governments (Apple, 2001; Hill, 2003; Marginson, 1997). This economic management can be characterised as a follow-on from self-management that resulted from the devolution and decentralisation of education in Australia throughout the 1990s (Marginson, 1997).

Since the 1960s, the overarching influence of educational reform has been Federal Government encroachment on traditional state responsibilities via the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (1999) with a consequent decline in state and Territory influence on educational outcomes.
The result of this decline in states’ rights and control over education has been the rise of an outputs model of education.

*Outputs model of Australian education*

The outputs model of education in Australia according to Welch (1996), comprises:

…interventions by the state [which] are transformed from maximising general welfare to maximising returns on investment, a re-orientation which disadvantages the traditional public sector…[and] in practice this means doing more with less, in a context where public resources are being redirected away from social welfare toward the prime requirement of enhancing economic competitiveness. (p.5)

This coincides with the findings of Pusey (1991) and Yeatman (1993) of a reduction in educational inputs in favour of a more outputs-based sector. The inputs model according to Welch (1996) explains:

For perhaps three decades after the Second World War, equality of educational opportunity was an important guiding principle of educational growth and reform in Australia. At least until the 1970s, education was seen as an important means to achieving social equality (pp.3-4).

The characteristics of the inputs model were equity, access and social equality, and not resource efficiency, maximum returns and rationalism of all aspects of education. The outputs model of the 1980s onwards is characterised by the rationalisation of public expenditure on education in order to maximise the greatest outputs of the system. The outputs model is a maximisation of resources and efficiency of allocation in education with a view to producing the maximum number of outputs (students) for the workplace and capital production in the market place. The outputs model of education has facilitated the marketisation of what was an inputs model up until the 1980s. Thrupp and Willmott (2003) argue that the ‘Post-welfarist educational reform in schools’ is essentially made up of an outputs model of education, which has the following features:
… more open school enrolment policies intended to allow quasi-market competition; self management, changes to teacher and school leaders’ pay, conditions and training; curriculum prescription; external evaluation of schools… [with an] emphasis on testing, target-setting and performance management (p.37).

These external devices are utilised to monitor and measure school and teacher performance. The outputs of education are determined to be measurable improvements in education such as student retention rates to year 12 at school or in other education and training contexts, increased class sizes in schools, and the improved participation rates of young people in post-compulsory education as a result of resource efficiencies. The universal key to marketisation of education since the 1980s has been the increased participation of young people in post-compulsory education (Marginson, 1997, p.173).

The drive towards increased participation of young people has coincided with reform of the structures administering education in all sectors of the public education system (Marks, McMillan & Ainley, 2002). The pursuit of increased performance in schools by teachers and students is another characteristic of the outputs model of education. The ways that schools are managed reflects the growing pressures to produce excellent results (outputs) of the school system at the end of year 12.

An example of significant reform as a result of the outputs model of education is the New Public Management model requiring a customer service focus for schools embedded in the pursuit of excellence, citizenship and a redistribution of power to local levels of the education system (Meek, 2001, p.48; Power & Whitty, 1999). The outputs model philosophy of service provision and excellence is demonstrated in the role of schools within the nationally derived education policy
framework of the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (1999). The goals are a means of enshrining the outputs model of education at the local school level in a required funding arrangement tying schools to prescribed targets and outcomes. The central principles of excellence, citizenship and service are also core elements in the life-long learning model of the OECD member nations, including Australia that reflects the globalisation of education.

The outputs model of education is an ongoing consequence of Australia’s global agreements and obligations to the OECD. For example, Cerny (1990) states that:

… the state is no longer in a position anywhere to pursue the general welfare as if it were mainly a domestic problem. As the world economy is characterised by increasing interpenetration and the crystallisation of transnational markets and structures, the state itself is having to act more and more like a market player, that shapes its policies to promote, control and maximise returns from market forces in an international setting (p.230).

Cerny’s (1990) point is supported by Apple’s (2001) explanation of how governments choose a particular agenda and use it to suit certain interests. The Howard Government’s educational reform platform was driven by international alliances and commitments in a globalised world to a free-market-outputs model of education. The governmental response at both the federal and state levels was characterised as the increasing ministerialisation of public sector departments to ensure that the principles of economic rationalism creating the outputs model of education, within the neo-liberal political atmosphere, are adhered to by the public sector in Australia (Reid, 1999). The growth in ministerialisation has resulted in the restructuring and breaking down of departments responsible for the administration of education (Reid, 1999). In addition, the management of education has been given over to managers who, with
little experience in education theory or management, would implement economic reforms in education provision (Marginson, 1997, p.192).

The reforms of the 1990s have disenfranchised schools by creating a push-pull fiscal constraint reliant on performance criteria and meeting national standards as an incentive for policy implementation at the school level. Policy has an integral role in how schools are influenced to respond to the national goals and meet their own local community needs. Therefore, the push-pull fiscal constraints imposed on schools have also facilitated the rise of competition education between schools.

*Competition in education*

Competition between schools was established through the Howard Federal Government’s funding of schools dependent on their willingness to undertake innovations that meet set criteria of the national system (Lingard, 2000, p.29). This approach to education provision was in direct contrast to the previous high inputs education funding of the 1970s to early 1990s. The current funding situation in 2008, continues the low inputs/high outputs or outcomes in education as ‘performativity-driven federalism’ (Lingard, 2000, p.30), that encourages competition between government schools, and now even private schools, for resources. The Australian experience was occurring with the backdrop of globalisation as a vehicle for international pressures on education provision and implementation and as a control mechanism in schools. This is described by Giddens (1998) as ‘… ‘downward democratisation’ [to such an] extent [that] it can exacerbate fragmentation and inequality of provision across communities” (p.545). The emphasis was on the way
education was being reformed to facilitate the performance-based, outputs model driven by the neo-liberal economic agenda.

The approach to funding education is still one of carrot and stick for schools to comply with national goals in line with improved performance. According to Penney (2004), status is a driving force for schools as “… status is fundamentally something that sets some schools apart from others … individual school results in exams remain a key policy and very public reference point for policy development and for investment” (p.3). It is apparent from Penney’s (2004) comments that the situation in England is similar to the Australian experience where policy development is being driven by the same neo-liberal economic agenda. The drive towards a competitive-market environment in which schools compete for funding dependent on their place on a league table may be deleterious to the success of other schools (Penney, 2004, p.7). The increased competition in schools is part of the push towards a national curriculum, as the next step in the Federal government’s economic rationalism agenda for education in Australian schools. This is the result of federal government funding to states benchmarked against predetermined performance levels for schools to reach particularly literacy and numeracy targets. I discuss performance and competition in more detail in Chapter Two.

National curriculum policy agenda

The Howard Government directed and regulated education policy through the mantra of increasing choice, diversity and competition in education as positive consequences of market-based reforms of schools (Adnett & Davies, 2000; Johnson & Reid, 1999). According to Johnson and Reid (1999), curricula can be described as “… all those
discursive practices, which affect what and how students learn, and what and how teachers teach” (p.ix). Therefore, curriculum cannot be reduced to a simple set of interactions, whereas Usher and Reynolds (2000) explain, vocationalisation of education determines that the learner only needs to learn about immediate knowledge, which can be measured by performance such as competencies.

The platform of national mandated curriculum reforms was not only highly regulated and dominated by a national political and economic agenda (Reid, 1999); it was controlled and driven by the Howard Government. According to Thrupp and Willmott (2003), “… [the] national curriculum in England led to a reduced teacher autonomy with change away from child-centred approaches and negotiated teaching to didactic pedagogies” (p.40). The case of the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector in Australia as the first national curriculum of vocational education (1990s to present) in Australia has had similar results as teachers and trainers all use modules of prescribed curriculum for teaching students. Every aspect of learning is standardised and commodified to reflect the completion of set targets, benchmarks and competencies.

The educational policy reforms of the 1990s and early 2000s have resulted in the imposition of national curriculum in Australia and other OECD nations as part of the choice, diversity and competition drive of marketisation. The national curriculum has increased the likelihood of established schools maintaining their existing curriculum as a status quo response to mandated national change (Adnett & Davies, 2000). The reaction from schools can be characterised as conforming to the national curriculum rather than a willingness to undertake innovation and compete with other schools for funding and resources (Adnett & Davies, 2000).
The notions of choice, diversity and competition in education were a platform that the Howard Federal Government used to frame current education policy in Australia. Thrupp and Willmott (2003) add further to the association between how “… another indirect pressure to narrow the curriculum comes from the market. Schools may be self-managing but if they do not keep up their market share they can be in trouble” (p.41). The implications of Thrupp and Willmott’s (2003) comments are indicative of what is occurring in Australian schools at the present time. According to Edwards and Usher (2000) national curricula can “… be said to resurrect nostalgically a more stable past of unified/universal knowledge and culture” (p.127). The national curriculum idea is similar to Apple’s (1993) notion of ‘common culture’ as a national mould for education to influence young people and meet market expectations for employers and industry (p.222).

Moreover, the Howard Government’s push in Australia for a national school curriculum in an already highly regulated education sector exacerbated this controlled space for teachers and students alike. The objective of a national curriculum for all schools in Australia is a logical extension of the last 20 years of economic rationalism and neo-liberalism in the landscape of Australian education. Smyth (2001a) sees the problem surrounding public education in the following way:

… the average citizen feels power to be at a great distance and frequently unresponsive to him or her. There is a sense of powerlessness in face of a governing machine which continues on its way without regard to the interests of ordinary people … [and] There seems to be no way that the ordinary citizen can have an impact on this process (p.18).

What Smyth (2001a) describes to be the “great distance” between citizens and the Federal government in Australia is exemplified by the policy groundwork of the former Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson, for a
national curriculum. The former Minister’s joint news conference with the then Prime Minister Howard, in Canberra on 22 June 2004 was a show of strength for the former Minister and his agenda to bring each state into line with the federal government’s education platform. During the news conference, former Prime Minister John Howard announced, “Dr Nelson and I have called this press conference to announce that tomorrow the Minister will introduce into parliament legislation to underpin our record $31 billion funding for education around Australia.”(ABC online News, 22 June 2006) This announcement alone indicated that there was to be a significant shift between State and Federal funding arrangements from 2004.

This legislation was in time with the Federal Government’s control of the Senate (ABC online News, 7 July 2005). The reasons given by the former Prime Minister for the proposed changes in funding education were:

… firstly, the common starting age for schools in 2010. Secondly, a minimum physical activity requirement. Thirdly, greater national consistency in curriculum and testing standards in English, mathematics, science and the arts. Fourthly, better reporting to parents including plain language reports on their own child’s progress, reporting literacy and numeracy results against national benchmarks and meaningful information on school quality including teacher qualifications and overall student outcomes. The agenda, which will mean that schools must meet all of these requirements to get federal funding (ABC online News 22 June 2006).

The evidence contained in the former Prime Minister’s comments were indicative of the Federal government’s neo-liberal economic rationalist agendas directing the funding and policy making of education in Australia. Former Minister Nelson went further to explicitly map out why education was being reformed in Australia and how he planned to facilitate the reforms:

… we’re educating them [young people] to be Australians and global citizens, and that is why the Government for the next four years, before handing over $31.5 billion in school funding is ensuring that in order to receive that money,
The former Minister’s comments were a substantial move towards the development and implementation of a national curriculum for all Australian schools, to be controlled by the Federal government. Former Minister Nelson also indicated in a later interview that “… from the Australian Government’s point of view, we think there is a case now for putting on the agenda an Australian Certificate of Education (The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 July 2005). On the same day former Minister Nelson when interviewed on ABC TV stated “… I want to talk to the states and territories about setting up a standard assessment for year 12 students … an Australian Certificate of Education for year 12s” (ABCTV online News, 7 July 2005). The statements contained in these different interviews all indicate that the Federal government was creating a national curriculum, a national certification of education, and increased controls over state-provided education in Australia.

The proposed nationalisation of education in Australia was firmly placed within the market-oriented rhetoric of choice, competition and diversity. The platform of reforms announced by the former Minister for Education highlight what Reid (1999) explains as the neo-liberal agenda of the Howard Government. According to Reid (1999, p.5), this agenda was characterised by six elements: a continuation of the previous Labour government’s microeconomic reform agenda of the labour market and education; a perception of low literacy and numeracy rates in Australian schools; good citizenship; the lack of good service of schools to students; choice in education; and educational accountability. Each of these elements has an underlying economic rationalist theme to it. The economic language of choice, accountability, measurement and service is now being entrenched as a dominant means of controlling schools and
teachers’ work. According to Reid (1999), the logic is “… predicated upon the notion that there is a level playing field and that the reasons for failure lie with [the] individual not the system” (p.12). The lack of social justice embedded in the push towards a national curriculum is a serious consequence of the pursuit of market-driven economic rationalism of education in Australia. Disturbingly, it seems that the Rudd Government in 2008 is continuing to pursue this course of action.

A further example of this move towards economic rationalism of choice, diversity and competition in education was the Howard Federal Government’s *Backing Australia’s Ability Innovation Report 2002-03*. This report was a review of Australia’s innovativeness across a range of areas, including research and development, commercialisation of innovation, and developing skills in the workforce (Commonwealth Government, 2002). The review defined innovation as:

> … the process by which new ideas are transformed, through economic activity, into sustainable, value-creating outcomes- into tradeable products, processes and services…Innovation is an input to creative work practices, entrepreneurial leadership skills, intellectual property management. (p.9)

The national policy agenda approach incorporating the above policy determines what Dudley and Vidovich (1995) describe as the Howard Government’s encroachment on education, a state based right of control. This process of national policy-making became more evident in the late 1990s when the Howard Government used its position and federal funding to control the states. This issue of federal state relations is discussed in-depth in Chapter Two.

The effects on schools of *Backing Australia’s Ability Innovation Report 2002-03* are linked to outcomes for students who excel in science, technology and entrepreneurial skills development. The funding associated with schools was
performance linked and tied to funding from the Howard Government to the state
governments funding government schools. The funding underpins the states’
obligations to the *Nationally Agreed Goals for Schooling* (1999) that requires the
states to agree to the imposition of national curriculum in relation to a curriculum
framework for each state. The report stipulates a fostering of foundation skills in
science, maths and technology in order to improve Australia’s place as an innovative
country (Commonwealth Government, 2002, p.62). In addition, the Enrolment
Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) was designed to develop school-based innovation of
new ideas and leadership among staff. How these resources would be delivered and
distributed was not clear nor was what individual schools needed to do to secure their
share of the funding.

**Conclusions**

In this chapter I have argued that the broader policy context for education in Australia
is derived from the current global emphasis on creating a “world model of education”
(Daun, 2002). This model is reinforced by powerful organisations such as the OECD,
World Bank and the IMF, who have espoused the ideological shift towards a neo-
liberal economic agenda for the provision, funding and control of education globally.
The shift in how education is valued, funded, controlled and produced has become an
entrenched part of how the Howard Government embraced the global world model of
education. The ideological shift in education policy making has resulted in the
promotion of an outputs market of education services where students and teachers are
part of a commodification process. The movement, away from a welfare general
education for all has been marked by the rise of markets of education and increased
competition between schools.
This push towards centralisation of education is underpinned by new managerialism, which is imposing new micro controls on individual schools and teachers to adhere to national benchmarks and targets for performance and accountability. Therefore, the global model of education suggested by Daun (2002) is serving the interests of neo-liberal governments in Australia and elsewhere to legitimate their claims over policy decisions and changes to education as a requirement of supranational commitments and mandates.

The centralisation of power and control over education is a reflection of the broader policy agenda directed by the Howard Federal Government under the auspices of the need to become globally competitive through the employment of a neo-liberal economic rationalist agenda. All of these influences provide a background for examining the impact on teachers’ work in chapters three and five. The next chapter will examine the influences since the 1960s to the present, which have changed the nature of post-compulsory education in Australia. I argue that these eras of educational reform can be linked with the evolution of policy-making that has seen the power and control of education by the states being centralised towards a new form of Federal government control as a consequence of national policy development to meet the needs and Australia’s place in a global economy.
Chapter Two: The evolution of the post-compulsory mandated curriculum reform in Western Australia – Critical policy analysis

Introduction

The Australian policy context

The national policy agenda of successive federal governments since the 1980s has changed to reflect the current international neo-liberal economic agendas of other OECD nations (Ball, 1998). As argued in Chapter One, the Australian policy context has been reshaped since 1996 by the Howard Government to reflect the changing global dimensions and influence of neo-liberalism and new managerialism on post-compulsory education in Australia. The resulting mandated curriculum reforms are driven by market mechanisms such as performance management, service delivery and accountability tools to promote central federal government control of education in Australian schools. The impacts of these reforms are the focus of this chapter.

Curriculum reform is occurring across all levels of schooling in Australia. The driving force for reform can be attributed to the changing perceptions of schools as instruments of economic policy and the desire to link schools more closely with the imperatives of industry and the world of work. The dimensions of reform driving the national standardisation of post-compulsory education in Australia are multifaceted and interconnected. They are interwoven with time, space, economic, political, geographical and social layers of control and influence.

This chapter sets out to do four things:
• to examine the nature of education policy and critical policy analysis in relation to post-compulsory educational reform as part of a national education agenda
• to critically examine the shift to coordinate federalism (which began in 1996) as a result of changing federal and state relations
• to examine the historical contexts of education evident in the national agenda for the standardisation of post-compulsory education curriculum across Australia from the 1960s to 2005
• To examine how the implementation of the mandated curriculum reform in post-compulsory education is impacting on school communities in Western Australia

Policy and critical policy analysis

Policy is an evolving process of change in values and understandings over time from the Federal Government through to the local school’s implementation of a policy (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). Policy is a response to changes in society and championed by particular interest or power groups who have their own values and ideas of change. As Yeatman (1990 cited in Taylor et. al, 1997) explains, social policy is a response to and a means of agenda creation by interest groups in and around governments. According to Gale and Densmore (citing Easton, 1953 in 2000), policy is an ‘authoritative allocation of values’ and interests inherent in interest groups and plays a key role in policy agenda setting at all levels in the community and government. In order to develop an understanding of how policy works and what impacts it has on schools and communities, I will provide a working definition.
Policy can be characterised according to Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) as having three essential contexts. The contexts are “… the *context of influence*, where public policy is normally initiated … the *context of policy text production*… [and] the *context of practice*…” (pp.19-21). The contexts represent where and by whom policy is constructed in Australia. The text production is a result of the dominant discourses of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism promoting marketisation of education and resource efficiencies. The contexts also represent how the current national agenda in education is played out by the increasing shift in how education is provided and who has control over education. Policy can be characterised as a complex set of agendas, interests and competing discourses.

According to Taylor et.al. (1997), policy is:

…. more than simply the policy text; it also involves processes prior to the articulation of the text and the processes which continue after the text has been produced, both in modifications to it as a statement of values and desired action, and in actual practice. Furthermore, contestation is involved from the moment of the appearance of an issue on the policy agenda, through the initiation of action to the inevitable trade-offs involved in formulation and implementation. (p.29)

The distinctions made by Taylor et. al. (1997) explain the complexities of policy and how at every stage of the process and implementation there will be disputes over the nature of policy and who and how it will affect different interest groups.

The complexity of education policy and the current political and economic climate are explained by Ball (1998) as being conflicting agendas. They are, as Ball (1998) explains the tying of education to national agendas of economic interest and a disconnection of education from state control (p.125). The two competing agendas are now entrenched in Australia under the Federal Government’s push to fully implement a neo-liberal economic rationalist agenda. The national agenda of policy, according to
Thompson (2002), is the ‘narrowing of Federal curriculum’ by the supposed needs of meeting Australia’s international obligations and commitments in a global economy (p.128).

The effects of this national agenda setting can be typified as an era in policy development and domination where policy is determined by a national ‘masternarrative’ promoted by the Howard Federal Government (Marshall 1997, p.5). The dominance of education policy by masternarratives like neo-liberalism and economic rationalism has generated the current era of policy in Australia.

The notion of ‘settlement’ as an era in Australian policy making can be employed to better understand the impact of globalisation on education:

…a new settlement which acknowledges and values the multiple purposes of education – the instrumental, the academic, the democratic- and which challenges the false assumptions that the academic and the vocational are incompatible, and that the goals of equality and excellence cannot both be achieved (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, p.189).

The new settlement around globalisation has forged a framework based on performance and the measurement of nationally agreed goals in Australian education. The settlement of education policy played out in the neo-liberal economic agenda of the Howard Federal Government was indicative of power groups using policy to drive the course of educational change in Australia. This is discussed by Dudley and Vidovich (1995), Offe (1975), Pusey (1991), Kenway (1990), Robertson, (2000) and Seddon and Carroll (1989), as the settlement of an era of policy making within a neo-liberal economic agenda providing a temporary solution to an issue within an agreed and prescribed mindset of values. The neo-liberal economic agenda era is still dominating how policy is derived, decided on and implemented at all levels from the Federal Government to the local school implementation level. In order to examine the
impacts of policy as the vehicle for educational reform in Australia, I used critical policy analysis.

**Critical policy analysis**

Critical policy analysis is useful in the examination of education policy, according to Prunty (1985), because:

…education policy analysis must attend simultaneously to the workings of the school and the workings of society… conducted within a moral and ethical stance…[by] the very role of transmitting values, and selecting people for or excluding them from social and occupational positions, is far from a neutral and objective activity…the notion that curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation are impartial must be dispelled…[and] it must be realized that values, interests, and power permeate these dimensions of schooling…[and] as a result, select groups and social classes benefit or suffer…(p.135)

This comment indicates the extent of control exerted by policy as a form of control and mandatory reform in education. Moreover, Prunty explains that it “… must be recognized that much of the power and control exerted by the school administration over classroom practice issues from, and is legitimated by, educational policy …” (p.135). Prunty (1985) criticizes the inherent flaws in current education policy as lacking social justice, equity dimensions and educational criteria.

The critical perspective underpinning Prunty’s critique of education policy has its basis in the Frankfurt School of critical sociology. Habermas (1970s) is the exemplar for the alternative to the current rationalist, narrow and vague conceptualization of policy analysis that exists in schools and the governing organizations such as education departments. The links made by Habermas between an ethical and social justice based framework combined with specific educational criteria for policy-making and analysis is highlighted by Prunty (1985). The integration of values into an ethical and social justice framework is needed in order to
equalize the power and control of decision making and policy creation and implementation in schools. The balance to be gained by this approach to critical policy analysis is contrasted with the economic rationalist and market-driven agenda of the 1980s and 1990s. The rationalist approach has continued to ignore the significance of power, control, legitimacy, privilege, equity and social justice values necessary to create balanced and fair educational policy (Giroux, 1983; Prunty, 1985). According to Prunty (1985), policy analysts have many roles including “... advocacy … [for] information on policy … [by] monitoring and evaluating … [and] analysis of policy content…” (pp.133-134). This comment associates the positive aspects of examining policy in an equitable way that benefits all interests rather than favouring some over others.

In addition, Prunty (1985) critiques the way policy is used in schools in order that it “... attended the ways in which facts and meanings were controlled in the classroom through curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation procedure” (p.134). Therefore, policy is used as a vehicle for certain controlling interests to drive their agenda in schools over less powerful interests, who may include teachers, students and the school community. In addition, Apple (1979) and Giroux (1983) have examined how policy is being used to promote what Prunty (1985) describes as certain “.... complexities of cultural and economic reproduction in schools” (p.134). The central role policy plays in how schools operate and whose interests are promoted can be analysed and explored through critical policy analysis. Prunty (1985) agrees with Easton’s (1953) assessment of policy as ‘authoritative allocation of values’ and Kenway’s (1990) question ‘whose values have been validated?’ as good starting points for critical policy analysis.
Prunty (1985) suggests that the personal values and ethical stance of the analyst or researcher needs to be aligned with a sense of moral order and equity for all involved in policy from its conception to evaluation. The biases and position of the researcher needs to be expressed so that there is transparency and an equitable approach taken to the analysis. In this context, Bernstein’s (1971) three message systems in schools need to be examined in the light of how policy is analysed: i) curriculum (what counts as knowledge?), ii) pedagogy (what counts as valid transmission of knowledge?), and iii) evaluation (what counts as valid realization of knowledge?). This process takes into account the various impacts of policy on teachers, students and the school community in a holistic manner.

Therefore, applying a critical policy analysis to education policy as a historical analysis and as a discourse analysis of what is occurring can form a sound basis for pursuing a critical ethnography of Glasheen SHS to be elaborated in Chapter Four. The data collected from the teacher meetings was essential in developing the complexities of what is occurring in education policy change, social justice issues of access and values embedded in the curriculum change. Critical policy analysis is an examination of policy implementation, with an emphasis on how the policy is placed within a context such as a school case study: this can be done in conjunction with using ethnographic methods, such as participant observation and interviews, to gather information from participants over a period of time (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). The critical aspect of my research will focus on how the teachers’ lived experiences and practices are affected by the policy. An example of critical policy analysis is the work Taylor et al. (1997). These researchers have focussed on ‘state-centric’ approaches as a result of the state-federal regulation of education in schools.
Critical policy analysis is not without its values and beliefs, which can be attributed to the researcher’s position on the topic and the participants’ views of change. Critical policy analysis is an effective means of examining past and present policy on the following kinds of questions: Where did the policy originate from? Whose interests are promoted? How does it impact on people’s work lives and the community? What are the consequences of individual policies on particular sites such as schools?

Public policy is complex, with different ramifications for education and other public services. Policy can be refracted by an organisation such as MCEETYA in order to support what Lipman (2004) calls the ‘supremacy of a transnational capitalist bloc’ to further marketise education in schools. According to Taylor et.al. (1997), MCEETYA’s decision making has caused a ‘weakening’ of the equity of the National Policy for the Education of Girls, giving it a more ‘vocational’ focus that was enforced by the “policy umbrella … [used as] sheltering … [for] a fragile consensus … [between] a number of disparate and not necessarily compatible interests” (p.31).

The fragile consensus created by MCEETYA was designed to reinforce the Howard Federal Government’s support of its neo-liberal economic agenda with regard to education. Policy refraction also occurs when policy is borrowed from other OECD nations and implemented in a local context without being tailored to meet local needs. There are other examples of problems with a national policy agenda of change for post-compulsory education, including slippages and issues with policy chains (Taylor et.al, 1997). The policy chain can represent the national policy directives being interpreted and reproduced in state decisions and then reinterpreted and reproduced again at the local school level. The loss of clarity between objectives and interpretations and outcomes of policy from its conception to implementation can
have a detrimental impact at the school level (Taylor et al, 1997). Where there is a need for interpretation along the ‘policy chains,’ there will be gaps and misinterpretations of policy objectives.

Policy is used by interest and power groups such as MCEETYA to generate what Apple (1993) describes as a ‘national common culture’. The national common culture suggested here is the drive towards the coordination and standardisation of education across Australia. This relates to the homogenising of individual learners, as a common group with common learning needs across Australia, in order to meet the interests of the dominant national agenda.

There were a few ways that states could manoeuvre their own policy development as long as it was in accordance with national education policy decided by MCEETYA. The effect of this form of federalism on the states with respect to education provision and responsibility is called coordinate federalism (Lingard, 1996). Therefore, MCEETYA is the Federal Government’s vehicle for coordinate federalism intervention in education.

**Coordinate federalism: Towards a national agenda in education**

In 1996, the Coalition became the Federal Government and continued the reform process of education. However, the Howard Federal Government utilised a more centralised and coordinate form of federalism to drive the national agenda on education. This mechanism of centralising policymaking and the use of financial incentives and disincentives for the states created more of a fiscal imbalance in the funding of education (Lingard, 1997). In addition, there were domestic factors
increasing the impact of globalisation as a platform for educational reform. The major influences on education policy reform were the restructuring of public management, the rise of managerialism, performance management, the marketisation of education and the school effectiveness movement, as discussed in Chapter One. The Howard Government utilised policy as an instrument for the conception, implementation and continual monitoring and assessment of stated national objectives within the public domain of education. Policy has been formulated and controlled at the national level through the agreement of MCEETYA members.

*MCEETYA – evolution and role*

The main role of MCEETYA is as a ministerial driver of educational policy formulation, prescription and implementation at the state level as mandated curriculum reform in government schools. This is further underscored by Knight and Lingard’s (1997) explanation of how MCEETYA evolved throughout the 1990s to perform its functions in regards to “… more globalisation of the economy ... restructured managerialist, competitive and performative state apparatus, along with the ministerialisation of policy production” (p.29). This ministerial approach goes hand in hand with a more ‘coordinate federalism’ (Matthew, 1977 in Lingard, 2000). Coordinate federalism has resulted in a performative competition between states, schools and sectors of education for funding and resources. This has been one of the outcomes of the Audit Commission (1996) that has strengthened the change to coordinate federalism by the Howard Federal Government. Therefore, the formation and role of MCEETYA has been instrumental in changing the policy landscape of Australian education.
The development of national education policy by MCEETYA is an example of coordinate federalism operating in Australia between the federal and state governments over the control and provision of education. The power sharing result allowed decisions on education to be taken at the federal level with state participation, as long as the state agreed to abide by the federal decision. The problems associated with multi-level governance are related to constitutional powers where states had their own control over the provisions and policy making of all education (since 1901) and were pressured to relinquish these powers to the Howard Federal Government. Multi-level governance has allowed the encroachment of Howard Federal Government control into previously state controlled spheres of decision making (Painter, 2001).

The national agenda of the Howard Federal Government was to promote a national system of education and training in Australian schools. This can be traced back to previous government decisions regarding education under the auspices of the Australian Education Council (AEC). The AEC developed the first steps towards a national education policy framework as part of the *Nationally Agreed Principles of Education* (1989). The AEC was the forerunner of MCEETYA, formed in 1993. The activities of MCEETYA were a further step towards the ministerialisation of education in Australia and the creation of a formalised steering body for educational reform. According to Dudley and Vidovich (1995), this formalisation of Commonwealth involvement in state provision of education, enabled the expansion of other parties into the formulation of national education policy. Such was the adherence to OECD policy framed the Federal Government’s agenda to nationalise education and control it. The mechanism to do this was the MCEETYA.
MCEETYA was formed in 1993 from an amalgamation of the AEC, the Council of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training and the Youth Affairs Council (p.1). The role of MCEETYA was defined by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG, 2000) to have “… responsibility covered by the Council are pre-primary … [and] primary … [and] secondary, [and] vocational and training, adult and community education, youth policy and cross-sectoral matters” (p.1). The Functions of the Council involve the:

… coordination of strategic policy at the national level, negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives … including principles for Commonwealth/State relations, negotiations … [and] scope and format of national reporting … [including] sharing [of] information … [and] collaborative use of resources towards agreed objectives and priorities. (p.1)

The Council has a powerful mandate for educational reform and reorganisation under the coordinate federalism mantle of the federal level. The first set of Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) adopted in 1989 by the then AEC provided the beginnings of such a national policy-making framework.

The National Goals for Schooling was revised in 1996, with literacy becoming an integral issue, then numeracy. The result of these reviews and evolution of the national goals has been the 1999 MCEETYA statement, Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA, 1999, p 4). The goals are described as being representative of “… widespread agreement about the underlying and fundamental purposes for schooling in Australia” (p.4). The 1999 MCEETYA endorsement is known as the Adelaide Declaration on education.
MCEETYA was supported and advised by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) established in 1992, by the Federal ANTA Act 1992. The role of ANTA was to develop and implement a national vocational education and training system with agreed goals and priorities (MCEETYA, 2000). In 1998, ANTA and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) provided a function for the implementation of the National Training Framework in secondary schools. This is an example of a nationally derived curriculum framework being positioned in schools in order to strengthen the Howard Federal Government’s involvement in state provision of education.

The national framework was designed to articulate recognition of achievement between schools, TAFE and Universities in order to develop a transition between sectors. Blackburn (1999) describes this as a vocationalised role for schools to play in a national system whereby “…schools … [were] expected to provide training as part of the seamlessness between systems” (p.8). This leads to student outcomes becoming an output of the productivity process of education, as a unit of production to be consumed. According to Lowe Boyd (1999) the “Productivity imperative … [of] education really is jointly produced, [between the government and a] … large share of responsibility that parents and community must bear” (p.287). This productivity imperative for education was enshrined in Federal legislation in the States Grants (Primary and Secondary Assistance) Act 2000. The Act encompasses the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) as a benchmark for state compliance 2001-2004 as an incentive to schools, in order to receive ongoing funding. This also includes a commitment to achieving performance measures, such as literacy and numeracy benchmarks by all
Australian government schools (MCEETYA, 2000). These performance measures included the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (administered in years three, five, and seven used until 2008) and the Monitoring Standards in Education testing (administered in year nine used until 2008) in Western Australian schools. In 2002, MCEETYA declared the *Stepping Forward-Improving Pathways for all Young People*, policy outcome of the MCEETYA Subcommittee to be a means of nationally tackling the issues of youth ‘at risk’, transition opportunities for young people and establishing a common direction and commitment for all states in post-compulsory education (MCEETYA, 2002). This declaration articulated the requirements of the national system to be imposed and adopted by the states as a means of implementing and monitoring pathways education and training for young people in schools. Each state echoes the national policy decisions decided by MCEETYA and mandated in the *Stepping Forward Policy* (2002). Therefore, schools are charged with an increased level of responsibility for policy implementation, monitoring, assessment and outcomes of students in relation to national goals and benchmarks. Western Australia has responded to the need to reform its post-compulsory system in order to align itself with the mandated national goals of schools.

The standardisation of curriculum embraces a nationally derived and steered education system as a consequence of global forces acting in conjunction with federal government policy making. The central feature:

… of the present situation is the conjuncture of global neo-liberalism and global resistance … [on] one side, the supremacy of a transnational capitalist bloc, composed of the G7 countries led by the US, attempts to impose the dominance of the market … on all countries and every sphere of social life through neo-liberal economic, cultural and social policy. On the other side, forces of resistance, both structural and cultural … [and educational]. (Painter, 2001, p.9)
The combination of the agreements and declarations of MCEETYA and the funding arrangements for education by the Howard Federal Government cemented the centralisation of control and power of education in Australian schools (Painter, 2001). Therefore, the Howard Federal Government’s power had grown markedly since 1996 over how education is funded, provided and what reforms are undertaken and when. The impacts of multi-level governance include the standardisation of education curriculum in Australian schools (Painter, 2001).

The current membership of MCEETYA indicates that the states have influence on the direction to some extent of MCEETYA’s national education policy. Lingard (2000) describes this as a means of ‘mediating’ national policy formulation and decreasing the Federal government’s influence in state-based education provision such as schooling. The mediation of national policy is the main means for states to retain some control over education. Lipman (2004) sees a place for states as resistors to a national agenda in education. The resistance offered by the states is a structural point where policy negotiation can occur.

The impacts of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) declaration enforced a ‘one size fits all’ policy approach to education provision and requires more local input such as the CC’s Our Youth, Our Future (2002) Report into post-compulsory education reform in Western Australia. As Popkewitz (1996) emphasises:

… [the] normalising practises’ in a universal system of education will produce simultaneous exclusions … instead of opening up spaces for those who are different, the reform systems may instead place them in an oppositional or marginal space. (p.44)
This is the challenge of the local implementation of national policy initiatives to support diversity and individual learners to fulfil their own learning needs. It is at this point that the resistance explained by Lipman (2004) can moderate the national agenda.

The only way for a national policy to succeed is with institutional involvement across all sectors, or for layers of participants and governments at the local level to implement and maintain the policy initiatives. The institutional involvement is what Lipman (2004) was describing as a structural force of resistance to provide the states with some mediating power over education. In addition, Luke, Lingard, Green and Comber (1997) describe how:

…. current government policy … [has] attempted to identify political and professional consensus a set of universal ‘skills’ and ‘behaviours’ … [that] can be developed into de facto national assessment and curriculum.” (p.9)

The issue at stake here is the imposition of a ‘test paradigm’ (Luke et. al. 1997, p.9) in schools as a result of the implementation of Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA). The test emphasis is designed to homogenise students and to develop in them generic skills and behaviours as they prepare for the workforce. This places teachers in an invidious position as they are being monitored and surveilled in order to ensure these national goals are met.

A central component of the national education agenda is the ‘surveillance and control’ (Luke et.al. 1997, p.16) of the testing and assessment paradigm. This has its basis in performativity as a measurement tool for educational outputs in the new system. This has been articulated by Luke et al. (1997), when they describe how “… government policies have attempted to assert ‘the market’ and ‘market forces’ rather than the state as the major steering mechanism for desired educational outcomes”
The impacts of the performativity managerialist steering of educational policy can be further explained as having exerted pressures on education providers such as schools while restricting funding – the paradox of performativity (Luke et al., 1997). Doing more with less creates negative impacts upon education provision and morale in the education sector, especially schools. Local schools are the sites of implementation of national and state curriculum reform. How successful this process is depends on teachers and their commitment and connection to the curriculum reform process. Therefore, major education policy cannot be realised and brought to fruition without the local commitment of teachers and the broader school community.

The mandated performance approach for schools in literacy and numeracy has formed the central plank of the development of standardised national policy development since 1996 in Australia. The core issue of policy formulation is the performance management approach that has proliferated in public administration since the 1980s. This management approach relies on measuring education quality.

Dudley and Vidovich (1995) describe how difficult it is to measure education quality:

Commonwealth polices would suggest that it [education] can be measured using performance indicators … [and] it has been argued that quality measures can become an effective tool by which governments increase their control over educational institutions … [reinforcing] the need for a coordinated national approach to the measurement of educational outputs has increasingly become an integral part of the Commonwealth’s reform agenda. ‘National’ implies agreement from all parties, including both Commonwealth and State governments. (p.127)

The national agenda described by Dudley and Vidovich (1995) further asserts that this pattern of Federal ‘national policy’ making has provided a means for using vocational education and training to colonise post-compulsory education at the state and local school level (p.161). This commentary has questioned the shift from state provisions of education with minimal federal intervention to a greater emphasis on nationally
driven agendas to continually reform the post-compulsory education systems in Australia. The shift towards Federal government control over education has been occurring since the 1960s.

**Historical contexts of post-compulsory education in Australia 1960-2005**

Post-compulsory education has been in a constant state of reform since the 1960s across Australia. This state of flux provides evidence, according to Gale (2001), of policy historiography (p.385). The constant change state can be attributed to the global changes occurring as a result of Australia’s growing international role in organisations like the OECD. In addition, there has been a shift in how Australia sees itself as part of the global economy and needs to become globally competitive, as a central part of successive Federal governments’ agendas for education. Moreover, the neo-liberal economic rationalist agenda, which has become the ‘masternarrative’ (Marshall, 1997) of successive Federal governments since the 1980s, has been used as the driving force for marketisation of schools and how they must become more competitive in education markets for students, funding, resources and status.

