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Bridging two worlds: From industry to schools

Annette Green
B.A., M. Ed.

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
University of Sydney
30th April 2012
Author's Declaration

This is to certify that:

I. This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

II. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used

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IV. No part of this work has been used for the award of another degree

V. This thesis meets the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.

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Date: 6th September 2012..............................
Table of Contents

Author’s Declaration .............................................................................................................. 9
Acknowledgments .................................................................................................................. 10
Abstract .................................................................................................................................. 11
Tables and figures .................................................................................................................. 13
List of acronyms .................................................................................................................... 14

Chapter 1. Starting points and initial ideas ............................................................................. 15
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 15
Personal, professional and philosophical background ......................................................... 15
Inspiration and challenges ...................................................................................................... 18
Context of the study ................................................................................................................ 21
Topic exploration ...................................................................................................................... 22
Research questions .................................................................................................................. 24
The structure of the thesis ........................................................................................................ 26
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 27

Chapter 2. A review of the literature ....................................................................................... 28
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 28
Motivations for choosing teaching as a career ....................................................................... 29
Motivations for career change teachers to choose a teaching career ..................................... 30
Supporting early career teachers ............................................................................................. 33
Alternative pathways into teaching .......................................................................................... 36
Beginning teacher issues for career change teachers .............................................................. 38
‘Re’constructing a professional identity for career change teachers ....................................... 39
Teacher identity ....................................................................................................................... 40
Teacher supply and demand ..................................................................................................... 42
The specific case of the technology teacher shortage .............................................................. 45
VET in Schools ......................................................................................................................... 46
### Chapter 3. Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual influences</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why use a case study approach?</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection – the process</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview topics and timelines</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis – the process</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations and ethical issues</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 4. The case studies—locating similarities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonalities</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program of study</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a community of learners</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios for learning and assessment</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem based learning</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the participants</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 5. Individual case studies – small and remote schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual case study explorations - locations</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Schools</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul: Stump Central School</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7. Individual case studies – large regional schools

Introduction

Martha: Life history and education

Martha's first position

Starting teaching in a 'mobile' position

Martha: Southern High School

School visit: Martha

Other teacher interview and literacy issues

Interview with the principal

Myron: Life history and education

Initial concerns and attitudes

School visit: Central River High School

Interviews with the TAS Head Teacher and the principal

Steve: Deans High School

Life history and education: Steve

School visit: Steve

TAS Head Teacher interview

Interview with the Principal of Deans High School

Ralph: Pitlock High School

Ralph's project

Life history and education

School visit: Ralph

Other teacher interview
Chapter 8. Cross case analysis – examining the themes ........................................ 154

Introduction ........................................................................................................ 154
Schools, workplaces and teacher socialisation ............................................ 155
Voice and identity as teachers ........................................................................ 156
Relationships, attitudes and atmosphere .................................................... 158
Liam: A different approach ............................................................................. 160
The vocational purposes of schooling .......................................................... 161
Influences on and beliefs about schooling .................................................... 162
Drawing on life and work experiences .......................................................... 164
The focus on students ..................................................................................... 165
Behaviour management ................................................................................... 166
Schools as preparation for work: class issues? ............................................ 169
Differences explored ...................................................................................... 173
Motivations for becoming teachers ............................................................... 174
‘The home comers’ ....................................................................................... 176
‘The converted’ ............................................................................................. 177
‘The unconverted’ ....................................................................................... 180
Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 181

Chapter 9. Further cross case analysis – examining the themes ....................... 183

Introduction ...................................................................................................... 183
The vocational and academic divide ............................................................. 183
School backgrounds reviewed ...................................................................... 186
Workplace influences, technology and VETIS ............................................ 188
Espousing constructivist approaches ............................................................ 189
1. Sharing ideas and knowledge .................................................................... 191
2. Engagement ............................................................................................... 192
3. Teacher scaffolding ................................................................. 192
4. Real world application of knowledge .......................................... 193
Impact on the school community ....................................................... 194
Measuring their achievements as teachers........................................... 196
Pre-service teacher education .......................................................... 198
Reflecting on planning and programming ........................................... 199
Literacy and learning ................................................................. 201
Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) ........................................ 202
Conclusion .............................................................................. 204

Chapter 10. Discourse analysis ....................................................... 206
Introduction .............................................................................. 206
Discourse analysis ........................................................................ 207
Teacher identity ........................................................................... 207
Major concerns as new teachers ..................................................... 211
Planning and programming .......................................................... 215
Managing classrooms .................................................................... 218
Communicating and working with students and staff ....................... 222
Beliefs about teaching ................................................................. 224
Interviews as third year teachers ..................................................... 226
Conclusion .............................................................................. 232

Chapter 11. Findings, conclusions and implications .......................... 235
Introduction .............................................................................. 235
Significant findings ........................................................................ 235
Revisiting and responding to the research questions ......................... 237
Attitudes to students ...................................................................... 238
Satisfaction with their roles .......................................................... 240
Early career teachers ..................................................................... 240
Author's Declaration

This is to certify that:

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Date: ...................................................................................
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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the 12 teachers who shared the experiences of their journey from industry to school. I would specifically like to thank them for giving so willingly of their time, reflections and stories to provide the data which informed this study.
Abstract

The journey undertaken by 12 career change teachers from an industry background during their first three years as Technology and Applied Studies teachers in New South Wales, Australia, is the subject of investigation in this thesis. The 12 teachers were selected for an accelerated teacher training program on the basis of their skills and knowledge in industry areas closely aligned to secondary school technology and VET in School subjects. Through interviews, site visits, emails and phone calls, a descriptive analysis was undertaken to investigate how these early career teachers had adapted to their new roles.

An interpretive case study approach allowed the researcher to gain insights into their lives and experiences and share their voices during their critical first three years of teaching in rural, regional and remote schools in NSW. The study was influenced by Lortie (1975) in its attempt to investigate the ways in which these teachers ascribed meaning to their professional lives. The researcher inscribed meanings to the data from the transcripts, field notes and observations (Yates, 2003). This was followed by cross case analysis (Stake, 2006) and discourse analysis (Gee, 2010) to confirm themes emerging from the data about these particular new teachers and their different pathway to the profession.

The study found that, although these new teachers experience issues common to many beginning teachers, their previous careers in industry appeared to have markedly influenced their adaptation to becoming teachers. Adapting workplace learning strategies to the classroom was one way in which these participants bridged the two worlds of industry and school. Rather than developing close collegial relationships with their colleagues, the data indicated that they were more interested in spending time in their workshop environments and with students. Over time, they became more confident in their teacher identities and all twelve remain in the profession to date. Resilience and flexibility proved to be valuable attributes possessed by these teachers. The study indicated mentoring would have assisted their transition from industry to the teaching profession. At the time of concluding this investigation, all 12 teachers remained in the teaching profession, many having attained positions of responsibility. All participants affirmed they were pleased that
they had decided to bridge the gap between industry and schools and believed they were making a difference in the lives of their students.
Tables and figures

Table 1 - Data collection process ................................................................. 63

Table 2 – Teacher appointments and locations............................................. 84

Table 3 – School locations and dimensions................................................ 88

Figure 1 – NSW School districts................................................................. 82
### List of acronyms

The acronyms used in this thesis are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Australian College of Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTP</td>
<td>Accelerated Teacher Training Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLA</td>
<td>English Language and Literacy Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HREC</td>
<td>Human Research and Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Higher School Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCEECDYA</td>
<td>Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCEETYA</td>
<td>Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (Combined with the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) in 2009 to become MCEECDYA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW BOS</td>
<td>New South Wales Board of Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW DEC</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Education and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW DET</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Education and Training (Name changed to DEC in 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEEL</td>
<td>Project for Enhancing Effective Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIE</td>
<td>Partners In Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Technology and Applied Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETIS</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training in Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1. Starting points and initial ideas

Introduction
This study explores the stories of 12 new teachers who have successfully transitioned from careers in industry to become classroom practitioners. Their adaptation to their new career provides the narrative of this thesis. Their experience in vocational fields aligned particularly well with concurrent changes in secondary education in Australia to include vocational courses as part of senior curriculum options. Since the 1990s, Australian schools have been encouraged, and at times funded, to provide alternative pathways in Vocational Education and Training in Schools. The intention has been to offer a wider range of courses, training pathways and learning experiences, particularly for senior students. This study documents aspects of the journey of the 12 early career teachers during their first three years of service. I worked with these newly-recruited teachers as a teacher educator during their initial teacher education.