Marketisation has also increased pressure within schools to accept the trend towards schools providing a more vocational education and training emphasis in years 11 and 12. The changing face of schools since the 1960s from providing a broad general education towards a more work-oriented training education is evident in secondary schools in Australia. Therefore, the changing face of post-compulsory education can be attributed to the growing population in post-war Australia and the subsequent need for more post-compulsory education places. The creeping of national standardised education has been occurring partly because of the growing population,
post-war prosperity, technology and immigration combined with the increasing dominance of Federal government control over education. In 2008 The Rudd Federal Government implemented the National Curriculum Board to oversee the implementation of national curriculum in Australia.

The imposition of a national curriculum framework has had ramifications in Australia, such as an overtaking of local school needs and decision making processes, resulting in the marginalisation of teachers and the local community (Blackburn, 1999). The question now is where to from here? How will the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) affect schools and how will schools respond to this nationally driven system wide-change? The national system reflects the increased Federal government’s intervention in education that has traditionally been under state government control (Smart & Manning, 1986, p.11). Increased school effectiveness is an anticipated outcome of the current national agenda that is expecting outcomes to include individual learning success and personal growth, parental inclusion in student’s education and aspirations, within a safe and enriching school environment (Marks, McMillan & Ainley, 2002, p.15). Therefore, it is possible to surmise that there are generic elements of what constitutes an effective school in the national policy agenda to be applied to all government schools in Australia. The question of whether the national system can meet individual student needs and those of the school and staff cannot be answered until the full ramifications become clear. The ramifications will include the social impacts of national policy on individuals and school communities.

These structural and cultural forces account for the resistance according to Lipman (2004), against the national agenda of standardised education. The difficulties
associated with nationally derived and imposed reform include the lack of local inputs into the planning and decision making processes that constitute the curriculum and assessment reforms (Luke et. al., 1997, p.9). The impacts of such reforms are felt right across schools, affecting teachers’ work and students, parents and the community.

A further impact at the school level is the use of education as a means of legitimating current economic agendas by espousing the development of productive workers as an end result of the education process (Hursh & Martina, 2003, p.4). This has the effect of legitimating education reforms of both nation-wide systems of education and local systems to current reform trends. This creates a naturalising influence of the neo-liberal economic agenda that needs to be critically examined in light of its effects on education policymaking (Hill, 2003, p.10). The main effect according to Hill (2003) is to “… make the existing status quo seem ‘only natural’, to hegemonize its ‘common sense’ …” (p.10) and legitimate the dominant national agenda as the best means of delivering education and meeting student needs. The national agenda purports to be better suited to meeting the needs of individual students than the current state-based, locally devised curriculum. In order to understand the connections between the push towards a standardised national curriculum in post-compulsory education today, there needs to be an historical review of Australian education from the 1960s to today.

Each time period since the 1960s has indicated a gradual shift away from exclusive state- based control and provision of post-compulsory education in Australia. The 1970s indicate a movement towards a more coordinated TAFE system in terms of Federal government involvement and control over previously state
dominated education. In addition, the 1970s was a significant period of social change, with changes to women’s rights, work and pay, and immigration.

The 1980s was the first time international considerations were incorporated into education policy at the federal level. The impact of the 1989 OECD agreement signed by the then Federal Education Minister Dawkins was a watershed in how education was controlled and provided at the State level. The 1980s was characterised by major reforms of the higher education sector in terms of funding and federal control and the increased role of technology in education. Technology was introduced into schools both as a tool for administration purposes and as a learning area of curriculum. The role technology has played in curriculum reform is also of consequence to the next period of reform.

This period of sudden change was followed by the 1990s, which saw the first national vocational education curriculum introduced in Australia. Technology was embedded in vocational education as computer literacy in schools emerged. In addition, new curriculum was developed to teach computing in schools in order for students to enter the information technology job market.

According to Ferneding (2004 cited in Edwards & Usher, 2004), technology as a driving force in educational reform of the 1980s to 2005 can be characterised as:

… technocentric reform policy … [as] the building of information infrastructures cannot be compared to any previous technological innovation … [or] information technologies have reconfigured our relationship to time and space and thus the very processes by which we experience communication. (p.52)

The global nature of information systems and technologies also interconnected every aspect of industry, education and curriculum development in Australia. The national
curriculum reflected this and was designed to provide a bridge between schools and TAFE as a means of generating further technical education. The result of the national curriculum was the imposition on schools of additional courses and competency-based assessments to sit alongside the state-based general education curriculum. The language of education was also changing from the general education inputs model to a more market-oriented vocational outputs model. Language such as quality education, resource allocation and technical efficiencies were all hallmarks of the 1980s up to present. This change in how education was valued and measured in terms of language and for what purpose was the beginning of the marketisation of education.

The 1990s to 2000s can be characterised in terms of the rise of marketisation of education as a consequence of the neo-liberal agenda adopted by federal governments since the 1980s. More students were seeking to go to TAFE than to enter university, especially in the early 2000s. Each of these periods deserves further examination, as follows.

**Historical overview**

*The 1960s: uncoordinated state-based education*

The 1960s marked the beginning of a period of economic and social growth in Australia. The main theme of this period was a need to increase the numbers of workers to meet the demands of industry, especially technical workers in mining and to expand regional areas such as the north-west of Western Australia. In order to achieve this there needed to be an increase in the diversity of post-compulsory education and training available to young people. The first significant change was identified in the *Martin Report* on Education in 1964, which emphasised a need for
Australian state-based, uncoordinated education to take on a more technical and training direction than the previous general education model.

The *Martin Report*, as described by Smart (1982), emphasised the creation of the Colleges of Advanced Education as a distinct part of post-school tertiary education. The 1965-1975 period resulted in the:

… creation of three distinct categories of tertiary institutions:- universities, (non-teachers) colleges, and teachers colleges—overarched by a single national statutory body … the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (Smart, 1982, p.23).

The outcome of the Martin Committee has had profound effects on the shaping of post-school options for students since 1964. This period began the shift from state based education to a more coordinated federal control over the tertiary sector. Schools were still very much the domain of the states.

*The 1970s: Social change*

The 1970s saw Australia undergo extensive societal changes that have also impacted on the provision of post-compulsory education at the school level. These social impacts included an increase in secondary school enrolments by 139% in the period 1953-1962 (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, p.57). This was as a result of the changing face of Australia in a post-war period of prosperity that included an influx of migrants to swell the population. Additional pressures included “… urbanisation [of cities], … [with] greater industrialisation … [and the] need for a more highly skilled workforce” (Bessant & Spaull, 1976, pp 69-91 cited in Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, p.58), all of which required an expanded secondary education system in Australia. These influences gave rise to the need for Australian education to modernise and begin to
reflect the diversity of population and individual needs of students in an increasingly industrialised society.

The 1970s also brought about more changes to education and particularly post-compulsory education, with the Karmel Report, ‘Schools in Australia’ Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (1973). One of the most significant consequences of the Karmel Report (1973) was its impact on increasing federal funding to all government schools in Australia. This report represented a major step forward in the provision and funding of secondary education in Australian schools throughout the 1970s. The consequence of the increased federal funding was a greater role for the Federal government to play in the decision making of education in schools.

The other significant changes of the 1970s to post-compulsory education were the recommendations of the Kangan and Williams Reports of 1975 and 1979, respectively. The Kangan Report (1975) resulted in the establishment of the TAFE Commission (formerly the Australian Committee on TAFE- ACOTAFE established in 1973). The significant outcome of the Kangan Report was to formalise and develop the TAFE sector as an important component of post-school education and as a means of developing a more highly skilled workforce in Australia. The TAFE sector was the first post-compulsory education sector to become coordinated under a national system of curriculum and control by a federal government.

The Williams Report (1979) was the culmination of the Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training. The report focussed on the development of TAFE as an instrumental sector for “… [the development of a] relationship between
the labour market and the education system and with the transition from education (both secondary and post-secondary) to employment ... [further] education ... [and] vocational training” (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, p.81). These recurrent themes are as applicable today as they were thirty years ago to post-compulsory education reform across Australia. During this period it became apparent that reform was identified by the need to evaluate and measure post-compulsory education provision in terms of quality and outcomes of resource allocation, funding and the national drive to create an interface between schools, TAFE, University and other training and employment options for school leavers. This period was characterised by a national agenda based on the need for ‘consistency’ across educational sectors.

The 1980s: Technology boom

The release of the Quality of Education Review Committee (QERC) report 1985, the second Karmel Report, heralded a new turn in the evolution of post-compulsory Australian education. The main features were:

…. the attainment of satisfactory standard by the great majority of students … [in] general curriculum [education], improved relationship between the secondary education and employment; and tertiary education opportunities … [and the] improvement in … [the] outcomes of education by funding at a consistent … [level of] priority claims on the Commonwealth, including those of TAFE and higher education sectors/ (Karmel et.al.1985; p.204 in Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, p.95)

The emphasis of the QERC Report was on the improvement of quality and ‘outcomes’ in education as outputs that could be measured and verified in terms of employment and training under the microeconomic agenda of the 1980s and 1990s. These ‘economic goals of education’ as Dudley and Vidovich (1995) describe it emphasise “… [the] evaluation, [and] the effectiveness … [of education and] accountability of programs according to measurable outcomes” (p.95). This trend towards qualifying
and quantifying post-compulsory education has continued throughout the 1980s,
1990s to the present (2008) as a platform for reform. The other main characteristic is
the push towards vocational education in secondary schools.

The 1980s –1990s: Vocationalisation of education

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the emergence of vocational education in schools, as
a major national policy agenda. The reasoning behind vocational education was to
support the view that education needs to better prepare future workers in an
increasingly global and competitive society. The key policy documents were Young
People’s Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training (Finn Review,
1991), The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System (Carmichael Report,
1992), and Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report
(Mayer Report, 1992), and Essential Features of Australia’s Training Systems
(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1992). Each report detailed the
inadequacies and inefficiencies of the existing overlapping and uncoordinated systems
of state-based vocational education and training Australia. The underlying themes of
this period were a direct consequence of economic rationalism being applied to post-
compulsory education and training. The economic rationalism of this time was
couched in the apparent need for efficiency, outcomes, competitiveness and
measurement of quality education across all sectors and to entrench a national
curriculum framework. Vocational education was the first national curriculum to be
introduced to secondary schools in Australia as one uniform system of accreditation,
competency-based assessment, reporting and design to meet the needs of industry.
The three reports that have had a profound effect on how post-compulsory education has been reformed since the 1980s are the Finn Review (1991), Mayer Report (1992) and Carmichael Report (1992). The main impact of the Finn Review (1991) was the overhaul of the post-compulsory education systems across the states in order to reflect a more uniform and coordinated system of education delivery and accreditation of competency learning outcomes for all students. The Mayer Committee (1992) provided a national framework for skills, education and training to be developed, using a uniform assessment and accreditation of competency-based skills.

The language of this period reflects the needs of industry rather than the individual student in schools. The curriculum still perpetuates inequalities, according to Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997), whereby:

… [the] traditional divisions are glossed with the rhetoric of pathways, convergence and competencies … [and the] bringing [of] TAFE modules into school unreconstructed … potentially served to reinforce the vocational-academic divide at an even earlier state in students’ educational careers. (p.118)

Therefore, curriculum has been used as a tool for the precipitation of industry and market agendas of education in schools throughout the 1990s to the present. The process of creating a national standardised curriculum in secondary schools has taken many years to achieve.

This process required the proposed national system of vocational education and training to become more flexible and accommodating of the different sectors of education and training. However, there was no system of administration available for the key competencies to be applied. The solution came from the Carmichael Report (1992), entitled The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System, which
enabled an administrative framework to be developed and provided a means of
crediting and organising vocational education and training. The emphasis of this
period was on the development of vocational education and training skills as an
outcome of post-compulsory education in schools. The notion of ‘key competencies’
as a mainstay of education has been challenged by Taylor et.al, (1997) and other
commentators as enforcing boundaries around knowledge and learning in schools.

According to Edwards and Usher (2000):

… wherein competent practice is based on performance and the knowledge
necessary to, or underpinning that, particular performance. In other words, the
only knowledge necessary for competent practice is that which is immediately
‘useful”’ (p.143)

This has had the effect of devaluing other knowledge and critical thinking of
individual learners and restricting their development to a prescribed and limited set of
vocational literal knowledge and tasks. The generic development of curriculum during
the 1990s helped to facilitate the Federal Government’s national education agenda.

The period of 1990 to 1996 can be characterised as the era of the
Hawke/Keating Federal Government’s new federalism in Australian education policy
(Painter, 2001). This period can be described as corporatist federalism (Davis, Wanna,
Warhurst & Weller, 1988). This era involved the continuation of the previous Federal
Labour Government’s agenda of microeconomic reforms into the Howard
Government’s neo-liberal economic agenda. The agenda involved reforms to all
sectors of education as part of an ongoing evolving reform process. During this time
MCEETYA was formed (1993) as a mechanism for the nationalisation of education
reforms through a nationally derived policy framework. As previously discussed,
MCEETYA provided the Howard Federal Government with a direct role into the
historically state-based provision of education as discussed earlier in this chapter. The
mechanism for this was the development and implementation of a national approach to education, the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (1999). The original national goals were first adopted in 1989 by the AEC, and now form the basis for a national education system.

The Australian educational context was committed to the self-managed market school approach promoted by a number of authors. According to Caldwell and Roskam (2002), this promoted choice, standards and equity, educational quality, competition and responsibility, in self-managing schools within the new era of outputs education. The emphasis for educational reform was on the standardisation of curriculum, outcomes, and meeting prescribed benchmarks, and tightening financial control of schools in order to implement change. The standardised education model built on neo-liberal economic ideas espoused by Caldwell and Roskam (2002) and Caldwell and Spinks (1998) was opposed by critical theorists like Apple (2001), Blackburn (1999), Hill, (2003) and Smyth (2001a), because it created vocational workers rather than free thinking and liberal educated young people.

An additional example of educational reform as a market-driven national agenda is the change that has occurred in vocational education and training since the early 1990s. This change is referred to by Chappell and Johnston (2003) as “Changing cultures” from one of education as the core activity of teachers and school sites to one of “… [creating] public good … [and] customer satisfaction … [in order] to ‘add-value’ to the educational experience of clients” (p.5). Moreover, the new vocationalism, according to Chappell and Johnston (2003), was:

… marked by the establishment of a VET market with schools, … [and] TAFE colleges, universities, adult and community education (ACE) colleges,
industries and private providers all competing with each other to supply 
vocational education and training services. (p.6)

The pressures of competition between schools escalated in order to capture the 
students and funding necessary to provide such curriculum diversity.

An additional pressure on schools was the push towards competition from 
the national standardisation of education both within and outside of Australia. An 
example of this is ‘Le@rning Federation’ designed to generate and support students 
and teachers in schools across Australia and New Zealand (Commonwealth 
reduces public education to a private good by measuring, and thereby validating, only 
highly individualized means of achievement …” (p.7). This is a real concern in the 
context of greater federal government intervention into states’ control and provision 
of education.

The pressure of competition in this period 2000 to 2007 was part of 
educational reform being driven by a national market-based agenda for change and 
efficiency within schools. This has resulted in a standardised post-compulsory 
curriculum being imposed at the school level with limited consultation involving 
schools and their communities. Therefore, the local interests and needs of schools are 
not taken into account by the formulation of generic national education policy.

2000-2005: Towards a national curriculum

The emphasis since 2000 has shifted towards a more balanced need for academic and 
vocational skills in post-compulsory education. This is providing a more diverse range 
of options for school leavers and an articulation into higher education, TAFE, training
and employment. Each state is complying with the national VET system that is underpinned by the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA)*. This represents a national curriculum framework for all post-compulsory education providers to operate within, across all states. There has been a cementing into place of the national curriculum for vocational education and training.

In 2004, former Federal Education Minister Nelson announced that all school funding would be decided according to the states meeting set benchmarks and targets of the Federal Government, as described in Chapter One. This form of tied funding, where all funding is contingent on toeing the federal line, is coordinate federalism at work. Subsequent policy announcements in 2005 at the Federal level fleshed out the requirements necessary for the States. An example of such policy was the announcement by former Minister Nelson of a National Certificate of Australian Education, to follow on from a common national curriculum in schools and standardised testing and reporting. The National Certificate of Australian Education has not become a reality in 2008. Therefore, it is possible to see the evolution of the Australian post-compulsory education reform process as it began in the 1960s and is still in a state of flux. The main influence on education policy formulation and implementation has been the creation of a standardised curriculum across Australia. The mechanisms to achieve this were the coordinated federalism of a nationally driven platform for the Federal Government through MCEETYA, the changing roles and responsibilities of states for the provision of education, and the major platform for continual change of globalisation as an international force upon the Australian economy and all sectors of education. This economic and political atmosphere has
been the mainstay of policy conceptions and frameworks in education at both the federal and state levels of government in Australia.

Western Australian policy responses 1998-2005

Western Australia has been experiencing the same degree of continual education reform, especially in post-compulsory education since the early 1990s as other states. The mid-1990s to the present can be characterised as a fundamental shift from a state based agenda of reform to a national agenda, in line with other states. The main structural responses commenced with the establishment of the Curriculum Council of Western Australia (CC) (1997), and were followed by state policy, responses including, ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Post-compulsory Education Review (Curriculum Council, 2002); Curriculum Improvement Plan/Programme One and Two; the Curriculum Reporting and Assessment K-10 Guidelines (Department of Education and Training, 2004); and the Creating a Future for Our Young People: Raising the Leaving Age Policy (Department of Education and Training, 2004). The combined effects of these structural changes to post-compulsory education saw an integrated program of reform commence with the Curriculum Council (CC) and its mandate for reform.

The CC’s mandate was to initiate and implement reforms of education at the state level, within the national context of policy obligations as part of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA). The first major reform was the Post-compulsory Review process (1998-2005), which
culminated in the release of ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Review policy (Curriculum Council, 2002). The ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Post-compulsory Education Review (2002) policy stipulated the implementation of the National Goals on Schooling pertaining to post-compulsory education in Western Australia. This policy program directly supported and conformed to the Howard Government’s national agenda on post-compulsory education in Australia as a direct consequence of the 1990s post-compulsory education reforms.

The CC of Western Australia was established in 1997 under the Curriculum Council Act of Western Australia. The Council embarked on a further reform of the post-compulsory sector in 1998. The culmination of the review process was the ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Review policy released in 2002. One of the aims of the review process was the mandated implementation of the National Training Framework recognition of VET in schools under the auspices of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA). This is a clear example of a nationally derived policy imperative being legislatively mandated at the state level in order to bring into line education and training across all states in Australia. Western Australia’s policy response was to overhaul its post-compulsory education system to reflect Federal Government policy.

The timeline for the implementation of ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Post-compulsory Education Review (2002), was to commence in 2004 with full implementation in 2009. The review was the basis of the new system for post-compulsory education, commenced in pilot schools. It was expected that the new system would be fully implemented and in place by 2009. The main reasoning behind this reform process was to provide a transition from school to post-school options.
This programme for implementation of a new post-compulsory system was due to commence in 2004, with the piloting of new courses in some government schools with new subjects and accreditation for year 11 (2004) and year 12 (2005). The fully operational system was to come into effect in 2007, with the across-the-board operation of year 11 and 12 under the new structures. This system is a state response to national and international agendas regarding post-compulsory education provision and opportunities for young adults in their transition from school.

The Western Australian post-compulsory education reform process culminated in the CC’s release of *Our Youth, Our Future Post-compulsory Education Review* in March 2002. This document formulates the structure of a new post-compulsory education system in Western Australia, commencing school trials in 2004. The Review’s aim was to:

\[\ldots\] construct a post-compulsory education system that contributes to increasing retention rates to Year 12, maximises educational opportunities for students in low socio-economic metropolitan, rural and remote areas, and improves outcomes for all students, particularly those who currently have low participation rates in year 11 and 12. (Curriculum Council, 2002, p.2)

The new system comprised: an outcomes-based curriculum underpinned by the *Curriculum Framework* (1998) for Kindergarten to year 12, introduced new areas of study in years 11 and 12 (fifty new courses), accommodated existing Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE), Wholly School Assessed (WSA) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects/ units of competency, provided a flexible delivery mode for students and accreditation of students’ achievements.

The implementation process for the new system consisted of a three-year, three-stage, “adaptive implementation” (Curriculum Council, 2002, p.45) trial, with several secondary school sites commencing in 2004. Each school was to trial new
courses in year 11 and 12 during the first stage (2004-2005), and several new subjects in the second and third stages (2006-2008). Each student was to receive a Western Australian Certificate of Education at the end of year 12. The CC made provisions for students participating in the trials to ensure that they would not be disadvantaged in the selection process for post-school options such as TAFE or University places (Curriculum Council, 2002, p.46). The new system was expected to be completely operational by 2009 in all schools offering post-compulsory education in Western Australia.

Curriculum reform in Western Australian schools has seen “…the policy shift to school-based management encapsulated in the Better Schools (Ministry of Education, Western Australia 1987) report and subsequent policy texts in Western Australia” (O’Brien & Down, 2002, p.111). The Better Schools (Ministry of Education, Western Australia 1987) represented a watershed of reactive education policy reforms by the state government. These policies were developed under the umbrella of Curriculum Improvement Plan (CIP One) (Department of Education and Training WA, 1998). The reform policies generated under the Better Schools policy umbrella were:


- Student Outcome Statements (1998)

- the Post-compulsory Review Discussion paper (Curriculum Council, 2000)
• the ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ Post-compulsory Education Review (Curriculum Council, 2002)

• the Creating the Future for Our Young People: Raising the School Leaving Age: A Consultation paper (Education Department of Western Australia, 2004)

The result has been a continual reform of schools since the 1980s, with little time for consolidation in Western Australian schools.

Curriculum improvement plan (CIP) One (1998-2000)

Curriculum reform occurring throughout this period has been premised on what O’Brien and Down (2002) describe as features of the effective and efficient school “… [as] educational administration that demonstrated … [a] responsiveness and adaptability to the needs of the community and to government priorities; [and the] flexibility … use of resources; [and] accountability to the government” (p.115). The debate about the effectiveness of schools as self managers in this climate of reform is still unclear. The effect of the “performance culture” (O’Brien & Down, 2002, p.125) include intensified and further diversified roles that schools are expected to provide in terms of high quality service, and self- promoting and accountable sites of public education production. The flow-on effect to the school community needs further attention and clarification. The mandated curriculum reforms are rooted in the Western Australian Department of Education and Training (WADET) CIP One of 1998-2000. The CIP One developed the mandated management of schools and how they were to follow certain management regulations and reporting procedures.
The discourse of the reforms in management terms is sufficient as Grundy (2002) explains to foster “… deep distrust of centrally devised change initiatives” (p.56). Therefore, the CIP One of 1998-2000 provided a problematic and large-scale change at the central curriculum and management levels across all schools in Western Australia. As Grundy (2002) explains “… it [CIP] was a mandated change, the adoption process emphasised school-based planning and implementation strategies.” (p.58). This system-wide change was the basis for each school to manage itself and to strategically plan and implement change in line with government priorities. Grundy (2002) goes on to explain the nature of resistance in schools “… Some schools … were hoping (indeed expecting) that if they held off, they wouldn’t need to change at all … [and] this view … [in schools] regarded the CIP … as largely ‘fashion’” (p.58).

The CIP went into its second phase of implementation as CIP Two in Western Australian schools in 2002.

Curriculum improvement plan (CIP) Two (2002-2005)

The CIP Two was a reaction to further pressures and mandated national policy. CIP Two is underpinned at the State level by the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting K-10: Policy and Guidelines (Department of Education and Training of WA, 2004) aimed at cementing the Curriculum Framework and Outcomes Standards Framework (Curriculum Council of WA, 2005) in all government schools’ operations in Western Australia (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004). The Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting K-10: Policy and Guidelines (2004) document mandates that:

… all government schools will: 1. Provide a balanced curriculum that maximises the capacity of all students to achieve the outcomes of the Curriculum Framework. 2. Use the Outcomes and Standards Framework: To
monitor, evaluate, report on and plan for improvement of individual student achievement. To evaluate and report on student achievement of standards specified at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. As the basis for reporting school progress and achievement and demonstrating school accountability. 3 Implement system-endorsed moderation processes to support teachers to make consistent judgements. 4 Administer, and use the data from, prescribed system assessments. 5 Report regular and relevant information to parents/caregivers on student achievement. (p.2)

Therefore, The *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting K-10: Policy and Guidelines (2004)* document was the regulatory structure on which all teaching, school planning/administering, accountability, and responsibility for policy implementation would be monitored by the central Department of Education in Western Australia.

The policy’s regulatory control had its roots in the *School Education Act 1999* (Western Australia), *Curriculum Council Act 1997* (Western Australia), and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth). This mandated regulatory power allowed the CIP Two to consolidate the links between school planning and implementation of new initiatives such as the current mandated changes to post-compulsory education. The role of teachers and administrators in schools is mandated in the CIP Two to reflect the centralised nature of the policy and its surveillance and control mechanisms. These mechanisms take the shape of Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA) and Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) used in schools (until 2008 when they were replaced by National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) national testing for all students in Australian schools) (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004).

The test performance results of students can then be linked to how well the school is achieving with regards to Western Australian education departmental and national benchmarks. The CIP Two directly influences how teachers will teach and
what curriculum they will deliver to the students. The CIP Two has the capacity to impose set teaching practices and expectations on all government schools in Western Australia. Its influence was felt from student and teacher performance to the kinds of reporting mechanisms schools use for parents and the community. Thus the CIP Two is the new management policy for schools to be centrally coordinated and monitored by the WADET. The CIP Two provides a systematic enmeshing with the *Creating the Future for Our Young People: Raising the Leaving Age* (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004) by articulating the K-10 years of compulsory education with the post-compulsory needs of adolescent students.

The ‘*Our Youth, Our Future Post-compulsory Education Review*’ policy (Curriculum Council, 2004) acted as a bridge between the compulsory years of education with years 11 and 12 by continuing the Outcomes teaching/learning system and allowing it to flow into post-compulsory education. Another aspect of the policy reform process of post-compulsory education being administered centrally was the push to increase student leaving to 17 years of age by 2008 (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004).

The *Creating the Future for Our Young People: Raising the Leaving Age* (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004) was developed to increase the leaving age for students to 17 years (year 12) by 2008. The main reasoning for this position was that the age of Western Australian school leavers was the youngest in Australia. The *Creating the Future for Our Young People: Raising the Leaving Age* (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2004) paper determined that after reviewing post-compulsory education in Western Australia that there needed to be a higher leaving age for school leavers (age 17). The
reasoning for this policy response was “…developing a new system of courses of study that incorporates the strengths of the current system with the new system [to] … provide for all students, regardless of whether they plan to attend TAFE, university or employment” (Department of Education and Training of WA, 2004, p.13). In this document there is a discussion on the changing role of secondary schools in Western Australia to act as an interface between TAFE, employment and University by providing a variety of study options for students. The document places in context the extent of school-based reform and how schools are changing in line with a raft of national agenda educational reforms over the last fifteen years.

The current reforms involve the changing roles and functions of schools to incorporate a more diverse role in the community and a recentralisation of power while increasing the level of accountability and responsibility on teachers. To facilitate the transition to the new system, CC used an adaptive implementation process of consultation with the main stakeholders in education and training in Western Australia. This process was chosen to reduce the resistance and to improve participants’ understandings of the new system. The CC claims to have enabled the active participation of teachers and other stakeholders in a series of professional development workshops to assist with the development of the new courses for years 11 and 12, in order to provide a transition from the old system (Curriculum Council of WA, 2004). Even though the new system is a prescribed curriculum, in some ways this approach will develop teacher understandings and provide a more effective introduction than what occurred with the Curriculum Framework (1998) and the Student Outcomes Statements (1999) implementation. These recent changes have had a profound effect upon the role and functions of schools. The curriculum changes
mandated in the above discussion reflect the recentralisation of control over education at the national and state levels through a range of tactics including funding, benchmark testing, performance management and outcomes-based education.

**Discussion of the new post-compulsory education system in Western Australia**

The function of schools has changed markedly with the incorporation of vocational education and training as an extension of the curriculum in post-compulsory education. This trend has been evident since the early 1990s with a succession of pilot programs, such as FAST TRACK and Structured Work Based Learning to introduce the role of schools as training providers and an articulation point to TAFE, further education and training and work. Throughout the 1990s the appearance of vocational training in schools was at best *ad hoc* and sporadic, with the greatest uptake being in schools with few TEE-bound students.

The new system aimed to systematically integrate TEE, WSA and VET (including TAFE National training modules in schools) in order to provide increased access and equity for students in years 11 and 12 (Curriculum Council of WA, 2002). This represented a major shift in emphasis for many schools away from the traditional academic learning areas. The new system aimed to build lifelong learning skills rather than rely on only academic knowledge acquisition.

With this change in direction for schools emerged the new role of schools as providers of a service – education and training to clients (students). According to Robertson (2000), this role reinforces the management of schools in a hierarchical top-down way. The new role for schools saw the development of corporate style
management, which required greater emphasis on quality outcomes than inputs. It also emphasised increased competition between teachers for increasingly scarce resources (Robertson, 2000). In addition, the new system required reporting to stakeholders to be more transparent with greater accountability to district offices for curriculum improvements and strategic school planning. This new school culture requires a paradigm shift for all staff from the principal to the teachers. As staff roles change so do the expectations of themselves and the community—recipients of the services.

The schools have to fight for their share of scarce resources by demonstrating competence to produce graduate students ready to participate in post-school options. There is a need for the marketing of schools, in order to attract students to the school. This competitiveness is a reflection of what is occurring in the global arena of education and training provision in other OECD countries.

The new post-compulsory curriculum represents a major milestone in the development of education in Western Australia. The impacts of the new system aimed to include a replacement of the old grades-based system of assessing and accrediting students’ progress with an outcomes-based system in years 11 and 12. It required comparability of courses between school sites, while offering greater choice of pathways, flexible entry and exit points. It was anticipated that there would be greater access and equity for students in rural and remote locations through the use of information technology and flexible delivery methods. This required more articulation between schools, TAFE and other training providers, with no extra time for teachers to achieve this.
The new way students were to be assessed and accredited required overhauling, with the new range of courses and their provision as semesterised units of study. The new system was underpinned by an outcomes approach to assessment that required continuous formative assessment in order to provide an accurate reflection of the students’ progress. This was already occurring within VET courses in schools, but it needed to be carried out across all subjects when the system was fully operational. The benefit of this assessment was to be the inbuilt options to defer or choose different units and the portability of the student’s achievements to other school sites or TAFE (or other training providers). The need for comparability of assessment between sectors was paramount if the new system was to have credibility in the community. This could only be achieved with considerable teacher time spent in consensus moderation meetings on the new subjects, conducted in a variety of locations and additional extra effort by teachers in their schools. This is what occurred as a result of the trial by the eight English teachers at Glasheen SHS.

Under the new system the choice provided by pathways education and training can be advantageous to students as it provides a guide and an entry point into other sectors of education, training and employment. However, the availability of course choices was affected by what the school can provide in terms of staffing, resources, funding and time tabling. The need for accurate and helpful student counselling in year 10 is vital in order to enable students to choose their range of subjects to suit their personal needs and to meet graduation requirements. The flexibility of the new system to enable students to change direction throughout year 11 and 12 is an advantage over the old system, which locked students into a set course of study, often leading to a high attrition rate in post-compulsory education.
Therefore, the choice of study and mode of delivery (to provide access to remote students online) were designed to provide greater equity than had been achieved by public education to date.

The opportunities available in the new system were premised upon the streamlined and seamless articulation within schools and to other sectors. This required a large input from teachers to adapt to a new way of teaching, assessing, comparability and accrediting student achievement. This also impacted on the way teachers were educated at universities, requiring an up-to-date knowledge of technical/ vocational learning areas and a move away from the single discipline educated teacher. It also required the establishment of a two-way relationship that has not existed between schools, TAFE and other providers in Western Australia previously. The new system was designed to interconnect with the broader educational approaches nationally and internationally.

The CoS years 11 and 12 were expected to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the Western Australian education reforms to the national agenda and international agenda of other OECD member nations. The effects of such wholesale reform in years 11 and 12 with national benchmarks and funding frameworks impacted on schools, teachers, administrators and the community in Western Australia in a number of ways. The effects include increased workload for teachers, the development of a new curriculum for years 11 and 12, review of assessment and reporting to parents and a complete rewriting of assessment tasks and procedures by teachers. The consequences of these impacts need to be examined along with the everyday aspects of schools and teachers as the people who implement the policy and with whom responsibility lays for the local effects incurred.
Consequences for reforms include the changing roles of principals, administration and teaching staff with the demands of a more centralised systemic approach to administering the school’s everyday activities (Grundy, 2002). This has the potential to create further instability and resistance at the school level, as reform requires time and resources for implementation to occur. A possible consequence of such prolonged insecurity and instability in schools is the issue of sustaining the change and its impact on teachers in schools (Grundy, 2002). This thesis set outs to investigate these changes in post-compulsory education in schools and the impacts on individual teachers’ work and lives in order to view the mandated curriculum reform from the point of view of those most directly affected. Teachers and administrators are charged with implementing change under the auspices of post-compulsory reforms in addition to their usual workload at the local school level. Education policy made and decided at the central level requires local implementation, support and action in order to be successful. There are impacts of the current educational reforms, which have altered the post-compulsory education landscape permanently in Western Australia.

*Impacts of post-compulsory reform in Western Australia*

The impacts of the mandated national reforms to post-compulsory education in Western Australia focus around intensification of teachers’ workloads, increased surveillance and control from the CC and increased accountability and responsibility for teachers in schools. The CC has played a significant role in the reproduction of the national agenda of the Howard Federal Government.
The CC of Western Australia is a signatory to the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) that stipulates:

… [the] implementation of the National Training Framework, which affects recognition arrangements of Vocational Education and Training in schools (VET); and the establishment of the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA), which provides the means for national agreement on broad principles for quality certificates and practices in the certification of the achievements of students (Curriculum Council, 2002, p.8).

The CC as a member of ACACA “… agreed to a set of principles and standards that are applied by all States for the certification of students’ achievements in post-compulsory schooling” (Curriculum Council, 2002, p.9). The aim of this arrangement is to provide students with a portable, recognised, transferable certification of education and training when they leave school. It is a means of articulating between sectors, from school to TAFE, to University or workplace traineeship/apprenticeship schemes designed to give students the best post-school opportunities. There are issues here that are not clear with respect to how progress will be monitored and how this will lead to surveillance and control of teachers’ work within schools (Luke et al., 1997). The follow-on effect is the simultaneous centralising of power at the national policy level over state schools and the move away from state control over schools. This was achieved in large part by surveillance and control of teachers in schools in their implementation of the CoS.

Surveillance and control impacts

The provisions for monitoring this new system are enshrined in the mandatory requirements and obligations agreed to by the State. These include:

Curriculum Council will recognise VET in Schools … [to] meet the registration requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework, recognise as VET in Schools only that which delivers national industry and/or enterprise standards (as outlined by Training Packages); ensure that VET in Schools contributes to the achievement of senior secondary certificates (WACE) and
articulates with further training, higher education and employment; … [to] ensure opportunities exist for all groups of students to participate in VET in Schools, particularly for those under-represented in education and training. (Our Youth, Our Future, 2002, p.9)

It is evident that VET has been used as a tool at the national level to create the first national curriculum in Australia as a forerunner for the current mandated curriculum changes. As part of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) and agreements to adhere to MCEETYA policy, all secondary schools will have to provide VET courses in years 11 and 12.

This new arrangement may create an atmosphere of instability within its trial stages for all stakeholders in and around schools. There is a need for continual consultation and a public education of the new system in Western Australia and its consequences. In addition, there will need to be a comprehensive program of professional development for all teachers on the new courses, their assessment and reporting changes as teachers are the frontline of policy implementation. To a large degree, the success or failure of the new system rests with teachers.

Social impacts

Western (2000) makes the point that “… the central role of educational institutions in processes of class formation and inequality is guaranteed, even as these processes themselves change …” (p.103) thus resulting in the reinforcement of elitism in education. In the current climate of competition there are pressures on students to compete to gain entry to courses in VET or academic places in schools, combined with increasing costs of education and training courses. The push by employers to have highly trained young people is reinforcing the credentialism associated with post-compulsory education (Blackburn, 1999). A spin off of this reaction to change is
the increased status of VET in comparison to academic courses, which has exacerbated the competition between schools and other educational providers.

Kenway and Fitzclarence (2000) describe this as “a process of … emulation” (p.125), whereby schools compete to market and promote themselves as a more exclusive or advanced educational and training provider to the community in order to attract higher performing students. This process is commonplace now as government schools seek to compete with other schools, both government and private in the educational marketplace.

Angus and Seddon (2000) argue that what we are now witnessing is a process of “… social and organisational renorming of education …” (p.151). The ‘renorming’ that has occurred is a direct result of curriculum reform in schools and every sector of education and training arising from the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA). These reforms in educational practices are indicative of the reshaping impacts of national educational reform. As Angus and Seddon (2000) explain:

Their [policy] effects have been felt in educational organisations not just as imperatives that are mandated, but also as normative orientations which shape the agenda of possibilities for ongoing institutional design and change. (p.167)

Here, Angus and Seddon (2000) have outlined a sustainable view of educational reform as:

… a broad reform agenda that pursues community development and the reworking of state, market and community relations with a view to nation-building for the global era … recognises the social and cultural resources that make Australia distinctive. (p.208)

This view of curriculum reform includes the complex, interactive, evolving and culturally sensitive process of education in schools as a changeable organic set of
complex interrelationships. According to Angus and Seddon (2000), this is not happening in the current neo-liberal economic agenda for educational change. In their view, more connections need to be made between how teachers, schools, students and parents work together, and what they need to do to improve individual students’ educational learning outcomes.

The schools’ willingness to undertake reforms can be linked to parental pressures and preferences for academic education rather than values or social outcomes (Adnett & Davies, 2000). The affects of the national curriculum at the local school level will vary from school to school as a reflection of the local needs and environment (Adnett & Davies, 2000). The changes occurring in Australia have been similar to England and North America (and other OECD nations).

The increased role of vocational education in schools has led to increased administrative compliance between states and the Federal Government because of the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA). The mandated compliance built into Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (MCEETYA) concentrate on the delivery of quality education provision, competitiveness between schools and sectors for good outcomes, and the reporting and accountability of individual schools as training providers to the state and federal governments. The effects may create difficulties for schools that are chasing increased funding to meet local needs. These needs may relate to lower retention rates, socio-economic or cultural reasons that will affect how a school competes with a highly successful school. An example could be a school where TEE is no longer offered competing with a school that can provide the full range of new courses, up-to-date technology and attracts motivated teachers and
students. This equity issue is one that needs to be addressed in order for all schools to operate on a comparable level.

The increased use of benchmarks as targets for schools to reach is an issue that could further disadvantage individual schools. These nationally decided levels may be inappropriate for each state. There needs to be greater local autonomy in order for schools to meet their particular individual and community needs. The impression that students are commodities and they are sorted by their results and whether they meet set benchmarks is an important issue. If students are perceived and treated not as individuals but as commodities, is a negative impact of curriculum reform in Australian schools (Finlay & Finnie, 2002).

**Conclusions**

Education policy making in Australia has been influenced by the current neo-liberal economic agenda as a policy settlement in an era of coordinate federalism. The evolution of national mandated curriculum reform in post-compulsory education has been driven by this policy settlement within a global-facing, performance-based, self-managed marketised school environment. The critical examination of how policy is decided, by whom, how it is developed and implemented is a central aim of this research. Critical policy analysis plays an important part in the identification and examination of education policy and its impacts on teachers, students and local school communities in addition to national and international policy complexities.

The impetus of policy devised and monitored by MCEETYA since the early 1990s has provided the vehicle for the national push towards Federal government
centralisation of power over education in secondary schools in Australia. The policy created and mandated in states is a reproduction of the national policy position of MCEETYA as a result of coordinate federalism. This policy reproduction can be traced to the fiscal federalism operating since the 1990s between the states and the federal government. Fiscal federalism is part of coordinate federalism and ties state policy to national agreements by binding funding resources and curriculum reform in education. There are implications for such binding of fiscal power over state education provision and decision making that impact at the local school level.

There cannot be such an ideological shift in curriculum based on a neo-liberal economic managerialist agenda without impacts on schools, students and the wider community in Western Australian. The role of authorities such as the CC of Western Australia in promoting the national agenda of curriculum reform is significant. Part of the CC’s role is monitoring, surveillance and assessment of CoS in the new post-compulsory system in Western Australia. There are social impacts of such wholesale reform, which will become more obvious over time.

The arrangements for national accreditation and certification of post-compulsory education and training raises issues relating to the imposition of national curriculum on states’ systems as an impact of mandated curriculum reforms. There will be a need to expand traditional learning areas to be able to incorporate into already crowded timetables the CoS. Curriculum reform has significant impacts across communities and sites of education.

The national policy agenda constraints are central to and in common with all states’ post-compulsory education systems and provide a means of examining the
similarity of states’ policy formations in the last ten years. The neo-liberal economic agenda shaping the issues has resulted in the following requirements of quality: student/parental choice; competition and performance outcomes based learning; local organisational learning cultures; national curriculum and obligations; teacher skills, comparability and assessment; articulation between different education and training sectors and stakeholder acceptance. In order to develop an understanding of the new post-compulsory education system in Western Australia, I conducted an examination of teachers’ work over the timeframe of the implementation trial 2004-2005. How these issues affect teachers’ work in relation to the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis will be examined in the next chapter. The conceptual framework is labour process theory. The basis for the theory is that teachers (in this research) are having their work impacted by policy devised and mandated externally to their work context. The impacts of externally devised policy driving curriculum reform require analysis in relation to teachers’ work in Glasheen SHS in Western Australia.
Chapter 3: Labour process theory

Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to build the theoretical framework for the analysis of the research into teachers’ work. I have chosen to build the theoretical framework on labour process theory. In the previous chapter I analysed education policy and the context of education reform within the dimensions of globalisation, marketisation and new managerialism over time, space, political, economic, social and geographical layers as impacts on Australian national and state education using critical policy analysis (Prunty, 1985). These dimensions are influencing the trends occurring here in Australia (since the 1980s) and are mirroring what is happening in education policy reform in America, Britain, New Zealand and other OECD countries. My focus in this chapter is on explaining how labour process theory contributes to understanding the changing nature of teachers’ work.

In this Chapter I examine the following issues:

- labour process theory and how it can explain the role and value of individual workers as part of the production process
- how labour process theory helps us to understand teachers’ work today in light of post-compulsory education reforms occurring in secondary schools
- how labour process theory helps focus analysis on whose interests are being perpetuated by ongoing mandated curriculum reforms and changes in teachers’ work

Labour process theory (Braverman, 1974; Smyth 2001a; Kesson, 2004; Reid, 2003, and Rikowski, 2002) is focused on the relationships and forms of organisations
that individuals are involved with in the production process in society. The pivotal point here is how labour is valued or devalued according to the value and production of capital (Braverman, 1974). The complex sets of relationships between the work life of teachers and their place within the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of policy development is the theoretical point of this research. I use labour process theory to demonstrate the changing nature of teachers’ work in light of the global external and internal influences of educational reform on individuals in schools.

According to Smyth (2001b), this involves:

… thinking about the work of teachers differently … The labor process view of teaching I have adopted here … involves looking at the way the work of teaching is organized, whose interests are silenced or denied, how it came to be that way, and indeed how power and control are exercised. (pp.4-5)

The consequences of examining teachers’ work from a labour process theory perspective are broad ranging. For example, labour process theory leads to an appreciation of the increasing power and impact of the neo-liberal economic agenda that is sweeping through education at all levels in Australian society on teachers’ work. In turn, the changes happening to teachers’ work examined here make the connections between what is occurring at the national education policy level and the individual teacher level in Glasheen SHS.

Labour process theory provides a means of examining teachers’ work in a unique way in this research. That is, labour process theory:

- offers an opportunity to understand both the enabling and constraining elements of teachers’ work
- makes clear the complex set of interconnections and links between the local experience of teachers and global education agendas
• helps illuminate the changing relations between the nature of teachers’ work and curriculum reform
• addresses limitations of existing ‘teacher blind’ versions of teachers’ work espoused by the school improvement
• offers a way of reconceptualising teachers’ work in more socially critical and just ways

According to Giddens (1998), there are both enabling and constraining effects on teachers’ work in schools. From Giddens’ (1998) perspective, labour process theory offers a conceptual framework in which to examine both the lifeworld and the systemsworld of teachers’ work (Sloan, 2006). In other words, labour process theory offers an opportunity to personalise the data of mandated curriculum reform being imposed on a group of teachers through the use of critical policy ethnography of teachers’ work in context.

I achieve this by contextualising individual teacher accounts about their experiences in order to shed light on the emerging themes and issues affecting teachers’ work today. The context of each of the participants’ experiences with the mandated curriculum reform of the CoS in English was in the same school, learning area and year (11). To achieve this understanding of context, I examined the broader policy effects impacting teachers’ work in Chapter Two. Critical policy ethnography, allows for dual set of methods to be used to develop an analytical account of the intersection between teachers’ experiences and policy reform. That is, in order to capture the individual experiences and contextualise them in an external sphere of work, I underpinned critical policy ethnography with labour process theory as a means of uncovering and analysing the impacts and changes on teachers’ work.
Labour process theory also provides a critical lens through which to examine the connections between the local and global contexts. I am interested in exploring the commonalities and differences between what is happening to teachers’ work in Western Australian state schools and internationally. In this research I work within the context of one case study school, Glasheen SHS.

For example, analysis of international experience indicates that the impacts on teachers’ work include the separation of the intellectual processes of teaching and learning from the individual teacher. According to Mac an Ghaill (1992), “… evidence of the experiential complexity of the thesis of deskilling; that is, that the logic of capitalism determines a continual reformulation of jobs, working on the principle of separating conception from execution” (p.184). The resulting effect is a deskilling or separation of teachers’ thoughts and decision making and their teaching. This comment focuses attention on one of the effects of continuous structural reforms in the Western Australian system of education in the 1990s, which have culminated in the current mandated curriculum reforms teachers are required to implement.

In addition, Mac an Ghaill (1992) differentiates between the changes as being more work creating and less collaborative in nature for teachers as they are so busy trying to keep up with changes that they have no time to work together with colleagues (p.190). This observation is also true of the Western Australian experience, as will be demonstrated in later chapters where I discuss participant teachers’ comments and accounts. There are serious repercussions for teachers because reforms are continually affecting their work landscape, with little time to settle into a new pattern of work.
Moreover, Ozga (1988 cited in Mac an Ghaill, 1992) observes that:

… [there have been] changes in the contractual relationship between teachers and employers; in teachers’ negotiation rights (their abolition); in their control over the content of the curriculum and examinations; and changes in the pay and promotion in teaching. (p.178)

Ozga’s observation is also true of the Western Australian education system. From these three observations, it is clear that labour process theory can help explain and add insight to the changes that have occurred in Western Australia’s education system.

In Western Australia, reform has not been limited to curriculum reform for teachers and schools since the early 1990s. All aspects of teachers’ work have been reformed and restructured to reflect an economic imperative of the neo-liberal economic agenda of successive federal and state governments.

Smyth (2001b), in critically examining teachers’ work in light of mandated curriculum reform based on Ozga’s (1988) view, says that:

... this labor process perspective on teaching has been spawned because of growing dissatisfaction with at least two areas of research on schools and school
In addressing these shortcomings, Smyth (2001a) advocates the importance of investigating teachers’ views and understandings through the use of close up qualitative research. Smyth (2001a) states that:

Studying the work of teaching, he [Connell, 1985] says, not only enables us to see more clearly the labor process of teaching and the importance of gender relations in particular, but it also enables us to bring together three levels of analysis that have hitherto remained separate - teachers’ life histories, the study of the institutional life of the school, and the large-scale structural factors affecting schooling. (p.7)

Mac an Ghaill (1992) cites Connell (1985) in claiming that there are three important facets that need to be analysed together in order to glean insights into education reform. Using Connell’s (1985) guidance, Mac an Ghaill (1992) reports that:

… after a decade of imposed State intervention, different teacher perceptions have emerged concerning the meaning of the recent curriculum restructuring that has included: the introduction of new management information systems, the development of new educational technologies, the promotion of curriculum specialists, the proliferation of new courses, the production of commercial pre-packaged learning materials and the new vocationalism, as well as the contradictory central government and media prescriptions regarding the need for more traditional and more modern teaching methods. A major issue has been the question of the significance of this intervention in serving to dislocate the structure of teachers’ occupational identity and culture … (p.194)

In addition to being a theoretical framework capable of leading to important insights, labour process theory is also progressive and can provide guidance on what needs to be done to improve and repair the less desirable impacts of continual changes. For example, in order to minimise the effects of dislocation of the structure of teachers’ occupational identity and work culture, Hakken (2000) suggests that work can be transformed through a ‘resocialising’ process where “… the idea that work would be once again substantially more social (less individuated) and that its sociality would be celebrated—neither ignored (as in the field of Human Relations) nor suppressed (as in
Taylorism” (p.172). This, Hakken (2000) believes, can be done through the use of ethnographic research to illuminate such deficiencies in today’s workplaces.

In addition, Hakken (2000) asserts that in the:

… face of growing globalisation of workplaces positive changes can come with the ‘resocialising’ of workspace and allowing individuals to work in social groups with … the relative abandonment of degrading forms of work organisation. (p.173)

The implications for teachers’ work are enormous as reforms are occurring on all fronts in terms of work roles, work intensity, curriculum development pressures, meeting prescribed external benchmarks and serving multiple masters in terms of outside government agencies. Labour process theory assists in the analysis and understanding of what is occurring to teachers’ work.

Labour process theory

Labour process theory, according to Smyth (2001a) is:

… basically concerned with the relationships and forms of organization that are involved at the point of production. The argument is that in the process of production, capital unfairly appropriates an increasing share of the final value of the product, turning workers into mere “wage laborers” (Knights & Willmott, 1990, p.3), receiving less in wages than they add in value of production. It is the manner in which the true value of labour is concealed that is the key concern. (p.9)

The central focus of labour process theory is on how workers are viewed and valued in terms of their relationship to the production function, rather than their individual qualities as unique, multi-faceted people. Using this perspective, I examine how teachers’ work has been reduced and devalued by the application of production values over individual values. For now I wish to elaborate the features of labour process theory around:
• labour as power
• labour power control
• individual agency and
• understanding teachers’ work

Labour power

How labour is constituted and divided in a capitalist society is an important starting point for developing a theoretical understanding of how individuals (in this case teachers) are valued and divided in terms of their labour power. According to Rikowski (2002), “As labour, we are always in the process of being subordinated to capital yet always kicking against the traces, resisting being dominated by the social force (capital) that we, through our labour, have created” (p.7). The emphasis of Rikowski’s (2002) analysis is on the internal battle of individuals being ‘socially constructed’ as labour and capital, as one cannot exist without the other in society.

This new lens of applying labour process theory moves beyond the Marxist deterministic approach of labour being only subordinated to capital as an external force, beyond the individual (Rikowski, 2002). It is here that I am connecting with the notion of human capital in context with the internal contradictions of a person being socially constructed both as labour and capital. The link to how human capital or labour power impacts on capital is, as Rikowski (2002) explains, the “weakest link”, in relation to how education can be of central importance to the development of learners and future workers.

The concept of labour power, according to Rikowski (2002) is:
... the unique commodity; the only commodity whose use-value is that is [sic] creates more value—surplus value—than is incorporated in its maintenance as a commodity. It is one commodity that enables the expansion of the world of commodities, of capital. (p.10)

The significance of Rikowski’s (2002) analysis also distinguishes the forms of interrelationships between how capital expands, spatially as a global transformation of work over time and as ‘social value’ through the development of individuals and their own labour value (p.8). The paradox of capital’s weakest link being labour is also the pivotal point where individuals can affect change to their own work conditions and have some power over their work experiences.

In relation to education and the work of teachers this connection is the most significant factor of individual work determination. Rikowski (2002) refers to this process as the:

... social production of labour-power. Their significance in this respect has increased, and is rapidly increasing, historically. Education and training are increasingly being subjected to processes of reduction to labour-power production, or human capital production—human capital being the social form assumed by labour-power in capitalist society. (p.9)

The connection between worker self-determination and role in the social production of labour power is explained by Reid (2003) as the:

... ways in which worker consent is organised within the capitalist labour process. Since workers regulate themselves, as well as being regulated by others, control of the labour process can be understood through discursive work practices, as well as material practices. Power relationships are not unidimensional: they are contradictory, complex, and circuitous .... Braverman had ignored the many ways in which workers resist various forms of control. (p.562)

The role of individuals as having some determination over how their labour is employed in the production process and how to effect control over the changes in work, is a central addition to Braverman’s (1974) early work on the power relations between individuals and their role and value as labour (Reid, 2003).
According to Braverman (1974) and Kesson (2004) work is becoming a more dissociated experience for individuals as their value and decision making attributes are not encouraged in order to carry out a work task. In addition, Braverman (1974) and Kesson (2004) assert that the individual is becoming more alienated from their work roles in relation to decision making and control over their work. This process is occurring across all sectors of work and can be observed in schools where the bureaucratic process of change is removing the power of decision making from the individual teacher to centralised management.

Braverman (1974) comments on Marx’ view that this process:

… shows how the processes of production are, in capitalist society, incessantly transformed under the impetus of the principal driving force of that society, the accumulation of capital … [This] manifests itself, first, as a continuous change in the labor processes of each branch of industry, and second, as a redistribution of labor among occupations and industries. (p.9)

The continuous reform of education through a multitude of mandated curriculum reforms over the last ten years has altered how teachers see their roles and experience their work in secondary schools in Western Australia. The reforms have impacted on every part of teachers’ work with adverse effects. Braverman (1974) suggests that workers have been “… robbed of their craft and been given little or nothing to take its place” (p.5). This comment describes the process teachers have been experiencing through curriculum reform in the last ten years. There is a need to examine how these changes are affecting teachers by using a labour process theory approach to analysing the emerging themes of this research. This research makes the connections (Reid, 2003; Rikowski, 2002) that are often left out of research into teachers’ work between how individuals (labour) are both labour and capital. It is crucial to examine how organisations impact on teachers’ work in relation to time, place and the effects of the
neo-liberal economic agenda; and how curriculum reform failure is often blamed on teachers (Smyth et.al. 2000, p.16). All of these connections need to be examined in order to clearly demonstrate how teachers’ work is being impacted on by curriculum reform in the present economic, cultural, political and social environmental conditions in Australia. The way work changes and the ways in which individuals experience and understand these changes can be illustrated through the critical theoretical framework of labour process theory.

Labour process theory has its roots, according to Braverman (1974) and Kesson (2004), in Marxist ideas of labour production and value of outputs. Braverman’s (1974) and Kesson’s (2004) work on labour process theory has shed light on the changing nature of work and the diminishing value of labour’s role in the production process to be less than capital, or any other part of the process.

I am applying this theoretical approach to teachers’ work in a secondary school context where significant post-compulsory mandated curriculum reforms are occurring. I am especially interested in the ‘concealment of the process of valorisation’ (Knight & Willmott, 1990, p.4) and what impact this is having on teachers’ work. This concealment can come in a variety of forms relating to what Smyth (2001a) describes as:

- Deskilling, or how the nature of skills change; Management and control, or the strategies of how the labor force is controlled; The influence of the labor market, or how fluctuations in the demand for labor along with changes in technology can shape the nature of the labour force. (p.10)

The effects of these concealments or diminishment of teachers’ work can have detrimental effects on individual teachers (Kesson, 2004; Knight & Willmott, 1990). The effects can range from the intensification of work, continual reform in
curriculum, monitoring and surveillance of work, increased assessment and reporting, and increased accountability and responsibility for individual teachers in schools. These effects are part of the sub-division of work into diminishing groups of management that are impacting on the everyday activities of teachers in schools.

A further consequence of the sub-division of teachers’ work has been the naturalising order of the neo-liberal economic agenda in the silencing and marginalisation of teachers’ voices despite their active role in educational reform in schools. Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) describe how “The voices of the heads, senior managers, classroom teachers or the students remain, for the most part, strangely silent” (p.6). There is a need for research to make explicit the lived experiences of teachers in this context and how they are working toward the implementation of policy produced outside of their school and how they understand, experience, and respond to these changes.

A further issue for teachers is their perceived reluctance to become involved as a result of past experiences and ‘sunk costs’ of their own time, energy and professional development (Adnett & Davies, 2000). In order for individual teachers to become actively involved, they require some sense of certainty with regard to timing, resources and support for curriculum reform at their local school. The reluctance to become involved can stem from what Kesson (2004) describes as ‘alienation’ of teachers from their work.

The issues impacting on teachers’ work today have been further developed by Kesson’s (2004) work on alienation of the individual from their work and ownership and control of their work roles. Kesson (2004) asserts:
Two intentions … [that are] to underscore the idea that capitalist education is dedicated to the reproduction of a different work force, disciplined to contemporary modes and needs of production … [and] thus to read current policies directed at poor children sceptically as serving the present and future necessity for a large reserve pool of labor for the deskilled jobs of the new ‘service economy’ and military service for the new imperialism. (p.1)

The analysis of how individuals are categorised and constituted by curriculum policy decisions in schools from a young age reinforces the experiences of teachers facing changes to their work as a result of mandated curriculum reforms. The point made by Kesson (2004) is that students and teachers are experiencing alienation in schools and society as a result of curriculum reform driven by the underlying neo-liberal economic and political agenda of the Howard Government. A significant result of this alienation was, as Rikowski (2002) describes, the objectification of individuals whereby they no longer had ownership or power to control their work without high level managerial surveillance imposed by the WADET and the CC (Rikowski, 2002). Therefore, the objectification of individuals from their work serves as a central mechanism of control.

*Labour power control*

Increasingly, teachers’ work is being controlled and regulated in order to define and restrict their influence over students in their classrooms. Curriculum is a central control mechanism of teachers, as it requires adherence, structural change, monitoring, surveillance and accountability of all teachers in schools. According to Smyth et. al. (2000), control is three pronged “…. Defining the curriculum … [and] supervising and evaluating teachers … [and] engineering compliance and consent …” (p.38). The central purpose of control is to order and administer individual teachers’ work to an extent where the individual is busy complying and accounting for their work time. Smyth et al. (2000) further assert that there are different mechanisms of
control within a five pronged model. These mechanisms are “[i] Regulated market control … [ii] Technical control … [iii] Bureaucratic control … [iv] Ideological control … [and] control through [v] ‘disciplinary power’” (p.38). In order to understand fully the impacts of these control mechanisms, there needs to be some discussion on how each operates to affect the labour power of teachers.

[i] Regulated market control

Regulated market control is, according to Smyth et al. (2000), dependent on how well the education system is targeting and reaching consumer and market needs. Smyth et al. (2000) assert, “Thus the market may be regulated through such means as making curriculum specifications explicit, devising ways to monitor and evaluate teacher performance …” (p.40). Regulated market control is used at the state and federal government level of policy making in post-compulsory education. The recent curriculum reforms mandated by the Western Australian government reflect a perceived need to change current curriculum to better meet the needs of students and industry. At the Federal Government level, the policy and funding announcements of 2004-2005 by former Education Minister Nelson (discussed in Chapter Two), directly link the national agenda for curriculum reform to the need to fulfil our competitive place in the global economy, and to do this there needs to be national certification and reform in schools. The needs of the market and industry are a driving force for reform of post-compulsory education in Australia. Regulated market control impacts teachers’ work by enforcing market based measures such as benchmarks and targets in education for teachers to meet on a performance management basis.
Reid (2003) explains how teachers relinquish their “creative capacity” in the form of labour to managers and central departmental control. The control over teachers’ work is handed in large part to organisations like the WADET and the CC of Western Australia. The education production process is described by Reid (2003) as having:

… three factors of production—the instruments of production, the raw materials, and labour power…such as equipment, buildings and teaching resources … owned by the state … [and] the raw materials are the students who are ‘owned’ by their parents …. [that] also include the knowledge or cultural capital that the education system seeks to impart. The state owns the labour power of its teachers …. as [the] employer, organises these factors into a particular set of relationships of production. It is the organisation that constitutes the labour process of teaching. (p.565)

The relationship between the labour process of teaching and individual experiences with students has what Reid (2003) determines to be relational aspects of education community, management and the broader community. There is, as Reid (2003) suggests, the education production process where the state government requires all three factors of production to work together to produce educational outcomes with students. The curriculum is therefore a form of management installed by the state government to organise and monitor the work of teachers.

Moreover, Reid (1999) sees regulated market control as an evolving control mechanism within schools since the intervention of school-based self-management in the early 1990s. Reid (1999) considers the ramifications of the contradictions in schools: they have become more responsible and accountable, with less decision making and self-determination, in a regulated market. This is the paradox of self-management. Reid (1999) also identifies ‘coercive federalism,’ whereby the Federal Government seeks to control and restrict the states’ funding for schools unless mandated market-driven benchmarks and targets are agreed to and reached. This form
of control is embedded within technical control as a mass of systems to document and quantify the work of teachers.

**[ii]Technical control**

According to Smyth et al. (2000), technical control is “… a number of systems which are embodied in structures rather than people …. [it is] encoded into the very basis of the curricular itself” (p.40). These systems of control include the managing of data for school indicators such as socio-economic status, enrolments, diversity of backgrounds and test scores against set benchmarks. Technical control is a lever to facilitate market control by the centralisation of this information at the WADET level and Federal Government level. The consequences of such access to data about schools are the quantification and league tabling of individual schools and teachers.

The development of national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy as a result of the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (1999) is another means for developing compliance among teachers in schools (Kesson, 2004). How these standardised outcomes have been influencing schools via curriculum reform and impacting teachers’ work is dependent on the historical, social and ideological influences of the past ten years.

This time period can be characterised by a shift in how labour was valued in terms of individuals’ roles in work. That is how economic global forces caused a shift from a human capital model of valuing labour as an input to more than just producing a worker out of post-compulsory school students. According to Quiggin (1999):

The human capital model [HCM] (Mincer 1958) is an elaboration of the commonsense notion that the function of schools is to teach students, that is, to
provide them with information and skills that will be valuable in later life… to encompass learning that does not contribute to higher market earnings. (p.131)

The role of schools, as Quiggan (1999) describes, is far more than merely producing workers for the economy; it is to serve the students and to broaden their understandings of life and the complexities of living socially, culturally, politically, ethically and environmentally. It is also evident from Quiggan’s (1999) analysis that the HCM has been replaced with a more market-oriented, worker-producing model that is detrimental to individuals’ work experiences and personal value in society. According to Quiggan (1999), the current economic model driving the neo-liberal economic agenda of education, and many other areas of public services, is Screening Theory and Public Choice Model (PCM) (p.131). The influence of economic models imposed as a technical control in educational reform is part of the larger mechanism, bureaucratic control.

Bureaucratic control

Bureaucratic control is explained by Smyth et al. (2000) as “… like technical control it grows out of the structure of the education system, rather than from personal relationships between management and worker … it is embedded in the social and organizational structure of educational institutions” (p.41). Therefore, bureaucratic control is the umbrella of all mechanisms of control. It is the system-wide structure that dictates regulations, time, activities and data formation and collection from individual schools. Bureaucratic control is explained by Reid (2000) as “… the structure and language of corporate management, a technical-rational form of educational governance” (p.191). The corporate style of management suggested by Reid (1999) is a replacement for the old style bureaucracy of education management. It can be argued that corporate management has further facilitated the increased
intervention in education by the Federal Government since the early 1990s. The takeover by a corporate style of management has also changed the language of school management to be more oriented towards meeting the demands of the market for educational outcomes (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998).

These practices of reconstructing roles and invalidating individual practices are central to how bureaucratic control operates in schools. Teachers are under more pressure now to create new curriculum while teaching their full load without any monetary compensation or extra time (observations from case study teachers, 2004/2005). Teachers have been continuously measured and quantified, while experiencing continuous change directly related to the performativity framework now underpinning all aspects of teachers’ work (Knights & Willmott, 1990).

The separation and alienation of teachers from their historical place and value of work practices is occurring as a result of the Courses of Study (CoS) in Western Australia (Finlay & Finnie, 2002; Kesson, 2004). This can be aligned as explained by Braverman (1974) to Taylor’s (1911) “concept of control” as part of an efficient management structure over workers. The idea of control through management, according to Taylor (1911), required three principles to be maintained. These were:

First principle … The managers assume … the burden of gathering together all of the traditional knowledge which in the past has been possessed by the workmen and then of classifying, tabulating, and reducing this knowledge to rules, laws, and formulae. (p.113)

This principle can be observed underpinning the current mandated curriculum reforms as the mandated nature of the changes in teaching practices to implement the CoS. The characteristics of the centralised management hierarchy are to assume control
over the power and appropriation of knowledge and what teachers have generated as new units of curriculum for years 11 and 12 in their own time. The means of production are: the teachers are ‘inserviced’ to produce a conforming set of units to be the foundation of the new courses for English and then give their knowledge and work up to the central office WADET and the CC. The individual teacher’s work is then accepted as valid and disseminated among other schools as a means of legitimising the new way of teaching and learning in years 11 and 12 (observations and teacher experiences, 2004/2005). It is here that Taylor’s (1911) first principle of management and control over workers is still evident and imposing over the work of teachers. An example of the further subdivision of teachers’ work is the very nature of the new courses described as units of work. Individual teachers’ work is broken down into small components or tasks to simplify the complexity of teaching, only to be later reconstituted as the new curriculum for all schools (observations and teacher experiences, 2004/2005). Thus the knowledge and expertise of teachers is being harvested and then made into a new curriculum to suit management’s needs.

Braverman (1974) describes Taylor’s (1911) second principle as:

… all possible brain work should be removed from the shop and centered in the planning or laying-out department … the principle of the separation of conception from execution: mental labor is first separated from manual labor and as we shall see, is then itself subdivided rigorously according to the same rule. (p.114)

The central premise in the second principle is the separation of knowledge and conception of ideas and planning from the individual. This labour process has occurred with the creation of the CoS in English. An example is the need for teachers to attend and participate in mandated in-service meetings, where they are required to give examples of their work and be reviewed by members of management from the
CC (observations and teacher experiences, 2004/2005). The teachers’ knowledge and experience are then synthesised and reproduced into the management’s planning and implementation of the CoS in English. There is no additional payment or acknowledgement of the individual teacher’s professional work during these meetings (observations and teacher experiences, 2004/2005). This is further evidence of the diminishing value of teachers’ work.

The conditions of Taylor’s (1911) third principle of management are according to Braverman (1974) as follows:

…. The essential idea of “the ordinary types of management” … is that each workman has become more skilled in his own trade than it is possible for anyone in the management to be, … therefore, the details of how the work shall be done must be left to him [the manager]. (p.118)

It is this third principle that dictates how the work is to be done, by whom and how long the task should take. Therefore, the imposition of management into every aspect of the individual’s work is demonstrated in the development, timing and implementation of the CoS in English. An example of this style of management by the WADET in Western Australia was the timeline for the introduction of the English courses to commence in 2006. There were concerns being voiced by teachers about the hurried implementation when the courses were still only in their outline stage, with no detail on assessment structures or final external examination in English (observations and teacher experiences, 2004, 2005). The media coverage of the CoS generated more debate about the efficacy of the changes and why they were being imposed in such a short time frame in schools (The West Australian, 20 June, and 5 July, 2004).
The effects of Taylor’s (1911) three principles of management and control over the labour process are evident in the curriculum reform process in secondary schools in Western Australia. The effects on teachers’ work can be described as dehumanising of the individual in favour of the production process of education.

Braverman (1974) explains “This displacement of labor as the subjective element of the process, and its subordination as an objective element in a productive process now conducted by management, is an ideal realized by capital ….” (p.172). The objectification and commodification of individuals as part of the production process is an inherent problem for teachers and their work (Rikowski, 2002). The role management plays in reproducing this reification is continuing, with curriculum reform being the context for the control over the labour and work of teachers.

Therefore, I have observed what Braverman (1974) explains as:

Management has become administration, which is a labor process conducted for the purpose of control within the corporation, and conducted moreover as a labor process exactly analogous to the process of production, although it produces no product other than the operation and coordination of the corporation. (p.267)

The parallel nature of management with the production of curriculum and education outcomes has developed into a dualistic control of teachers’ work in Western Australian secondary schools. The self-perpetuating state of management to control by continuous changes and destabilisation of the workforce is a central component of the current situation in secondary schools. An outcome of the greater role of management in schools leads to the question of whose values and interests are being served by continuous mandated curriculum reforms. These needs are having a destabilising influence on schools (Helsby, 1995), resembling Troman’s (2000) views on how work exists in a high risk, low trust sphere of testing, targets and pressures on individuals. The use of performance measures to commoditise and control teachers’
work is a central tenet of the current management structure of Western Australian secondary schools. The current mandated curriculum reforms are serving the needs of the management bureaucracy within the WADET and the CC of Western Australia while promoting ideological control of teachers’ work.

Iv] Ideological control

Ideological control can be defined, according to Smyth et al. (2000) as “… being located in …. [market based] ideas, language and beliefs …. [and] Its primary purpose is to organize teacher consent to the values embedded in the prevailing educational settlement [new managerialism]” (p.43). The present dominant educational settlement involves outcomes education within a market of education to suit the economy’s needs. The reasoning behind outcomes education was primarily a result of the perceived need to reform what was taught and how it was taught to students in schools. The dominance of the double-edged sword of outcomes and a market economic rationalist agenda for education reverberated across schools and teachers as they clamber to change their teaching methods and practices to reach the set targets and benchmarks. The rise of rationalist economic ideological control in education meant that students were educated to take part in a more competitive economy.

The impacts of the current economic agenda of Screening and Public Choice Models (PCM) are that they restrict the broader, general education of students in schools. This is especially relevant to the growing emphasis in post-compulsory vocational education and training. Quiggan (1999) outlines how Screening Theory selects certain capable students for academic courses through the use of ranking; this occurs with the current TEE. The implication for students is that only a chosen few
will experience an academic education in post-compulsory learning environments. The majority of students are then encouraged into less rigorous courses of study of a more vocational nature. The reinforcement of vocational education for the majority is where the economy derives most of the labour required for processes of production.

The impacts of PCM include the reduction in spending in schools, increased class sizes, and the overall reduction of resources to government schools as a means of increasing educational outputs in students (Quiggan, 1999, p.135). The PCM represents the economic validation of the current political agenda based on a neo-liberal economic agenda of: rationalisation of resources; competition for funding and status; increased accountability and responsibility for individual workers, including surveillance and control of work; and the intensification of work in most organisations, including schools. The neo–liberal economic agenda has affected how education is controlled and managed in Australia.

The prevalence of this neo-liberal economic agenda marks a turning point in Australian history, where the implied constitutional rights of states to administer education policy are overturned in favour of a borrowed set of policies and ideology from overseas jurisdictions (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Painter, 2001). There has been a significant cultural, economic, political and social ideological shift in how education is valued from a belief in the intrinsic values associated with helping individuals to develop in a general education to a market oriented, competitive, accountability management of teachers and students in an outputs-based system of education. The changes can be observed in policy and ideology borrowed from overseas.
The result of borrowed policies and ideologies can, as Reid (1999) suggests, lead to deskillling of teachers as school-based curriculum development is a borrowed and interpreted set of policies from an international setting and transplanted without meeting local needs into a school. The result of curriculum borrowing is often the failure of the initiative or new curriculum, which tends to be laid at the feet of teachers in schools. In order to control teachers and try to ensure success of mandated reforms, the WADET and CC have put into place a number of disciplinary controls. Therefore, policy is being used to regulate and discipline teachers into working in a manner that best meets WADET’s system needs.

Disciplinary power

Disciplinary power is used by the WADET to reinforce dominance of the ideological control by dictating what teachers will teach and reducing any chance of departure from this dominant educational ideology (Smyth, 2001a, p.43). Disciplinary power and control has significant impacts on how individual teacher’s work is regulated, monitored and surveilled in order to produce set outcomes for learners in their classes. The impacts of this form of control influences the individual agency of every teacher’s work in school. Moreover, the labour power of each teacher is affected by the impacts of controls on their every action. Disciplinary control works by creating parameters of work for teachers within the education system. This creates sets of information to quantify what teachers do and how well they are reaching set benchmarks or targets.

The performance framework approach is designed to quantify teachers’ work into a set of competencies that define the work of individuals (Department Education
and Training of Western Australia, 2005). The further narrowing of teachers’ work into set categories of operations and service delivery is contributing to the intensification of teachers’ work (Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Reid, 1999; Smyth, 2001a), technocratisation, and deprofessionalisation of their work against the backdrop of international and federal influences on how schools function through surveillance and control (Hursh and Martina, 2003). A further example of how teachers’ work is being mandated and controlled is the introduction of the CoS in English. There are now more pressures on teachers to include the requirement for all teachers teaching a CoS to report directly to the CC at the commencement of every year with a detailed program of their teaching strategies, learning activities, assessments and reporting structures (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2005).

Teachers also needed to attend compulsory moderation meetings where their professional judgements were be compared and recorded against school performance (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2005). The nature of such an intrusion into individual teachers’ work and their professional conduct is not only surveillance and control at a highly centralised power level but an insult to the profession (Smyth, 2001a; Smyth et.al. 2000). This situation can be likened to what Braverman (1974) describes as the “new working class”, where we can see what is occurring to teachers via the process of deprofessionalisation and loss of individual decision making ability by “educated labor” (p.26). This is reinforced by what Smyth (2001a) calls the ‘dislocation of teachers’ from their work and their expert knowledge and abilities. The dislocation of educated labour is having a deleterious effect on teachers’ work in schools.
In addition, Braverman (1974) details how the increased need for educated labour and credentials in work such as teaching has not translated into greatly increased “…prestige, status, [or] pay…” (p.36). The combined effect of intensification of teachers’ work, deprofessionalisation, technocratisation of work, surveillance and control, accountability and external influences from the Federal Government have resulted in less status, prestige and remuneration for teachers today (observations of teachers, 2004/2005). The role of schools and teachers’ work in a capitalist society is according to Rikowski (2002):

…[a]…complex, contradictory and *living* commodity that schools and training organisations are in the business of socially producing, and it is the process of production that leads us to characterise education and training organisations and institutions today as being decisively capitalist in nature. (p.18)

The relationship between teachers, education departments and curriculum regulators is of significance as this relationship is where teachers experience both the power to affect changes or not to their work practices and the restrictions placed upon them by the regulatory organisations controlling education at the governmental level. It is here that Rikowski (2002) explains how and why governments control and restrict teachers from expressing their views or criticising curriculum reform. Rikowski (2002) points to governments ensuring that the schools and students (labour) produced by the education process are available to meet the needs of the economy in an internationally competitive sense and to ensure that labour is produced in a certain way to suit the needs of the economy; furthermore, this restricts the opportunities for teachers to voice their concerns resulting in a reform process that can “erase critical space” (Rikowski, 2002, p.19) over how curriculum reform impact students and their own work.
The mandated curriculum reforms affecting teachers’ work are being delivered through a top-down, hierarchical management structure. The school education system in Western Australia has turned 180 degrees away from the devolution of the 1980s and 1990s, which did not deliver what it promised in terms of allowing more freedom for individual schools to make decisions and plan for local needs to a more centralised, controlling form of management (Smyth, 2001a). The new managerialism mentioned earlier in this chapter is the vehicle for the delivery of the new performance-based management structure underlying the CoS in Western Australian secondary schools. Braverman (1974) explains the role of organisations like the WADET and the CC as “… Management habituated to carrying on labor processes in a setting of social antagonism” (p.36). In addition, Finlay and Finnie (2002) explain how the new management and development of ‘quasi education market’ conditions in schools are creating tensions and conflicts for teachers and their work. Finlay and Finnie (2002) explain how:

There is a discrepancy between the market-led managerialism which leads to young people being treated as commodities and the alternative market view of young people as potential or actual clients with educational and training needs to be met. (p.149)

The position of students and teachers parallel each other in terms of a lack of ownership, control and direction over their educational learning and work experiences. Finlay and Finnie (2002) and Reid (1999) explain how the management and leaders of education departments and councils control students and teachers in schools and treat them as commodities in the education production process.

The management and performance hoops imposed as a result of the CoS are a means by which changes to teachers’ work can be created under the auspices of a
better curriculum for both teachers and students in secondary schools. According to Braverman (1974):

… reforms that are being proposed…represent a style of management rather than a genuine change in the position of the worker. They are characterised by a studied pretense of worker “participation”… and to have the illusion of making decisions by choosing among fixed and limited alternatives designed by management which deliberately leaves insignificant matters open to choice. (p.43)

The management strategy identified by Braverman (1974) has been borne out in the development and implementation of the mandated CoS in 2005. All of the real decisions have been made at the top level of the WADET and the CC (observations and teacher experiences, 2004). The combined effect on teachers’ work has been: a reduction in individual decision making and agency; a more regimented and controlled adoption of outcomes-based education, without any real curriculum except what is created by teachers for the system; and greater surveillance and responsibility.