The lens I used in observing, gathering data, analysing my findings and discussions for this research was influenced by my own career as a teacher and as a teacher educator. Thus, I begin by providing a brief introduction to my personal, professional and philosophical formation as the author of this thesis. As well as showing the influences and ideas informing this work, the brief biography below is based on my own responses to the life history questionnaires completed by all the participants in the research study. This information was shared with the group during the data gathering process.

Personal, professional and philosophical background
I was born and brought up as the middle child of a large family of seven children on a small working farm in an isolated rural area near Franz Josef Glacier in New Zealand. Despite having a dairy and mixed farm, we were not wealthy and there was not a family tradition of education beyond the compulsory leaving age. In fact, I was the only one of my family to even consider university or to pursue an academic career. This lack of interest in scholarly learning or aspirations was also reflected in my schooling where I remained as the only senior student by the time I was in the
equivalent of Year 12. On reflection, I can see that much of my interest in creating opportunities for school students who may not have believed they were destined for an academic pathway stems from my life as virtually an aberration from the expectations of my family and community. It also explains my extensive interest in ‘second chance’ educational opportunities and, in particular, the widening of participation for groups of students who had limited expectations of attending a university and participating in further education.

I excelled in the very small schools I attended. My primary school averaged an enrolment of 18 students and my secondary school, a small Catholic boarding school, had 90 students. There were very few challenges in terms of other students who intended to go to university so I was always an outsider in terms of my academic goals and aspirations until my final year of secondary school. As the only student in the final year of senior, it was strongly suggested I change schools and I was sent to a much larger school, which had an enrolment of 300 students, for my final year. For the first time I was intellectually stimulated and challenged by my peers, rather than only by my teachers and I thrived in a more academically oriented school curriculum and ethos.

I went on to university where my first degree was in English Literature, Linguistics and Languages. This was followed by teachers college and eventually by teaching in secondary schools. I was teaching French and Japanese as well as being appointed to teach a small group of struggling students English because my interest in linguistics and language development was seen as an asset. During my first year of teaching, I found language teaching did not engage my interests as much as working with the students who had difficulties with reading, writing and basic skills. My favourite class was a Year 9, or Form IV, class selected as a remedial or problem group of learners. This ‘opportunity’ class fostered a lifelong interest in and commitment to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language which has followed and influenced my career over the past 30 years.

I moved to Australia where my career choices included working at the University of Queensland as a language tutor and then working for a period as a deckhand on a prawn trawler. It was while I was in the Gulf of Carpentaria that I discovered the
isolated schools which inspired me to my return to teaching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) community schools in Far North Queensland in the late 1970s. Again, my belief that senior schooling in particular offered limited choices and possibilities for success for a number of students was reinforced by my experiences. This also further inspired my passion for encouraging and improving literacy, numeracy and language skills for students so their choices of future pathways could be expanded. My interest in other options for senior curriculum in particular was strengthened.

I was also aware that my educational and social background was often very different from many of my colleagues who had limited experience beyond classrooms and what could be perceived as 'middle class' expectations of the role of schools in preparing students, who were capable, for further study at tertiary level. In indigenous schools, this meant the majority of students were unable to succeed in senior schooling. This was particularly the case in schools where the view was that the senior years were ultimately for the students who planned to attend university.

I then moved to mainstream teaching in Atherton, Queensland, where I was able to establish a senior secondary program for Indigenous students who came from remote areas to complete a three year senior program which gave them the possibility of attaining a senior school result. This provided the possibility of more opportunities for students from isolated areas to overcome barriers to further post school learning. Only one of the local ATSI community schools offered classes above Year 10 at this time, so the only option for remaining at school beyond Year 10 was to attend a distant boarding school in an alien environment. Atherton was much closer to home and students came in groups from the various communities so they shared community connections and support in their studies.

During this period I married and had four children, which limited my choices as far as continuing teaching or being an education officer in remote areas, as I had done while writing programs for indigenous students. I had noticed that the turnover of teachers was very high in most Indigenous schools. Many of the teachers appointed to these schools were very young, so the culture shock of leaving home and beginning teaching meant more support was required for these teachers. I was
employed as an Education Officer to prepare English programs from the Queensland syllabus for junior secondary students. These teaching programs emphasized the teaching of English as a Second Dialect with cross curricular literacy and language skills embedded in all aspects of teaching and learning in ATSI schools.

When my family moved to New South Wales (NSW) in the early 1990s, I moved to teaching adult literacy, numeracy and language in the community sector, although I still taught casually in secondary schools as opportunities presented themselves. Thus it was that I was working in the adult education field during the rise of funding and interest in Vocational Education and Training (VET) throughout the nineties. During this period, I also studied for and attained a Masters degree in Adult Literacy through distance education at Charles Sturt University, where I am now employed in VET and secondary teacher education.

This brief depiction of my career and learning pathway indicates how some of the passions which have developed in my teaching and learning philosophies are embedded in my personal history. Despite working in education and academia for most of my adult life, I have had many other jobs and connections with the working world. I am subsequently as interested in students following pathways to become workers in a vocational area as those who wish to have a university pathway to a career. My experience with teachers and teacher education inspired a desire for a broader range of teachers in terms of backgrounds, life experiences and aspirations for their students. I was influenced philosophically from my teacher college days by the work of John Dewey (1916; 1958) who wrote about the importance of the link between developing participatory and critically enquiring learners to aspire to a socially just and democratic society. My guiding philosophy as a teacher developed from my own experiences and I remain committed to enabling learning for all students in the disciplines that enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations whether these are academically motivated or more focused on direct vocational pathways.

Inspiration and challenges
The inspiration for researching teachers moving from a trade to a classroom came initially from a response to a question about Vocational Education and Training in
Schools (VETiS) in 2001. In an interview I was conducting with a senior VETiS researcher for a project concerning young people’s learning from work, he advised me to ‘think about the teachers’ and the unique set of vocational and teaching qualities and knowledge they would require in order to offer sufficient industry appropriate skills. This background information is included to demonstrate that prior to beginning the research required to complete this thesis, I had developed an interest in alternative pathways for school students who were staying on at school longer yet not aiming for university studies, the former traditional reason for staying on at school through senior years.

The following year, 2001, saw the first intake of students to an accelerated teacher training program which I helped devise. This program is described in Chapter 4. Students from this first cohort volunteered to become participants in the longitudinal study which forms the basis of this thesis. A longitudinal study allows for multiple views and perspectives across the pedagogical approaches and perceptions of the teachers as they adapt from one career to another. One of the most interesting early observations found in this study was that, to a greater or lesser extent, rather than adapting to fit around school contexts and cultures, these teachers quietly turn their classrooms and workshops into workplaces. Their pedagogical approach has much in common with workplace learning, especially as defined by Stephen Billet (2001) as:

... the learning available through everyday participation in work activities guided by expert co-workers and assisted by the contribution of other workers and the workplace environment itself (pp. 103 – 104).

Theories of workplace learning contribute to the theoretical framework supporting this study. Through observation of these teachers in class and conversations with them and with other teachers and, in many cases the principals, the pattern of making the classroom or workshop become as close to a workplace environment as possible became apparent.

In approaching this study, as the researcher, I will use a metaphor to explain the way in which I am neither an insider nor really an outsider to the participants involved. This metaphor is one from food technology – the cooking and preparation of soup. My experience with the initial teacher education of all the participants, and the other 60 teacher education students from the first cohort of the industry to school teacher training pathway program, means that my knowledge is enriched from the many
interactions and communications I have had with these participants. This formed the base stock of the soup. It also means that I have had nine years of e-mails, phone calls, chats and other communications with these participants. Layered on that stock is the succession of teacher education students with an industry background who have participated in the seven cohorts of the teacher education program that followed the initial intake from which my participants are drawn.

Returning to the soup metaphor, the rich stock must flavour any ingredients that are added. Conceiving of the ingredients as the data, the analysis, the interpretations and, indeed, the 'taste' are all influenced by the rich stock, or experience and knowledge, built up over nine years of working with this type of program, and to some extent, this type of student. While acknowledging the bias, or particular standpoint this encourages can be termed a limitation, the depth of the relationships over such an extended period of time, must also be recognized as an opportunity to develop deep understanding of the new teachers such a pathway may produce. The experiences and pedagogical insights afforded by observing, teaching and working with people from industry or trade backgrounds who want to become teachers in VETiS and Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) have informed this study.

TAS is an umbrella term that links many and varied technology based courses. Students studying TAS courses are given the opportunity to creatively work with tools, materials and techniques to investigate and create unique solutions to design problems. TAS courses aim to develop the higher order thinking skills of students as they apply knowledge to create solutions and deeply engage in the technologies they are using. The experiences they undertake are designed to connect with the real world in which the students are situated. This attitude and approach matches well with teachers from an industry background. The underpinning aspiration is that technology courses provide students with the skills to be effective lifelong learners and problem solvers (NSW BOS, 2005).