**Individual agency and structure**

Individual teacher’s ability to work and make their own decisions has been greatly diminished by the mandated curriculum reforms introduced as part of the CoS. The structure that teachers work within is now straight jacketing them into a more controlled and determined way of working. Willmott (1999) argues that structure is part of, and dependent on, human agency and possesses “… irreducible causal powers and liabilities, which differentially condition agential courses of action.” (p.7). From this position, Willmott (1999) develops an argument for ‘analytical dualism’ where the differences between the interconnectedness of individual agency and structure can be ‘teased out’ and developed further. The analytical dualism concept, as explained by Willmott (1999) and Banfield (2003), resolves the categorical boundaries separating individual agency and structure as aspects of teachers’ work.
Sloan’s (2006) view “on the lifeworld of schools, [teachers], or issues of community, experience, and meaning [reflected in] an agency orientation …” (p.121) is also an important aspect of individual agency. According to Sloan (2006), the teachers’ experiences, meanings and understanding of their own agency as policy actors and active teachers are central to the research conducted here. The notion of individual agency or orientation is a pivotal point in developing an understanding of how teachers’ work is changing as a result of mandated curriculum reforms. Drawing on Banfield’s (2003) work, individual agency is part of everyday action but should not be reduced down to a simple cause and effect outcome (p.61). This is where, according to Banfield (2003), critical ethnography plays a part in the teasing out of tensions and experiences of individuals in their everyday work context.

The relationship between individual agency and structure can be further explored by what Rikowski (1996) explains as a need to release social research from the deterministic effects of previous Marxist analysis. This point is central to how labour power is conceived in this thesis as an interrelated set of human interactions with structures in schools and society.

Moreover, Rikowski (1996) sets out to reinvigorate the place for labour process theory in contemporary society by explaining how:

The apparently separate ‘things’ of society (state, money, capital and so on) are social phenomena, forms of social relations, the interconnections between which should be understood not as external (causal relations, for example), but as internal, as processes of transformation or metamorphosis. (p.17)

This is the link between how labour acts as individual agency and forms social relations in society. Therefore, human agency as labour power can be seen to be intricately interwoven into all aspects of social relations including structure in society.
Moreover, this interconnectedness is dynamic and changing over time and reflects the changes resulting from educational reform in schools influencing individual teachers’ agency and existing structures.

Rikowski (2002) develops the significance of the interconnectedness of individual agency as labour power and structure, in the following way:

….. Labour power has real social existence when it is transformed within the labour process into actual labour. It has a dual mode of social existence. On the one hand, labour-power exists as a virtual entity (a capacity, a potential) within the labour market, or to be more accurate, the market in labour-power (McNally, 1993) On the other hand, in the capitalist labour process, labour-power has real social existence; labourers call forth and activate an array of capacities, attributes and capabilities within their personhoods as they set about the process of labour. (p.10)

Here, Rikowski (2002) explains how labour power is transformed as part of human agency and acted out by the individual in their choice to exercise their agency. This point is crucial to the conceptual position of this research as teachers choose to use their human agency in different ways in the face of mandated curriculum reform which forms the basis for control of teachers’ work in schools (Banfield, 2003; Sloan, 2006). Rikowski (2002) contends this is the main reason why teachers’ work needs to be controlled from a bureaucratic new-management, technical and social-space position, in order to reduce the ‘critical space’ in which teachers examine their work and thereby reduce their human agency as part of the labour process. The need to control teachers’ work can be related to what Rikowski (2002) sees as “… [the] regulation, assessment, targeting, standards and inspection regimes within all sectors of education” (p.19). This is apparent across all aspects of teachers’ work in schools today.
According to Comber (1999), there is a sense of urgency for teachers to strengthen their connection to education research as part of their teaching. According to Comber (1999), teacher research is required in order to continually examine and critically reflect on the roles of teachers in their everyday work as paramount to continued professional development. This point is further supported by Easthope and Easthope (2000) in their research and analysis of how teachers’ work is changing as a result of continued reforms and how they need to maintain significant commitment to their own agency as professional educators.

The impacts of control and curriculum reform as part of the current educational settlement have also affected how teachers’ see their own agency in terms of personal factors like commitment, role and career, status and values being reshaped. Woods et.al. (1997) elaborates the consequences of this ‘realignment’ as follows:

… if the reforms are successful in ushering in a new technical-rationalist age in education, many teachers will become little more than technicians, operating a prescribed National Curriculum in stipulated ways, their work closely monitored by the national inspectorate.(p.163)

Commenting on the same phenomena, Robertson (2000) explains how the process of reform and increased control and surveillance of teachers’ work is considered integral to the increased economic outputs in education:

A central principle within this new mandate is that educational systems, through creating appropriately skilled and entrepreneurial citizens and workers able to generate new and added economic values, will enable nations to be responsive to changing conditions within the international marketplace. Competitiveness is thus viewed as a social value and a social good … (p.187)

The transformation of how individuals are valued as factors of production are evident in what Robertson (2000) refers to the “transformation of assets”, including individual teachers’ value adding in economic rationalist terms to the economy. The individual
agency of teachers is being influenced and reshaped by the reforms in education designed to enhance economic competitiveness, rather than individual learning and aspirations in schools.

Understanding teachers’ work

Drawing on these broader sets of ideas from labour process theory—(labour power, control of labour and individual agency), I want to now tease out how labour process theory can be used to develop an understanding of teachers’ work. I have followed a set of conditions suggested by Braverman (1974) in order to research, understand and analyse teachers’ work. These are:

The interpretation of the opinion, feelings, sentiments, and changing moods of the working class is best accompanied by experienced and well-attuned observers and participants, who know the history of a particular group, are acquainted with its circumstances, background, and relation to other parts of the working class, and from their assessments from intimate contact and detailed information. (p.30)

I have followed these conditions throughout the research process and have worked with individual teachers and incorporated my own understandings from personal experience with curriculum reform as a teacher. In order for teachers’ work to be examined from a labour process theory perspective, Smyth (2001a) also recommends that changes to teachers’ work be observed from the point of view of those individuals experiencing the reforms. Teachers are contributing more value than they receive in payment to the education process in schools as `concealment of process of valorisation’ as a form of deprofessionalisation (Knight & Willmott, 1990, p.4). Therefore, according to Braverman (1974) and Smyth (2001a), the labour of teachers is subordinated and leads to a reduction in real wages, more hours, and more intensity in teachers’ work in schools under greater surveillance and control.
Exposition of whose values and interests are perpetuated by education reform

The question of whose values and interests are being served by the mandated curriculum reforms are directly related to the management structure of the WADET and the CC. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, the continuous reforms of curriculum and direction towards an outcomes-focussed education system have been as a result of international policy borrowing and transplantation into WA schools. The influences of these dominant values and interests is analysed using the critical lens of labour process theory to investigate what these mandated reforms mean to teachers’ work. An example of this domination of education by a powerful interest group was the creation of the CC in 1995, as a vehicle for the creation and implementation of the national agenda for education in an outcomes-focussed education system in Western Australia.

It was also a state response to the national agenda of reform where the power, values and interests of curriculum reform were being devised and met in Western Australia. The emphasis of the last ten years has been on the implementation of not only an outcomes philosophy of education but also a consolidation of human resources management encompassing the performance management of the individual teacher and their work (Rikowski, 2002; Smyth et. al. 2000). One of the most significant impacts on teachers’ work as a result of the systemic shift in education is the deprofessionalisation of teaching. This has been achieved through the development of what Braverman (1974) defines as the universal market approach being applied to education.
Universal market

The universal market is the focus of every capitalist production process, where every want can be satisfied through the production of consumable goods and services as a result of the production process (Braverman, 1974). The flip side of the universal market approach is what those wants really cost society in terms of individuals and society. According to Braverman, the “… universal market is widely celebrated as a bountiful "service economy”… the other side of the universal market is its dehumanising aspects, its confinement of a large portion of the population to degraded labor” (p.281). The point here is that there are costs of convenience in all aspects of change in society. The social and family costs of the last ten years of change in curriculum have resulted in fewer permanent teachers, a more mobile, casualised workforce with little or no power over their own work or career direction (Easthope & Easthope, 1995). The CoS are not reducing the workload of teachers; they are doubling the load of teachers (Observations and teacher experiences, 2004/2005). In addition, the control and surveillance of teachers’ work is unprecedented in schools in Western Australia. The level of control and surveillance is not there to make teachers’ work more equitable, rather it serves to control teachers’ knowledge, voices and professional position in society. The result of such organised and centralised control has been the deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work.

Deprofessionalisation

The place that teachers occupy professionally has been changed dramatically over the last ten years. Braverman (1974) suggests that teachers are part of a:
…new “middle class”, by contrast, occupies its intermediate position not because, as part of this process, it takes its characteristics from both sides… it receives its petty share in the prerogatives and rewards of capital, but it also bears the mark of the proletarian condition…. [in] the social form taken by their work…, in the mass occupations …. [of] nurses and teachers.” (p.407)

The role of teachers has continued to change in schools since the post-war era where more teachers were required to educate a growing number of adolescent students in secondary schools (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995). The changing role of teachers is one of the reasons why the status and prestige of teachers has been altered, principally due to the weight of numbers. The gender imbalance has also contributed to the reduction in real wages of teachers, with approximately 65% of secondary teachers female (Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, 2002). The change in characteristics of the teaching profession has diminished the power and place of the profession in schools and society. The current effect of the growing middle class labour, according to Braverman (1974), was not anticipated by Marx when he considered the makeup and extent of human labour. The impacts of such changes on teachers’ work are occurring as a result of the way change is created, managed and controlled in secondary schools.

The nominal participation by teachers in the curriculum reform process that is controlled by the WADET and the CC of Western Australia has been limited. According to Smyth et. al. (2000) “The curriculum is not a static object: it is a social construction over which there is fierce competition. It should be expected that those who are successful in shaping the nature of the curriculum will not want to stop at defining what it should look like” (p.53). The role of teachers is now more controlled and mandated than before, as the pace of change quickens and intensifies. Therefore, the values and interests of a small group of managers are being served and reproduced
through the continual changes in schools over the last ten years. The voices of teachers have been limited and marginalised again by the performance culture of the WADET and the control of knowledge over the CoS and the CC. The inherent critical aspects of labour process theory to analyse and tease out these tensions and limitations around teachers’ work are beneficial to developing understandings of how their work is changing.

Conclusions

The critical theoretical lens of labour process theory serves to deconstruct the changing nature— and deprofessionalisation- of teachers’ work in terms of the intensification, technocratisation, the increased presence of control, surveillance accountability and responsibility across all aspects of their work; and the external influences of policy from the Federal Government and globally. The role of education policy in the self-managing school through performance management, competition in education and the influences exerted by global international competitiveness have reinforced the notions that teachers need to be monitored, assessed and made more accountable and responsible to the prevailing economic requirements of the time including the neo-liberal economic agenda.

In this chapter, I claim that following Rikowski (2002), labour process theory, can serve to explain the willingness of individual teachers to question and resist the prevailing economic models imposed on education and teaching in Australian schools. The changing nature of federalism which underlies this economic agenda of reductionist approaches to education; the more coordinated, centralised form of Federal Government control is another factor that can be analysed using
labour process theory. The prevailing changes have removed the HCM of valuing each person for his/her own interests and abilities in a general education inputs framework to a market oriented, competitive production process for the development of workers to support and develop the economy of Australia. Therefore, it is necessary to examine teachers’ work experiences not in isolation but in context with the prevailing economic, political, global, cultural, social and ethical factors that constitute education in Australia.

In the next chapter I will examine how my methodology of dual critical policy ethnography and associated methods has helped in the development of understandings and the creation of an enunciative space for teachers to talk openly about their experiences with mandated curriculum reforms (Smyth, 2001a). In addition, I will account for how the methodology framed the research in terms of its reciprocal, ethical and reflexive strategies that benefited both the teachers involved in the research and myself. The experiences and understandings of the teachers involved in this research have been integral to the changes made to the CoS and to their own work practices as a result of the reflexive nature of the process. Moreover, this research has provided a means for teachers to speak out and control aspects of the curriculum reform being experienced in post-compulsory education in Western Australia in 2008.
Chapter four: Critical Policy Ethnography methodology

Introduction

In deciding the kind of methodology I would adopt in this research, I reflected on my own professional experiences as a secondary teacher and researcher in state schools. This work experience, combined with my reflections on my Master’s thesis, led me to contemplate how I might examine curriculum reform and its impact on teachers in schools within an educational policy context of global and national reform of education and training. I decided that in order to do this I needed a reflective and adaptable methodology. For me, critical ethnography offered a way of capturing the lived experiences of teachers over time as they were experiencing the mandated curriculum reforms to their work. Importantly, critical ethnography provided a means of integrating an analysis of how policy impacted on teachers’ work with an analysis of whose interests were being promoted by education policy reform. Hence this thesis examines the lives of classroom teachers and how education policy impacts on their work using critical policy ethnography as a hybrid methodological framework for this research.

This Chapter addresses the following topics:

• The use of critical policy ethnography to examine the dynamic nature of teachers’ work as both lived experience and individual meaning making and how it relates to informing understandings of education-policy-driven curriculum reform of teachers’ work in a Western Australian secondary school (Ozga, 1988; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997).
The research design and methods used to gather data from teacher stories and the analytic process adapted to interpret these stories.

Ethical considerations involved in this research to ensure: a reciprocal arrangement with teachers, where teachers were free to discuss with me any aspect of their work relating to the trial of the year 11 courses; confidentiality of all information collected, and a trusting collegial relationship with the participants to ensure that they do not feel used or manipulated by my presence.

The researcher’s role as a multiply positioned teacher, researcher and parent (Weiss & Fine, 2004) and the significance of self-reflexivity underpinning the ethical considerations of the critical policy ethnography embedded in my research (Banfield, 2003; Weiss & Fine, 2004; Foley, 2002; Mac An Ghaill, 1992; Patton, 2002; Roberts & Sanders, 2005; Smyth, 2001a; and Van Maanen, 1988).

Through my personal experiences and observations, I came to realise that how individuals understand, experience and respond to mandated curriculum reform was an integral part of the reform process. The identification with, or orientation to, curriculum reform by colleagues is typically influenced by their previous experiences. Each individual teacher has his/her own unique way of understanding and making sense of their part in mandated curriculum reform.

This thesis examines these broader contexts within a critical policy ethnography research framework (Lawn & Ozga, 1988; Ozga, 1988; Smyth, 2001a). The theoretical basis for this research is labour process theory (Braverman, 1974, Kesson, 2002, Rikowski, 2002, Smyth, 2001a). Labour process theory allows an
The methodological approach results in a critical analysis of education policy that is the driving force of educational reform and how this impacts on individual teachers and their work. The dual method approach facilitates analysis of individual experiences with reform and contextualises these experiences within a global and national education policy shift impacting on teachers and schools (Weiss & Fine, 2004; Marshall, 1997; Mac an Ghaill, 1992). The two sides of methodology are critical policy analysis and the gathering and development of critical ethnography of teachers’ work with curriculum reform. I use both to illustrate the impacts of policy decisions and implementation on teachers and their work. The methodology that emerges is a combination of critical policy analysis (Weiss & Fine, 2004; Gale, 2001; Prunty, 1985), case study (Stake, 2000), critical ethnography (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Preissle Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Van Maanen, 1988), historical document analysis (Gale, 2001) and discourse analysis (Ball, 1997; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Patton, 2002). These sub-methods form the critical policy ethnography of this thesis that is the focus of this chapter.
Critical policy ethnography

Critical policy ethnography examines the complex relationships between where individuals are and how embedded they are within the contextual features of global, economic, social, political and cultural change to be observed and analysed. The role of education policy and its influences were examined in relation to the Howard Government’s neo-liberal economic agenda in Chapter One and Two. The utilisation of critical policy ethnography as a research model examining mandated curriculum reform within a Western Australian high school allows me to examine the interactions, experiences, understandings and meaning making of the participants as they experience reform in real time in tandem with a critical policy analysis of the reforms. This process was examined over a period of time in order to collect data and analyse what occurred as a result of educational reform to the school community.

Applying critical policy ethnography to the Glasheen SHS data is a useful way of detailing what is occurring in relation to policy change and teachers’ work within system-wide policy reform. Critical policy ethnography is an examination of policy implementation with an emphasis on how the policy is placed within a context of a school using ethnographic methods like participant observation and interviews to gather information from participants over a long period of time (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Preissle Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997; Van Maanen, 1988). The contextual situation of Glasheen SHS provided a rich source of data about how work culture affects individuals, especially those undertaking mandated curriculum reform.
Eisenhart’s (2001) interpretation of culture as a changing, somewhat nebulous concept of individual human experience is essential in the development of an ethnographic study. In his words, “… that we can no longer conceive of social groups of people with a culture that is clearly bounded and determined, internally coherent, and uniformly meaningful” (p.4). My reading of authors, including Eisenhart (2001) and Mac an Ghaill (1992), is that individuals like teachers, will draw upon the group- their colleagues to develop their own cultural affiliations while retaining external values, experiences and opinions within their own personal context. Individuals can create their own personal work culture within a larger group culture or context, such as a school.

To examine teachers’ work and education policy, I needed to develop a depth of understandings about what was happening in contemporary society with respect to education curriculum reform and teachers’ work. O’Neill (2003) explains that in order for teachers to be co-opted into delivering curriculum reform, there are three key phases of policy influence that need to be achieved by governments or agencies to implement the policy. O’Neill (2005) describes this as first, a process of promotion of the policy by groups within education, such as associations who have been influenced by the government or agency. Second, the enculturation of the ideal views of teachers being represented in the policy to the broader community- parents and the community by government agencies such as the Curriculum Council and WADET (O’Neill, 2005). Third, the reaction or ‘recapitulation’ by teachers and the community, to contest the policy and ideals being espoused by the Curriculum Council and WADET to implement the mandated curriculum reform of year 11 and 12 education. This occurred at Glasheen SHS where across the school groups of teachers were influenced
to accept or reject the reforms. The CC developed the post-compulsory education reforms and co-opted certain groups including academics to promote the reforms outside of schools. This has been followed by the process of trying to reshape and control teachers’ work by overhauling years 11 and 12 completely to reflect the priorities of policy reforms of the CC and WADET. This resulted in the public debate and outcry by teachers who stood up and openly railed against the reforms and demanded changes to be made that would better meet the needs of the students than the system of education. According to Lee, Hill, and Lee (2004) “… a curriculum proposal can be translated from rhetoric to reality only when it is successful in gathering firm support from pupils, parents, teachers and employers;… when its underlying educational philosophy is identified and widely endorsed” (p.81).

**Education policy backdrop**

According to Codd (2005) policy can be described:

… by saying that policy is about *politics* and politics is about *power* and *control*. More specifically, political power is about the allocation of goods and the definition of values…. Educational policies are sets of political decisions that involve the exercise of power in order to preserve or alter the nature of educational institutions or practices. (p.xvii)

This explanation fits with the global model of education discussed in-depth in Chapter Two. The transference of education policy internationally in line with the neo-liberal economic agenda has been the dominate discourse of the last ten years. Evidence of how education policy is being replicated and mandated in Australian post-compulsory education can be found in the UNESCO Newsletter *Education Today* (2003) where the same wording is used to describe how educational reform can be undertaken by its member nations.
An example of UNESCO’s role in policy change and reform of education is reflected in the following statement:

UNESCO is drawing countries’ attention to the need to completely rethink the role of secondary education. It is advocating reform that will make lifelong learning a reality so that both young people and adults are better prepared for life in today’s world. UNESCO also argues for more flexibility and interaction between general education and vocational courses. In 1999, the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, in Seoul made recommendations to adapt technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to the needs of employers. (UNESCO, 2003, p.7)

The United Nations Delors Report (1996) uses the term lifelong learning as a central part of its education policy shift. The consequences of this new model for managing and administering education represent a fundamental policy shift that Taylor et. al. (1997) describe occurred in the 1990s, away from a model of equity and social justice in the provision of education towards a consolidation of the neo-liberal economic agenda. According to Thomson (2002), the new policy framework of performance management within government schools is linked directly to the new form of managerialism within markets-based education systems. The new managerialist agenda has been discussed at length in Chapter One.

The main issues discussed by Codd (2005) and Taylor et. al. (1997) centre on how education policy is constructed to reflect the instrumental outcomes of policy decision makers. The emphasis here is on how policy is developed to incorporate a reaction to global, social, cultural and economic changes by governments in Australia. Both Codd (2005) and Taylor et al. (1997) discuss how the social democratic settlement in education has been rejected by many governments in an era of economic rationalism as the driving force behind education policy decisions (Codd, 2005; Taylor et al. 1997; Pusey 1991; Welch 1996; Yeatman 1993). Significantly, the values underpinning economic rationalism and neo-liberalism are taking precedent over the
values of social justice, access, and equity for all students in Australian schools (Codd, 2005). The control over education policy decisions and implementation of changes in schools from the international and national levels has legitimised the neo-liberal economic agenda of the last 15 years in Australia. Marketisation has been the vehicle of transmission of the neo-liberal agendas for reform of education policy of the public education sector in Australia since the 1990s to the present.

The pursuit of an outputs model detailed by Welch (1996), Pusey (1991) and Yeatman (1993) for education in Australia is discussed at length in Chapter One. The transmission of market-oriented goals of efficiencies and effectiveness also described by Elley (2004) are now being translated into education policy at the state level. The pursuit of outputs model education has resulted in the creation and production of the current education reform of years 11 and 12 education in Western Australia. The mandated reform of this sector to reflect an outcomes-based education system is the result of what Reid (1999) explains as curriculum control through policy creation. The control delivered over teachers’ work via policy is used to facilitate reform and control teachers’ work.

The main control used in the creation of policy since 2002 in Western Australia has been bureaucratic control (Reid, 1999). Bureaucratic control enforces a managerialist focus to ensure teachers must report to line managers in schools who in turn adhere to regulated sets of responsibilities and account for their activities to district office then to the WADET and CC. This hierarchical model may be enforcing the power and centralisation of control over schools at the WADET and CC system levels. In addition, the policy cycle may also be perpetuating the control by, as Lee, O’Neill and McKenzie (2004) explain, adding additional layers of responsibility and
surveillance to teachers’ work. According to Lee et.al. (2004), the possible impacts on teachers include the overall intensification of their work by: increased accountability; increased site management pressures; recentralised bureaucracy; and the increased competition between schools for students and funding (p.47). The myriad of impacts on teachers’ work as possible consequences of education policy and curriculum reform needs an in-depth examination and analysis to unravel and reveal what is happening to teachers’ work.

The current model for education policy making in Australia and New Zealand has been explained by Codd (1998) and supported by Phillips (2005) as a ‘technicist-empiricist’ approach. This approach to education policy making has all the hallmarks of the neo-liberal economic agenda accompanied by the rise of new managerialist approach to managing teachers and schools. The current changes in post-compulsory education in Western Australia are part of the new generation based firmly in the political and economic agenda of economic competition and efficiency (Welch, 1996). The policy agenda comes from a globalising effect on education of recent years and OECD commitments by countries like Australia on the world stage (Ball, 1998).

In addition, to the ‘technical-empiricist’ model the emergence of and domination of what Phillips (2005) describes as the conflict model of education policy planning and development has characterised the 1990s to now. According to Phillips (2005), the:

…conflict model takes into account the government’s policy changes since the mid 1980s and the principles on which they were built, as well as Neoliberal assumptions about…individual choice and responsibility, inter-agency competition and provision of contestable advice to government, the splitting up
of key functions into separate agencies, and market-based approaches towards education. (p.129)

It is with this background that I have chosen to base the research in a critical policy ethnography methodology. I agree with Thomas’ (1993 cited in Patton, 2002) connection between the ways in which critical policy ethnography combines the focus on culture with the commitment to use findings for change (p.135). I believe that this selection of methodology will enable me to examine how policy is influencing cultural change in schools (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997), whose values are being espoused by the new curriculum (Gale & Densmore, 2003) and how the change will affect teachers’ work (Prunty, 1985, Smyth, 2001a).

The removal of teachers from how policy is created, controlled and implemented is a key aspect that requires examination. According to Gale and Densmore (2003) and Lee, Hill and Lee (2004) teachers have been disenfranchised from the whole process when their role is central to creating and implementing successful education policy and reform in schools. According to Codd (2005), teachers have become ‘managed’ to the point where they are expected to have a generic set of competencies, to operate within a prescribed management context, and to uphold the performance indicators required to meet the central policy implementation needs in schools (p.xvii). There is a role for teachers as policy actors (Gale & Densmore, 2003) to play in each stage of the policy cycle: setting the policy agenda, creating the text, determining the practice and implementation of the policy, and assisting with the successful outcomes of the policy. In addition, teachers are at the forefront of experience and knowledge as to what works and is beneficial in a school and what is not. So the evaluation and monitoring of policy can be achieved at the school level through the input of teachers into the entire process. According to
Sullivan (2005), there is a gap between the policy developed at central office and the practice out in schools (p.280). This is evident in Glasheen SHS where the policy offered an unwieldy and cumbersome new system to replace the old system without appropriate teacher involvement or feedback. The gap between policy and practice is a serious miscalculation at the central WADET level and has led to serious implementation issues for years 11 and 12 English in Western Australian schools.

In order to capture the policy implications of global, national and state educational reform, I used critical policy ethnography as a means of examining the role played by policy in teachers’ work at Glasheen SHS. Moreover, the research demonstrates how teachers have a central role to play in policy development and successful implementation of mandated curriculum reforms in schools. Critical ethnography needs to be fore grounded in the methodology of this research.

Critical ethnography

Critical ethnography in this research has five central features. First, an examination of the role of cultural production of teachers’ work in Glasheen SHS. Second, the context of the teachers’ lived experiences with curriculum reform. Third, the methods used to gather the experience in non exploitative ways. Fourth, the ethics underpinning the research as contributing to, not taking away from, the teachers’ experiences with the research. Finally, reflexivity, as an examination of the teachers’ experiences and multiple positioning experiences with reform and my own experiences as a multiply positioned participant in the research.
The implications of using a critical ethnography to develop and chronicle the complex set of social relationships in a school culture have been echoed by many writers on policy process and teachers’ work. The methodology has provided an opportunity to critique policies and their wider societal effects (Down, 1990; Hursh & Martina, 2003; Mac An Ghaill, 1992). I am seeking to better understand how teachers experience change through curriculum reform, whether this indicates a broader societal agenda at work, and what this means to the community in and outside of Glasheen SHS. As Smyth (1994), Mac an Ghaill, (1992) and Ozga (1988) indicate, the economic rationalist agenda has increased responsibility at the local school and teacher level without any increase of power or control (Smyth, 1994, p.5).

The contemporary effects influencing teachers’ work are a flow-on from the rationalist agenda in social policy and education, including performance management, school effectiveness, and outputs and adding value through professional development of teachers (Gewirtz & Ball, 2000). The commodification applied to students participating in post-compulsory education in Western Australia is also influencing teachers at a personal and professional level (Robertson, 2000). These influences include an intensification of work as a result of continual curriculum reform, the deprofessionalisation of their work as decision makers and judges of students’ work, surveillance and control exerted over their work by the CC to adhere to the mandated reforms and regulation of work as part of an ever growing systems management of performance. The research examines these large-scale changes inherent in the PCR (2002) being implemented by the Outcomes and Standards System (Western Australian Department of Education and Training, 2006) in Glasheen SHS, focussing on how teachers’ work is changing. Thus the dual methodology utilised in the
research has its basis within a critical ethnographic tradition of gathering data from lived experiences in the field over a sustained period and by examining the cultural production of teachers’ work (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Preissle Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Van Maanen, 1988).

*Cultural production*

How individuals experience and make meanings of their work lives are shaped by their own place in the school culture, in terms of lifeworld experiences and cultural production (Sloan, 2006). According to Sloan (2006), lifeworld is the subjective, personal experiences and understandings of an individual in a particular place and time such as a teacher experiencing curriculum reform in a school. Therefore, I am examining what is subjective to each participant, including myself, in light of contextual situations (objective culture) or systemsworld (Sloan, 2006) experiences that occur in Glasheen SHS. I do so in order to construct critical policy ethnography from the findings and experiences captured throughout the research process (constructionism). According to Sloan (2006), systemsworld represents the experiences and events occurring outside of the personal lifeworld of individuals in schools, such as policy created and decided at a central WADET level or at the CC level or Federal governmental level.

This approach of examining the individual’s experiences on a personal level and examining the external systemsworld events of how policy is decided, and whose interests are being promoted by its implementation is central to examining curriculum reform as critical policy ethnography in this research. The use of critical ethnography is supported by Banfield’s (2004) discussion of Bhaskar’s (1989) work on ‘critical
realism’, which acknowledges complex relationships between individuals and their experiences in relation to others. Banfield (2004) describes how critical realism is the result of social realities of individuals interacting in society, where there is not a single causal factor responsible for events. The implications for this research are that the emergent themes revealed throughout the research and how individual social realities are constructed are deep, multifaceted and cannot be reduced to one causal factor or event like one curriculum change. The teachers involved in the research provide a rich set of experiences and cultural realities by working with curriculum reform and sharing their experiences. Moreover, education policy is the vehicle for reform used to direct teachers’ work and experiences in schools. The methodological approach I take throughout this research has focussed on uncovering culture that exists in the everyday lives of teachers and how culture is reproduced in one school.

Drawing on Willis, Eisenhart (2001) defines culture production “Cultural productions have been defined by Paul Willis as discourses, meanings, materials, practices, and group processes [used] to explore, understand, and creatively occupy particular positions in sets of general material possibilities” (1981, p.59 in Eisenhart, 2001, p.9). Therefore, the time, space and experiences occupied and lived by individuals is all part of cultural (re)production. This way of viewing culture allows me to examine what individuals are experiencing in the context of what is going on around them in their school, locally, nationally and internationally. I am able to make social, economic, political and temporal connections between the individuals at Glasheen SHS and what is occurring in a broader less personal context (Carspecken, 1991; Eisenhart, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1992).
In order to research the personal lived experiences of teachers implementing the CoS in English, I followed a group of teachers who volunteered for the trial of the CoS in English offered by CC. The individuals were a reflection of their personal and professional experiences modified by a need to meet the requirements set by the Council. According to Silverman (1987 cited in Holstein & Gubrium, 1994):

Collective representations…the schemes collectively represent the social forms or structures of our lives…the schemes mediate individual biography and interpersonal relations, reflecting and perpetuating culturally promoted understandings of, and orientations to, everyday experience. Interpretation is shaped by the resources that are locally available, recognized, and accepted, making meaningful experience—its perception, representation, and authenticity—a socially rather than privately constructed phenomenon. (p.267)

The mediation of personal experiences by socially constructed meanings is an outcome of the teachers’ own reflective practices during the trial of the CoS. The meanings generated by this process are a construction of personal experiences and mediated by the requirements of institutional constraints. According to Hughes and Sharrock (1997) “…‘meaning’…does not involve only the meaning of words in the language, but also the meaning of the expressions of the things the members of the society say and do” (p.124). This process in turn benefits my research, as I was at meetings and presented to the staff ways of documenting their work in meetings, conversations and experiences for their own use in reporting back to the CC. The individual meanings and experiences captured in this research reflect the nature of cultural production as an essential part of everyday life.

A central dimension of critical ethnography is the cultural perspective of individuals involved in this research. Cultural perspective refers to the personal cultural context of each participant in the research which is embedded within each teacher’s work. It is here that I can use labour process theory, as a means of
identifying and analysing meanings from observed events occurring over a period of
time with the participants at Glasheen SHS. As Ewers and Lakomski (1991) indicate
“The perceived benefits of linking culture and organization consists of considering the
subjective, interpretive aspects of organizational life as legitimate foci for research”
(p.114). Therefore, how the research is conducted using critical ethnography and the
application of labour process theory analysis is part of this process. According to
Banfield (2004), the ‘depth of realism’ offered by critical ethnography can assist us to
see the emerging themes of everyday experiences by taking a theoretical stance and
accepting the myriad possibilities and causal processes affecting individuals and
affecting the social relations within groups of people in the context of their workplace.
(p.3) Moreover, the context of teachers’ work needs to be examined in order to further
develop a critical ethnography of their work.

Context

The purpose of using critical ethnography as a research framework for examining
mandated curriculum reform as a phenomenon is to develop an understanding of who
is involved in reform in schools, how these individuals implement reforms, and how
they see their own experiences in light of the current dynamic set of educational
reforms. Therefore, the Van Maanen (1988) interpretation of “…ethnography is
written representation of a culture (or selected aspects of a culture). It carries quite
serious intellectual and moral responsibilities, for the images of others inscribed in
writing are most assuredly not neutral” (p.1).

This research method presents a diverse choice of investigation at the school
level. The relationships Van Maanen (1988) describes as central to ethnography are
…assumed relationship between culture and behaviour (the observed); … [the] experiences of the fieldworker (the observer); … [and] the representational style selected to join the observer and the observed (the tale); and … [how] the reader engaged in the active reconstruction (audience). (p.xi)

Therefore, the context of the research needs to be selected carefully and participants informed of what is involved in being part of a critical ethnography of mandated curriculum reform.

Teachers’ work is made up of many different roles in and out of the classroom. These roles, including being creators of new curriculum and policy actors are according to Holstein and Gubrium (1994), to be:

… conditioned by arrays of local interpretive resources-recognizable categories, familiar vocabularies, organizational missions, professional orientations, group cultures, and other existing frameworks for assigning meaning to matters under consideration. (p.266)

Thereby, the participants’ work and understandings of experiences with mandated curriculum are influenced and shaped by institutional factors within the school and external to the school. Government agencies can have a significant role to play in influencing how teachers’ respond to policy reform and how they express these responses. A positive effect of this study was my role as a confidential sounding board, to whom participants could freely express opinions too perilous to be voiced openly in the school or to the CC. My role was also to support the emancipatory nature of the research. That is, teachers could talk to me and reflect on their experiences as part of their own network of professional dialogue. This role accommodated what occurred in the school, where curriculum reform was impacting on a variety of people within a social setting, and allowed individuals to speak up in a safe way. In order to capture individual experiences with curriculum reform, I also needed to complete a critical policy analysis of the policies driving the reforms.
I use critical policy ethnography to explore the changing nature of teachers’ work in depth and in a contemporary context. The information gathered from the research adds voices to the uniqueness and diversity of teachers’ work that have been silent and missing from other research (Smyth, 2001a). This research occurred while the teachers were experiencing the mandated curriculum reforms and so contributes a unique real time aspect to policy analysis in a school context. Critical policy analysis is examined in depth in Chapter Two.

I sought to examine how teachers’ experiences of change through curriculum reform may indicate a broader societal agenda at work and what this may mean to the community in and outside of Glasheen SHS. As Smyth (1994) explains, the current economic rationalist agenda has increased responsibility at the local school and teacher level without any of the power or control (p.5). The commodification applied to students participating in post-compulsory education in Western Australia is also influencing teachers at a personal and professional level (Robertson, 2000). Therefore, I use critical policy ethnography to discover the extent of mandated curriculum reform and its impacts on Glasheen SHS, and I use the findings to give a voice to individuals experiencing the reform (Eisenhart, 2001, p.7; Thomas, 1993, cited in Patton, 2002, p.131).

The critical approach of the research is focussed on how the teachers’ lived experiences and practices are affected by the post-compulsory policy, ‘Our Youth, Our Future’ (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2002). The information gained from the data collection and analysis of teachers’ experiences here has many different points of view. As Weber (1949 cited in Hughes & Sharrock, 1997) explains “All knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always knowledge from
particular points of view” (p.133). This capturing of different views is a crucial aspect of the research as it is beneficial in developing understandings of teachers’ work. It is also a representation of individual lived experiences over time within a particular setting or context. To achieve this I developed specific methods of data collection and analysis.

**Specific methods**

The specific methods utilised in the research, with their basis in the dual critical policy ethnography, include: writing the data as it was given to me by the teachers using a realist tale (Van Maanen, 1988); my participant observation of the teachers I interviewed over a sustained time frame; my own provision of a counter discourse to the prescriptive evaluations of teachers’ work; developing understandings of teachers’ work and roles as policy actors; use of case study to make connections between teachers’ work and curriculum policy reform; use of an interpretivist analysis of teachers’ voices and of critical policy analysis (examined in depth in Chapters One and Two); Carspecken’s Five stage analysis of teachers’ voices in relation to critical policy analysis; and ethical considerations and reflexivity on the part of the teachers and myself as we experience the curriculum reform from 2004-2005.

At the forefront of my mind when collecting ethnographic data was the richness and variety of multiple interpretations and perspectives that the teacher accounts reveal. As Van Maanen (1988) explains “Ethnographies…are never beyond debate”, (p.35) this leads to the ethnographic form of the research, which will examine issues relating to curriculum reform. The ethnography of the “Realist Tale” (Van Maanen, 1988), which by definition takes on the form of “…the authenticity of
the cultural representations conveyed by the text…explicit focus on the regular and often-observed activities of the group under study” (p.48). This allows for inclusion of the daily events that will be observed by me over the period 2004-2005. According to Van Maanen (1988), a sense of ‘experience-near’ (p.52) observation to develop a contextual placement of the events in the participants’ work lives relating to change is a unique way of gathering data about how teachers respond, understand and make meanings from their experiences with mandated curriculum reform.

An example of the realist perspective in this research is the evolving nature of the teachers’ responses over the two years of the trial of CoS in English. The teachers were open and frank with me and allowed me to capture their thoughts, feelings and opinions and write them up verbatim so as not to lose the real intensity and personal reflection at the time. This is discussed in depth in data chapters Five and Six.

This approach, as Van Maanen (1988) explains, allows for face-to-face interaction throughout the study. This close proximity requires that I get to know the participants and their work context without interfering in day-to-day experiences of change. I am also keenly aware of ensuring that the teachers themselves interpret their experiences and make meanings of it as I work with them. I take the point made by Ewers and Lakomski (1991) that the ‘cultural perspective’ of humans’ needs to make sense of our social environment such as schools. This cultural perspective can be demonstrated through an examination of an educational context and how people interact to experience and effect change. The main concerns of the cultural perspective are “… with human motivation, intention, and beliefs … with human subjectivity and the creation of meaning” (Ewers and Lakomski, 1991, p.113).
The value of critical ethnography in this research is the flexibility to conduct educational research into curriculum reform as a means of examining “… [how policy analysis is] orientated to prescriptive research, evaluation studies, and [the] mandate to improve education and schooling [through curriculum reforms]” (Preissle Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p.1). The implication here is that program evaluation and process outcomes have been more accepted as studies of schools’ performance in relation to change, than an ethnographic perspective on human experiences with change over time.

I claim that critical ethnographic models of, for example, ‘realist voice’ examining mandated curriculum change are a more valid and useful contemporary research approach. As Preissle Goetz and LeCompte (1984) state:

Ethnographic design mandates investigatory strategies conducive to cultural reconstruction…. [and to] elicit phenomenological data; represent the world view of the participants being investigated, and participant constructs are used to structure the research…Ethnographers seek to construct descriptions of total phenomena within their various contexts and to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour toward, and belief about, the phenomena. (p.3)

The approach described by Preissle Goetz and LeCompte (1984) is a useful means of examining curriculum reform as it affects teachers in one school using semi structured interviews and observations of participants. The participants are involved with the implementation of mandated curriculum reform and this is the emphasis for data collection over a period of time (2004-2005). The data collection process allows the observation of implementation of the CoS in year11 in English at Glasheen SHS during its trial and first year of operation.

The research documents the work of teachers as they experience the reforms by developing understandings of their work. In order to do this, I have utilised what
Smyth (2001a) explains, to be three aspects of understanding teachers’ work as my own frame of reference. First:

Our capacities to access the complex work lives of teachers are still very crude by any standards. Because we do not have the resources necessary to do the extremely detailed ethnographic studies, this has presented us with an interesting challenge of how to capture information about the breadth, diversity, richness, and uniqueness of what is happening to teachers’ work.” (p.4)

The research provides a space and a means for teachers to publicly voice their opinions, concerns, and experiences over a period of time (Smyth, 2001a). The semi-structured meetings and focus group meetings allow teachers to articulate their experiences and concerns about the nature and affects of the mandated curriculum reform on their work in a confidential manner.

Second, Smyth (2001a) indicates that capturing the immense knowledge and diverse experiences of individual teachers is necessary in developing understandings of teachers’ work throughout a critical ethnographic study. Smyth (2001a) describes this as:

Keeping track of how and in what ways teachers acquire, hold, and modify the repertoire of sophisticated knowledge required to be an effective teacher is a major difficulty not least because it resides largely in the private granary of the oral culture of teaching…. (p.4)

The implications for this aspect of understanding teachers’ work is to document and the depth of experience and knowledge that teachers have and are willing to share outside of their classrooms. The research offers a means of exploring teachers’ breadth of experience and expertise with curriculum and is fundamental to the research process I have been involved with. All of the participants involved in this study have developed a variety of expertise over their professional lifetimes. This expertise includes an understanding of knowing what works and what will not in their
school. Teachers’ expertise and knowledge can be used as a source of policy creation and implementation, if approached by government agencies.

The knowledge and expertise of teachers can be successfully combined with policy making in schools in order to create successful curriculum reform. The third aspect necessary for developing understandings of teachers’ work is as Smyth (2001a) describes:

The increasingly muscular ways in which policymakers have sought to spot-weld education onto the economy as an engine for economic growth have the prospect of doing considerable violence to the local indigenous ways in which teachers think and operate pedagogically, and how this thinking informs how they act in relation to their own and their students’ learning. (p.4)

The prospect of policy made and imposed on teachers is a central aspect of this research. The social, political, economic, and cultural situation in which teachers work today has been discussed at length in Chapters One-Three of this thesis. The critical ethnographic approach of this research enables me to examine the system relationships described by Carspecken (1991), in order to draw together the globalising forces of the neo-liberal economic agenda with the current political landscape in Australia. The examination of system relationships is a crucial facet of this research as it has the potential to generate impacts on individual teachers at Glasheen SHS, over the period of time of the mandated curriculum reform.

The critical approach to ethnographic research here is designed to frame the collected experiences of individuals within a group of teachers from Glasheen SHS and to allow the contextualised meanings of both the individuals and the group to be heard. In the words of Eisenhart (2001), “… researchers will be pushed by theoretical and social currents to trace cultural forms “upward” and “outward” so as to consider how they are manifested and produced in networks of larger social systems” (p.16).
The complexity of the participants’ relationships and experiences with mandated curriculum reform are the methodological underpinning of this research (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). I have made the connections between the individual experiences of the participants and the national and global stage of economic, social and cultural change that is affecting teachers in most OECD countries (Ozga, 1988). Chapter Two discusses the neo-liberal agenda at the national and global levels of government.

The flow-on effects of teachers’ experiences with curriculum reform allows for a constructivist or interpretivist analysis of the data. As Schwandt (1994 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) explains “…to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it. The inquirer must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors” (p.118). Therefore, the interpretation of personal experiences with mandated reforms are the construction of meaning through analysis of observations of daily events and actions of the participants in the study. The Glasheen SHS teachers are yielding what Fiske (1996) describes as social change which is more likely to occur “…at their margins than at their centers; social change typically originates in marginalised or subordinated minorities …” (p.196). The implications here for using critical ethnography and critical policy ethnography as a dual and reflexive methodology is that social change, no matter how small, can be observed at the margins of system-wide change. Change can be observed in teachers’ work and documented to reflect system-wide reforms and pressures on teachers.

In order to emphasise the central role critical policy ethnography can play in observing and documenting social change, Rist (1998) describes how James Coleman viewed the study of policy: “There is no body of methods, no comprehensive
methodology for the study of the impact of public policy as an aid to future policy” (p.400). I agree with Coleman’s assessment that there is not a comprehensive methodology to assess the impacts of policy. I see that using critical policy ethnography can examine both the impacts of policy and the human experiences with the policy as a useful means of understanding social change. Eisenhart (2001) indicates a sense of the inevitability of changes that occurs with policy development and how as individuals we can only experience it and share our experiences of the process. My research uses adual methodology to tease out and examine the tensions and emerging themes of the implementation of a new curriculum as a result of policy reform.

Research design

In order to work within a critical ethnography research methodological approach, I utilise Carspecken’s (1991) five-stage approach, which is discussed below. In conjunction with Carspecken’s (1991) approach, I identify the connection between the individual’s experiences and the need to represent their voices in a realist and emergent sense (Foley, 2002, Smyth, 2001a). Therefore, I use the critical ethnography of Carspecken’s five stages as part of the dual methodological framework to accurately and realistically voice the experiences, understandings and reflections of the teacher participants. My intention here is to retain flexibility throughout the research to capture emergent themes and ideas within a fluid set of voices and lived experiences. I felt that in order to accurately capture the teachers’ experiences I needed to get to know them individually and as a group. In order to work with the participants for such an extended time, I found it vital to establish a sufficient level of trust and communication. This process did not occur overnight. I spent a considerable
In 2002-2004, I was involved in supervising a large number of secondary student teachers at Glasheen SHS. As a result of the professional connections I made during this time, I was able to start a dialogue about the then proposed changes to years 11 and 12 English. The professional dialogue was the antecedent (Roberts & Sanders, 2005) to my research into the topic. As a direct consequence of my professional work as a student teacher supervisor within the English learning area of the school, I was in contact with a number of staff, about to participate in the trial of a new course in year 11 English. This contact led to many discussions about what the CoS in English meant to the teachers currently teaching year 11. I saw this as my opportunity to develop and frame my research into teachers’ work within Glasheen SHS. I approached each of the eight teachers involved in the trial of the CoS in English year 11 and they agreed to take part in my research. The first phase was to develop and collect data using shallow interviewing strategies.

Stage One: Shallow interviewing

The following Carspecken (1991) inspired five stages of critical ethnography are an essential part of my research process. The first stage is to collect observations and ‘shallow’ interview participants. This stage formed the beginning of the data collection phases where I had individual meetings and group meetings with the participants in their workplace. This phase took around two months to complete.

amount of time with individual teachers prior to commencing the data collection process in 2004. Roberts and Sanders (2005) describe this as a “before phase ethnography” approach to using personal biography to gain access to individuals and study their behaviour for an extended period.
(March-May 2004) and required an hour with each teacher and myself. During this time I used an introductory interview questionnaire to gather information relating to the individuals and their work experiences. Apart from the biographical data needed, such as role in the school, years teaching and years teaching at this school, I found that I did not need a prescribed interview structure. Moreover, I needed a semi-structured approach to be able to capture where the individual was at in the beginning of the trial. Background questions were used to develop demographic data about the individuals and their work experiences as teachers (Patton, 2002, p.342). Using this approach allowed me to collect open ended responses, which resulted in in-depth, rich detail essential for critical policy ethnography.

According to Patton (2002), ethnographic interviewing can gain responses from questions which elicit information about what position the person holds, their activities and experiences with the curriculum reform at that point in time, in the school. Patton (2002) also describes `opinion values questions’ which seek to elicit from the participant their views and opinions in relation to an issue or experience. I also utilise `feeling values questions’ to elicit emotional responses to experiences with the mandated change (Patton, 2002, p.342). These questions allow me to capture the details and experiences of the teacher accurately while allowing them to expand on what is significant to them and their work.

Knowledge questions are used in order to establish what factual knowledge the participant had about their role (Patton, 2002, p.342). I asked questions like `How is the assessment structure different from the current structure. Can you explain it?’ This type of questioning helped to give me access to the intricacies of the reform at the operational level for teachers. Using these sorts of questions allowed me to access
how the individual teachers experience the changes to their work and expert
knowledge.

The use of sensory questions in this phase of the research enable me to
develop a sense of what the teachers were experiencing at that time. This also
provided data about their changing attitudes over the course of the study (Patton,
2002, p.342). I used questions to elicit responses that the individuals were
comfortable giving me like `What is your experience of attending the professional
development days for the CoS in English? How has morale been affected by the trial?
Can you give an example?’ These types of questions help me to paint a detailed
landscape of the impacts of the trial on teachers’ work, how teachers experienced it
and felt about it. Throughout this phase I transcribed and returned the responses to the
participants for their approval and editorial comment. I only used information that
individuals were comfortable giving me. This preliminary phase took the first year to
complete (March-December 2004) because so much was changing about the trial. The
trial was cancelled at one stage and then resurrected in a new form. A major technique
of my research was the gathering of teachers’ stories, voices and confessional tales
over two years (Atkinson & Hamersley, 1994; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Van
Maanen, 1988). In capturing the teachers’ experiences with the curriculum reform, I
ensured that what they told me was transcribed verbatim to produce an accurate
account of the meetings. After the shallow interviewing phase came the reconstructing
of data in order to understand what was common to each teacher’s experiences with
the curriculum reform and what was different.
Stage Two: Preliminary reconstructive analysis

The second stage, according to Carspecken (1991), is the preliminary reconstructive analysis where the data is examined for common elements of experiences, homologous and oppositional experiences (p.2). I transcribed the data virtually the same day or week I recorded it so as not to lose its meanings or significance over time, as I sought to capture the confessional tale each teacher was sharing with me. This process required up to four hours transcribing for every hour of recorded meetings. I did this for every meeting and continued the work from March 2004 to December 2005. In this phase I found a number of homologous experiences shared by the teachers (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). By homologous I mean similar or the same experiences common to teachers such as “we have been through this before” and “we are willing to change our teaching to benefit students in the CoS” as some of the teacher responses. These views were shared by many of the teachers in the study. Some participants had completely oppositional views to the others, regardless of their position in the school (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). An example of this was the senior teacher who refused to be part of the trial at all. However, he did agree to participate in the follow-up research, giving his views and experiences on the trial, as he had to attend the professional development on the CoS. I found some participants were against the changes no matter what and would not participate in the trial, although they would participate in the research. Other participants, regardless of experience or position were willing to give the trial the benefit of the doubt. As a result of the preliminary examinations of the data, I was able to move onto the next stage. The preliminary phase of 2004 resulted in approximately 30 visits with teachers and the focus group. Every visit to the school took from 30 minutes to 3 hours.
**Stage Three: Strong-interactive data collection**

The third stage defined by Carspecken (1991) is the strong-interactive data collection (in-depth interviewing) stage. I conducted this stage over the 2005 school year, in order to gather as much information about how the curriculum changes were affecting teachers’ work in Glasheen SHS. This involved one-on-one interviewing and focus-group interviewing of the participants. I timed the meetings to be between different phases of their work in order to ascertain how their planning, implementation and evaluation, and reflection activities were altering their work practices and experiences. Carspecken (1991) determines this stage to be crucial as it:

…is a way of validating and refining the reconstructions begun in stage 2, it is a way of allowing the subjects of the study to have input into what is being written about them, and it is the only way to really probe some of the subjective states suspected by the researcher. (p.3)

This process also allowed room for the participants to confidentially voice their concerns with me as a sounding board, which some were unable to do in the group meetings. This reflective process helped to consolidate my position as a trusted individual for the participants to interact with, without any repercussions.

**Stage Four: Exploration of system relationships**

The fourth stage, empirical exploration of system relationships, is determined by Carspecken (1991) to be where as a researcher I can “…compare cultural structures and routine activities across diverse social sites in order to look for relationships between them” (p.3). The view I have taken on system relationships here is that of Johnson (1983 cited in Carspecken, 1991) where he describes the “…circuit of cultural production”. This notion describes the way in which cultural products, like “…. school policy documents, educational theorists and so on are produced in one
During this phase I critically analysed different policy documents in order to identify which policies were reproductions of others, and how policy was being refracted and borrowed (Halpin & Troyna, 1995) from a mandated agreement between Australia and other OECD nations. The policies I analysed using this method within a critical policy ethnography included *Our Youth, Our Future* (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2004), and *the Post-compulsory Review* (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2002). These two policies form the central planks of the educational reform occurring in Western Australia from 1998-2006. I analysed and discussed both of these policies in depth in Chapter Two, taking the perspective on how education policy is conceived and developed from external sources such as the OECD member nations and then disseminated down to the national level for redistribution to the states and finally to the local school site. At each of these sites occurs a form of cultural interpretation and policy borrowing (Halpin & Troyna, 1995). This is how I have made the connections between the global neo-liberal agenda of the OECD nations to the Federal Government of Australia, to the Western Australian State Government and to the school level. This is the crucial link between what is happening outside of an individual’s experiences (their systemsworld), and what is happening at the school site (their lifeworld) in terms of where education policy is decided and how it impacts on teachers’ work.

*Stage Five: Explanatory system relationships*

The fifth stage, the explanatory use of system relationships to explain how “cultural reconstruction and the system relationships within which it is located by reference to a broader model of society” (Carspecken, 1991, p.4), requires the analysis of the
impacts of education policy reform on teachers’ work and the construction of a critical ethnography to discuss these impacts. This stage illustrates the unequal power relationships that exist in all areas of society including schools where teachers are required to implement policy no matter how difficult or unworkable the policy is. As Carspecken (1991) points out “…culture allows the group to survive, cope, and partially resist socially imposed constraints” (p.4). This represents in the research the complex set of relationships that exist at the local site level between participants, their role in implementing the curriculum change, how they relate to the CC and WADET policy as a result of their work, and how these experiences are affecting how they understand and make meanings of their role as teachers (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). This analysis and reflexive phase occurred throughout 2005-2006 when I spent hundreds of hours making the connections between the individual experiences and the educational reform at the policy level. This was the most time consuming and difficult phase of the research. It required a deep level of understanding of: how the CoS in English were to operate as outcomes-based courses; the assessment changes required to change to the outcomes levelling to replace grades and percentages; pedagogical practice and methodology changes to teachers’ work; and the complex system relationships between these local site experiences and changes to the national and global arena of educational reform. In addition, there was also the public debate of the changes to years 11 and 12 that began a juggernaut of community dissent.

The public debate burned brightly in the print and electronic media and at the federal and state government level from June 2005 to April 2006. This was a very illuminating time as the systems relationships of the implications of the reforms to years 11 and 12 and what this meant to students, parents, employers, politicians, and
of course teachers became clear to the participants in the process. This industrial issue for teachers was taken up by so many aspects of the community and resulted in a widespread disillusionment with the WADET and the CC over the way the CoS was to be implemented in schools. The end result of this debate was that what individual teachers had been experiencing in isolation had become the hottest topic in the community. This created a unique ethical situation where public debate was on the side of teachers where people were concerned that their children’s rights and needs were not being adequately met by the mandated curriculum reforms of English. Finally, the CC relented and relaxed the changes to years 11 and 12 so that existing assessment, teaching practices and methodology would remain as central to the education of students in years 11 and 12. The timing of the public debate was useful to my own reflection on what had occurred during 2004-2006 in regard to the reforms of years 11 and 12. Some reference to the public debate is undertaken in Chapters Five and Six.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the research I have endeavoured to be neutral and have no negative impact on the teachers as a result of my research and contact with them. The emphasis here is the ethical and confidential aspects of critical policy ethnography to capture and analyse an individual’s experiences and understandings in relation to policy reform in a site such as a school. I also promised each teacher that I would keep his/her anonymity and privacy throughout the research process. I have striven to develop a confidential, professional and trustworthy relationship with each participant (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). I asked teachers at each meeting if they had any concerns about my involvement or their involvement in the research. I also made certain that I
did what I said I would do with respect to getting copies of transcribed materials back to the teachers for their review and permission to use them. This has been of the highest importance to both the participants and myself, in terms of generating trust and confidence. I consider gaining the participant’s trust as vital to the success of this research.

The emphasis of ethical research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), is to develop the research around “…four principles of mutual respect, noncoercion and nonmanipulation, the support of democratic values and institutions, and the belief that every research act implies moral and ethical decisions that are contextual” (p.21). I have attempted at all times to encompass these ethical constraints and the reflexive nature of ethnographic research into mandated curriculum reform. To achieve this I must examine my own role in the research.

_Multiply positioned researcher, teacher and parent_

My own position within this research is that I am multiply positioned as a researcher, teacher, and a parent (Weiss & Fine, 2004). According to Weiss and Fine (2004) to be multiply positioned within research is to be given:

… the opportunity and obligation to be at once grounded and analytically oscillating between engagement and distance, explicitly committed to deep situatedness and yet shifting perspectives as to the full [research] composition… [therefore] the researcher as multiply positioned: grounded, engaged, reflective, well-versed in scholarly discourse and knowledgeable as to the external circumstances, and able to move between theory and life. (p.xxi)

Therefore, I cannot be unbiased or unaffected by the reforms as a researcher, teacher or parent. I have as a result of my multiple positioning, been able to gain the teachers’ trust as a colleague, a researcher from my professional work with them and as a parent. The trust shared in the research is according to Reina and Reina (1998)
communication trust. It relies on the sharing of information, truths admission of errors, feedback and confidentiality between members of the school (Reina & Reina, 1998, p.66). According to Roberts and Sanders (2005) the “during phase of ethnographic research... [requires] …the maintenance of dialogue between the investigator and the researched” (pp.304-305). My role as investigator was shaped by my ability to share the experiences of the participants and to maintain our professional relationship over a two year period. The benefit of being in such close proximity to the teachers has included the development of a reciprocal professional relationship where I learned a lot from sharing their experiences. As I was able to be a positive part of the research with the teachers, professional understandings, trust and experiences developed between us. The research also proved a useful means for my own reflexivity on what was occurring at Glasheen SHS.

Reflexivity

Throughout the research process, I maintained a participant observer role in the study. As Atkinson and Hamersley (1994) indicate:

… Ethnography…. [has] a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena … to work with “instructed’ data,… [and] data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories… [the] investigation of a small number of case studies… [allows] analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations. (p.248)

Therefore, I operated within this ethnographic tradition in order to capture the very personal experiences of teachers as they experienced and worked in a dynamic social environment that requires them to alter their own professional practices. My role as participant observer was “… referring to observation carried out when the researcher is playing an established role in the scene studied” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994,
p.248). My role as a participant observer also creates tensions for me as I was multiply positioned within the research. Drawing on Weiss and Fine’s (2004), I was simultaneously a teacher, researcher, parent and member of the community who had my own views and experiences along with the teachers who participated in this research. I took my views with me as I was accepted and welcomed by the participants into their offices and work lives. I was mindful of the need to act in a non exploitative way with staff on a regular basis and return feedback to teachers where they could vet and veto all data collected by me (Patton, 2002). I have placed myself within the research to capture the details of teachers’ work as policy actors.

I maintained reflexivity between the teachers and myself throughout this research process by being up-front and honest about my own roles in the research and being a sounding board for their concerns and opinions. The teachers and I have experienced the reforms of post-compulsory education in Glasheen SHS over the two-year trial together in many respects as we were all multiply positioned as teachers and parents (Denzin, 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Patton, 2002). As a consequence of our common experiences, we each were able to reflect on the past two years of the trial in our own ways. According to Altheide and Johnson (1998), “One meaning of reflexivity is that the… observer is part and parcel of the setting, context and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent” (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.285). I am applying this meaning of reflexivity to this research as I have become a part of the context of Glasheen SHS as a participant researcher and concerned teacher and parent. This has been of benefit to my own research and a highlight of my career. The teachers and I have all experienced a unique set of experiences at the same time.
According to Roberts and Sanders (2005), both the researcher and the teachers face dilemmas of reflexivity. These dilemmas explain how reflexive the whole critical ethnography process is from beginning to end. That is, as individuals we can be reflective of our experiences at all moments along the journey, not only at the end (Roberts & Sanders, 2005, p.297). With this thought on the power of reflexivity as integral to each stage of the research for all involved, I have encouraged this with the teachers. According to Sloan (2006), this can be achieved through the use of “reflection-focussed conversation” with participants during all meetings and discussions (p.126). The significance of focusing on reflection of teacher actions and experiences continuously throughout the research creates an evolving critical ethnography of teachers’ work with curriculum reform. Drawing on Foley’s (2002) work, I have also utilised the connections between critical reflexivity and Carspecken’s five stages of critical ethnography. The connections relate to how teachers experienced, understood and reflected on their work as it was impacted by curriculum reform. The impacts of the curriculum reform can alter individual’s awareness and sense of their own realities.

The impacts of the curriculum reform on the individual teachers and their work were central to my reflection phase of research. Roberts and Sanders (2005) refer to this phase as “the moment of reflection” where I am able to analyse all of the data collected from the participants over the two-year study and draw together the threads of my ideas with the emergent themes and issues affecting the teachers and their work. According to Jeffrey and Troman (2004) ethnography requires time between visits to “…reflect on our observations and conversations and to experiment with relevant theories to interpret the data from the site. We then revisited the site
when we were ready to view the teachers’ practices from a new perspective” (p.540).
I also experienced this need to space out the visits and reflect on the data gathered
during intense meetings with individual teachers.

I needed the two-year period to be able to work through my own
interpretations and to be able to decide on labour process theory as the theoretical
underpinning to the research. This time and process allowed me to place the
individual’s experiences or lifeworld within a wider context of external educational
reform or systems world. Therefore, the lengthy data capturing time enabled a deeper
and more connective response to the research on my part.

The next step in the process was the teacher evaluation of the trial of the new
units within the CoS year 11 English in 2005. This was where the individual teachers
were able to reflect on their work and progress with the students working in the new
unit of work over the term and compare the different approaches. This step was very
important in feeding back information to the CC about the outcomes and issues
associated with implementing a CoS in English. Therefore, the whole process was an
ongoing form of reflective practice, which the teachers used to develop their own
experiences and to examine how the CoS affected their work and the learning
experiences of students in years 11 and 12. The reflexive range of experiences
demonstrated by the teachers indicated to me that they had conceptualised for
themselves how to best implement the reforms to years 11 and 12 in a way that would
benefit their students. This is the central homologous aspect (Mac an Ghaill, 1992) of
reflection for all of the teachers to get to a point where they can benefit the students’
learning using the CoS in English in years 11 and 12. The process of reflexivity is
discussed in depth in Chapter Six as teachers uncover their own reprofessionalisation as an outcome of the trial of CoS in English.

For my own reflexivity, I realised that I had taken on what I thought to be a narrow research project, but it became a massive piece of ethnographic research and the first time in Western Australia that teachers could be heard in a systematic way. This was a momentous time for me as I watched the whole process unfurl and become the centre of public attention and the focussed efforts from many quarters to not allow the wholesale reforms to years 11 and 12 education. I also realised that local experiences and expert knowledge can make a real difference to how policy is decided and implemented. This was a revelation for me as a teacher and researcher. Finally, how the local school can influence upwards to a state level of government to shape policy and how to implement it at the school level by teachers was exciting. The changes made to the CoS in English have been as a direct result of the teachers at this school and across the state standing up and refusing to be silenced when faced with a major overhaul of English, which they realised needed serious debate and reform of the reforms.

The next chapter is a data analysis that will detail actual teacher’s recounts of their own experiences with the changes to year 11 and 12 English in real time. It demonstrates how the data was gathered while the teachers were experiencing the trial and changes to their everyday work roles- not at the end of the trial period, which is how policy analysis is usually conducted. I have gathered a varied set of responses by teachers at all points along their journey with the mandated curriculum reform. The Chapter describes the enunciative space (Smyth, 2001a) where teachers freely
commented on their experiences with mandated change in a safe and confidential setting.

**Conclusion**

Examining the everyday work experiences of a group of teachers over a two-year period has enabled me to demonstrate links and sets of complex relationships which exist between how teachers experience, understand and make meanings of their changing work roles and how other influences are impacting on and affecting these individuals. The enmeshing of labour process theory within the hybrid methodology of critical ethnography and critical policy ethnography provides a rich source of in-depth data and links to the analysis of teachers’ work and systems relationships.
Chapter 5: Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work—data analysis

Introduction

The previous chapters of this thesis have demonstrated the broader neo-liberal agenda impacting on Australian education, how this has been translated to the federal and state levels of education policy making and how it impacts teachers’ work. I have conceptualised this research using labour process theory in order to critically examine what is happening to teachers’ work as a result of the current mandated curriculum reforms to teaching year 11 and 12 English in a Western Australian secondary school-Glasheen SHS as discussed in Chapter Three.

In order to gather the data for this investigation, I have used a critical policy ethnography approach as described in Chapter Four. This approach has allowed me to work within one school for a period of two years. During this time I was granted access to individual teachers, small groups, focus groups and observed learning area staff meetings. I was also able to interview the Principal and a Deputy of the same school. As a result of this research approach and lengthy meetings with the teachers, I have found several emerging themes affecting teachers’ work. The most significant themes of the research are as follows:

- Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work
- Intensification of teachers’ work
- Surveillance and control
- Technocratisation of teachers’ work
- Accountability and responsibility
The themes represent the tensions influencing teachers’ work at Glasheen SHS. These tensions effect individuals, and occur between individuals and the CC, District Office (DO) and WADET. This chapter will examine the impacts of: deprofessionalisation, intensification, surveillance and control, technocratisation and accountability and responsibility on teachers’ work, emanating from curriculum reform being experienced in one school by eight English teachers. The reforms that occurred in 2004 to 2005 are indicative of the shifting sands of educational reform of the past ten years in Australian and global education systems. This chapter sets out to do two things: first, to describe the school and the participant teachers in context and to identify and analyse the emerging themes impacting on their work; and second, to explore and analyse the personal data sources which underpin this research in terms of system relationships (Carspecken, 1991), specifically teachers’ firsthand accounts of their work experiences with trialling the CoS in English (year 11 and 12) at Glasheen Senior high school.

The case study school context - Observations of a teacher/researcher (2004)

My experiences with the research process were very positive. I enjoyed visiting Glasheen SHS and appreciated the open door policy the staff showed me. The school’s contextual features included the following: the school was a state government senior high school; it had a diverse student population of approx 1,800; it is located in a middle-class, multicultural suburb in the Perth metropolitan area; it was academically successful across all learning areas; it had well developed programs to offer support to a wide range of student needs, including general education support, sporting teams, multicultural activities; and it had a curriculum consisting of: computing, art, music, performance-dance, and career and vocational education, and
structured work-based learning, in years 11 and 12. Staff comprised approximately 150 teachers.

The teachers received me in a very positive manner throughout the two-year data collection period of 2004-2005. I had already established professional relationships with some of the staff through my role as a school experience supervisor in the School of Education at Murdoch University. My professional connections and relationships helped to facilitate a reciprocal research relationship at the school that was equitable between the staff and myself. I provided staff with written feedback on our semi-structured interviews, focus group meetings, and individual discussions with staff. The feedback received positive comments by individual teachers as they could see there was no mystery behind what I was doing. This open and honest approach supported my ongoing access and data collection in Glasheen SHS. In addition, my own role as an experienced teacher-researcher facilitated my connection with teachers in an empathetic collegial way.

The teachers I focus on in this chapter were the individuals trialling the CoS in English in year 11 in 2004 and 2005, in particular the eight staff members I interviewed. I also interviewed the remainder of staff in the learning area indirectly involved with the trial (approximately ten staff involved with year 11 English TEE, Senior English, and Vocational English.) The focus group of teachers was actively involved with piloting the CoS in English and attending CC meetings as part of reporting feedback process to the CC.
The participants

The eight main participants who contributed their professional experiences over the two year trial and implementation of the year 11 CoS in English at Glasheen SHS were as follows (with fictionalised names):

Dean, the Principal of the school, had been teaching and in administration for 27 (2004) years, 5 years as Principal of the school. Dean was very proud of the school as it was considered to be successful across academic, sporting, community and personal development spheres. It is important to note that the school was also a successful example of an inclusive learning environment for students with special needs.

Jo, an English teacher who specialised in teaching Literature to year 11 and 12 students, had been teaching 22 years (2004), 12 years at the school. Jo also worked in the Academic Talent Programme (ATP)-English with gifted and talented students.

Bryan, the Deputy Principal of the school, had been at the school for six months at the time of my interview with him in June 2004. Bryan had been in teaching and administration for 31 years (2004). Bryan was new to the school and his main responsibility was for curriculum leadership, specifically in years 11 and 12 English. Bryan left the school after the trial was completed.

David, the Head of Learning Area (HOLA), English throughout the duration of the trial, had been teaching 26 years (2004), 14 years at the school. David’s
position was one of curriculum leader in the area of English. He was very proactive in commencing the trial of the new courses in English.

Vicki, an English teacher who specialised in the Academic Talent Programme (ATP) and taught English and Literature to year 11 and 12 English at the school, had been teaching 25 years (2004), seven years at the school.

Tom, an English teacher who had taught at the school for 12 years out of his 20 year (2004) teaching career, was interested in gaining promotion into a more administrative role.

Ray, a Level Three classroom teacher in the English learning area, had been teaching 25 years (2004), 16 years at the school. Ray also specialised in teaching Literature to year 11 and 12 students.

Dan, a classroom teacher who had an interest in improving students’ literacy in lower school and upper school years 8-12, had been teaching 8 years, with 6 years at the school.

These teachers offered a window into their work world as they experienced curriculum reform and a view of the tensions of their experiences with curriculum reform. The trial had been introduced to the staff in English via the Principal Dean and David, the HOLA. Both were strong advocates for the introduction of the new curriculum that formed the CoS in year 11 and 12 English. Dean, the Principal of the school, describes his role this way:
The CC offered to our school the opportunity to pilot some of the new courses of study in 2004. My role was to ask staff if they were interested in being involved in the pilot. I considered the risks before asking staff to get involved. Teachers responded initially in a very positive way to the trial. David and the English staff were the first to accept the pilot of the new courses in year 11. The English teachers have continued to pilot the new courses throughout 2004. David discussed the pilot with the English teachers and they decided to trial different levels of courses. We agreed that no students would be disadvantaged by the trial. (Dean, March 2004)

The individual teachers who participated in this research were all experienced English teachers who had taught at the school for more than five years. All but one had taught at the school for ten or more years. The individuals all volunteered to participate in the curriculum trial at a learning area meeting in 2003. They were working as part of the English learning area in the decision making with David, the HOLA, to pilot the new courses in year 11 (2A and 2B 2004-2005). The CoS in English are arranged as follows: in year 11 English the units include 1A/1B/1C/1D, which replace the previous Senior English and Vocational English (non TEE wholly school assessed subjects), and 2A/2B which replaces the previous 11 English (necessary for TEE and university entrance). In year 12 students can also complete 2A/2B courses (which replaces Senior English year 12- wholly-school assessed subject) or year 12 English (the same course can be used for TEE and university entrance) or Literature (which is the same as the previous course for TEE and university entrance). Each course consists of units of work to be developed by individual teachers.

The teachers were able to work in pairs to create the units of work. They also cooperated with each other to complete all aspects of the reporting and feedback process required by the CC. David, the HOLA of this learning area had the opportunity to take part in some of the policy planning and introduction of the new post-compulsory system in the WADET via a series of meetings at central office in
2004. The participants were experiencing the influences of curriculum reform as they embarked on the trial. I shall now turn to the first theme of deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as a result of external influences from the CC and WADET.

Deprofessionalisation

Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work is a complex web of pressures and intensification that, according to Smyth (2001a), influence change:

...around teachers’ work- vocationalism, accountability, testing, performance appraisal, devolved responsibility, school charters, league tables, recentralized curriculum frameworks, and other extraneous limitations on teachers’ work and student’ learning .(p.157)

Deprofessionalisation is a deeply entrenched managerialist economic political agenda to control, reconstruct and restrict the work of teachers in schools as Robertson (2000) explains:

A central principle within this new mandate is that educational systems, through creating appropriately skilled and entrepreneurial citizens and workers able to generate new and added economic values, will enable nations to be responsive to changing conditions within the international marketplace. (p.187)

Here Robertson (2000) is demonstrating the reconfiguration of teachers’ work in line with economic and political imperatives. This reconfiguration of teacher identities leads to changes in workplace conditions and remuneration.

In addition, Braverman (1974) and Smyth (2001a) explain how the labour of teachers is subordinated leading to a reduction in real wages, more hours, and an increasing intensity of work under greater surveillance and control. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. This view is supported by Knight and Willmott (1990) who describe the deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work in terms of it occurring as teachers’ real wages are declining while they are value adding to students and society
with their expertise and professionalism. Knight and Willmott (1990) describe this as ‘a process of concealing valorisation’ by governmental agencies, which, in the case of Western Australia, are the CC and WADET.

Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work is linked throughout this thesis to the ongoing influences and control of global impacts on the changing nature of work in the public sector, including education. The global impacts of marketisation of education as a business where outputs are to be maximised and inputs reduced while demonstrating resource efficiencies in a competitive market is a significant contributor to the changing nature of teachers’ work. In addition, the rise of neo-liberalism as a political, economic and social agenda for reform and control of sectors such as education is also contributing to the systematic change of teachers’ work in schools. The system relationships between what is occurring at the global level, nationally and locally are having significant consequences for individual teachers. Gewirtz’ (2002) explains:

…that the culture of teachers’ work is changing in significant ways. In short, teachers are experiencing a loss of autonomy and an accelerated intensification of activity and stress…[and] generates an intensification of the labour process of teaching, a refocusing- and narrowing—of pedagogic activity, and a concomitant shift in who and what is valued in schools. (pp.88-89)

Deprofessionalisation is occurring as a result of the changes in teachers’ work practices through a series of reform layers including: changing cultures, intensification, technocratisation, surveillance, control and the increasing accountability and responsibility imposed on teachers and their work. These themes have been borne out in this thesis to be major contributing factors to the changing nature of teachers’ work. In addition, these themes are enmeshed with external influences to teachers’ work including: the global approach to education within a
market-driven public sector; the institutionalisation of new managerialist doctrine in terms of performance management; and control of teachers’ work by the layering of the Federal Government policy driven by the international influences of the current neo-liberal economic rationalist agenda. These layers of influence are impacting on state control of education in Western Australia.

Labour process theory helps to disentangle the many interconnected layers of reform and to critically examine what the consequences are for teachers’ work. Moreover, the theoretical base allows for the voices of individuals to respond to impositions of such changing cultures from the point of view of people who have direct expert experience with mandated curriculum reforms. The teachers experience a sense of alienation, isolation, and disconnection from their intellectual work that is teaching by mandated reform, thus further highlighting what is a global phenomena of changing cultures in education. This is a central reason for conducting critical policy ethnography of teachers’ work as mandated curriculum reform is increasingly driven by outside political agendas to increase external pressures and intensification of their work.

There are some political risks associated with research into policy implementation as Rist (1998) explains:

Close-in studies of the operational life of a policy initiative can gain a perspective on the commitment of those involved, their belief in the worthiness of the effort, the amount of political support they are or not engendering, and the receptivity of the target population to the policy. (p.422)

As Rist (1998) suggests, qualitative policy work can be more potential than actual in nature as a result of a lack of support on the ground. In this case at Glasheen SHS with the teachers, trialling the CoS in English. The realisation or implementation of
the policy created centrally by WADET and the CC will occur despite what opinions
the teachers as policy implementers have. Therefore, it is necessary to gather data
from the participants over a long period of time in an in-depth manner in order to
develop a greater understanding of how these reforms shape the lives of teachers and
other educational professionals. The design of the research was crucial to capturing
the voices of the teachers.

According to Weis and Fine (2004):

…compositional designs-ethnographic inquiries designed to understand how
global and national formations, and relational interactions, seep through the
lives, relations, and communities of youth and adults, ultimately refracting back
on the larger formations that gave rise to them. (p.xix)

Therefore, the study has been designed to capture as much of the professional
experiences of the teachers at Glasheen SHS as they underwent the trial of this major
reform. This approach also allowed me to step back and think about what was
occurring to teachers, including my own experience. I was able to ‘oscillate,’ as Weis
and Fine (2004) describe the role as a teacher/researcher, in and out of the school in
order to collect data and engage with the participants and then work on the analysis of
the data. The first major shift experienced by the teachers was the
deprofessionalisation of their work within a changing work culture.

Deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work was discussed in detail in the context
of the changing nature of work in schools as a result of the current curriculum reform
in Chapter Two. In this chapter, I will examine the process individual teachers have
lived through over a two-year period trialling and implementing the CoS in English in
year 11 at Glasheen SHS. The main contributors to deprofessionalisation, I have
identified are: intensification, surveillance and control; technocratisation of work
tasks and technology; and the increased accountability and responsibility of teachers in the new managerialist atmosphere of school-based self management. These factors are not isolated or singular in effect. Rather they represent a cumulative compounding layering effect to individual teachers and their work, with some detrimental consequences. In order to understand the compounding layering effect of these themes, I utilised the analysis of Carspecken (1991) system relationships—making the connections and interconnections between the different relationships occurring within the education system in Australia, individually, locally at the school, state, federal and global level. The impacts of the layering of the themes discussed above have contributed to large-scale change in teachers’ work as a result of curriculum reform in post-compulsory education in Australia.