The most challenging aspect of the TAS discipline area for both TAS teachers and TAS teacher educators is the variety of technologies this area encompasses. Wood, Metals, Food, Information and Agricultural Technologies are the basic building blocks which proliferate across contexts and foci in junior Technology Mandatory
incorporating a Design and Technology approach to these subjects. There are also senior Design and Technology subjects across a range of content areas. VETiS courses such as Construction, Metals and Engineering, Hospitality, Information Technology and Primary Industries are also included in TAS. This is not a comprehensive list and schools offer a range from these multiple options depending on the interest of students, resources and the expertise of staff.

**Context of the study**

The short period in which VETiS has been incorporated into the senior curriculum in Australian schools has meant that systems have been under pressure to train, retrain and recruit staff to manage, teach and develop the programs which put policy into practice. The increasing number of students engaging in VETiS courses across the whole country brought further pressure to systems, both public and private. To make it work, these teachers must have vocational knowledge and industry experience (Brown, 2010). Additionally, they must have developed pedagogical expertise. They also require an understanding of secondary education. Teachers need to bring together their experiences at the intersection of diverse and changing schools and post-compulsory systems, adolescents and parents needs and the world of work and training in order to develop new and innovative programs (Connell et al, 2003; Polesel et al, 2004). To meet employment requirements, they need to have relevant current industry knowledge, academic credentials suitable for various systemic requirements, general knowledge and understanding of the needs of young people within educational institutions as well as a sound knowledge of the National Frameworks of VET.

To develop teaching programs to meet the competencies specified in the relevant Training Packages, teachers must adapt pedagogical practices to fit within the frameworks of both VET sector approaches and school practices. State and Territory Boards of Studies and the Curriculum Corporation have provided materials and templates for programs to assist teachers to bridge the gap between the Industry Framework competency standards and school curriculum requirements. These support materials include sample teaching and learning materials, templates for assessment, professional development materials, and case studies.
Topic exploration

In an attempt to explore the attitudes, perceptions and approaches of representatives of a cohort of teachers who have moved from an industry background into teaching, this study uses longitudinal data gathered over the first three years of the 12 participants’ teaching careers. The sample group of mature new teachers were volunteers from the graduates of a rural university’s Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP) which was designed to offer a viable alternative second-career pathway into the teaching profession, specifically addressing teacher shortages in the area of TAS and VETiS in NSW. These candidates were selected specifically to teach subjects in TAS and VETiS in their industry area. The selection process was based on criteria developed by the then NSW Department of Education (NSW DET), which conducted initial suitability interviews for all candidates. The applications were then scrutinised by the university using the criteria developed by the department to ensure there was a strong correlation between the candidate’s trade background and the required TAS and VETiS school subject disciplines.

The study has a rural focus, as the participants who volunteered were chosen from those appointed to schools in rural and regional NSW. Although there were volunteers from the program who were appointed to city schools, the focus the university has on providing graduates for inland Australia influenced my choice of sites. As a teacher and researcher, my own experience and interests also assisted in selecting rural locations as sites for study. The teachers this study examined were recruited to specifically meet the increasing demand for vocational programs as well as to cover the current and anticipated shortfall of technology teachers in NSW schools.

The traditional beginning teacher pathway consists of a reasonably successful career at secondary school followed by a university course and then a return to the school context. University teacher education programs are predominantly made up of students who have been in school all of their lives and can be termed as having limited experience of work life beyond an educational setting, although the number of mature applicants has increased in recent times (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). For the teachers studied in my thesis, their own school career may have been less successful,
with an exit to an apprenticeship and the workforce prior to completion of senior schooling being typical of most entrants.

Over all, time in industry means the life experience of these teachers has been very different from the traditional pathway taken by teachers in most Australian secondary schools. A conscious decision to change career focus means that these teachers have completed their training in a university context and then are returning to schools with potentially different views on the purpose and outcomes of schooling. A theme through this study will be to consider the academic and vocational divide in the school system as perceived by the representatives of an industry background as they make a cultural shift, at some level, to the different workplace of rural secondary schools in NSW.

Just as the importance of what the learner brings as prior knowledge to the learning context has been acknowledged, this study examines what the teacher brings to the learning and teaching context, and the effect of that background on their approach and beliefs about teaching. By examining the personal histories and backgrounds of these teachers, the researcher can examine the way "past experience, circumstances, and significant events may be related to the perspectives teachers bring to the classroom" (Gitlin et al., 1992, p. 29). Through a methodology involving a longitudinal study as the 12 teachers establish themselves in their new career, interviews, both by telephone and face to face, and a continuing series of e-mailed conversations, which could be termed professional discussions, the researcher has gathered data to analyse and explore some of the key issues for these teachers.

The beginning teachers were encouraged to reflect on their own practices in terms of personal theory building conversations, as "using a theory involves giving it a contextually specific meaning, so there is always an element of reinterpretation or reconstruction" (Eraut, 1994, p. 60). Thus the researcher and the participants construct and reconstruct the ongoing discussions through reflection, conversations and further reflection. Discourses from field notes and interviews have been analysed to reflect on the attitudes, approaches and values of these participants. By discourse, the researcher refers to the specific ways in which language functions in specific social and ideological relations which are constructed in and through language
(Fairclough, 2003). By noting the ways in which the participants speak about and frame their practice, the exploration of their construction of their teaching identity can be viewed through another lens which may show similarities or differences from teachers following other pathways into the profession. As these teachers can be arguably categorised as new ‘teacher types’, the critical discourse analysis will examine the language to highlight new ways of describing and reflecting on their practice, perceptions and approaches to the profession.

**Research questions**

The research questions focus on developing an understanding of how this group of teachers has adapted to the profession of teaching; in particular the ways in which their background and former careers intersect with their new contexts in schools. The questions include consideration of the specific vocational and technology specialisations that are linked to the trade skills and knowledge these teachers had developed in industry. The questions are:

- What are the effects of an industry background and an accelerated teacher-training course on the orientation to teaching and learning of teachers in VETiS and technology education?

- Is the conception these teachers have of students, the curriculum and the culture of senior secondary school markedly different from that of other beginning teachers; or do they adjust to the dominant cultural ethos of the school to adapt to prevailing contextual conditions?

- Are these teachers operating as agents or signifiers of change, or are they ‘made safe’, socialised into the existing context of the schools they begin their career in, or a combination of both?

My research was initially influenced by Lortie’s (1975) sociological study of teachers. I wanted to use his approach and methodology of observing, interviewing, corresponding, and examining in detail a group of new teachers who changed from a career in industry to become teachers of technology and VETiS courses in NSW schools. The primary purpose was to gain some understanding of the reality of their lives as teachers through studying each of them in context over their first three years
of service. Lortie was intent on understanding the way teachers understood and ascribed meanings to their "professional" lives. Lortie described his approach as:

... a stance which combines naivety with scepticism -- a questioning approach toward what is commonly said about teaching and teachers (p ix).

This study examines a particular group of teachers with commonalities in their backgrounds, including the fact that they were all selected to enrol in teacher education because of their demonstrated expertise and knowledge in industry and trade areas. The focus of the study is on the manner in which they both constructed and attributed meanings to their new identities as teachers.

In collecting data, I attempted to encourage the participants to describe features of their transition in their own language, to situate the investigations in their lived in reality. The study is situated in the tradition of ethnomethodology (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008) but uses a case study approach (Stake 1995; Yin, 2004). Each teacher participant forms a case for study and the individual cases are examined in detail. In addition, cross case analysis was undertaken to provide understanding of and insight into these teachers as a different type of new teacher, potentially offering a different approach and attitude to the profession. Whilst examining the perceptions, beliefs and progress of these new career change teachers and their alternative pathway, this study is not intended to be a direct comparison with teachers who have followed more traditional pathways, for example from school to university to becoming teachers.

All teachers are individuals with their own motivations, philosophies and approaches. By focusing on the lived reality of a small group of teachers with similar pathways, commonalities and features of their approaches and journey through the first three years of their new careers as teachers, the advantages and disadvantages of such a pathway can be more clearly identified and understood. No attempt to generalise is made; rather these individual journeys are described and analysed. In this study, the specific purpose is to use thick description, as noted by Geertz (1994) to gain specific knowledge and insight into the world these particular new teachers find and construct. As Geertz asserts:

If you want to understand what a science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and certainly not at what its
apologists say about it; you should look at what the practitioners of it do (p. 213).