I examine the tensions of the themes by first examining the role of deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as a result of mandated curriculum reform. Of the interviews and meetings conducted with the teachers in the school, deprofessionalisation of work emerged as one of the biggest impacts of the curriculum reform. The pressures and influences of deprofessionalisation came about as the teachers began their trial of the new courses in English. During the first meeting with the teachers, which occurred in March 2004, the teachers seemed split, four (in favour) and four (against), about the changes to the current teaching syllabi for English. The previous syllabi spanned Senior English, Vocational English, TEE English 11/12 and English Literature 11/12. The responses at this time were more concerned with the improvement and renovation of the current subjects in English than with the changing nature of their own professionalism and intensification of workload.
Intensification of teachers’ work - “I don’t own this new curriculum, it’s not mine.”

Intensification can occur as teachers struggle to implement new mandated curriculum reforms in schools. Using labour process theory analysis, I was able to examine the tensions present in teachers’ work during implementation of the CoS in English during the trial. According to Giddens (1998), there are enabling and constraining influences leading to increased intensification. The enabling influences include the change in curriculum emphasis and updating of current ideas and approaches to teachers’ work which can be beneficial. The constraining influences include the increased work load where teachers are the main sources of curriculum creation and development under a watchful and controlling bureaucratic governing body—the CC. In the remainder of this section, I shall allude to two main aspects: increased workload; and external pressures and monitoring—leading to intensification of teachers’ work.

*Increased workload*

The intensification of teachers’ work resulting from the responses and experiences of the teachers directly involved with the trial in 2004 have revealed several key tensions, including: increased workload; external pressures to complete curriculum writing while teaching the new courses; pressures from the CC to attend meetings, monitoring and assessment of their work by the CC; and having to ‘give away’ intellectual property and expertise for no extra compensation or status; and the increased level of accountability and responsibility experienced by individual teachers.
At the commencement of the trial, I asked each teacher how they saw their role in terms of professional responsibility for the new courses. Jo speaks of a growing sense of isolation from her colleagues:

*I am working on my own with a year 10 Literature class working in isolation from my colleagues. I am giving it a go, but I do feel the weight of the responsibility to the Curriculum Council (CC) for my teaching. It seemed straightforward at first with the Curriculum Council’s program. The problems I have encountered relate to the piecemeal nature of the trial in year 10 Student Outcome Statements (1998-2004) I feel the outside pressures from the CC to produce sufficient feedback to them in a restricted time. It’s a time factor pressure.* (Jo, March 2004)

The factors Jo refers to may be magnified by the school’s tradition of being a highly successful academic school in Western Australia.

Jo refers to the agenda for curriculum reform:

*Our school is always keen to be at the forefront of innovation and curriculum change. As a teacher I do feel the pressure to perform and keep up with the innovations occurring in our school... The decision making process is led by the agenda of others ... Getting into [curriculum] change in its infancy is better for me as a teacher.* (Jo March 2004)

The CoS was the latest change Jo and other staff in English at the school had to take on and make work. The layers of tension and intensification of work involved increasing feelings of isolation and alienation as Jo describes. Others’ perspectives depended whether they were a teacher or administrator.

In David’s words:

*I am the head of learning area (HOLA), English and am a curriculum leader in the school. My role is a double-edged sword as I am responsible for curriculum change in the department given limited time.* (March, 2004)

David sees his role as being a driver of curriculum and a champion of change in order to keep up the school’s reputation as a high performing and up-to-date school. He continues:
My role is to embrace the new curriculum and encourage changes within our learning area and across the school. However, I don’t believe in the new curriculum as I find it structurally faulty and extremely difficult to implement. I am concerned about the inherent flaws in the new curriculum as it is supposed to offer new opportunities to develop students’ learning experiences in English. As an experienced teacher I find it hard to reconcile the need to alter my current teaching practices in favour of a curriculum that I know does not belong to me. This is an issue of credibility for us as teachers in trial schools. The Ed department [WADET] and the CC are expecting great changes to occur yet are unwilling to listen to teachers’ concerns. (David, March 2004)

David’s comments are tied up with concerns about what constitutes this new curriculum and how his role as HOLA will be affected by the changes. It is clear from the start that Jo and David have concerns about how the new curriculum will be managed and how much work they as teachers will have to do to implement it. In terms of labour process theory, it is apparent that the teachers do not feel a sense of ownership over the new curriculum or indeed their professional work. This situation was amplified by the layering of extra workload, regulations and lack of structure in the new curriculum.

Additional concerns about workload, organisation of the new curriculum and issues of intensification are expressed by Vicki:

*The post-compulsory changes are a result of the CC’s Curriculum Framework implementation. The CC had to align post-compulsory education with outcomes-based 8-10 education. The problems with the Post-Compulsory Review (PCR) implementation are the lack of time, and not enough resources and expertise to assist teachers with the transition. (Vicki, March, 2004)*

Teachers have a sense of suspicion about the CoS in English, which were not allayed in the beginning by the CC or WADET. The issues central to Vicki’s concerns were directly related to the intensification of teachers’ work by the new post-compulsory curriculum in English. The increased workload, feelings of isolation/alienation and external pressures to meet designated targets and benchmarks set by the CC all contributed to internal pressures on individual teachers throughout the trial.
individual teachers experienced a sense of uncertainty about the beginning of the trial, which added layers of pressure to their already hectic work schedules.

Vicki makes the following point:

*The other internal problems are based on the lack of time for assessing and reporting students’ performance using the new curriculum and attainment levels. We have partial unit implementation and it is already week 8, term 1. How useful or valid will the pilot be without enough time to implement and assess students in the new unit structure?* (Vicki, March, 2004)

Vicki’s response highlights the double work load of teachers implementing the new courses and how this was affecting her work. The need to operate two lots of assessment framework programmes for year 11s and 12s throughout the two years of the trial, and the first year of full implementation in 2006 was regarded as irksome. The increased work load generated by the assessment adversely impacted on the amount of time and energy teachers had for individual students. Another significant point made by Vicki refers to external pressures imposed (for example, by the shift in curriculum design, assessment and teaching methodologies and practices), which added to the increasing sense of deprofessionalisation.

Vicki elaborates:

*The external problems come from the rushed writing of the new units for 11 English. I would have liked to see more complete writing up of the units in the courses before the pilot began. Teachers of English each interpret and want flexibility to use a variety of resources. The new units are too prescriptive and restrictive of what we can and cannot use.* (Vicki, March, 2004)

The suspicions voiced by Vicki are indicative of too little planning, funding and consultation with teachers about such a major curriculum change. This point of view is apparent in discussion with other teachers.

For example, Tom’s view of the reforms:
I am a classroom teacher of English. I would prefer to be in a more administrative role. I’m just doing a small aspect of the trial of the PCR in year 11 English. I am writing programs using the format proposed in the new units. There was a lot of indecision to start with between the teachers in our department. I think the trial of the new courses of study will be implemented as cheaply as possible using teachers’ unpaid efforts. Funding is minimal at best. We have no promised funding except for occasional relief funds to attend CC meetings. I am experiencing the extra workload on top of my classroom teaching. I’m resigned to it as I am used to change. (Tom, March, 2004)

External pressures and monitoring

The points made by Tom reflected a view of an experienced teacher who has seen previous mandated curriculum reforms that have been only partly implemented and successful. Tom was communicating not only a sense of *déjà vu* but also a sense of resignation to the forces of reform and deprofessionalisation as something to be tolerated. In addition, Tom made clear connections between his workload and the increased pressures of the new courses in terms of the enormous amount of work for teachers to write, create, resource and develop the curriculum as units of work and then implement them without any additional time or remuneration. Tom also highlighted the significance of the effect of the CC’s desire to control teachers’ work.

**Surveillance and control - “Change…a means of controlling teachers’ opinions”**

In order to examine the implementation of a new mandated curriculum, Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid and Shacklock (2000) explain the role of surveillance and control as a three-pronged mechanism. The three controls are curriculum definition, supervision, and evaluation of teacher’ work to engineer teacher consent and compliance, as discussed in Chapter Three. With the trial of the new curriculum came a number of tensions arising from external influences. These external influences included the surveillance and control of teachers’ work as an added regulatory measure on top of the additional workload. This included the requirement for teachers to attend...
designated CC and DO meetings in order to perform and report on their work in a regulated atmosphere. Moreover, the teachers experienced an unprecedented level of direct interference in their work, which they had not experienced prior to the trial by DO and the CC. It was as if the teachers were on trial not the new curriculum. This was a significant contributor to the changing nature of the teachers’ professionalism as they felt they were being isolated from the intellectual rigour of their work, something they had greater ownership of before the trial. In addition, the curriculum created by individual teachers was used by the CC and DO as a springboard for other schools to frame their own work over the 2004 –2005 period. This additional pressure made use of the teachers and their intellectual property without adequately remunerating them or acknowledging their expertise.

Moreover, the depth of surveillance and control was becoming more obvious when I returned to the school to have a meeting with Tom:

The main problems with the Curriculum Framework and the SOS were to do with the lack of moderation and consensus between teachers. That is why you get the slippage in interpretation between levels and teachers. There will need to be feedback to us from CC in order to gauge how our interpretations of the levels compare with other teachers and schools. Reporting in outcomes needs to be more clearly given to parents in order to gain their confidence in what we are doing. The threat here is that bad results could be used to control which teachers teach certain classes. I see this as a negative thing in schools. (Tom, December, 2004)

Tom’s comments reflect another layer of control and surveillance of teachers’ work impacting on their daily work. Tom’s comments refer to the power the CC has over what teachers teach and individual control of the teachers on a daily basis with regard to teaching and assessment of students in the CoS in English. Thus, teachers’ work is further deprofessionalised as a consequence of the use of surveillance and control as a tension created by mandated curriculum reform. The use of external monitoring
mechanisms also indicates the connection between how teachers’ work is changing and responding to external imperatives of greater responsibility and accountability.

The main impacts of mandated curriculum reform on teachers were, use of time, resourcing, and additional curriculum demands on top of an already busy teaching load and the need to create curriculum from the ‘ground up’. While the new curriculum lacked significant and explicit structure and organisation, teachers were being monitored for their performance and held accountable for the development of the new courses. The combined effects of reduced professional status with over work and alienation from their professional work have further exacerbated the tensions in the trial. The teachers were being used by the CC to provide professional development to other schools around the state. This situation represented the beginning of the separation of teachers between those pro the new mandated curriculum and those who were anti the new courses at Glasheen SHS. The divisiveness of the CoS became very public as a result of the PLATO website (http://www.platowa.com/) where teachers could discuss their views in an open manner with others. The PLATO website became the battle-ground for a majority of the arguments surrounding the CoS in English. This was a significant point in the CoS development as teachers could publicly debate the issues facing teachers without risk of reprimand by the CC or WADET in a public forum.

Jo and Tom echo the concerns raised by Ray, in their description of the power relations between themselves and the CC resulting from their involvement in the trial. As the trial progressed there was a definite sense among the teachers that they were being marginalised by powerful voices in the CC meetings. This was the case with all of the teachers except David, who had become part of the insider club.
with his expert contributions which were being valued and listened to by the CC and DO. Some of the other teachers, like Tom, concur with the insider-outsider club pressures:

_The power base for making decisions lies firmly within the Curriculum Council with regard to how schools will implement the Post-Compulsory Review – New Courses of Study for years 11 and 12. Maybe we have examined the course too critically from our perspective as classroom teachers. Nobody wanted to commit him/herself to this trial in a big way. There are others outside of our school that may judge us negatively within the context of the meetings we have participated in at the CC. There appears to be a climate of political judgements and negativity between colleagues at these meetings._ (Tom, August, 2004)

Tom’s responses unearth a real sense of ‘us and them’ between the trial teachers and the CC and DO. In addition, Jo describes how she is feeling less valued:

_I don’t think what I’ve done is going to be valued. I think it will be judged critically by others especially those from private schools. I went to a levelling meeting where this very know-it-all younger teacher from a private school was giving all the answers. The next time I went to a similar meeting there she was part of the ‘team’ on the inside. I’m observing this and feeling on the outside of the process. This teacher assumes knowledge without a lot of experience. She commented on how we managed our task with our students._ (Jo, August, 2004)

The pressures of the CoS embodied in the curriculum shift are demonstrated by Ray’s account of the beginning of the reform process:

_I am an English teacher and second in charge (level 3 teacher) in the English department. I am interested in teacher leadership and pedagogical leadership. I support the HOLA with administration within the department. I have a minor role in the implementation of the PCR trial here. I don’t see my role as introducing a whole CoS, rather a small part of the change. We felt annoyed that we were prepared to be involved without knowing what was entailed in the trial. They [CC] changed plans due to other schools’ lack of involvement._ (Ray, March, 2004)

Ray’s comments illustrate how the whole trial process increased the burden on individual teachers above and beyond their already full timetables. The disembodiment of the expert intellectual teacher from the curriculum, except for the small contributions prescribed and valued by the CC, was a further pressure placed on teachers throughout the trial. According to Ozga (1988) and Smyth (2001a), this
separation of the individual from their intellectual work is to engineer compliance and reduce resistance.

In March 2004 concerns were emerging about the lack of direction and support from the CC for teachers. Jo elaborates on this stress point:

Would the CC approve of the way I have gone about my class trial? Is it a waste of time? I like to do things my way but I don’t want to triple my own workload. The CC has given me little or no support or assistance so I am creating the system from within my own teaching practice and experience. I need the security of knowing that I am doing the right thing. Doubts and concerns are part of my stress over meetings at the CC. I am forced to critically reflect on my own experiences. I do feel by myself as the others [teachers] are working in a group (Jo, March, 2004)

The lack of direction within this new highly regulated framework, without any actual curriculum, except what the teachers themselves were creating, was a disturbing experience for Jo and the other teachers. It became apparent that teachers were central to the creation and success or failure of the CoS. Shortly after this meeting, the teachers went to a meeting with DO. Tom explains the fallout from this meeting:

I think that the criticism of our work by district office is unwarranted and unfair. The pilot of new 11 English courses is based on goodwill. I feel as though the goodwill between teachers here and DO has been damaged. This is difficult to take given the lack of resources and assistance by DO and CC. (Tom, April, 2004)

One of the implications of such a widespread lack of resourcing, funding and support is more pressure on teachers’ work in relation to the implementation of the CoS in English. Tom’s comments also highlight the authoritarian role taken by DO towards the teachers and how they felt being monitored for their performance throughout the trial. This new level of monitoring and control is indicative of the new managerialist doctrine impacting on every aspect of the public sector. According to Smyth et al, (2000) and Reid (1999), the use of managerialist controls including ideological, bureaucratic and disciplinary controls is apparent in the curriculum reform process.
undertaken in schools. The new managerialist doctrine is a consequence of the neo-liberal economic rationalism of the prevailing global political agenda sweeping over education and every part of public serviced based organisations discussed in Chapter Three.

This model of regulated and close monitoring of teachers’ work was another tension impacting on teachers’ work. The new managerialist doctrine of performance management and bench-marking outputs used by the CC and WADET were closely aligned to the changing cultures of teachers’ work. The changing culture of teachers’ work involved a determination of what teachers should teach, when, and how as well as how students will be assessed according to an ever growing set of external targets and benchmarks. This tension in the process of deprofessionalisation is known as technocratisation of teachers’ work (Ozga, 1988; Kesson 2004) or the devaluing of the intellectual work of teachers by employers in order to separate them from their work (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). This results in mandated curriculum reforms that are out of the teachers’ hands and made mandatory by agencies like the CC or WADET.

**The technocratisation of teachers’ work - “a language to talk about the language”**

The technocratisation of teachers’ work was an additional tension imposed as a result of mandated curriculum reform. According to Rikowski (1996), technocratisation is the separation of the teacher from their intellectual work by diminishing their individual agency. This has occurred as the NCS in English required all decisions to be made at the central bureaucratic level, away from the intellectual work of the teachers charged with its implementation. The way that the teachers base their work
on teaching methodologies and practices was challenged and impacted by the trial of the new curriculum (Easthope & Easthope, 2000). Part of the technocratisation process of teachers’ work was the mandated changes to assessment, teaching methods and practices, reporting and external influences and pressures imposed by the CC and DO of WADET.

Tom describes his experiences of dislocation from making curriculum decisions:

*There is no curriculum to hold onto, no framework. Teachers are feeling less confident about more change given the experience with the Student Outcome Statements (SOS) and the Curriculum Framework (CF) I am interested in curriculum development as part of my own professional development. Overall, even though I am embarking on this change, my past experiences with the Education department have been dismal. I have low expectations of success of this innovation. Change is actually used as a means of control of people’s opinions.* (Tom, March 2004)

The tone of Tom’s response indicates that he was experiencing a sense of disengagement from the CoS only two months into the trial. Other teachers were more positive in the initial phase of the trial.

The following focus group meeting occurred prior to the teachers attending a CC meeting regarding the trial of English year 11 units in term one, 2004. David was initially up-beat and enthusiastic about the changes and had made progress with his year 11 English class since the commencement of the trial in week one term one:

*Where to from here? What experiences will students gain from the trial? The main change involves the variation in process- investigation as an assessment task. The unit 2A is about language and power. We need to do a lot of groundwork research. This may involve initial public controversy –issues. Contexts will be an important issue in the unit for students. The major problem is time constraints to implement a new course with little resources available to us. What we have used in the past as course structures and frameworks may not be applicable now. Students need a lot of guidance in order to be able to complete the investigation.* (David, March, 2004)
The issues discussed by David centre around the changing language and teaching methodology of the NCS being more student centred in providing students with enough structure for them to complete the course successfully. This has influenced how he viewed his teaching role and its changing place in English. In addition, Ray experienced a similar revelation about the CoS.

*I would suggest that students become more reliant on their own resources and skills to locate relevant texts. The model is still dependent on the teacher providing all sources.* (Ray, March, 2004)

Ray’s initial response indicated a genuine concern about the students becoming more autonomous, especially in relation to finding their own texts to complete tasks. Tom’s response was more flexible in relation to student progress:

*Students’ research tends to be mechanistic and limited.* (Tom, March, 2004)

Tom’s approach is realistic as he explains how year 11 students are still very much dependent on what the teacher can provide for them. He was prepared to assist students by teaching them more mature research skills required in order to complete the course.

David also expressed concerns about students’ lack of understanding of social issues and their place in the world:

*The CoS places emphasis on students having already developed research and personal organisation skills in order to get through the course. An important outcome for us as teachers is that students need a lot of background learning in language and power in order to complete the investigation task. They then need to use a variety of texts on refugees [for example] to develop a body of knowledge over seven weeks.* (David, March, 2004)

David’s response here suggests that teachers need to fill in student knowledge, especially about world events, in order for students to be able to meet the requirements of the tasks.
Other teachers shared David’s concerns on the shallowness of student knowledge.

They included Jo’s view:

_They develop a language to talk about the language as they learn more about the theme, (e.g.) power._ (Jo, March, 2004)

David also discusses with Vicki and Tom the consequences of teaching students with little understanding of world events:

_David: I was able to give students experiences to develop their own understandings of language to be able to discuss controversial issues._

_Vicki: We need to take time to motivate students to develop language skills._

_Tom: We are not doing English because they love it. There is a loss of depth of understandings for the sake of coverage of the course in year 11_(March, 2004)._

David, Vicki and Tom have different ideas on how students can attain a sufficient understanding of a theme in order to study it. This collegial discussion helped the individual teachers to develop their own teaching ideas on a more theme-driven approach to the teaching of English than the previous genre approach, as suggested by the following teacher comments:

_Jo: You need to teach them research skills, forms (of texts e.g. feature articles) covered in breadth, not depth._ (June, 2004)

_David: How can I teach with critical depth in limited time (eight weeks)?_ (June, 2004)

Ray also had increasing concerns about the efficacy of the new courses to meet students’ needs by adding:

_I have a lot of reservations about the new courses of study. Teachers of upper school are used to working with a syllabus that gives them direction, clear assessment processes, and structures for using different English texts. The new course has no set texts or recommended text types. There are activities that are open-ended tasks that will be interpreted by teachers in a number of ways. The interpretation will cause a great deal of variability in assessment and cause comparability problems for teachers. The main reason I can see to change the existing course of the TEE is that we have not had a significant overhaul of post-compulsory education since the McGaw report of 1983._ (Ray, June 2004)
Ray’s position on the trial was a reaction to having been through many half-implemented and partially successful mandated curriculum reforms over the last 25 years. He was not convinced about the benefits of revamping the TEE approach to post-compulsory education in Western Australian secondary schools with the CoS.

The second year of the trial (2005) confirmed for most of the participant teachers that the CoS in English was going had the potential to be a disaster for education in Western Australia. The focus group meeting in April 2004 describes the pressures of timing and being externally accountable for the development of units of work within the new courses for year 11 English. The issues of time pressures and external accountability added together to intensify the workload and further impact the professionalism of the teachers from the beginning of the trial.

**Increased accountability and responsibility - “The insider-outsider club”**

According to Hill (2003) and Smyth (2001a), the process of reforming curriculum can operate as a reconstruction of teacher roles by invalidating what teachers have been doing in their careers by replacing current teaching methodologies with new methods. The effect of the CoS increased tension upon already overworked and over monitored staff, who were working in an atmosphere of increased pressure and accountability for central government agency decisions. The additional tension is what Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) describe as the ‘silenced voices’ of teachers as they endeavour to meet increased work obligations and account for every aspect of their work without much say. While teachers are busy complying with the increasing demands of bureaucratic agencies, they are not able to be as critical as they may like to be of the new curriculum (Rikowski, 2002).
The management style taken by the CC and WADET are indicative of a managerialist agenda of a large bureaucratic governmental organisation. This is characterised as enforcing cooperation of teachers to participate with the reform of the CoS, and then not providing sufficient resources, time or support to ensure that the teachers can do their work (Braverman, 1974). The result is that teachers have no choice but to follow the requirements of the CC and WADET to implement the CoS. Therefore, the individual agency of each teacher is unhinged because of having to meet the demands of external agencies and being accountable and responsible for the success or failure of the mandated curriculum reforms.

An additional aspect of the intensification of teachers’ work throughout the pilot of the CoS was the stress placed upon them to meet external deadlines, assessment targets and levelling of students’ tasks in order to meet the timeline for implementation set by the CC. Jo discusses her views in this way:

*The workload at the moment is over the top. The work is getting out of hand. So right at the last minute we have to do an assessment [based on external tasks to replace the TEE] and annotate the students’ work for the CC. We need to level students’ work according to the scales of achievement criteria after annotating the work samples. The CC wants to see a variety of work samples for our next meeting later on in June. Even in my program I have to just give students the assessment task. (Jo, April, 2004)*

Again the increasing intensity of the workload imposed on teachers throughout the trial reduces any opportunity for them to openly criticise the reforms publicly (Banfield, 2003; Sloan, 2006). Jo continues:

*The differences in the new assessment structure will require a separation of reading, writing, speaking/listening and viewing strands while marking students’ work. I think the new external assessment will resemble the English language competency tests. I hope it does not end up like the MSE [Monitoring Standards in Education tests] as separate components- reading, writing, speaking/listening and viewing and then added together to give students’ levels. (Jo, June, 2004)*
Jo’s expert opinion is indicative of concerns raised by other teachers as they struggled to rationalise their previous successful teaching and assessment with the new courses’ requirements. Jo goes on to explain:

> There are concerns out in the community about assessment using student outcomes statements (SOS). Reporting formats are being adjusted in order to reflect student progress in terms of a number range (e.g.) level 3.1, 3.2, to show parents there is progress. We have to quantify how we assess students’ progress in number terms using the SOS. (Jo, June, 2004)

Jo voiced her concerns, especially about the assessment and reporting aspects of the CoS, after having to try and resolve the mounting tensions she felt towards the creation of the new mandated curriculum and at the same time having to implement it. In addition, Jo’s comments indicate a push towards the breaking down of English into component parts—reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Her concern reflects the broader technocratisation of teaching whereby knowledge is commodified and fragmented, thus distorting student learning (Braverman, 1974; Kesson, 2004). Therefore, the curriculum reform experienced by these teachers is not only impacting on students’ learning but also on teachers’ work and abilities to perform their work.

Mandated curriculum reform presented very real obstacles to teachers as they grappled with new curriculum while continuing to teach the existing curriculum in other classes. The impacts adding to the layers of constant change included: the way teachers’ labour is used continuously without any extra recognition or payment to create the new curriculum; the role of professional development of experienced teachers in order to professionally develop other teachers to implement the new curriculum; and the lack of private school involvement in the trial and development of the new curriculum. Moreover, their views demonstrated considerable caution about the CoS. Vicki elaborates:
My commitment to change has been minimal. It is a massive inconvenience to me and I find it hard to find the time. The CC is relying on the good will of staff to plan and implement the PCR. The change in PD from throughout the year to five days at the end of the year will have a negative effect on the new courses [and their] implementation. Teachers are tired and need to finish up the year not do curriculum planning at the end of the year. We need the PD at the beginning of the year in order to plan and decide how to best implement the PCR CoS in English. I would prefer three days at the beginning of the year and 2 days at the end of the year. (Vicki, June, 2004)

Furthermore, she says:

The change-over process will be horrendous. The new courses are a dynamic set up by people moving up the promotions scale. No one has asked if the SOS have improved student learning. Even though the SOS is supposed to be student centred, nothing has changed. Reporting of SOS is appalling as a parent and teacher I think more needs to be done to improve this problem. Upper school problems as feedback to the CC includes problems associated with discriminating between levels for students’ performance in year 11 and 12. I think that they (CC) will rank students at the end of yr 12 just as they do now. I don’t think it will be easy to ‘fine grade’ ranking as a result of external assessment. It [the new courses] will have to function like the TEE [Tertiary Entrance Examinations] to give students a mark and rank for university and TAFE entrance. (Vicki, June, 2004)

Vicki’s comments highlighted how the new mandated curriculum had impacted on all aspects of her work. The impacts included how Vicki teaches, her planning and how her professional development changed to meet the implementation requirements of the CC, not the students’ needs or her own.

The perspective of David was more positive about the new mandated curriculum as he discusses how:

The reaction from the private schools has been one of wanting me to deliver to them what I have already designed and implemented as a starting point for their implementation. They know how much work is involved in the planning and initiating of the new courses. The private schools are looking for curriculum materials, assessment tasks and structures and our approach to the new courses in yr 11. These schools want our interpretation of the new courses as a basis for their own implementation. (David, June 2005)

As the second year of the research began (2005), there appeared to be even more uncertainty about the CoS. The rising uncertainty generated lower levels of morale.
and a lack of confidence in the trial. Ray decided by June of 2004 that he was not going to continue his role in the implementation of the CoS. Ray’s reasoning was:

I will talk about the courses of study. We assessed the students using a writing task with the scales of achievement levels. We then took the annotated student work samples back to the CC meeting to discuss the effectiveness of the task and its assessment. We were trying to give ourselves an idea of how the new course would work for our own benefit. The students were given a grade as per the current course assessment requirements, and were not disadvantaged by our trial of a new task. (Ray, June, 2004)

It is apparent from Ray’s comments that the nature of the accountability and responsibility of each teacher was intensified by the external pressures exerted by the CC to adhere to their framework for the new courses.

The in-depth meetings I was involved in during this time (February-December 2005) were mainly with individuals or pairs of like-minded teachers. That is, some teachers were working together to develop units of work as part of the trial and so had time to reflect on their experiences in between my visits. The teachers composed and created all the aspects of the units to be trialled, such as 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B, within the CoS to replace the current year 11 English subjects. The accountability and responsibility of the reforms seemed to grow as time went on. As Tom states:

There is a feeling of pressure from external forces that are disempowering us as teachers in the trial process. In one semester we have had three changes in leadership within the CC. As a teacher involved with and prepared to work with the new system, I have no confidence in the trial process. I do not know if we will trial any new courses after this year. (Tom, August, 2005)

After planning the units of work, the teachers embarked on the implementation phase of the trial. The development of new units by each teacher required approximately one school term per unit to implement. Jo’s comments highlight the intensity of feeling more responsible and less in control:
I think that creating an insider-outsider club [in the CC] where certain voices are invited in and dissenting voices are excluded is a negative thing for the beginning of such an important change in post-compulsory education. All of the things we are critical about with regard to the trial courses is attributed to our skills, experiences, and practice or are an existing problem we all have to live with. Things change but not for the better. The trial definitely affected my workload. (Jo, August, 2004)

Jo’s experience is common among the teachers in the trial. The attitudes towards the trial were reflected in Ray’s opinions and suspicions of the trial and confirmed by June 2005. He explained how:

We can’t have massive change. We need to look at the micro level and how it is going to work. The variables will be where schools decide how to suit themselves and implement the new course. (Ray, June 2005)

It is apparent from Ray’s comments that he sees the CoS as a significant mandated curriculum reform. This is the first such wholesale reform of post-compulsory education in Western Australia since the McGaw Report of 1984. The issues central to Ray’s departure from the trial are substantial and all centre around time, pressures, creating curriculum from the ground up while teaching and having to carry private schools who at this time would not commit to the mandated curriculum reforms imposed on the government school sector and the increased accountability and responsibility placed on teachers. In addition, all of these tensions amounted to greater intensification and deprofessionalisation of work for Ray, and all of the teachers involved in the trial. This layer of increased workload and accountability and responsibility, without any tangible benefits, resulted in a sense shared by many of the teachers that they were being excluded from the debate and silenced. Jo captures the mood of many of the teachers by describing her response to the trial:

We will call things different names and we will write them down in our marks books. But those of us will teach the same core; the icing may look different but the cake will taste the same. (Jo, August, 2005)
Tom’s perspective had also hardened over the time of the term trial of a unit of work as part of one of the CoS in English. Tom’s response:

*I am feeling bitter and twisted about the whole PCR trial that we have undertaken here in English. His [David’s] work is valued by outsiders from the CC and WADET, ours is not. As a teacher I only receive filtered information about the changes from outside of the school. This affects what we see and know from outside of the English department and outside of the school. We do not know anything about CIP2- it is about power. We only get the end product. The CIP2 level 3 in-services talk down to teachers. All knowledge and decision making is held by the HOLA in regard to the whole trial process. We are not working as a team anymore He is still liaising with the CC, but we are disappointed and frustrated by the process. (Tom, August, 2005)*

The comments made by Jo and Tom indicate a palpable sense of exclusion and silencing of dissenting teacher voices by the CC and DO. The measures used to silence the teachers included a lack of appreciation for professional expertise at open forum meetings, and the refusal by the CC to ‘hear’ the voices as they reported back through the required mechanisms. In addition, there was a willingness of the CC to take the professional work and expertise of some teachers seriously, whilst not listening to the concerns voiced by teachers who had actually trialled the new curriculum.

By the end of 2005 certain concrete features of the new curriculum were becoming obvious. These features included the distinct resemblance to the failed Unit Curriculum of the early 1980s reforms of secondary education. The Unit Curriculum was a prescribed curriculum built on work-sheet teaching materials. It comprised a unitised approach to every subject from Kindergarten to year ten in schools, across Western Australia. The main reasons for its failure were: a completely deterministic approach to students’ learning using an objective list per unit; students could only progress to the next year’s units if they completed and passed the units in each year of school education; and there was no room for teachers to create any new assessments.
or teaching materials for students. The Unit Curriculum did not allow for any inquiry-based or student-centred learning to occur. It also relied heavily on test-based assessment where blocks of knowledge were assessed in a term and then not referred to after the test. The CoS in English faced similar issues, in particular prescription of student outcomes and only covering certain topics in a given time.

An indication of the inherent difficulties faced by teachers with the new curriculum included how David’s views changed over the course of the trial in 2004-2005 as a result of the lack of clear parameters for the CoS:

_There are problems with the new courses such as the management of the student production of work. Until now we have had a draconian approach to assessment and it requires students to stick to the set due dates and parameters of the assessment tasks. Under the new courses of study, students have this elongated timeline where there are no penalties for ‘late work’ in the outcomes-based system. When work is due in so what! We have always worked to an end point in the students’ work; now we have this blocked progress. I know these things [assessments and timelines] can be moulded to fit the situation. (David, November, 2004)_

David’s perspective indicates a sense of frustration with the new courses as they displayed inherent flaws, especially in relation to assessment. David continued:

_I think that we are observing a merging of systems between TAFE and secondary schools through the implementation of the new system under the PCR. Secondary school students have not yet developed independence and work habits to complete work without the structure and parameters that are currently in place. The new courses will see a removal of these structures to a more individual student progression of work. Students are being thrown in the deep end of the pool. Some will enjoy this while others will drown. Without the scaffolding and structure we have previously given, both teachers and students will find year 11 and 12 very difficult. (David, November, 2004)_

His comments are indicative of the weight of responsibility being placed on individual teachers in order to align the school system with post-school institutions and the prescribed learning outcomes for students.
The following focus group meeting details the inherent flaws within the new curriculum and how the teachers planned to adjust their teaching practices and methodologies to make them fit their students’ needs rather than making the students fit the new curriculum:

Jo: The comparability we are told is just all in the levelling and the outcomes. That is where there needs to be comparability. It doesn’t matter theoretically; you know what levels you are pitching your units at. It is too hard to get comparability to get comparability with different texts and levels across schools. It really is allowing students to achieve a range of levels and ensuring your levels are comparable. We will need moderation across levels.

Vicki: So we will need to take portfolios into upper school and maintain and store them.

Jo: The problems I see come from the similarities I see between this new system of courses and the old unit curriculum. The reasons why the unit curriculum didn’t work are no matter how much work the students did you couldn’t get all of the objectives completed in a term/semester. The ten assessments in a semester were ridiculous. Then people realised that we were not reporting on that until the end of the year so you could leave it go into the next term. The pathways are still relevant in the courses of study but they are not as structured and rigid. Students can move in and out of courses after each semester [except English].

Vicki: Semesterised units will stream students. (Focus group, December 2004)

The focus group meeting revealed some very contentious issues regarding the reinvention of a unit style curriculum designed to funnel students into set units during years 11 and 12. The imposition of a unit style new mandated curriculum is reminiscent of the 1980s in Western Australian High Schools and another failed mandated curriculum reform. This perception added further pressures to individual teachers and their work, resulting in greater impacts of deprofessionalisation. The following comments by Dan, Tom, David and Ray all amplify the impacts of the new curriculum as something which is only partly developed and untenable in its current form.

Dan’s views are as follows:
The main issues for me about the new courses are around the increased work for teachers in schools. I am wondering what all the officers in the CC are doing, because they are not creating curriculum materials. Change is a result of someone needing promotion. They come up with bullshit they don’t understand and we have to implement it in schools. (Dan, December, 2004)

Dan’s perspective is negative towards the new curriculum and its masters, because he has experienced the ramifications of creating a unit of work only to have it rejected by DO. In addition, Dan highlights another layer of the new managerialist doctrine, which produces ongoing uncertainty and change. According to Dan this kind of destabilisation tends to benefit aspiring managers who seek to secure a promotion at DO or central office. The impact on other teachers is increased insecurity in their work in order to maintain control and accountability by DO and CC while withholding support and information as a source of power from teachers.

The role of teachers with the increased level of accountability and responsibility resulted in a complete overhaul in how students were assessed.

According to Ray:

With the new assessment structure I am going to have to assess my students twice in writing, reading, speaking and listening and viewing every term. In other words every week there will be an assessment. I don’t have the assessment criteria in my head the way I have grades for students’ work. They [CC] say you can do a rich assessment task embedded aspects (for example, view a film and write a response to the film) and make 8 judgements about the task. Theoretically the task is designed to cut down the workload for year 11 and 12 teachers. But the amount of assessment and frequency will be greater with the new courses. To me the assessment system will still be too cumbersome for all of us. (Ray, December, 2005)

Ray’s comments have remained the same throughout the entire trial process and unfortunately proved to be accurate with respect to how the new curriculum is designed to radically alter teachers’ work without allowing for any sustainable means of assessment and development at the local site. Things did not improve in terms of assessment, teaching, reporting and curriculum development from the end of 2004 to
the end of 2005. Dan’s views at the end of the trial were also echoing what Ray had to say about the same issues:

There are no measures in place as far as I can see to moderate across schools. They [CC] say that they have measures in place, but I don’t think it will work. There will be so much variation between schools. The criterion is so open that how can you say that a student hasn’t fulfilled it? (Dan, December, 2005)

In addition, the same issues were relevant for David’s experiences as HOLA of English:

This is going to cause real problems in terms of comparability across schools. I mean that my staff is very concerned about comparability. We are getting conflicting views from the ETA [English Teachers’ Association] and the CC. The contradictions and conflicting views between these two organisations are not helpful to us. It provides greater uncertainty and confusion for us as the people who must implement the changes next year. We have all been working towards developing common judgements on students’ progress and this confusion between the ETA and the CC is not helping. Things are very fluid. They [CC] are asking us to implement a new system in year 11 and 12 English which they [CC] are uncertain about. (David, December, 2005)

The ongoing uncertainty and lack of control over assessment continued and was taken up by Jo. She states:

The external exam will not be predictable like the TEE. I think it [TEE] is predictable in its structure, the students know they are going to have to write essays, construct an argument based on a particular text form, but they don’t know how the questions will be framed. Why throw them into something they are going to have no idea about? I know it will be the same, it will evolve. The course is always going to be driven by the external exam, always. (Jo, November, 2005)

Jo’s comments were also complemented by Ray’s consideration of how his work had changed and the consequences of the new curriculum for all teachers:

There is a lot more bureaucratic micromanagement of teachers’ work. We are being asked to make decisions and then being held more accountable for the decisions without clear direction by the CC. Teachers are being asked to make decisions and be accountable for these decisions without any real support from central office. We are also seeing more centralisation of control at the central office level. So people are not feeling confident to make those decisions, regardless of their professional teaching experience. (Ray, December, 2005)
Vicki’s response supports what Ray, Jo, Dan, David and Tom had to say in relation to how teachers’ work is changing and the layering effects of the new curriculum on teachers’ work and its depprofessionalising influences:

*I will be working on the CoS 2A and 2B [currently 11 English]. The system is set up so that we all needed to attend the 5 days of PD. We have only been able to start planning for next year after the 5 days were completed. This leaves us with only this week to start planning for 2006. This is too late. We will have a program outline, but we need time to work on the constructing the tasks for the new courses. In the 5 days of training we were given a file with all of the schematics, templates and theory behind the new courses. Effectively, I was given empty pages that I have to fill in.* (Vicki, December, 2005)

Vicki’s responses indicate how enmeshed the intellectual rigour of teaching English is with the individual teacher. That is, each teacher has his/her own critical view on the texts, tasks and approaches to teaching year 11 and 12 students in order to help students become autonomous, critical individuals. The work completed by teachers in the trial was done as part of their work roles without any extra remuneration or time. In contrast, certain individuals within the CC were able to be remunerated as high level public servants and privately. As Vicki explains:

*There is a conflict of interest between people like XXXX writing and working for the CC and publishing for profit privately. I see an appalling conflict of interest when he is paid as a public servant who is writing a book that will personally benefit him.* (Vicki, December, 2005)

Vicki’s comments further reinforce the recentralising effects and contradictory treatment metered out to teachers in the trial by the CC. These combined effects have contributed markedly to the process of depprofessionalisation of individual teachers and to the profession as a whole. Vicki adds:

*This whole bureaucratic shift is a way of making the bottom people [teachers] accountable for everything to do with the current output model of education. This results in no inputs in the forms of support documents, programs or curriculum assistance. You have to fill in everything and if you do not you will be held accountable. It’s very ungracious as we are being treated as clerical staff with all of the time required filling in and ticking boxes with the outcomes system. In real wages terms we are going back and back.* (Vicki, December, 2005)
Vicki’s response here highlights the actual process of deprofessionalisation impacting on teachers’ work as they are forced to accommodate the new curriculum. They are required to replace their own expert teaching methodologies and professionalism with a new managerialist controlled set of practices designed to determine and control teaching and student learning across a whole system of education.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the themes borne out and examined in this chapter indicate how inextricably linked the layers of curriculum reform are and how they operate to deprofessionalise teachers’ work. The layers of deprofessionalisation comprise: the intensification of teachers’ work, through the surveillance and control of individual teachers; technocratisation and changing work culture; and the accountability and responsibility. The evidence discussed in this chapter demonstrates how teachers are being impacted on by this NCS as a means of large-scale professional change and control. As a result of this process, teachers have developed their own means of resisting, speaking back and taking control.