With the understanding that what is asserted in the findings are "essentially contested concepts" (Gallie, 1956, p.167), the descriptions of the individual new teachers in each case and the discussion and comparisons made both within and between the cases is of value in increasing understanding whilst acknowledging the philosophical anomaly of presenting 'truths', rather than interpretation made by the researcher from the data gathered.

The structure of the thesis
The thesis opens with a contextual introduction to my personal background as a researcher and as a teacher and teacher educator. The context of the study is explored in some detail and the research questions under investigation in this study. The second chapter explores the relevant Australian and international literature on career change teachers and their motivation for changing to the teaching profession. Beginning teacher literature is examined, with a particular emphasis on teacher identity formation. This chapter also explores the changes which accompanied the inclusion of vocational education as part of the senior secondary school curriculum in secondary schools in Australia generally. The specific issue of the shortage of technology teachers, within Australia as well as internationally, is considered. The third chapter introduces the qualitative methodology and the theoretical framing of the study. Particular emphasis is placed on the way case study research has been used as a way of allowing the voices and lives of the participating teachers and their rural school contexts to be foregrounded in the study. Essential information including the data collection process and timelines; interview topics and protocols and the processes of data analysis are discussed in this chapter. Chapter 3 concludes with a consideration of limitations and ethical issues relevant to this thesis.

The next section of the thesis, from Chapters 4 to 7, introduces the case study data structured around the locations and contexts in which the new teachers are beginning their new careers. Chapter 4 examines the teacher preparation all participants shared as part of the first cohort of accelerated teacher trainees who studied together at a regional university in NSW. Their locations as teachers and a brief introduction to the participants are also included in this chapter. Chapter 5 looks at three participants
who were posted to small and remote schools. The case studies throughout the thesis examine the biographies of each participant, details of their school context and data gathered while visiting each school. Chapter 6 is structured similarly, with data concerning five teachers who were situated in medium size rural schools. In Chapter 7, the four teachers who were given positions in large schools located in regional towns were the subject of investigation.

Chapters 8 and 9 provide the main discussion of the key themes emerging from the analysis of the qualitative data gathered. Themes include teacher identity formation, linked to the ways in which these second career teacher perceive the ways they draw on their life and prior career experiences. Chapter 8 also considers the specific motivations inspiring these teachers. In Chapter 9 there is a section on the vocational and academic divisions within the school curriculum, accompanied by a related discussion on workplace influences underpinning the practices of these teachers as well as considering their thoughts on literacy and learning and occupational health and safety. The penultimate chapter, Chapter 10, revisits the data with the tools of discourse analysis being employed to provide other insights into the perceptions and approaches of the participants. The findings, conclusions and implications close the thesis in Chapter 11.

**Conclusion**

In this opening chapter, I have provided some biographical details of my life and career in order to begin to expose the attitudes and experience I bring to the study. Particularly in research involving an examination of specific biographies and early teaching careers, the interpretations and analysis are constructed by the researcher from a philosophical and theoretical standpoint which influences all aspects of the study including the design and choices made by the researcher. The historical and social context in which the study is located was introduced. In particular, the effects of increased offering of VETiS as well as the growth of an emphasis on technology education are discussed. The main topic and the key initial research questions have been presented. The longitudinal nature of the study and the aims of the researcher have been introduced in this section. Some initial ideas and inspirations have been included. In the next chapter, the literature concerning 'second career' teachers is examined in some detail to locate this study within the field.
Chapter 2. A review of the literature

Introduction

In this chapter the literature under review addresses key themes related to becoming a teacher, with a specific focus on 'career change teachers', a broad term which is used in this review to specifically refer to early career teachers who have undertaken teacher education after a significant time in one or more earlier careers. By 'early career teacher', this study refers to the first three years of teaching. The review is structured to begin with a focus on early career teachers and the themes found in the literature. There is a focus on the motivations to choose teaching as a career.

Beginning teacher literature has been examined to explore issues concerning all teachers in their first years in the profession. This includes those teachers who follow the traditional pathway entering a teacher education program on completing school or after having completed an undergraduate degree. Mature entrants are found in increasing numbers in graduate entry program study groups and other groups referred to as 'career change' teachers, who are becoming more prevalent in both alternative and mainstream programs (Blake, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hess, 2009).

This critique is followed by a close examination of the literature on alternative pathways into teaching. The debate on the strengths and issues of alternative pathways dominates the American literature as practices involving recruiting career changers and recent graduates have proliferated there, particularly after the introduction of Teach for America and alternative teacher certification (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The Teach for America program, which has subsequently been replicated in the UK, Australia and elsewhere, was designed to seek graduate applicants who were offered quite brief teacher education programs before moving directly into schools, typically in locations which were difficult to staff.

Examining and critiquing the literature on beginning teachers and second career teachers locates this research within a broader context, particularly on the topic of teacher shortages, specifically in Australia in certain disciplines and geographical locations. Discussion on the issues and concerns of second career teachers
themselves featured prominently in the literature on career changing entrants to the teaching workforce. In addition, how these early career teachers construct their new identities as teachers is also of importance in this review. What they bring with them to the classroom in terms of attributes, attitudes, knowledge and skills is considered.

Additional topics such as the increased provision of VETiS, issues of teacher supply and demand and the academic and vocational divide within the school system are included in this review. At the beginning of this research journey, the rapid growth of vocational pathways in senior schools in NSW through the rapid rise of VETiS courses as part of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) also resulted in a need for more teachers who could teach trade and industry skills as well as aligned technology subjects. The increase in numbers of students remaining at school through the post compulsory senior years and the introduction of more VETiS courses during the late 1990's and into this century has been well documented (MCEETYA, 2005; Polesel et al, 2004; Polesel, 2010). The subject of preparation of VETiS teachers has not appeared as a major topic in the literature and some of this review addresses the shifting landscape of senior schools which alternative pathways have been in part designed to address particularly in Australia (Frost, 2000; Polesel et al, 2004; Polesel, 2010).

Motivations for choosing teaching as a career

There are many studies in the literature that examine the reasons pre-service teachers choose teaching as a career. In a study of 298 students at the University of York in the United Kingdom, from responses to a questionnaire asking them to rate the influence of twenty factors which could influence their choice of career, Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) found that all students ranked enjoyment of their potential career as the highest factor influencing their decisions. For those students who had already decided teaching was their career choice, factors such as contributing to society and altruistic desires to care for others were ranked more highly than promotions and high earnings. The latter were more prominent in other groups of students in the survey (p. 123).
In a study examining the motivation of a large cohort (n=79) of pre-service teachers, Manuel and Hughes (2006) found that the three factors most influential in their choice of teaching as a career were:

- personal fulfilment (70.9%)
- enjoyment of the subject (69.6%)
- working with young people (65.8%)
- lifestyle (34%)
- working conditions (19%) (p. 10).

Watt and Richardson (2007) surveyed two large groups of teacher education students (n= 488, 652) in two Australian universities using an analysis designed to seek responses to survey questions about factors which influenced these students’ choice to become teachers. They found the key factors were the participants’ belief in their own ability to teach, their perceptions of value in a career as a teacher, their desire to work with and influence young people and a desire to make a social contribution. The motivations of career change teachers share factors with these findings which are explored later in this chapter. In my research study, the motivations are also explored with the key difference in this particular group being that the pathway these teachers experienced was designed and intended to match their industry background.

**Motivations for career change teachers to choose a teaching career**

The literature on alternative pathways to teaching investigates the many motivations which encouraged new teachers to choose teaching as a career. Social justice was the main motivator for a group of 65 pre-service teachers in a study of a group of graduate students enrolled in an eleven month program intended to prepare its students to teach in urban schools (Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008). This seems unsurprising given the specific intentions of the program to provide new teachers to urban schools which were seen as difficult to staff. The authors point out that these graduates had excellent academic backgrounds which would have enabled them to choose a range of career options. The participants referred to personal beliefs about the failure to offer quality education in lower socio economic urban areas as highly relevant to their choice to enter the program. Many of the respondents used terms denoting conflict, such as:

... fighting, battling, defending the right to learn, developing an arsenal of skills and defeating desperation. These subjects saw themselves as foot soldiers in a battle to 'right the wrongs' of society (p. 95).
The belief that they could make a difference as well as the idea of contributing or 'paying back' society were key reasons for making a career change to become mathematics or science teachers in a Californian study (Grier & Johnston, 2009).

Another motivational factor found in the literature was the knowledge candidates believed they already had about being a teacher from their own perceptions of what such a career would entail. For example, all of the participants in a study of career change teachers in the United States reported that they had knowledge and in some cases experiences or family members who were teachers which led them to become teachers (Castro & Bauml, 2009):

They believed teaching as a career becomes an attainable option when it is considered through either lived experience or close association with those who teach. The support of friends and family aided these career changers during times of uncertainty and vulnerability (p. 117).

The authors asserted that the findings indicated that the availability of an alternative pathway into a new career as a teacher and a belief that they were now ready to become teachers were also important factors in making the decision to become teachers. A study of teachers who had taken an alternative route to become teachers in Wisconsin found many were motivated by a desire to work with young people and they also believed their earlier careers and study meant they had a lot to offer the profession (Wade, 2005). They also did not think that they would have considered changing career to teaching if an alternative pathway was not offered and available.

Mature beginning teachers, including many of the participants in the accelerated program associated with my research, have expressed the view that they were enthusiastic to give something back to the community on terms of sharing their skills with young people as teachers. Altruistic motivations appear in much of the beginning teacher literature. All of the teachers in Mrozik's (1993) study of teachers from industry shared the view expressed by Lortie (1975) as the motivation for traditional entrants to become teachers. They were drawn by the rewards of the career in terms of personal satisfaction in contributing to the education of their students, making a difference in their lives and contributing to social good. This conception of contributing to society and being there for students is a recurrent theme. In a study of career changers who became teachers in the Netherlands, the researchers found that many of the participants in their research reported that they
were motivated by a desire to contribute to society in a useful and significant way. Many participants expressed aspirations to make constructive contributions through their work (Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008).

Altruism was also found to be a major motivator in a research study by Chambers (2002). She also found in her research, which examined a group of ten career change teachers in and around Chicago, that her participants were motivated to become teachers because of perceived personal benefits to themselves. However, the diverse range of participants (four pre-service teachers, five in-service teachers who had been teaching from one to six years and one teacher who had been teaching for 32 years) makes the study problematic. In a study of teachers who had entered teaching through alternative certification in the US, Chin and Young (2007) argued that those choosing teaching as a second or later career may have very different motivations and that to some extent these motivations are framed by the opportunities offered by alternative pathways that afford the change. In their study, Chin and Young found that service was the main motivating factor with the opportunity to help their own students gain a sense of self worth being the other prominent theme (p. 80). The need for support during the early years of service for these teachers, particularly through the use of mentoring, was also highlighted. The authors warn that mentors must develop understanding of this different pathway to teaching in order to be effective.

The prime motivation for their participants becoming teachers in a study of a small group of career change teachers, was to make a difference in students’ learning as well as to take up a challenging career (Wilcox & Samaras, 2009). Ng and Peter’s (2009) study of five teachers who had completed an alternative course to prepare them to teach in urban schools in the US found similarly that:

The psychic rewards of teaching – feeling like they were making a difference in children’s lives and giving back to society – were clearly the strongest occupational factors shaping participants’ career choices. These individuals valued having a sense of purpose and believed they could derive it from becoming a teacher (p. 132).

This study sadly concluded with only one of the five teachers remaining in the profession after the contracted first three years. Their reasons for leaving, although diverse, were reported as the new teachers being concerned with lack of administrative support and resourcing issues rather than disenchantment with their
new roles. In an Australian study, Richardson and Watt (2005) found that the reasons second-career teachers chose this profession were linked to a desire for job security, more time to spend with their families as well as a belief that they had a calling to this occupation.

Supporting early career teachers

Early career teachers, whether mature or younger beginners, need support and guidance in their first years as teachers (see for example, Barnes-Ryan 2010; Beattie, 2007; Le Maistre & Pare, 2011; Manuel, 2003). Induction programs were found to be “somewhat ad hoc and unsystematic” in a longitudinal study conducted in NSW (Manuel, 2003, p. 145). This may be particularly true in smaller, rural or remote schools such as those where the new teachers in my study were located. Manuel goes on to point out that in practice, “the distinction between ‘novice’ and ‘accomplished’ teacher is virtually irrelevant” (p. 145). Teaching is different from other professions in that new teachers are expected to perform all the roles and functions of experienced teachers from their first day on the job (Le Maistre & Pare, 2010, p. 560), a comment which was recurrent in the literature on beginning teachers.

Reducing the teaching load in their first year and adding to the induction and mentoring processes already in place were some of the suggestions which emerged from a study of new teachers located in hard to staff schools (Manuel, 2003). This study also recommended:

... professional development for existing staff, particularly executive staff, in effective ways to support and affirm new teachers and to shift school cultures that see archaic ‘rites of passage’ and a ‘baptism of fire’ as the necessary experience for all new teachers (p. 149).

Quality induction and mentoring and well supported professional development were also identified by Darling-Hammond (2001, 2005) as essential in retaining and supporting early career teachers. This was affirmed in an Australian study which investigated factors for success in early career teaching (Peters & Le Cornu, 2006). The participants reported concerns that there was a perceived lack of systemic support and adequate induction processes. Mentoring was identified as a “critical practice” (Le Maistre & Pare, 2010, p. 564) if early career teachers are to learn from more experienced teachers to support them and develop solutions for problems they may be experiencing in their classrooms. Induction in pedagogy and practice, as well
as support with transition to school routines and culture, were identified as essential for early career teachers (Gore, Williams & Ladwig, 2006).

In a study of twenty graduates from a regional university in NSW, McCormack, Gore and Thomas (2006) emphasised that new teachers:

... are required to construct their professional practice by taking control and demonstrating skills and knowledge they are still developing, as well as forming a professional identity within the school (p. 102).

At the same time, they may well be struggling with behaviour management issues in their classroom (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). In terms of mentoring and induction, the secondary teachers in McCormack, Gore and Thomas’s (2006) study found that mentors who were from the senior management team or a different teaching discipline offered less practical support than teachers from within their own faculty (p.108). The findings of this research affirmed that:

Learning to teach is a complex and lengthy process and that professional learning is vital in this process. Early career teachers need to be both supported and challenged during their induction into the workplace if they are to be retained and develop into quality teachers providing quality teaching (p. 110).

Encouraging beginning teachers:

... to connect with other staff, to express concerns, and to contribute ideas and perspectives would go some way towards offsetting the isolation and professional disconnectedness that can lead to attrition (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 13).

A recent Scottish study asserted that the importance of support following their first year of teaching was identified by the early career teachers in a national investigation into the induction of new teachers (Patrick et al, 2010). This study also pointed to “the importance of a collegiate ethos to professional development” (p. 287) and as an essential part of the conditions needed to encourage early career teachers to thrive and remain in the profession.

The importance of support and mentoring for all early career teachers was also emphasised in the literature on career change teachers (Allen, 2007; Carter & Keiler, 2009; Chambers, 2002; Grier & Johnson, 2009; Kember, 2008; Molner, 2004). The literature also identified supporting new teachers as an essential factor in retaining them in the profession. In a recent study of alternative teacher education programs in the United States, Suell and Piotrowski (2007) asserted that research had positively
reported on alternative pathways to encourage new candidates into the profession. They also cautioned that studies investigating the retention and attrition rates of teachers, both traditionally and alternatively trained, had so far produced conflicting results. In their review of the literature, Suell and Piotrowski found that factors such as mentoring and support during the early years of teaching were essential for the retention of such teachers. They also strongly advised that programs for recruiting and training such teachers needed to provide well developed relationships between teacher education institutions and schools as well as a strong emphasis on curriculum studies and coursework which developed and encouraged the pre-service teachers’ ability to adapt their prior knowledge and experience to the school context.

Feistritzer & Chester (2003) concurred with the comments on the need for mentoring for alternatively qualified teachers. They also argued that alternative teacher education programs needed to ensure such programs included strong curriculum and coursework as well as extensive well supported field experience in schools during teacher preparation. These aspects, extended practicum and supported placements, mentoring through professional experiences and intensive coursework were all deliberate features of the program of study from which the new teachers in my study graduated. This study also reported that in the USA in 2003, 200,000 teachers had been certified through alternative programs since 1985 (p. 55).

The term ‘resilience’ has been used to describe the ability of newly qualified teachers to remain in the profession despite the difficulties and challenges they may face (Howard & Johnson, 2004). In a recent study of 60 Australian early career teachers, the concept of resilience was linked to identity formation (Pearce & Morrison, 2011).

Understanding how early career teachers shape their new professional identities while at the same time enabling their personal selves to persist and remain coherent would seem to be an important part of understanding resilience (p. 49).

In my study, the early career teachers have already lived with one or more vocational or professional identities linked with their former careers. Their formation of identities as new teachers, their adaptation to their new roles and their own thoughts and attitudes to resilience are examined in this study. The consideration of whether their resilience could potentially benefit from conscious construction of their
professional identities as teachers (Pearce & Morrison, 2011) is also important to this study. A Canadian study (Etherington, 2009) which examined ten pre-service teachers in an accelerated program, found that:

second careerists draw heavily on their experiences from first careers and these experiences continue to shape their interpretations, attitudes and beliefs about teaching (p. 39).