The next chapter is also a data analysis chapter dealing with the rise of resistance, reprofessionalisation and reinvigoration of teachers and their work as a direct consequence of the CoS. Reprofessionalisation is a counter discourse to the prevailing new managerialist doctrine of the neo-liberal economic global agenda for political control of education. Reprofessionalisation and resistance are the means by which teachers act within the system to exercise their individual agency and expertise as professionals in an ever changing landscape of complex mandated curriculum reforms in schools. Chapter Six is a counter narrative to the prevailing masternarratives of neo-liberalism and markets in education. In addition, the next
chapter allows individual teachers to voice their expertise in continuing to reinvigorate their professionalism in a continuing age of curriculum reform.
Chapter 6 Reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work - A sense of the future

Introduction

The mandated curriculum reform currently impacting on secondary English teachers’ work in Western Australia is a complex, interrelated set of tensions and relationships. These tensions include the global neo-liberal economic and political reform agenda shaping federal and state governments’ managerialist agendas for education as well as the control of local schools and individual teachers. And the layered influences of the complex interactive system relationships have been examined in light of the negative impacts on individual teachers in the previous chapter.

This chapter examines the tensions, themes and processes as teachers attempt to assert some control over their work. In this chapter I adopt the term reprofessionalisation to describe what is happening to teachers’ work at Glasheen SHS. Reprofessionalisation is a multi-faceted set of processes that teachers engage in as they undergo curriculum reform. It includes a changing of collegial relationships, resistance and engagement with the reform process and the development of critical reflective practices of teaching methodologies. My interest is to move beyond the damaging effects of mandated curriculum reforms and accountability regimes discussed in Chapter Five and consider the positive aspects, especially, how teachers manage to find the spaces to create a more productive and democratic set of relationships and approaches to curriculum reform. This Chapter will examine a number of emergent themes:

- Reprofessionalisation
• Critical reflective practice
• Resistance and reclamation of collegial space
• Trust and goodwill as a central part of collegial relationships
• Expert explicit teaching as a response to a changing culture of curriculum contestation

These tensions and themes became central to the experiences of the participant teachers as they experienced the trial of New Courses of Study in English (CoS) in 2004-2005. The analysis in this Chapter is underpinned by labour process theory, as outlined in Chapter Three. In order to examine the tensions inherent in the reprofessionalisation process, an understanding of reprofessionalisation is central to the analysis.

**Reprofessionalisation**

The process of reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work is an organic, unpredictable renewal and reinvigoration process experienced by teachers as they undergo changing cultures of their work. According to Edwards and Usher (2000), reprofessionalisation is a form of (dis)location where individuals are influenced by processes of globalisation that “… challenge traditional continuities and bounded senses of identity through an increased and intensified engagement with the other” (p.139). Edwards and Usher (2000) are suggesting that individuals are not isolated or disconnected from the influences around them. As discussed in Chapter Three, every aspect of work, according to Braverman (1974), is influenced by this shifting relationship between the individual’s agency and the changing cultures of work and life. There is a transformative quality that reform brings to teachers’ work in the shape of continual change and shifting of professional practice and identities. This process of
transformation was embedded in how the CoS in English trial teachers responded to the mandated curriculum reform at Glasheen SHS. Teachers’ responses were not passive and accepting, rather they actively changed their professional practice to implement the curriculum reform.

Teachers at Glasheen SHS were not letting things be done to them without critical reflection on their professional practice, and considered the best ways to meet the needs of their students while maintaining their own level of professionalism in changing cultures of work and curriculum reform. Therefore, teachers were not only reacting to the reforms, they resisted and reinvigorated their own professional identities. I interpreted this process as the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work. Reprofessionalisation is a counter discourse to the school effectiveness movement and new managerialism. Reprofessionalisation is a process that teachers experience as a consequence of imposed curriculum reforms. At Glasheen SHS there is evidence that teachers are willing and prepared to: critically reflect on their practice in response to changing cultures of work; resist and reclaim collegial spaces; generate trust and goodwill between colleagues; and develop relevant teaching strategies.

Professional practice, according to Edwards and Usher (2000), is made up of:

Professional workers [who] have to be able to analyse and interpret particular circumstances in order to assess how best to respond to them. They have a certain degree of autonomy open to them in their work which is not the case for those engaged in repetitive tasks. (p.144)

Professional practice is a central aspect of the teachers’ professional work examined in this thesis, to assist with the analysis and interpretation of individual teacher responses and reprofessionalisation of their work. The interpretive nature of teachers’ work is adaptable and allows for reflection of practices in a context. The reflective
nature of teaching is the entry point where Edwards and Usher (2000) document the rise of the ‘reflective practitioner’ as “… someone who can cope with and shape change and uncertainty by interpreting and responding to the particularities of the circumstances they find” (p.145). This definition of professional practice and reflection is indicative of the teachers’ behaviour in the trial of the mandated curriculum reform described in this research.

**Critical reflective practice**

The critical reflective nature of teachers’ work has been affected by the managerialist doctrine as discussed in Chapter Five. The impact of managerialist doctrine is “… displacing professional autonomy with managerial accountability…. Managerial discourses tend to focus on institutional structures and what and how [they are] provided” (Edwards & Usher, 2000, p.149). The impacts of managerialist doctrine included a lack of professional autonomy, increased surveillance, set benchmarks and targets and treating schools as part of the economy producing products at the end of the education process. The importance of the changing cultures of teachers’ work driven by such managerialist doctrine is that the notion of the professional, autonomous reflective practitioner has been restricted. In other words, external monitoring of practice is valuing certain practices such as vocational education and diminishing others such as general education values. These impacts have been the individual and collective experience of the teachers involved in the trial as their work was under unprecedented scrutiny by the CC.

The changing culture of teachers’ work is also resulting in a loss of autonomy and increased intensification (Gewirtz, 2002). The work of teachers is
becoming increasingly controlled and regulated from external organisations, resulting in less individual control (Gleeson & Gunter, 2001). However, in contrast to the seemingly negative totality of changing cultures in teachers’ work, there is hope for renewal and reinvigoration through the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work. According to Down, Chadbourne and Hogan (2000), teachers are capable of improving their own performance through critical reflective practice and support from professional and collegial rather than managerialist sources. According to Down et al, (2000), “…committed teachers continue to reflect on, share and improve their work in spite of elaborate managerial systems designed to make them improve their work” (p.221). Therefore, the critical moments of reflection teachers experience and adopt as part of their intellectual work is of the utmost importance when examining the process of reprofessionalisation within Glasheen SHS. It is apparent that teachers are engaging in this process in order to reclaim control over their intellectual work within the school as a response to and form of resistance to mandated curriculum reforms.

The mechanism for scrutiny and control over teachers’ professional practices has been the curriculum itself. According to Reid (1999), curriculum is the mechanism for control of teachers’ work as it “…specifies the labour process of teaching… which will be the focus of the mechanisms used to control teachers” (p.189). Moreover, Mac an Ghaill (1992) contends that the way teachers adhere to implementing the new curriculum is a means of redefining their labour process from outside of the individual teacher towards the more managerialist approach discussed in Chapter Three. This weakens the autonomy of the professional, reflective practitioners as the trial teachers at Glasheen SHS worked to meet external targets and CC management benchmarks.
Control over teachers’ work takes three forms according to Reid (1999):

… [firstly] defining the curriculum: using methods or mechanisms which direct teachers, including content … [and] methodology and assessment; [secondly] supervising and evaluating teachers … [is] a way to identify those individuals who are not performing adequately, according to criteria consistent with achieving the define[d] curriculum; [and thirdly] engineering compliances and consent: establishing ways to discipline and reward(s) workers in order to elicit consent and/or enforce compliance with the defined curriculum. (p.189)

All three forms of control are evident in the CoS in English mandated by the CC as a means of ensuring the implementation of the CoS in every secondary school in Western Australia. I have discussed in detail the impacts of the new curriculum on teachers and their work in Chapter Five. Curriculum is also used as a means of defining the labour process of teachers by its language and relationship to changing cultures of professional practice. According to Apple (2004), the consequences of curriculum reform have not totally changed teachers’ work, they:

… did not completely transform the practice of teaching, while patriarchal relations of authority which paradoxically “gave” teachers some measure of freedom were not totally replaced by more efficient forms of control and greater state intervention using industrial and technical models…. Thus, this new generation of techniques that are being instituted in so many states in the United States, … [have] grown out of the failures, partial successes, and resistances that accompanied the earlier approaches to control. (p.189)

The point made by Apple (2004), is that curriculum has been used as a control mechanism for many years and is evolving to overcome the resistance and responses of teachers with every new curriculum introduced in schools. Therefore, the labour process of individual teachers and their work is being continually reshaped and controlled by changing of cultures through curriculum reform.

The control of teachers’ work through curriculum is reinforced by what Eisner (2004) describes as rationalisation:

Rationalization as a concept … First it depends on a clear specification of intended outcomes. That is what standards and rubrics are supposed to do. We
are supposed to know what the outcomes of educational practice are to be …” (p.59)

It is apparent from Eisner’s (2004) comment that teachers’ work is not only controlled by curriculum reform; it is bounded by it in order to produce deterministic learning outcomes and targets by students. The other side of rationality, according to Eisner (2004), is the use of measurement in order to quantify and categorise outputs of education. The inherent limitations of such rationality are evident in the new curriculum in English in Western Australian schools. The limitations included intrusive external monitoring of teachers’ assessment practices by the CC, undermining of teachers’ consistent judgements for individual students’ work and a constantly changing assessment and reporting management system used in schools.

Each of the participants has his/her own reflections about the trial. The following commentary indicates how the current system provides for student needs and is an embedded part of his/her teaching methodology. Ray demonstrates how the existing curriculum, which is a grade criterion based assessment system, provides for students of different levels of ability:

*The old course met the needs of the students at different levels. Now teachers have to interpret and rewrite their programs through a process of interpretation to implement the new courses. The main issues I see as detrimental to the new courses are the problems of comparability between teachers and schools using the scales of achievement to level students’ performance. I can also see equity problems associated with the differing levels of teacher experiences in schools, especially where there may be a lack of experienced teachers like we have here. There will need to be a lot of effort put into writing and producing support material for these schools and teachers. I am confident in the person who is writing the CoS that he will do a good job. (Ray, June, 2004)*

Ray’s own experiences inform his reflection on how the CoS will influence his teaching and student learning. David’s (HOLA) response indicates a sense of renaissance of his professional practice. David comments on how:
We received excellent feedback on our progress with the new 11 English course pilot. As a consequence of our efforts we will become involved in a regional network with country schools linked through the English Teachers Association (ETA). The purpose of the network will be to mentor other schools that have not yet commenced piloting the new courses. We are also presenting at the school-wide PD day on the progress of our pilot. I think this will broaden local knowledge within the school. (David, August, 2004)

David’s own professional practice received a boost as he was asked to help provide professional development to other schools who were less experienced with the CoS.

David also held reservations about the efficacy of the CoS as suggested in the following comment:

The main problem is the lack of depth and breadth of coverage restricted by time and other pressures. The new curriculum lacks embedment of knowledge in students’ learning. Essential content of course overrides strategies of teaching. The old syllabus allowed the development of language skills, knowledge and writing skills in each student. The new curriculum has an emphasis on themes such as language and power across a wide range resulting in a loss of depth and breadth of learning experiences. (David, August, 2004)

The concerns voiced by David are indicative of what Jardine, Lagrange and Everest (2004) describe as the “…almost random surface skittering over topics which casts the oddest things together resulting in a loss of depth for the sake of breadth and coverage of a topic in a set time and place” (p.324). This shallow coverage suggests that “Curriculum integration has to do with keeping things in place, nested in the deep communities of relations that make them whole … [and work by] living out a deep cultural logic of fragmentation” (p.324). The single most important point here is that the CoS is encouraging a fragmentation of learning and teaching as surface skittering across the topics in a unit of work in order to get the coverage. This can also be attributed to the thematic approach employed in the units of work such as ‘Power and Identity’ as a theme. David suggests:

The difference between the old curriculum and the new is the level of teaching across text forms in order to give the students a variety of learning experiences. (David, August, 2004)
Therefore, the teachers in the trial have been grappling with the fragmentation of curriculum depth in order to provide coverage and breadth as the externally valued outcomes of their work.

This point is reinforced by Jo’s experiences with the use of theme rather than generic text forms in her teaching during the trial of a unit of work:

*In terms of how students are responding to the program they are finding the tasks somewhat threatening. I am asking students not to put their names on work, as I need to show the work to the Curriculum Council. The time it takes using the scales of achievement is taking an awfully long time. My teaching practice has been altered this term as we are doing individual investigations. They can use a framework around the theme of Australian national identity. They can incorporate how individuals and groups are represented in our culture, such as how women are portrayed in Australia. (Jo, August, 2004)*

Jo’s own professionalism saw her through the trial as she accommodated the units of work by changing her own work habits through her own process of critical reflection. The influence of reprofessionalisation of the teachers’ work is a layering effect of another curriculum change to be taken on by teachers in their own time without any additional time, support or compensation in their work. The instability surrounding the trial has been systematically imposed to create a reverberation of impacts across every aspect of the trial teachers’ work. This highlights again the changing cultures required by teachers in order to experience, react to and reprofessionalise their work in the shifting sands of mandated curriculum reform.

In addition, the response by Jo to the required changes to her teaching in the trial was particularly focussed on:

*The level of difficulty of the course is chosen by the teacher for the students depending on the teacher’s experiences, knowledge and expertise. This approach allows another layer of meaning to be imposed over the course in order to allow more vocational schools a chance to do these courses. It doesn’t matter what your context, is its how you level the students that counts. (Jo, December, 2004)*
It is evident from Jo’s remarks that the control over the unit of work and indeed the new curriculum can remain at the teacher’s discretion. This is part of the contest for curriculum control between the expert professional teachers and the external pressures and influences of organisations like the CC. According to Jo’s comments, it is possible to capture the reprofessionalisation process she underwent as a direct consequence of the trial. Moreover, the experiences Jo had as a teacher assisted her to develop her own practice and reflect on how she could accommodate the new curriculum without losing her own sense of identity.

Other perspectives on the changing practices experienced by teachers included the way that teachers and students interrelate within the new curriculum. An example of this change is David’s comment below:

_I have had difficulty with the CoS as part of the trial. Trying to meet the demands of the course of study is hard as the guidelines are unclear. I am moving my teaching away from genres based to a more contextual basis for teaching. I am also seeing a change in the teacher-student relationship as the new courses are seeking greater student involvement in the teaching-learning process. This change in the teacher-student relationship is affecting how I teach._ (David, December, 2004)

David’s comments coincide with Vicki’s conclusions on how her relationships are changing with students, in order to encourage greater negotiation of what is taught and what is learned in her classes. Vicki explains:

_It is far more exploratory and giving kids more power over their learning and choice. In theory we are looking at more student centredness in our teaching that provides students with more chances to negotiate the curriculum._ (Vicki, December, 2004)

Vicki’s comments are indicative of the willingness of teachers to critically reshape their own professional practice and methodologies of teaching and learning as a means of facilitating student success in their classes. This is another tension between
the changing cultures of teachers’ work and their reprofessionalisation as a response to mandated curriculum reform.

The following focus group conversation between Jo and Vicki in December 2005 indicates the nature of critical reflection teachers experience in order to accommodate the new curriculum and student needs:

Vicki: David wants us to see what we can come up with. So I have put an idea up there on the board. I know that it is inadequate I did it in an hour and a half. I know that different teachers see investigation in different ways; do we need to sequence it in over two years? David has launched us in fairly heavily and I think going back that I can do more with this idea.

Jo: Unless you’re designing a unit, I don’t know what the end product is going to be. It depends on whether you are really intending to teach this way.

Vicki: They (CC) said they were going to spend some time writing these units next year. I think it is a matter that we should be thinking about.

Jo: I think it is important to design an overview and give it to the kids so that they know what the areas are, how we will do the task, how things will be. To write it in a lot of detail at this stage is not really possible.

Vicki: We will stay focussed on year 11 new courses next year as we choose our texts and not be able to work on year 12 courses.

Jo: Kids are still going to do a lot of the tasks and use texts we have been using.

Vicki: I think it is a survival thing really. This investigation component is different. What I have done is a very conservative way in. I will use two text types that I teach and then they are going to find their own. There is an assumption in these courses that kids are self-motivated and will find them. It is a very middle class expectation of having access to resources that they will have on hand. I can see that if I were in Carnarvon or somewhere else that I would have to walk in with everything, resources, texts that I would need to present to kids. There are going to be a lot of problems about teaching texts for the investigations.

Jo: You need to cover a wide range. We need to access and find a variety of texts and buy them for the students.

Vicki: I foresee that teachers will have to get a range of texts and bring them in for children to investigate. I mean there is an assumption that students will be able to go and tape something. As they change to DVD we are going to need DVD recorders to be able to show the texts. We won’t be able to ask them to tape things. DVD recorders are expensive. So that is in some ways it is letting
It is evident from the collegial interactions of the focus group that the individual teachers are critically reflecting on their current teaching methodologies and practices and ways to reinvigorate their work to accommodate the new mandated curriculum. Each teacher according to Rikowski (2002), is ‘kicking against the traces, resisting being dominated’ by using their own critical reflection to carefully engineer the new courses to best suit student needs (p.7). This is a further example of the extent of the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as a consequence of the trial. The teachers are critically reflecting on their own individual agency (Willmott 1999; Sloan, 2006) and control of their work. The remarks about technology as a medium of curriculum and pedagogical change are also indicative of the willingness of the teachers to continuously reflect on their work and make changes. According to Vicki, there is a definite need to balance academic literacy and the changing cultures of society. Vicki expresses her concerns in this way:

*I am concerned that there is too much emphasis on multimedia texts and chat room texts of popular culture. What level of language sophistication is there within these texts? Unless you have the skills and broad knowledge of a traditional education as a teacher you will not be able to intertextually analyse different popular texts and teach students to examine traditional texts. If you can do this to teach students the generic understandings of sophisticated text types, then you can go back and examine popular texts like MSN and apply theory or sophisticated interpretation to it. So if we only embrace technology, fringe, and popular culture elements of English the new courses of study we are going to have a disaster in English. If you have no reference points, your analysis of a text is weak and superficial. You are just about removing English as a basic literacy measurement now with the lowering of levels to level 4-5 for University entrance. (Vicki, December, 2005)*

In addition, David makes a salient point about how the teachers, including himself, are not going to alter all of the professional experience and expertise they have
David’s comments further reinforce the adaptability of the professional expertise and experience of his colleagues. In addition, he explains how this level of professionalism adds to the process of reprofessionalisation that they are all experiencing.

Jo’s comments on her teaching practices were critically reflective and considered as she discussed how:

*I’m at the point where I know I will keep doing things, as I want to remain teaching. There is a lot at stake, the students, and our work as teachers, the school’s reputation and my own personal work and conditions. Teaching doesn’t have the critical moments where someone will die as in medicine, but we cop the negative press.* (Jo, August, 2005)

The critical reflective practices that the teachers have engaged in throughout the trial are a major factor in the success that the new curriculum will have in this school. Without the critical reflection, collegial hard work, trust and goodwill combined with a dedication to maintain academic literacy, the reinvention of English in the new curriculum would not be possible. As a result of the trial, teachers have also gained positively from this period of hard work and reflection in terms of their continued reprofessionalisation and reinvigoration of their work. The changing cultures of teachers’ work will continue with the full implementation of the new curriculum.
teachers were able to resist and reclaim their collegial space by working closely with others in the trial.

Resistance and reclamation of collegial space

Resistance and reclamation of collegial space was part of the process of reprofessionalisation experienced by teachers in the trial. According to Smyth (2001a), “… reforms may have actually increased the collaborative decision making as the micro-politics of schools give expression to the internal dynamics of the way teachers use the autonomy left to them” (p.105). The response by teachers was acts of resistance that benefited their students and themselves in the face of constantly changing curriculum. This process also generated a transformation of individual teacher identities (Robertson, 2000). This reinvigoration of identity can result in a reconstruction of teachers’ work as a response to curriculum reform (Woods, 1997). As Woods (1997) explains “…there appear to be contrary tendencies occurring at the same time leading to diminished professionalism on the one hand, but enhanced on the other” (p.145). This imbalance caused by curriculum reform is redressed by teachers redefining their collegial work space and professional culture in schools.

In addition to the changing nature of teacher and student relationships, this trial has resulted in greater professional interdependence between teachers to critically reflect on their own practice and the implementation of the new curriculum. The changing cultures of their work included an increased sense of collegiality. Collegial relationships also reinforce acts of resistance to the wholesale reforms to the English curriculum. According to Kesson (2004), teachers are resisting the alienation from
their intellectual work and reclaiming ownership of their work. Vicki describes the emergence of a greater sense of collegiality:

\[
I \text{ suppose our experience can give an overview and a conceptual idea better than the document can. We have just started to do some units now. What we have found is that we cannot go away and write in isolation now. There is some review and sequence required for the move from year 11 to 12. (Vicki, November, 2004)}
\]

In addition, this need for greater interdependence helped to positively affect the teachers’ interdepartmental working relationships. As Vicki further explains:

\[
\text{We will need to spend far more time involved in the process of moderation, which is good. But there is no time provided for that. They [the CC] get teachers to do the work and then claim the credit for the success of the work. I think this new thing called West one, which is supposed to provide real teaching resources to be used by teachers, may be of benefit to us. We have staff here getting involved in this [West one] resource unit. I think it will be along the same lines as the old curriculum branch we had in central office years ago. It should be of help to us in the classroom. (Vicki, November, 2004)}
\]

There is a sense of optimism projected by Vicki about the trial of the new curriculum and a sense of her work not being wasted. The rational approach taken to creating curriculum at the central level is keenly understood by teachers in the trial. They are resistant to wholesale change but receptive to collegial moments in which they can work together to galvanise their own experiences in curriculum design. As Banfield (2003) suggests, teachers are choosing how to use their individual agency to resist and respond to the mandated rationality of curriculum reform.

The rationality of curriculum reform can be further extended to include layers of control. According to Connell’s (1985) hierarchy, the curriculum is made up of two elements curriculum and syllabus. The curriculum is the framework for the syllabus for a learning area such as English. Therefore, the overarching framework is the CoS in English underpinned by the syllabus that is currently being constructed by teachers in schools. Both the curriculum and syllabus embedded in the CoS are driven
by a learning outcomes philosophy. The curriculum and syllabus are considered as an interdependent set of ideas and preactive curriculum. In the case of the CoS, the outcomes were predetermined before the syllabus was developed and without any concrete curriculum framework for years 11 and 12.

It is evident that the CoS was conceived and presented to schools as a paradoxically deterministic set of learning outcomes for students in years 11 and 12 while having no syllabus or curriculum foundations. This occurred as a result of the CC throwing out the existing well established and successful criterion referenced subjects in year 11 and 12 English based on a stable curriculum and syllabus and replacing them with thematic CoS, which lacked substance. The consideration given to labels of curriculum components such as units of study, are part of the hierarchy commencing with the notion of ‘Course of study’. Connell (1985) considered ‘Course of Study’ to be “… the details of subject-matter to be studied in a given time or for a particular purpose, a formal statement of a curriculum arranged to show the desired sequence of study….” (p.21) as a framework for a new curriculum, this demonstrates the lack of structure and stability of the CoS in English.

The prepackaged notion of a ‘Course of study’ is a further deterministic mechanism to control teachers’ work by requiring adherence to externally imposed teaching and learning outcomes. The next layer of curriculum hierarchy is made up of units of work and topics. According to Connell (1985), units are a more comprehensive, distinct set of knowledge and values concerning a subject in depth, while topics are concerned with the subject to a lesser level of depth of knowledge, values and understandings. In year 11 English the units include 1A/1B/1C/1D, which replace the previous Senior English (non TEE wholly school assessed subject), and
2A/2B which replaces the previous 11 English (necessary for TEE and university entrance). The influences of this hierarchy of curriculum further diminishes the individual teachers’ autonomy and professional practice by creating mechanisms of control, rationality and systematic specification of teachers’ work while removing the expert teacher from the curriculum development process. This is where the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work might serve to allow teachers to resist the curriculum and reclaim control of their own labour process through collegial space.

The data suggested that the following occurred as a significant part of the process of reinvigoration of teachers’ work: reclamation of professional space through the enhancement of collaborative relationships and practices; the growth of trust and goodwill between individual teachers in English and within the school; and the maintenance of expert teaching methodologies and practices such as explicit teaching.

Comments by Dean, the Principal, are typical of the climate of collegial support that exists in the school. He is very supportive about enabling greater collegial working relationships in the school. He also has a perspective of the new curriculum that is based on years of experience with mandated reform both as a teacher and as an administrator. He is very interested in the reprofessionalisation process experienced by the teachers who were being encouraged to trial the CoS in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

Dean describes his role as:

[T]rying to provide more informative generic help to teachers in this school by encouraging a variety of teaching pedagogies and learning processes, to be accommodated in the innovation process and to develop teacher understandings of the changes involved in the delivery of the new courses and assessing student progress.(Dean, March, 2004)
Here, Dean is offering to create a space within the context of the school for teachers to develop their own teaching methodologies and pedagogies within the framework of the new courses. It was critical at this time that the teachers could feel supported by the administration of the school. Dean’s role is double edged as he has to manage a very high performing state high school held up as a model for other schools and to balance the needs of his staff.

Dean’s comments are indicative of his role as manager of whole-school change and offer an insight into how the CoS may affect teachers. Dean continues:

*The trial is part of a much larger change, the CIP [Curriculum Improvement Plan]. The phases involve the trial and implementation [of the new courses in English]. I think there will be a lower impact on our school. My role and relationship relates to internal capacity building. I have experience to establish relationships of trust as I have worked with the staff for a number of years. I know the staff well. I have gone through a process of making incremental changes over the time [five years] I have been Principal here as part of the CIP process. We have a high degree of trust relationships existing within the school. (Dean, June, 2004)*

Dean’s comment about ‘internal capacity building’ related to his dual role as manager of curriculum reform as a system priority and manager of a very experienced teaching staff implementing the reform. According to Robertson (2000), the ‘transformation of assets’ such as teachers within a system like education is designed to create greater efficiency and competition and hence internal capacity to meet benchmarks and levels of performance (p.187). Dean’s extensive experience as Principal indicates his depth of understanding of what teachers need in order to develop their own critical professional practice during the trial. He continues with a qualified comment on the differences between collegial relationships within the school and those relationships outside of the school. Dean explains:

*There is still an element of scepticism and distrust of the systemic change occurring as part of the CIP process. It is a balancing act to be part of the*
larger systemic change that individual staff members do not feel in control of. There is a lower element of trust between the staff and the CC and WADET—people staff can’t see. (Dean, June, 2004)

The responses to the reprofessionalisation process are reflected in Ray’s comments on his own professionalism and workload:

*I am also on the exam panel for TEE English. I am also the department rep[resentative] on the English syllabus committee. I like extending my role beyond the classroom. I feel very positive about my roles as a teacher, administrator and level 3 teacher. I am involved in a number of activities outside of hours on improving teacher professional status and developing a career structure for teachers. This helps to keep me motivated.* (Ray, June, 2004)

Ray’s comments are indicative of the collegial relationships that exist within the school and allowed the trial to go ahead. Ray continues:

*I attended CC meetings to find out more information about what was involved with the implementation process. I then proceeded to incorporate a task from one of the units into my existing year 11 English course programs. The task Tom and I chose to use was a writing task. The students were required to read and respond to different texts by contrasting them in an essay. Tom and I wrote the new program together. This would allow different teachers to pick up our program and use it in their classes.* (Ray, March, 2004)

Ray’s comments here indicate that despite the changing shape of the CoS he and his colleagues can work together to create their own interpretations of what is required to assist students’ learning. In addition, this is an example of the reinvigoration of collegial relationships between the teachers in this English learning area. The teachers involved had already well developed trust relationships with one another and the new curriculum has solidified their mutual support and assistance.

**Trust and goodwill as a central part of collegial relationships**

The empowerment of the teachers in the trial via their own professional relationships is inclusive of their trust and goodwill towards each other and the school. Arguably it is through the intersection of these professional motivations that professional
empowerment occurs for individual teachers. As David suggested above, other
teachers and schools were going into panic mode at the thought of implementing the
new curriculum. They were clamouring for the professional assistance and expert
advice offered by him and other teachers at the trial school. David discusses his views
on trust and goodwill in this way:

As a teacher-leader, I know that my position requires a lot of negotiation and
trust with other staff members in order to allow all staff members to be involved
in the decisions made within the department. We are a large English staff of 20
teachers with many differing perspectives on change. My role is to embrace the
new curriculum and encourage changes within our learning area and across
the school. (David, April, 2005)

David’s comments suggest his dedication to the reprofessionalisation of both his and
other teachers’ work as paramount in relation to facing and succeeding in a
curriculum reform of this magnitude.

Moreover, Vicki comments on why the teachers share this trust and goodwill towards
each other and the trial:

The school is a very supportive environment for innovations. It has a long
history of acceptance and willingness to change and implement new ideas with
the support of administration. Everyone had the opportunity to reflect on the
idea of innovating the trial and to be part of the decision making process.
(Vicki, April, 2005)

The institutional trust and goodwill extends across the school and across all levels of
teachers and administration. This is exemplified by Dean’s statement as Principal of
the trial school:

I am the ultimate risk manager in the school. I am responsible for all affects on
students and the outcomes of this innovation for future students. I analyse and
minimise risk affects. I am leading the innovation and vision in the school by
providing PD for staff to set the groundwork for students in the future. I need to
balance both sides of risks by being prepared to take risks and to support and
commit vision to assist teachers and the school to move forward. I am also
trying to provide more resources and assistance to staff. (Dean, March, 2004)
It is clear from Dean’s comments that he saw his role in the new curriculum as hands on and requiring negotiation in order to generate the best possible conditions for the teachers and students in the school. Dean’s role as principal was more than symbolic in the trial; he continually supported the teachers and provided the resources, time and whatever else he was able to for the teachers. His role indicated that the trust and goodwill alive in this school was a two-way process of reinvigorating the professionalism of all teachers involved.

The trust and goodwill that developed as a consequence of collegial partnerships and resistance to the wholesale introduction of the curriculum reform to English were an integral part of the reprofessionalisation process experienced by the teachers. The reclamation of collegial space within the school was also extended to some external colleagues. Ray discusses his appreciation:

_I am also happy to see the quality of the writing and materials being produced at SIDE [Schools of Isolated and Distance Education] for their students. They are focussing on units 1A and 1B for the moment. These units are a follow-on from year 10 levels 3-4 English. We do not have the time or resources that they have at SIDE to be able to produce support materials, so we have to do this as best we can from our experience. (Ray, March, 2004)_

The confidence Ray has for the person in the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education as a professional colleague to write the CoS is an indicator of the growing collegial relationships both within and outside of the school. Even though there are difficulties to overcome, Ray is confident in the professionalism of the teachers in some external organisations.

David’s professional practice was also bolstered by his professional development role to other schools as a goodwill gesture. He explains how:

_These schools want our interpretation of the new courses as a basis for their own implementation. The reciprocal arrangement allows me to show other_
schools what we have achieved here and allows them to have a whinge about their concerns. (David, December, 2004)

The extension of David’s professional goodwill and collegial space in sharing with teachers from other schools as a consequence of the trial was evident; it provided him with a boost to his spirits, after a great deal of hard work and energy expended on writing curriculum units for the trial. This can be observed as a motivating factor in generating more goodwill among teachers like David, and assisted in the implementation of new curriculum.

David comments on how he was feeling about his role in the trial:

[H]aving a voice in the change process in the department (WADET), I know that I have the support of my staff to voice our concerns and issues with the department. I think that the department needs to hear our voices as concerned teachers as we have the experience to detail community concerns. Finally, teachers’ voices are being heard by central office, allowing us to make changes from within the local school. This is a grassroots up approach. The next meeting with the CC will be a further opportunity to influence policy change and development in the trial. (David, December, 2004)

David continued by adding his goodwill toward other schools has increased as a consequence of his involvement in the trial. He describes how he was:

[H]appy to share my knowledge and experiences with other government schools in order to benefit students and teachers all around the state. I know that the work that we are doing and the understandings we are developing are of value to other schools. (David, December 2004)

David’s comments are very positive as he felt that at long last he and other teachers were being listened to and what they had to say was being inculcated into the policy making process of the new curriculum in English. Other senior teachers like Ray did not share David’s positive views. Tom, Jo, Dan and Vicki indicated that they continued to use the new units as part of the work tasks in their existing programmes. David had completed all the tasks required to fully trial the new 2B unit in his year 11 class. He continued with this for the rest of the year in 2004. The time frame of the
trial over two years allowed the teachers time, to develop their own critically
reflective professional practice in a supportive environment with trusting collegial
relationships as a back up to their own professional development. Ray describes how
he approached the trial even though his class was not directly involved:

The students in our classes understand that they are involved in a trial, to
degree [depending on which class they are in]. All year 11 students in English
sat the same exam. We included 2 sections of 5 questions each. Students had to
choose 1 question for each section in the exam. David’s class were able to
choose from the same variety of questions as all other students, with the
addition of questions which were directed at their knowledge, understandings
and learning experiences in the new course. (Ray, December, 2004)

Moreover, the rediscovery of collegial relations, goodwill and trust where individuals
can assist each other and show how their work is valued has definitely been a positive
influence of the reform. A further aspect of the collegial support teachers offer each
other has enabled them to withstand the media negativity associated with the Student
Outcomes Statements (SOS) of the 1990s. Teachers have been able to stand up for
their own professionalism and voice their concerns to organisations such as District
Office. Dan offers an explanation of how he felt about the trial:

I don’t see any problems at all with teaching these new courses. If you have
taught CAF [common assessment framework] subjects like Senior English, then
it will be similar to this. I think people are making it overly complicated than it
really is. I don’t understand why as it appears to be straightforward. I am going
to teach the new courses from 2006 and wait and see if I am given any feedback
as the course progresses in 2006. (Dan, December, 2004)

Dan’s view at the end of the first year of the trial indicates a sense of goodwill and
trust he felt towards the other teachers in the trial. He is positive towards the trial as
he continues to explain:

I think that the implementation process for this [new courses] will be much
better handled than the SOS and Curriculum framework even though there is a
shorter uptake time. Ironically, the changes brought in with the CIP2 are
including what teachers have been asking of district office about the SOS but
were told that we didn’t understand what the SOS were about. Now they blame
us for not doing it properly [implementing SOS]. (Dan, December, 2004)
Dan’s comments suggest a growing sense of professional confidence in his own teaching and a willingness to participate in the trial despite his misgivings of how teachers are treated by DO and the CC. The significance of this is that, despite what teachers have had to deal with in terms of continual reform of their work, they have remained professionally driven to achieve the best outcomes for their students. This was a further example of the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work in spite of the changing cultures imposed on them over time.

The increasing role of collegiality as a positive and negative aspect of teaching was evident in the experience of the teachers in the trial. According to Smyth (2001a):

…it may be in the interests of the state to appear to treat teachers as “professionals” who have autonomy to engage in forms of self-regulation and peer review. What we have in these instances is a form of central control in the guise of local autonomy. (p.99)

This occurred at the school where teachers have entered into enforced collegial relationships with other teachers during moderation meetings. The paradox was that whilst there is a growing sense of ‘corruption of collegiality’ (Smyth, 2001a), there is a real and natural enhancement of collegiality at Glasheen SHS. An essential aspect of the renewal of the natural collegial relationships is based on a mutual respect for the continued promotion of expert teacher knowledge through the continued use of explicit English teaching by all of the participants.

**Expert teacher knowledge as a response to a changing culture of curriculum contestation as a result of curriculum reform-Explicit teaching of literacies**

A central layer of meaning derived from the research data focuses on the necessity of teachers retaining their explicit language teaching methodologies in English, in order
to allow students the best possible opportunities for developing foundation and then academic literacy. Explicit teaching is described by Barnett and Walsh (1999) in this way:

Explicit teaching demands that teachers make both language and culture visible to students at every point of the curriculum…. [This] makes transparent the funds of cultural knowledge that learners bring to the classroom, the cultural histories of the curriculum on offer, and the spaces between the two. It makes transparent the academic registers of specific curriculum areas, and the ways in which the grammar of the language works to construct them. It makes transparent the criteria by which learning outcomes will be judged, and the steps whereby those outcomes can be achieved. (p.131)

The significance of the need for explicit language teaching in all English learning settings is a result of what Barnett and Walsh (1999, p.131) refer to as “a shallow breadth of learning experiences instead of depth of learning”, especially foundation literacy in young students. This has been occurring since the beginning of the progressivism movement of education in the 1960s, where there has been a reduction in terms of teacher intervention in language teaching. Since the 1970s, with the rise of discovery based inquiry learning, resulting in the intervention by teachers in students’ learning being further reduced. There is a need to balance both academic literacy development and discovery inquiry learning for students in schools. This is asserted by Barnett and Walsh (1999) as they explain how to facilitate the balance:

… developing a pedagogic identity which foregrounds [how] (a) language as a key to access and success in the curriculum, [with] (b) the learner as a cultural being, and (c) explicit teaching as a means of bringing the two together in an active interchange. (p.132)

Therefore, examining the new curriculum in English trialled at the school provided the following insights into how the teachers’ pedagogical practices and methodologies were changing or not changing depending on the individual teacher. Jo explains:

*I hear that teachers should be teaching and meeting individual needs as a matter of course [from the CC]. So their thinking is that the new courses should not be a huge change for teachers. In the end the external testing will be very similar to the current TEE in order to test [assess] all year 12 students. We still*
need to teach generic skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening to these students. (Jo, December, 2005)

Jo clearly explains the intersection of the need for generic skills and the connection to culture and society in her English teaching methods and practices. Jo continues:

The motivation for me to become involved in this trial was the need to get in on the ground floor, so I could understand the whole change process better. You are more likely to have the time to experience the change and incorporate the changes into my teaching. I would not want to be a teacher who has not been involved from the beginning with the PCR. I am concerned about the comparability aspects of the SOS and now the new courses in 11 and 12. I think we are going to continue to have ongoing difficulties with comparability. I am also concerned about how to show student progress in reporting terms, like a student at level 3 for 2 years. We are under pressure in order to show how these students have improved. (Jo, August, 2005)

Jo’s comments reflected a strong held view of the need to develop academic literacy along with students’ identities and contexts for learning in English. The need for generic language teaching described by Jo, highlighted the need for an interchange between the teacher, students, curriculum and cultural ideas in order for the new curriculum to be successful. Student learning success is the most important indicator of the new curriculum.

In addition, Vicki commented on the need to stabilise the curriculum over time with emphasis on reflecting and moderating the new courses. Vicki suggested:

I am going to explicitly teach by foregrounding a text in a particular genre. Then the students will have to go and find one of their own. There will be some structured questioning involved with the first text. I am going to teach one crime/fiction drama and apply that to part of their oral investigation. I am overlaying a very traditional approach to the new courses. They need the framing of genre and conventions before they investigate any other text in a complex way. If I said ‘go and find out about some themes’, they would come back with some summaries about themes. I think that once the CoS units are established and working, the workload will stabilise. We will need more time in terms of moderation for the next 3 years. (Vicki, August, 2005)

Vicki’s comments referred directly to the need to maintain the balance in her teaching between academic literacy and the development of ideas about culture and
experiences for the students in her classes. It is evident from Jo’s and Vicki’s experiences that teachers would maintain their professional methodological approach to teaching English, while inculcating the CoS. Therefore, the new curriculum has added to the reprofessionalisation process experienced by all teachers involved in the trial at this school.

David’s view of his own teaching in terms of changes encompasses the movement away from text-based teaching towards a more thematic approach to English in year 11 and 12 under the CoS:

*We as a learning area of English teachers have had a good experience in general with the trial over the two years with the new courses of study. We have been changing our thinking about the new courses and working with different ideas. Other schools may be not as well prepared as we are. I think that the allocated six days of PD and one school day [used by us in after school time] are not enough to make such a large change in curriculum. We require a lot more time to be ready. We are changing our methodology from a text-centred to a language-centred methodology around the new pedagogy and new way of assessing students. I have had to devote more time to creating the units, which make up the new courses of study in English.* (David, December, 2005)

Jo also makes the point that the way she has been teaching will be altered in order to ensure that she continues to provide explicit teaching practices to students to allow them the opportunities to develop their academic literacy in a thematic approach to English:

*For me it was a lot more work and I know that next year I will use different ways of teaching the investigation to try and make it more successful. It took kids such a long time to find texts. So next year I will outline for them what they need to do and then revisit it in term two. I have to try and remember to remind the students to look for texts and think about the investigation. So you can pitch the unit at any level from 4-8 and write a very challenging unit for unit 3B. It is preuniversity and makes links with other cultures. Some texts will be culturally challenging for both students and teachers.* (Jo, August, 2005)

The role of explicit expert teaching of academic literacy remained at the forefront of the trial teachers’ minds. Even though they had each experienced and critically reflected on how to change their own teaching methodologies within the curriculum
reform of English, they retained a commitment to teaching English academic literacy explicitly to all of their students.

The trial demonstrated the dedication and willingness of the participant teachers to not only risk their own professionalism; it also highlighted how they were willing to fight to retain their expert explicit teaching methodologies. These methodologies are based in a need to teach generic conventions of Australian Standard English skills to students using generic text forms from years 8-12. The consistent use of such generic skills methods enhanced students’ success in English and then enables them to critically regard their understandings of the world. This approach was common to all of the trial participants even though the CoS actively discouraged a genre-and-skills-based teaching methodology with a more general thematic discussion of issues in society. The changing cultures of teachers’ professionalism can be seen in the willingness of the teachers to persist with the trial despite the difficulties in order to professionally shape the new curriculum with their own expertise and experience. Tom comments:

*I am feeling more confident, especially about the assessment side of the new courses. I am finding that being an expert teacher visiting less established schools that schools in the XXXX district are more progressive and accepting of the new courses, and others in more established schools are not wanting to be told to teach in different ways and the surveillance involved. A lot of people are just carping about the changes.* (Tom, December, 2004)

Tom’s position was that he had become more accepting of his role in the trial and how he affected change from within. This was a moment in the reprofessionalisation process where the teachers were critically reflecting on the significance of their roles in the conception, development and success of the new curriculum. The moment was a professionally empowering time for all of the teachers involved, even though there
remained significant tensions between the trial teachers at the school and the central office of WADET and the CC.

The turning point of the trial arrived with the realisation that each teacher’s work was indeed significant, not only to her/him personally/professionally, her/his colleagues and the school but to the entire post-compulsory education system in Western Australia. David’s comment typifies this realisation:

“We are ready. We are a very dynamic staff here at Glasheen SH school. We have a healthy level of scepticism and a critical approach to the whole process. We look at the new courses and critically decide what is best for our students and ourselves. (David, December, 2004)

The moment of empowerment lifted the spirits and shifted the focus of the individuals from looking outward to how others viewed and valued their work to looking inward, to valuing each other’s work and success with the trial. The moment can be best captured by David’s explanation of how the power relationship shifted between the teachers and CC late in 2004. David describes the dedication of all of the teachers in the trial and their elevated role:

“I have asked staff [involved in the trial] to take two days off to write programs for the new courses. None of them has taken any time off even though they are writing the programmes and doing all of their other work. They are under too much pressure with the end of year with 12s, TEE, 11s reporting then lower school to take the time off. Teachers have to do all the curriculum development for the new courses while they continue to do their normal work. So I am asking them to write programs, assessment tasks, support materials and with particular contexts we have chosen in mind. There are 10 units in total they are doing it in pairs or threes with a willing spirit. (David, December 2004)

The role played by teachers like David as he experienced the reinvigoration of his professionalism with colleagues was a highlight of the trial process. The professional development role that David and other teachers were involved in was beneficial to teachers in other schools. However, the responses of the teachers in the trial towards
the professional development given by the CC were not so positive. Dan explains his sense of frustration:

> From what I understand the PD [professional development] has been useless. I haven’t completed it yet. The signing off on units of work by the CC is logistically impossible and is not going to happen. Having less experienced teachers doing the PD training is not helpful to us. I know from my first years of teaching that I wouldn’t have known shit from clay. So [how] can they explain this complicated process to us? Most of what I know about post-compulsory I have gained from working with very experienced colleagues here. If I hadn’t experienced this work with these people I would find the changes harder to understand as a teacher of a few years’ experience. They [the PD trainers] cannot answer our questions, as they do not know the answers themselves.  
> (Dan, April, 2005)

The empowering experiences for teachers like Dan, who attended the professional development, was the realisation that their own work was superior to what was on offer at the professional development meetings. In addition, the level of collegial support afforded by the professional approach of teachers and the level of their own experience in the profession, at Glasheen SHS was infinitely more beneficial than the professional development provided to teachers. The effect of collegiality on the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work cannot be under-estimated or replaced by external professional development. Therefore, it is apparent that the success of the trial of the new curriculum was directly influenced by the professional collegial relationships of the teachers involved and their determination to retain their professional expert explicit teacher knowledge. The foundation stones of expert teachers in the trial included the rise of collegiality within the trial group of teachers where they shared trust and goodwill for each other in order to pull together over the course of the trial.

The teachers described their growing awareness of their expert roles as a result of the trial:
Tom’s motivations were personal as well as benefiting the other teachers he was working with. Ray’s healthy level of scepticism offered a view of the trial in this way:

Afterwards we thought: what have we agreed to? I drifted into the decision to initiate change in 11 English. I feel that I should be involved in these things. I want the work in 11 English to be workable and beneficial to students. (Ray, March, 2004)

At the heart of Ray’s comments is his professionalism as a teacher and his motivation to always place students’ needs at the forefront of his teaching.

Jo also contributes her own view of her motivations for involvement in the trial:

I think that my role is valuable in the research process. This, combined with my normal workload, is putting a lot of pressure on me as a teacher. (Jo, March, 2004)

Even though Jo’s comments highlight the pressures she has been under over the trial period, she also demonstrates how important she saw her role in the trial. This renewal of purpose is part of the reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work experienced by all of the teachers in the trial. At the heart of the participants’ actions was their commitment to the development of both academic and foundation literacies in every student.

At the last meeting, I asked three questions of teachers individually in order to capture their experiences of the changing cultures and the process of reprofessionalisation of their work for the final time. The questions were:

- Can you describe for me how the CoS in English year 11 has impacted on your teaching, planning and preparation for 2006?
- How much has your work changed since commencing the trial two years ago? Why? What effect is this having on you?
What are the ongoing effects of curriculum reform having on your work? The responses were as follows:

Dan responded in December 2005 to question one by outlining his teaching practices:

No, not one iota of difference to my usual planning for teaching of 11s next year. No one has seen the reporting software yet, so we do not know how we will be reporting to parents and students next year. The assessment package was supposed to be out months ago and I still haven’t seen it yet. The exploratory draft we were shown of the sample external exam was embarrassingly bad. No one gave any credibility to the sample. The [CC] have said they will not allow the exam to have a predictable structure or format. So there is no structure whatsoever.

Dan continued:

My preparation for me personally is not going to be a big drama. Other people have different ideas and we will need to have more discussion, which will not always be fruitful about the courses. I think there will be a lot of time wasted. We are losing time on this and it is taking away from other work. (Dan, December, 2005)

In response to how much your work has changed Dan commented on his experiences:

A lot of confusion. I was quite positive [initially] about the new courses when I first heard about them. I did up a program and got XXXXX from District Office to look at it. He poopooed my work and I just thought ‘To hell with it’. The sad thing is that there has been a lack of decision making. They [CC] don’t decide on anything. Lies, like this idea that kids will have to study books. Show me where in the documentation that it says that kids will have to study books? It doesn’t. It is quite legitimate to ask where does it say this? The concept of structure as we currently have in years 11 and 12 English is an anathema to them [CC]. All sort of structure is being removed from year 11 and 12. The holes we see in the lack of structure, they [CC] see as virtues. The impression I get is that a certain voice in the CC has a vision. This person’s vision is being taken and is assumed to be shared by all of us teaching English in 11 and 12. This personal, philosophical vision is very big on removing structure and bringing in a lot of popular culture. (Dan, December, 2005)

To what ongoing effects of curriculum reform having on your work Dan responded describing his feelings about the CC as:

We don’t know much at all because they [CC] don’t want us to know. The PD has been a waste of time. With the current syllabus structure in every year 11 and 12 course, we are able to go in and teach it. With the new courses, it will be very hard for a new teacher to go in and teach, as there is no structure. The problems around the new courses for me are that kids are going to go through years 11 and 12 without having read a novel, or written an essay, they will think
that they capable of achieving at university. I think there needs to be a balance between popular culture and traditional English study; you cannot understand one without the other. (Dan, December, 2005)

Dan’s responses demonstrate an increased level of mistrust of the WADET and the CC as a result of being involved in the trial. He also contended that a lot of time has been wasted in the confused introduction of the CoS in a hurried and haphazard way. He also identifies how the PD he had to attend was unhelpful and a waste of money and time. This is another example of the external control of teachers’ work by the CC by monitoring what teachers are doing and collecting and using their resources constructed in schools for the CC’s own program of implementation.

Vicki’s responses to the questions were as follows:

It will have, it should have, and we haven’t done anything here at school for 2006. What we need to do is do a common program for year 11 together. We have already put in the texts lists earlier in the year and we will stick with these. We need to look at what has worked in the current year 11 program and translate it into the new course. I think that as long as I use the proformas from the Curriculum Council we can do whatever we want to do. As far as my teaching practice goes, I think I will be collecting more assessments and more marking. How much we use formative assessment over summative assessment is an issue. We will be doing more formative (continuous assessment) than summative as we currently do in year 11 and 12. It will be hard to get comparability on. If one teacher uses a particular assessment and another uses a different assessment, how will we get comparability on this? I think they need to be explicitly stated on the program, as everything has to be fair, transparent and obvious for all. (Vicki, December, 2005)

Vicki continued by discussing her experiences of the professional development required to be completed by each teacher by saying:

I have had very little preparation time for the new courses for next year. I have completed the Course of Study days [5 days] the first 2 were in school time and the last 3 were in our own time [after school or in the holidays]. I found doing one whole day too much and not meaningful for me. Then they [the CC] changed their mind about day 5 as to when we did the day, as a trade off day or in our own time and get paid for it. The rules change all the time while we are playing. We had Greg Robson [from the CC] to answer our questions. He was very good to listen to us, but he placated us by saying “That’s a good point” “I’ll take that back”. He has taken it with him to South Australia or wherever he has gone to now that he has resigned from the CC. We see it as an escape for
the bureaucrats to dump it on us and we as teachers implement the decisions. We put up with it because we are teachers who will not let our students down. (Vicki, December, 2005)

Vicki described the effects of the curriculum reform on her work:

The level 3 promotion is something that is very hard to get. I feel as though, the first group who went through and got their level 3 locks most of us out of the process. The institutional ‘status’ is a pressure on my work. I feel unsure at times of what I need to do with respect to filling out the forms and ticking boxes for assessment and planning in order meet the CC’s requirements. I think that certain voices are heard over others and given preferential treatment over the rest of us. The system is still in a state of flux and there is a lot of cynicism among teachers. Originally we had to write our own units of curriculum and send them into the CC to get approval. Without the CC approval we cannot continue. (Vicki, December, 2005)

In answer to question three, Vicki added that as a teacher she has not received any real support from the WADET or CC in order to teach the new courses from 2006 by explaining how:

Not a lot as we had very little information or time to develop units or assessments, and the data package is changing all of the time. I think everything will be done ad hoc in the first 6 months of the year. I think it is the inept ability of the system and they [CC] are genuinely shocked when they [CC] find that people are not happy with the changes. The system has been so slow to deliver the finer details of the courses that I am unable to complete any more work before I get more information. The ARM panel are a group who teachers have to account to. All of its members are like the old examination panel. It is made up of people from universities, private schools and government schools. So once again you get a closed circle of voices all agreeing with one another. (Vicki, December, 2005)

Vicki’s comments indicate how much the new curriculum has impacted on her teaching and yet how she will continue her own critical reflection of her work as part of the reprofessionalisation process along with the implementation of the new curriculum. Other important issues for Vicki were the same problems associated with the required PD by the CC and how it was a waste of time and money. Vicki also discussed how she felt as an experienced and highly skilled classroom teacher who was locked out of the Level 3 promotions process by the first group of gate keeper teachers. This was further evidence of the ‘corruption of collegiality’ experienced by
teachers. In addition, Vicki highlights the need for a common course structure that was the centrepiece of the previous year 11 and 12 courses. She explains how time will be needed to create this structure within the unstructured context of the CoS. Finally, Vicki explains her continued feeling of isolation from decision making which is done at the CC level devoid of any real input or consultation with teachers actually implementing the CoS in English.

Ray responded to the three questions by describing the changing situation he found himself in:

*The major thing at the moment is the great deal of uncertainty. I don’t believe that the system is ready for this change to take place for the beginning of next year [2006]. There are a lot of things that teachers would like to see before they feel confident enough to start such a dramatic change. For example, the Robson Report stated that the exploratory exam paper would give teachers details of what the external would look like and the structure it would take. The details have not been given to us. They (CC) say there will be a sample exam paper ready by May 2006. We have seen some draft, exploratory items in the day 5 of the PD course. So all of the examination uncertainty is having an impact on us. Comparability is a major issue. People are used to having exams at the end of term two and [at the] end [of] term 4 for year 11s. They [CC] are saying that is no longer required. We are being told that the exams for year 11s should fit into the assessment model as an outcomes-based exam. (Ray, December, 2005)*

Ray continued to describe the level of uncertainty he experienced throughout the trial and how it had not subsided in December 2005:

*The other major issue is levelling and people feel that until you complete the 5 days of training in the new courses of study that you cannot fully prepare to level on balance judgements about students' work. During the 5 days we look at pieces of work and judge them in outcomes levels terms. When we have seen these samples at the PD there is often a complete lack of consensus between teachers as to what level the work should be judged at. People are being told to use their own balanced judgement. We are very uncertain about the assessment procedures and moderation necessary for the new courses of study. Teachers always get on with it. (Ray, December, 2005)*

Ray’s comments and experiences were a reflection of the concerns, but also the professional diligence demonstrated by the teachers in the trial to get on and make the new curriculum work in a meaningful and successful way in their school. The central
issues for Ray revolved around the level of uncertainty of how the CoS in English will be assessed across schools, districts and ultimately in the external arena of the TEE. He also emphasises his concerns about the development of teacher uncertainty in their own expert knowledge and teaching methodologies. This is a significant and pivotal point where reprofessionalisation as a process can be beneficial to individual teachers as they resist the central office deprofessionalisation of their expert knowledge and experience.

David had some concluding remarks about the future of the trial as it came into full implementation in 2006-2007 in the school. His remarks are framed around the continued reprofessionalisation of his work within a continually changing culture of curriculum and work practices in teaching. David explains how:

2006 will see the full implementation of year 11 English in our school. The CC will be providing all teachers who are implementing the new courses 3 days of PD time to write and develop their own implementation strategies. The PD is a great cost to the CC. This will always be an inhibiting factor in how much time teachers receive in order to develop new programs. The major problem with teachers and the new courses is a lack of confidence. Unless sufficient time, support and resources are in place teachers will continue to have a lack of confidence in the new system. We do not have credibility for this change yet. So why are we changing our English curriculum? We do need rethinking of the English Syllabi in its current form. (David, December, 2005)

David’s comments suggest a sense of ongoing difficulty with expectations by the CC that teachers should be able to seamlessly implement the new courses with little disruption to their work or to students’ education. He continues with:

I will continue to implement and trial new courses in my English department. 2006 will see the introduction of the Literature course (texts, traditions and culture). Other staff are feeling disillusioned. We feel the CC is not really listening to our concerns. They [CC] have their own predisposed views of how the courses should be created and implemented. [In] 2007 all new courses of study across all government schools will be implemented. The Catholic system will also be involved in the full implementation in 2007. (David, December, 2005)
Despite David’s concerns about the efficacy of the CoS, he demonstrates a continued level of commitment towards their implementation within his own critically reflective teaching approach. He also highlights the common issues about the corruption of collegiality through the enforced attendance of teachers at PD days controlled by the CC. In addition, David identifies the unnecessary nature of the CoS in English as a complete replacement for the previous subjects in English years 11 and 12. He suggests that continual revision of the current English syllabi of subjects including Senior English (11 and 12) and TEE English 11 and 12 would be a more effective use of teachers’ time and government funding. David also supports Vicki and Dan’s views of the lack of real cooperation and consultation by the CC with teachers implementing the CoS in English. This is a grave concern for teachers and another aspect of the reprofessionalisation process for teachers to resist and respond to.

Jo’s responses to the three questions were as follows:

*If I weren’t trialling the new units this year I would be using what I programmed for last year. I know that my programming and planning is effective and suitable for this pilot. However, it is the time required and the funding issues that are affecting our implementation of the trial.* (Jo, December, 2005)

The implications that the new courses lacked transparency of assessment was another indicator of the lengths teachers would go to ensure that their students are justly assessed. Jo answered question two:

*I have had very little preparation time for the new courses next year [2006]. I have completed the CoS days [five days]. The first two were in school time. The last three were in our own time [after school or in the holidays or Saturdays]. I found doing the whole day too much and not meaningful for me.... We see it [the new courses] as an escape the bureaucrats dump on us and we teachers implement it. We put up with it because we are teachers who will not let our students down.* (Jo, December, 2005)

It was obvious from Jo’s comments about her changing work culture that, despite being worked even harder, she will not disadvantage her students by not being in
control of the new courses and their roll-out in 2006. Jo continued to answer question three:

_ I feel like schools have become corporatised entities where we have to market ourselves to the community to attract students. This has impacts on teachers and our work as we are put under more pressure to conform. (Jo, December, 2005)_

Jo’s comments here demonstrated a critical view of the whole CoS in English process. She specifically focuses on how much money and time has been wasted by teachers trying to come to terms with CoS without any demonstrated support from the CC, WADET or DO and the wasted resources by these government agencies. Jo also discusses the imposed role of the corporate school where the school has to operate like a corporation and generate its own resources. This is an integral aspect of the changing cultures experienced by teachers in schools today. Teachers are no longer there to teach children; rather they are a service provider servicing clients in a market setting.

Jo’s final comments demonstrate how teachers’ work has changed as a result of this latest curriculum reform. The impacts on their work require a continual reinvigoration and reprofessionalisation of work practices and teaching methodologies. Therefore, the experiences borne out in this research demonstrate that teachers are evolving their work cultures and individual roles in order to continuously meet the new challenges of teaching in a constantly changing system.

**Conclusions**

The tensions and influences on teachers’ work by the new mandated curriculum at Glasheen SHS have consequences for the way individuals think, practice and reflect on their work. The new curriculum exists in a space of continual change in education.
The central conceptualisation of teachers’ work used to examine the reprofessionalisation process is labour process theory. The lens of labour process theory assists in deciphering what is happening to teachers’ work and their personal professional responses to their experiences. The way in which curriculum is used to control, rationalise, specify and influence teachers’ work is central to what teachers are experiencing as they seek to reinvigorate their own practice. The intensification of work through curriculum reform is also an influence on every teacher as they strive to keep ahead of the workload and the continual compliance and external pressures imposed on them.

In addition, how teachers have responded by critically reflecting on their own work practices and methodology to teaching has been a positive outcome of the trial. The other positive outcomes for the individual teachers were the support and assistance they were able to share with one another in a positive collegial environment of shared experiences with change. This set of collegial relationships ensured that the trust and goodwill generated by their work would assist them to get through the trial successfully. Therefore, the CoS trial over two years at Glasheen SHS provided a positive means of reprofessionalisation for the individual teachers involved in an ever changing culture of work. The renewal and reinvigoration of teachers’ work reflects both effort of the individual teachers and the ethos- a collegial culture that has been developed in this particular school over many years. Therefore, is not possible to generalise and suggest that other schools and teachers would have had as much success as the teachers in the case study did with the trial. Finally, the CC and the WADET failed to provide professional support to the teachers throughout the trial. Rather the managerialist doctrine imposed by the CC and WADET via the new
curriculum negatively affected teachers’ work. However, the teachers rose up to reinvigorate their own work through a complex process of reprofessionalisation in spite of their ongoing difficulties and lack of external support. Through resistance and reinvigoration of their work, the teachers were able to reclaim their collegial space and continue their expert teaching of English within the CoS in order to best meet their students’ needs.
Conclusions

Introduction

The central focus of this thesis has been to examine how teachers understand, experience and respond to mandated curriculum reforms in English. In order to examine this question I embarked on a research process to examine the connections and complex interrelationships between how individuals and their work are influenced by a range of internal and external influences and pressures relating to mandated curriculum reform in a Western Australian Senior High School.

In Chapter One, I examined the broader contexts of educational reform impacting on teachers’ work. I found that teachers are experiencing an unprecedented level of external influence and pressure on their already constantly changing cultures of work. The individual voices heard in Chapters Five and Six, support the premise that teachers’ work is in a constant state of flux. The reasons behind this increasingly changing culture of work can be traced back to the changes occurring at the global, national and state levels of government and decision making. Each of these layers of governance further reinforce a common set of agendas, in particular the neo-liberal economic rationalist views of how government-provided education can be changed to best meet the demands of the market. The emphasis of the neo-liberal economic rationalist political agenda has given rise to the last ten years of education reform in which schools are expected to operate like a business with clients, resource efficiencies and an outputs model of education. This is the core set of values underpinning how education is being viewed, funded and controlled in Australia. These values are reproduced through a broad policy context, with its genesis at the
global level of international agreements as to how education will be controlled, funded and for whose benefits.

The broader policy context is derived from the current global emphasis on creating a ‘world model of education’ (Daun, 2002). This model is reinforced by powerful organisations such as the OECD, World Bank and the IMF, who have espoused the ideological shift towards a neo-liberal economic agenda for the provision, funding and control of education, globally. The shift in how education is valued, funded, controlled and produced has become an entrenched part of how the Howard Federal Government embraced the global world model of education. The ideological shift in education policy making has resulted in the promotion of an outputs market of education services wherein students and teachers are part of a commodification process. The movement politically, socially and economically away from a welfare general education for all has been marked by the rise of markets in education and increased competition between schools.

In addition, the introduction of a national curriculum and certificate of education in Australia has been announced as the next step in the marketisation of schools. This achieves the goals of the global education model by centralising the control and decision making over education at the federal level and reducing the states involvement via their education departments (Reid, 1999). The push towards centralisation of education is underpinned by new managerialism, which is imposing new micro controls on individual schools and teachers to adhere to national benchmarks and targets for performance and accountability.
Therefore, the global model of education suggested by Daun (2002) is serving the interests of neo-liberal governments in Australia and elsewhere to legitimise their claims over policy decisions and changes to education as a requirement of supranational commitments and mandates. The centralisation of power and control over education is a reflection of the broader policy agenda directed by the Federal Government under the auspices of the need to become globally competitive through the employment of a neo-liberal economic rationalist agenda. All of these influences provided a backdrop for examining the impact on teachers’ work.

Chapter Two examined the evolution of the Post-compulsory Review (1998-2005) in Western Australia using critical policy analysis. The influences since the 1960s to the present are indicative of the changing cultures of teachers’ work as a means of control and reform by the Federal Government. The constant change has resulted in a `shifting sands’ reform of post-compulsory education in Australia. There are implications for how state-provided and controlled education in schools is now shifting more towards a centralised Federal Government level of control over education. Therefore, education policy has been used as a tool to wrest control of education away from the states to create a national framework for education in Australia.

Education policy making in Australia has been influenced by the current political and economic rationalist era as a policy settlement in an era of coordinate federalism. The evolution of national mandated curriculum reform in post-compulsory education has been driven by this policy settlement within a global facing, performance-based, self-managed, marketised school environment. The impetus of policy devised and monitored by MCEETYA since the early 1990s has provided the
vehicle for the national push towards Federal government centralisation of power over education in secondary schools in Australia. The policy created and mandated at the federal level is refracted at the state level as a reproduction of the national policy position of MCEETYA as a result of coordinate federalism. Therefore, the freedom enjoyed by the states to administer and make decisions about education in schools has been replaced with a system of benchmarks and agreements in order to access federal funding for schools. States are not creating their own policy; rather they now create policy responses to the federal mandated policy framework for education.

Policy reproduction can be traced to the fiscal federalism operating since the 1990s between the states and the federal government. Fiscal federalism is part of coordinate federalism and ties state policy to national agreements by binding funding, resources and curriculum reform in education. There are implications for binding fiscal power over state education provision and decision making that impact at the local school and teacher level. The implications include the centralisation of power over education at the federal level away from the states; a reduction in states’ rights that have been a historical political mainstay since Federation; and a mirroring of global trends in education at the federal level.

The ideological shift in the 1990s to present, in curriculum reform based on a neo-liberal economic managerialist agenda has impacted schools, students and the wider community in Western Australian. The role of state authorities such as the CC in promoting the national agenda of curriculum reform is significant. Part of the CC’s role is monitoring, surveillance and assessment of the Courses of Study (CoS) in the new post-compulsory system in Western Australia. There are social consequences of such wholesale reform, which will become more obvious over time. The
consequences experienced by teachers during this research process include: the changing nature of their work; the removal of curriculum structure in favour of a more open-ended approach to teaching English; a reduction in the emphasis on teaching explicitly, especially academic English; and a growing sense of surveillance and monitoring of schools and teachers. The surveillance and control exerted by the CC of Western Australia is purported to be a necessary requirement of the state falling in line with federal government agreements on education.

The arrangements for national accreditation and certification of post-compulsory education and training raise issues about the imposition of a national curriculum on states’ systems as an impact of mandated curriculum reforms. There will be a need to expand traditional learning areas to be able to incorporate the CoS into already crowded timetables. Curriculum reform will have significant impacts across communities and sites of education as well as individual teachers and their work. The impacts of the large-scale curriculum reform are being experienced by teachers and students in secondary schools in Western Australia.

The Howard Federal Government agenda policy constraints were common to each state’s post-compulsory education system and provide a means of examining how effective the changes to post-compulsory education have been. The neo-liberal economic agenda shaping education has resulted in the following requirements and impacts: quality, student/parental choice; competition and performance outcomes-based learning; local organisational learning cultures; national curriculum and obligations; teacher skills, comparability and assessment; articulation between different education and training sectors and stakeholder acceptance and understanding of the new post-compulsory education system in Western Australia. How these issues
have affected teachers’ work is integral to the impacts of curriculum reform in the wider community.

In Chapter Three, I used the theoretical lens of labour process theory to deconstruct the changing nature of teachers’ work in terms of the emerging themes of: intensification, technocratisation, deprofessionalisation, surveillance and control; and increased accountability and responsibility. In addition, in Chapter Six, I discussed the processes of reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as individual responses to these changing curriculum circumstances and work cultures for the participant teachers at Glasheen SHS. Reprofessionalisation was a positive and constructive response by teachers to deal with mandated curriculum reform in a critically reflective and professional manner. Teachers are being used as an instrument of the neo-liberal political economic agenda in order to deliver the mandated curriculum reforms with less resources, time and professional support than before. It is at this point that the role of labour process theory can be used to uncover the unprecedented level of scrutiny of teachers’ work, and how they resist and reclaim their professional spaces and expert knowledge.

The role of labour process theory serves, as Rikowski (2002) suggests, to demonstrate the capacity of individual teachers to question and resist the prevailing economic models imposed on education and teaching in Australian schools. The changing nature of federalism that underlies this economic agenda is another factor that can be analysed using labour process theory. The prevailing changes of culture have inserted human capital approaches to education within a market orientated, competitive production process for the development of workers to support and develop a globally competitive economy. Therefore, it was necessary to examine
teachers’ work, not in isolation but in the context of the prevailing economic, political, global, cultural, social and ethical factors that constitute education in Australia. The value of teachers’ work has been undermined in the last ten years to such a degree that teachers are experiencing a fragmentation and separation of their intellectual work. This has been particularly evident in the way that the teachers in the trial have been used to create new curriculum without any professional support, resources or time and have been disenfranchised from the ownership of their intellectual property by the CC. This process of alienation from the craft of teaching has occurred, paradoxically, in conjunction with teachers responding with their own reprofessionalisation and renaissance of their work. This has been the most interesting aspect of how teachers have responded, and made sense of the changing cultures they have experienced as a consequence of the trial.

In Chapter Four, I explained the methodology underpinning this research as critical ethnography/critical policy ethnography. I decided to use this dual approach in order to juxtapose the policy impacts of mandated curriculum reform with the lived individual experiences of teachers implementing the reform in real time. This dual method enabled me to achieve this. I developed this method to generate and capture teachers’ understandings and responses, in particular, how they created enunciative space to talk openly about their experiences with mandated curriculum reforms (Smyth, 2001a). In addition, this chapter framed the research in terms of reciprocal and ethical research strategies that benefited the teachers involved by providing feedback to the focus groups. The experiences and understandings of the teachers involved in this research have been integral to the changes made to the CoS and to their own work practices as a result of the reflexive nature of the reprofessionalisation
process. Moreover, this research provided a means for teachers to confide and control aspects of the curriculum reform being experienced in post-compulsory education in Western Australia in a constructive, confidential way. The methods underpinning the research required lengthy meetings over two years where I was given full access to each of the individual teachers and to learning area staff meetings and focus group meetings. I developed a strong foundation of professional trust built up over years of professional work between the teachers and myself. Therefore, the research process enabled a reciprocal process of trust, exchange and sharing of experiences that allowed me to collect a rich and diverse range of individual stories. The everyday details captured throughout the research process reflect how the teachers were able to respond to the imposed curriculum reform with their own process of reflective discovery and reprofessionalisation of their work as experts.

In Chapter Five, I focussed on the emerging theme of deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work. Examining the everyday work experiences of a group of teachers over a long period enabled me to uncover the complex sets of relationships that existed between teachers’ experiences, understanding and meanings about their changing work roles and how other influences were impacting on them. Using a labour process theory perspective enabled me to connect what was occurring in Glasheen SHS with the broader processes of global restructuring. The decisions implemented by government agencies such as the CC are designed to implement a homogenous approach to the production of labour required to meet Australia’s international production obligations and to reinforce the current neo-liberal economic and political agenda of the OECD nations (Braverman, 1974; Ozga, 1988; Kesson, 2004; Rikowski, 2002; Smyth, 2001a). The enmeshing of labour process theory with
critical policy ethnography methodology provided a rich source of in-depth data and links to the analysis of teachers’ work and system relationships.

The system relationships uncovered in the research demonstrate the interconnectedness of individuals’ work with different levels of government and control over education. The system relationships between teachers and their work as a response to curriculum reform highlights how reform can only be introduced successfully with the goodwill and trust on the part of expert professional teachers. The layering effects of individual experiences and professionalism demonstrate that the layers from global to the individual are not discrete, isolated, impenetrable layers. Rather, the individual teacher makes decisions and takes actions every day as a professional response to curriculum reform that will benefit students, the school and wider community as well as themselves. The action of teachers has been demonstrated in the thesis as a renewal of collegial relationships in response to mandated curriculum reform. Therefore, the deprofessionalisation of teachers’ work that occurred had an alternate aspect that is reprofessionalisation. The themes in this thesis demonstrate the interconnectedness of individuals with the external influences that impact their work.

I captured the responses of each teacher in order to develop an understanding of the process of deprofessionalisation during the trial. The themes borne out and examined indicate how inextricably linked the layers of mandated curriculum reform are. The layers of deprofessionalisation comprised: intensification of teachers’ work, surveillance and control of individual teachers; the technocratisation of work; and increased accountability and responsibility. The evidence in my study demonstrates how teachers are being impacted on by this new curriculum as a means of large-scale
cultural change. The counter side of the discussion reinforces how teachers are active participants, not just having things done to them, but responding and reinventing themselves to reassert their expertise and professionalism in the changing cultures of education.

In Chapter Six, I uncovered the significance of reprofessionalisation of teachers’ work as the central theme of the data analysis. This involved acts of resistance as well as reclamation of collegial space, reprofessionalisation and reinvigoration of teachers’ expert knowledge and teaching methodologies. In addition, I discovered the direct consequences of the mandated curriculum reform on individual teachers as they implemented the CoS. Reprofessionalisation is a counter discourse to the prevailing new managerialist doctrine of the neo-liberal economic global agenda for political control of education. Reprofessionalisation is a means by which teachers act within the system to exercise their individual agency and expertise as professionals in an ever changing and complex mandated curriculum reforms in schools. The evidence presented in this thesis provides a counter narrative to the prevailing masternarratives of neo-liberalism and markets of education as part of the production process. In addition, the data chapters allowed individual teachers to voice their expertise as they continued to reinvigorate their professionalism in a continuing age of curriculum reform.

The impacts on teachers’ work of the new curriculum at Glasheen SHS had consequences for the way individuals think, critically reflect on their practice and conceptualise their work in terms of expert knowledge and methodologies. The CoS in English exists in a space of continual changing of cultures in education. The central
conceptualisation of teachers’ work used to examine the reprofessionalisation process was labour process theory.

In addition, how teachers have responded professionally, collegially and critically by reflecting on their own work practices and methodology to teaching has been a positive outcome of the trial. The other positive outcome for the individual teachers was the support and assistance they were able to provide to one another in a positive collegial environment of shared experiences with reform. This set of collegial relationships ensured that the trust and goodwill generated by their work would assist them to get through the trial successfully. Even though there has been a systematic “corruption of collegiality” (Smyth, 2001a) by the WADET and the CC, teachers have resisted and reclaimed their relationships in the school. Therefore, the CoS in English trial at Glasheen SHS provided a positive means for the ongoing processes of reprofessionalisation, for the individual teachers involved in a supportive and changing culture of work.

The renewal and reinvigoration of teachers’ work was as a result of the individual teachers and the collegial culture that has been developed in this particular school over many years. It is not possible to generalise and suggest that other schools and teachers would have had as much success as the teachers in the trial. Finally, it must be said that the CC and WADET did not contribute positive professional support to the teachers throughout the trial. Rather the managerialist doctrine imposed by the new curriculum negatively affected the teachers’ work. Notwithstanding, the teachers experienced a renewal and (re)empowerment of their professionalism as a positive effect of the trial and were able to reassert their own reprofessionalisation from within. In conclusion, the research process documented two years of ups and downs
of professional experience of teachers who were willing to participate in the mandated curriculum reform process. The most significant result was the way that the teachers were able to take back the control of their work by creating new curriculum and reasserting their expertise and knowledge as experienced professionals in their ever changing work culture.

This research demonstrates how the professionalism of teachers can be enmeshed with the policy processes to create and implement curriculum reform in state schools in Western Australia. Furthermore teachers are the experts who have the most experience to implement and develop new curriculum at the local school level to ensure curriculum policy success. Focusing on the conditions to enhance teacher professionalism and autonomy offers a rich and productive field for future inquiry.
References


(URL: http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=article&articleID=15)


PLATO, People lobbying against teaching outcomes website (http://www.platowa.com/)


Schools Council, (1993). *In the middle: Schooling for young adolescents*. Canberra: AGPS.