The influence of former career knowledge was linked to identity formation and confidence as new teachers in Anthony and Ord's (2008) study of career change teachers:

Being able to draw on prior work experiences and expertise appeared to be a significant factor in affirming these teachers' identity and sense of worth as beginning teachers (p. 370).

The question of creating, or recreating a new identity as a teacher is of key concern for all neophyte teachers in the literature, as in reality, and the influences on that identity formation is deemed to be critical in their adaptation to their new roles.

**Alternative pathways into teaching**

The theoretical ideas underpinning this study into teachers who have come to the profession from industry without an undergraduate degree introduce this discussion of alternative pathways into teaching. The view of education proposed by Dewey (1916, p. 138) informs this research: education is about adapting to new situations through developing knowledge, capacities for making judgments, understanding how to seek solutions to problems, conceptualizing and, in general, learning how to behave intelligently. As such, this could be termed an 'expansive' style of learning (Engeström, 2001) where solutions and conceptual thinking lead to further learning. Through the use of applications to authentic real world contexts, practices and experiences, it was theorized that teachers who have moved from industry to schools apply Dewey's underpinning premise for an approach to education through their pedagogy. Dewey's concept was echoed by Pring (2000):

The expertise of the teacher lies in being able to inhabit both the world of the learner and the world of public understandings, and thereby to establish a 'continuum' between them (p. 13).

With the majority of their life and career experience located outside the school system, it is worth considering whether these new teachers hold a different set of beliefs about the purposes of schooling. Does the opportunity to provide insights into
the world of the workplace, particularly for their senior students, take precedence over more academic goals? These questions are explored in this investigation into the teachers who have moved from industry to school.

Those who come to teaching from a different career background as mature entrants to the profession have diverse backgrounds, experiences and career experience prior to becoming teachers, whether they are in a traditional post-graduate program or one specifically designed for career changers. Many candidates in teacher education programs, particularly post-graduate entry courses, have experienced other careers and begin their studies long after leaving school. The literature on those who have changed career and become teachers through alternative pathways into the profession indicates the range of programs and pathways available. It is therefore impossible to characterise career change teachers in any generic manner as a group with shared characteristics.

Like my study, the majority of the investigations into career change teachers focus intensively on small numbers and qualitative methodologies (Carter & Keiter, 2009; Chin & Young, 2007; Haggard, Slostad & Winterton, 2006; Halladay, 2008; Kember 2008; Mayotte, 2003). Further research into career change teachers over their first years of being teachers is essential to understand more clearly what strategies need to be employed to ensure the success and retention of such teachers in the profession (Mrozik, 1993). Some of the research has been more directed to describing and evaluating the programs offered, such as a study of a Californian experimental program devised to recruit mathematics and science teacher for urban schools (Newton, Jang, Nunes, & Stone, 2010).

The literature on alternative pathways was deemed to be limited in terms of examining career changers themselves and their effectiveness in the classroom (Halladay, 2008). The question of what these teachers bring to the classroom has been of interest in the literature, for example, Chambers (2002) identifies “communication skills, the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously, a highly developed work ethic and analytical thinking” (p. 214). More research is required to understand the ways in which these new teachers form their identities as teachers and adapt to the school environment. This was the motivation for a study of
career change teachers’ acculturation and identity formation (Allen, 2007). The limitation of Allen’s study was the brevity of responses resulting from the quantitative survey methodology. This study of 200 teachers who self identified as ‘career changers’ in an online survey afforded limited opportunities to understand the perceptions of these new teachers in any depth, although the breadth of the study was of much interest. Her key finding fits well with other studies when she contends that:

Career changers come to the public schools with a much richer background of experiences than the traditional student. They bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experiences that create the whole unique person (p. 259).

As in all of the studies into alternative certification examined in this review of the literature, the new teachers already possessed an undergraduate degree unlike the trades qualified entrants in my study, most of whom had not attended university prior to entering their teacher education program.

**Beginning teacher issues for career change teachers**

Issues for beginning teachers who have changed careers was discussed in a recent small scale study examining an alternative teacher education program for ‘career switchers’, as they are often referred to in the United States (Wilcox & Samaras, 2009). In this study, the main issues in the first year of teaching for the participants were time management, behaviour management and working with mentors. Beginning as a new teacher after a previous career may mean that “second career teachers show an inherent resistance to certain types of school bureaucracy – mostly in the form of top down decision making” (Etherington, 2009, p.39). This was one of the findings of a study of ten pre-service teachers in Canada. However, the data informing this small study involved pre-service teachers after their practicum, not after beginning teaching. The context was primary schools and the participants’ former careers were characterised as working in a ‘professional’ position. All participants in the Etherington study had completed degrees prior to the program. Confusion about roles during professional experience is common with mature pre-service teachers (Haggard, Slostad & Winterton, 2006, Murray & Male, 2004). In a research study which examined pre-service teachers who had completed an alternative mature entry program provided by the Southwest Texas State University, Huling, Resta, and Rainwater (2001) reported that:
Mid-career candidates, unlike undergraduate candidates, have worked in other fields and have chosen to teach, often at considerable personal and financial sacrifice. Their maturity and life experience make them better able than the young adult to cope with the complexities of schools and better able to nurture the growth of students, especially those in high-needs schools, which have proven to be especially challenging for young teachers (p. 337).

Such strong generalisations need further investigation with larger cohorts.

'Reconstructing a professional identity for career change teachers

To define the activity of teaching is complex and problematic. Richardson and Roosevelt (2004) posited a multiple definition useful to consider as a researcher and teacher educator.

Teaching is at once: a purposeful, ends-driven activity; a materially, historically, culturally and politically situated relationship; and a complex, potent social signifier (an image of considerable symbolic value, a screen on which are projected multiple meanings, hopes and fears). It is a normative practice: ways of doing and thinking, shaped by beliefs and habits, entailing traditions of lore and skill, linked by the common intent of influencing the immediate and long-term dispositions, capacities, and conduct of the young, constrained by the need to manage the complex social dynamic of young people's involuntary presence in the classroom. Replete with the attributes of a craft, it is nonetheless, like other human arts and "helping professions", value-saturated (p. 208).

Adding to this definition, Richardson and Roosevelt argue that classrooms are a meeting of the experiences and beliefs brought to them by teachers and students in a context specific way. A discipline area based on vocational domains such as woodworking, metalwork or agriculture means the extensive background of the teacher is more aligned with a workplace environment rather than a school or university context. It could be contested that the values which 'saturate' these specific classrooms are workplace values, a contention that will be revisited in data analysis and discussion later in this thesis. No studies have been located in the literature specifically referring to the workplace practices of career change teachers, although the aligned topic of bringing knowledge from the workplace has formed part of every study as a source of knowledge for teachers who have had a prior career, (for example in the work of Crow, Levine & Nager 1990; Merseth, Sommer & Dickstein, 2008; Vien, 2010; Wilson & Deaney, 2010).

The value in studies into second career teachers was in part to assist teacher educators to understand more about how such entrants cope with teaching and to
provide information to teacher training institutions (Lee, 2011). In particular, Lee referred to the need to match the teacher preparation to the specific needs of a different group of pre-service teachers, in particular to encourage and support the learning and experience such candidates bring with them from their former lives.

**Teacher identity**

Whether a new or trainee teacher has come from another career or has followed a more traditional pathway from school to teacher education then back to school, they must construct and create a new identity as a teacher. In a scholarly and perceptive article set in Canada, Beattie (2000) used narratives to explore identity formation in a group of post-graduate pre-service teachers, some of whom had experienced other careers prior to their teacher education. Beattie comments:

> Many of these individuals had spent a number of years pursuing other careers before entering the teacher education program, and consequently brought a range of rich career and life experiences to that setting (p. 1).

Beattie found, through a distillation of 900 narratives she had received and analysed over a nine year period, that the creation of a teacher identity as a neophyte was a very individual and personal journey. She writes:

> All beginning teachers have to acquire a variety of teaching strategies, learn different ways of creating safe and equitable classroom environments, learn to respond to the needs of diverse groups of students, and to engage large groups of students in the curriculum content of the classroom (p. 19).

In a more recent publication, Beattie (2007) contends that the central feature of such identity formation is the forming of relationships, specifically relationships with colleagues and mentors.

In forming a new identity as a teacher, one of the many challenges for career-change teachers was “to avoid reverting to long-held personal beliefs when dealing with the realities of classroom life and other professional challenges” (Kember, 2008, p. 50). Other research foregrounded attributes such as organisational and management skills; creative problem solving; knowledge and life experience as skills that career-change teachers bring to the profession compared to those who select teaching as their first occupation (Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006). Their new identity creation as teachers, however, has received less attention in the literature and it is not yet clear how it differs from other early career teachers. Pearce and Morrison (2011) assert that interactions with other staff, students and the wider community are
essential factors in supporting identity formation for all early career teachers (p. 56). “A teacher’s identity is shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context” according to (Beauchamp & Thomas, (2009, p. 178). In my study, the complexity of constructing, or reconstructing, a teacher identity on top of professional identities as chefs, builders or metal workers developed over their early careers can be construed as problematic and complex. Perhaps the close alignment of the teaching disciplines in which they are located and their former careers influences this identity formation. This is an aspect of their experience that my study investigates.

Darling-Hammond (2010) wrote about the problems of fast tracking new teachers into the profession with limited preparation and support. However, she asserted that exceptions to her contentions about second career and alternative pathways programs were lessened in programs where certain guidelines were followed during their teacher preparation. These included carefully supervised professional experience opportunities prior to teaching; aligning these professional experiences with the schools, teaching areas and content areas in which these new teachers would begin their career as teachers; adequate coverage of curriculum and pedagogy and the inclusion of a major project which combined all of the elements of their learning at the end of their courses.

Teach for Australia was introduced in 2009 as a fast track way for graduates to enter teaching with limited teacher education. This program is modelled on Teach for America and Teach First in the UK. The website for Teach for Australia identifies their mission is “to confront educational disadvantage by transforming outstanding graduates into exceptional teachers and inspirational leaders” (Teach for Australia website, http://www.teachforaustralia.org/ Retrieved 13th January 2012). Graduates participate in what is described as an intensive short teacher education program before teaching for two years in designated disadvantaged schools where they are supported in adapting to their new careers. The pre-service education involves six weeks of study at a university. Although independent research has not yet been published on this program, the website contends that 60% of their graduates would not have participated in traditional teacher education. They also claim that their ‘drop-out rate’ is less than 5% and that 55% of these teachers have continued to
teach into their third year. An article in *The Age* newspaper also cited retention of 95% into the second year of teachers from this program in Victoria last year (Topsfield, 2011). The second year is part of the mandated program and figures on retention beyond the second year are unavailable.

Criticism has been apparent in the media, for example, an article in *The Australian* newspaper featured an editorial which was dismissive of the brevity of the teacher preparation prior to entry into the classroom (Van Onselen, 2010). *The Brisbane Times* labelled the initiative *inadequate*, citing parents and teachers of Queensland as being critical of the initiative (The Brisbane Times, online, February 22, 2010).

Darling-Hammond (2005, 2010) has been highly critical of the alternative pathways offered through the *Teach for America* program, in particular for devaluing teacher education. Independent evaluative research is required to find out whether this pathway directly into the classroom has adequately prepared its graduates.

There are significant differences between this study and others on career change teachers. The main one is that the knowledge the participants in this study bring to teaching is entirely based on vocational and workplace experience and qualifications. Typically they had limited academic experience, particularly university studies. Their established identity as chefs, horticulturalists, metalworkers and information technology professionals, for example, could be seen as an influence during their pre-service education. This meant their identity formation as teachers would possibly be coloured by their preceding occupations. Investigating the impact of their past identities on their approach to teaching has high priority in this research. Unlike the diverse participants typical of most studies into career change teachers, this research examined a cohesive cohort. All of the teachers in this study were older, similar in educational and vocational background and had all undertaken the same specifically designed teacher education program.

**Teacher supply and demand**

Teacher supply and demand is a challenging topic which has been the main impetus for the proliferation of programs and opportunities for alternative pathways to becoming teachers, particularly in the USA as well as, to a lesser extent, in Australia and internationally (ACE, 2003; Allen, 2007; Anthony & Ord, 2008, Carter &
Keiler, 2009; Chambers, 2002; Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006). Teacher shortages in Australia and beyond have led to increased interest in, and the development of, many alternative certification pathways for people to become teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Vien (2010) claimed that in the United States, the age demographics of the current teacher workforce indicates that up to one third of all teachers are due to retire in the next ten years. His study, based on survey data gathered between 2003 and 2009 at the University of Phoenix from second career teachers, found that although second career teachers may need more support, they are highly motivated and have the experience and the maturity to adapt to their new roles, particularly in managing classrooms.

The reason for the teacher shortage predicted in most countries participating in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been attributed to the ageing teacher workforce. For example the retirement of many teachers was predicted for the ten year period following 2005 (OECD, 2005). This OECD report referred to an increasing demand for teachers in specific subject areas at a time when it was feared that there was concern about “the image and status of teaching” (OECD 2005, p. 8) and the perceived undervaluing of teachers’ work in many, but not all parts of the world.

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA) reported that in Australia, there were issues finding teachers for rural and remote schools as well as for some of the more challenging metropolitan schools (2010, p. 16). This was evident particularly in specific disciplines such as mathematics, science, industrial arts and technology (Lonsdale & Ingvarson, 2003). The shortage of technology teachers, particularly in rural and other hard to staff schools was anticipated by the then NSW Department of Education which responded by calling for expressions of interest from universities to provide an accelerated pathway for potential teachers with appropriate experience in defined technology discipline areas in 2000. Unlike the approach in the USA, these candidates were not required to have an undergraduate degree, which makes this study quite different from most found in the literature.
One of the other reasons for teacher shortages is that many newly qualified teachers leave the profession after only a short time as a teacher. Teacher attrition, particularly during the first three years of teaching, is a contributing factor in the demand for teachers (Manuel, 2003; OECD 2011; Pearce & Morrison, 2011; Skilbeck & Connell, 2003). This attrition in their early careers was attributed to stress and burnout in a study by Howard & Johnson (2004). Darling-Hammond (2001) reported that as many as 30% of all beginning teachers in the USA leave during their first five years as teachers. In disadvantaged areas, the attrition rates are even higher. An American research study cited that between 30% and 50% of teachers leave in their first five years of teaching (Le Maistre & Pare, 2010). These authors argue that the main reason for this rate of attrition is the lack of support offered to beginning teachers. Molner (2004) also cited USA attrition rates as above 30% of new teachers and shared the view that support was essential. Molner’s research reported favourably on the benefits of carefully managed induction processes to retaining teachers in the profession. The Partners in Education (PIE) induction program was central to her research. It resulted in 95% of the group of 161 teachers who undertook the program still teaching after four years (p. 244).

In Australia, it is estimated that up to one third of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching (Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Skilbeck & Connell, 2003). Ewing and Manuel (2005) point out that in rural locations or in more disadvantaged schools, attrition rates are particularly critical. Issues such as lack of support and workplace conditions emerge as the factors most clearly linked to teachers leaving their new roles during their first years in schools. The teachers in my study started teaching in 2003, a year before mentoring was made available to all graduates from the accelerated program by the then NSW Department of Education in their first year as teachers. Induction programs in NSW rural schools were informal if they existed at all. In 2004, with the introduction of the NSW Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC) new teacher mentor program, more support has been provided for newly qualified teachers (DEC, 2012).

A recent OECD report, “Building a high-quality teaching profession - Lessons from around the world” (OECD, 2011, p.10), recommended:
- Opening the teaching profession to individuals with relevant experience outside education, not just in vocational programs.
- Recognizing the skills and experience gained outside education and reflecting those in starting salaries.
- Offering more flexible approaches to teacher education that provide opportunities for part-time study and distance learning, and that give credits for relevant qualifications and experience (OECD, 2011).

This quotation from an OECD presentation resonates with the ethos of the teacher education program referred to in my research. The skills recognition and the flexible approach to learning were included in the pre-service teacher preparation program. It was offered by distance and flexible learning to allow rural and other entrants who may have been excluded from other programs. Technology educators are in demand internationally as well as in Australia, which is the focus of the next section of the review.

The specific case of the technology teacher shortage

Technology teachers have been difficult to recruit since the 1980s in the United States (Tiala & Harris, 2011, p. 32) as well as in Australia. Factors such as the retirement of many teachers and the decrease in university courses to prepare technology teachers have been identified as reasons for the problem (Gray & Daugherty, 2004; Hughes & Bell, 2011). Moye (2009) also discussed the critical shortage of technology educators in asserting that “the technology education profession is facing a critical situation” (p. 34). Although these authors were referring to the education system in the United States, the lack of courses for technology pre-service teachers is mirrored in Australia.

An alternative certification program, located at Dominion University in Virginia, USA, which recruited applicants from the military for a specifically designed teacher education program to address the shortage of teachers of technology education was described by Ritz and Manning (2004). The researchers defined technology education as the new term for industrial arts to distinguish it from information technologies. This program was based on the belief that most senior military personnel had experience in instruction as well as a wide range of technological and other skills as a result of their careers in the forces. They wanted to recruit potential teachers who would understand the discipline goals of enabling students to become
technologically literate. In particular, they sought teachers who could move beyond the industrial skills conceptualisation of the program, limited to woodwork and metals skills, to a reconceptualisation of an approach which saw the rise of the importance of problem solving, analysis and the inclusion of higher order thinking skills. This definition of technology education is very similar to that underpinning Technology and Applied Studies in Australian schools. Although this article discussed the program used in some detail, and the approach has many similarities with the one which was completed by the new teachers in my study, there was no analysis or discussion of the outcomes for the teachers who undertook the course.

Another study of technology education that was particularly focused on teacher shortages in this teaching discipline was conducted in Illinois, USA (Steinke & Putnam, 2008). This study examined the factors that influenced technology teachers to accept teaching positions. The methodology involved a quantitative survey. The participants completed a Likert scale that indicated the level of agreement on twenty-eight factors concerning the influences deemed relevant to the acceptance of a teaching position. The findings of the study suggested factors such as “having resources available for the classroom and labs, having resources for professional development and a collaborative work environment” (p. 71) were the most important needs identified by the survey participants who were either technology teachers or administrators. The resourcing of schools was found to be more important than pay rates in influencing the potential teachers’ decision to accept a teaching position.

The approach taken by the then NSW Department of Education, now the Department of Education and Communities, to recruit potential teachers from industry and to support their studies in return for a tenured period of teaching in difficult to staff schools, which was the case for my study, ensured that these graduates in technology education accepted their teaching positions in almost all instances.

**VET in Schools**

One of the reasons for considering teacher education candidates who had qualifications and experience in vocational areas such as construction, hospitality and information technology, for example, was the increased number of post-compulsory secondary school students taking up VETiS courses offered in senior
secondary years in NSW as well as across Australia (MCEETYA, 2005). Thus the literature that was examined in this work concerned the inclusion of increasing vocational options in post-compulsory years in the majority of secondary schools in Australia (Polesel et al, 2004). The reason for this is that the participants in the study were specifically recruited as pre-service teaching candidates on the strength of their vocational qualifications and experience, although they were also being prepared to teach in other technology areas apart from the senior VET in Schools courses.

The literature showed that there was interest on the part of policy-makers in the topic of VET in Schools, (ANTA, 1998; Brown 2010; Dalley-Trim et al, 2007; Dalley-Trim, Alloway & Walker, 2008; Frost 2000). The literature concerning vocational education and training in schools in Australia was abundant during its introduction in the 1990's. However, now it is quite well established, there is less research on this topic. Hence the references in this section of the review are more dated. VETiS is recognised by national VET policy documents such as *A bridge to the future* (ANTA, 1998) as a way of addressing the training needs of young people making the transition from school to work (Kilpatrick, Kilpatrick, & Bell 2000).

However there was and remains in the literature far less emphasis and discussion on the recruitment, training and orientation of teachers who can deliver in terms of industry expectations while still being adequately educated in terms of general teacher education requirements. Polesel et al (2004) commented on the lack of literature on teacher recruitment, preparation and training or retraining of teachers for the increasing demand in schools for suitably qualified VETiS teachers. The result of the survey of teachers carried out by Polesel and his colleagues showed that many educators believed that one of the key issues in VETiS was the shortage of suitably qualified teachers to meet the demand. This report also reaffirmed that my examination of representatives of a cohort selected and trained specifically for their industry expertise and life skills is distinctive, as it aims to address the dearth of materials about accelerated teacher preparation programs in Australia.

Other research points to the improved outcomes both in schools, and beyond school, for many students who have gained from their participation in programs involving VET traditional approaches and benefited from the affirmation and appreciation
provided by learning experiences in the workplace (Frost, 2000; Malley, Keating, Robinson & Hawke, 2001; Spark, 1999; Teese, 2000). A study by Fullarton (2001) reported that students in country regions were more likely to participate in VETiS. Her figures showed that approximately one in four rural students was enrolled in VETiS programs compared with one in five in urban schools. Fullarton attributed this higher enrolment to better social support and community ties in smaller schools.

Although the efficacy of VETiS dominated the literature, critical questions remain about changing school cultures and the changing roles of teachers (Shaw, McDonald, Childs & Turner, 1999). Arguably, new teachers who have moved from an industry background to school teaching may be participating in a process of fundamental change to school culture and organisation. The issues include a fundamental:

... incompatibility between traditional teaching culture and those supportive of work-related learning needs to be addressed by appropriate professional and organisational development strategies (Ryan, 1997, p. 2).

**Conclusion**

This review of the literature on teachers who have changed from former occupations to this new career highlighted the importance of life experience, maturity, skills and competencies from their earlier careers as major resources for their new profession. Many of the studies, like mine, took a qualitative approach with small numbers of participants and locations. This allowed topics such as motivations for becoming a teacher and perceptions about the influence of their earlier career on their teaching to be explored in depth and detail. The findings pointed to a predominance of altruistic reasons for becoming teachers. This was supplemented by commentary on the availability of pathways and programs to become a teacher being of high importance in the decision making process. The literature pointed towards the need for further studies to examine the experiences such career change teachers have during their early years of teaching. More recent studies have started to examine this topic (Allen, 2007; Halladay, 2008; Lee, 2011; Wilson & Deane, 2010).

The literature on teacher shortages showed that specific discipline areas, such as technology education, and schools identified as hard to staff, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas and rural and remote locations, were suffering most from the specialist teacher shortages reflected in the data available. Although much of this
data was based on predictions from teacher workforce demographics, the shortage of technology educators has been apparent for two decades or more. The retention of teachers, whether from an alternative or traditional pathway, was another major concern in the literature.

My study was therefore designed to address some of the identified gaps in the literature. It intends to provide insight into the perceptions and experiences of a group of beginning teachers who entered the profession with experience and skills from industry rather than the undergraduate degree requirement of most secondary teacher preparation programs. This renders the research in this thesis quite different from that reported in the available literature on career change teachers. The beginning teachers in my study, unlike most other mature entrants, had not completed an undergraduate degree prior to beginning their teacher education. The entry requirements for this alternative pathway, which included trade certification and three to five years industry experience after completing their apprenticeship, means that these new teachers tend to be older than most beginning teachers at the start of their teaching career.

There are few studies on career change teachers who have come through alternative pathways in the Australian literature. Exceptions include a New Zealand study (Anthony & Ord, 2008) and a report from the Australian College of Educators (ACE, 2003). The latter report on teacher supply and demand includes a short section on alternative programs offered at that time in Australia. Anthony and Ord’s more recent New Zealand study focuses on the motivations for a sample of 68 newly qualified teachers to change careers and the ways in which these motivations affected “their early and long term career expectations and intentions” (2008, p.359).

Accelerated teacher training pathways, or alternative entry to teaching, are under-represented in the Australian literature. To summarise, there is limited discussion in the literature on “the subjective world of second career teachers and the way they understand themselves as mature age teachers (and) their occupational lives” (Etherington, 2009, p.41). This research is intended to contribute to knowledge about such career change teachers in Australia and internationally.
The research questions, introduced in the opening chapter, are also included here to point to the ways in which this quite different study approaches questions about career change teachers who have changed from workplaces in industry to teaching in schools. The questions are:

- What are the effects of an industry background and an accelerated teacher-training course on the orientation to teaching and learning of teachers in VETiS and technology education?

- Is the conception these teachers have of students, the curriculum and the culture of senior secondary school markedly different from that of other beginning teachers; or do they adjust to the dominant cultural ethos of the school to adapt to prevailing contextual conditions?

- Are these teachers operating as agents or signifiers of change, or are they ‘made safe’, socialised into the existing context of the schools they begin their career in, or a combination of both?

The questions are intended to elicit research findings from my study which will contribute to this identified gap in the literature. The voices, concerns, perceptions of success, issues and problems of a group of teachers starting their professional careers in rural schools provide insight into the reality of the effects of becoming teachers after completing an accelerated degree. The methodology selected to question how these teachers have coped with and managed their new careers is introduced in the following chapter.
Chapter 3. Methodology

Introduction
A qualitative research paradigm was selected for this study of beginning teachers as the main purpose for gathering qualitative data on a specific group of new teachers from an industry background was to gain understanding of the lives and experiences of these teachers during their first three years of teaching. Lortie (1975) and his key concept about exploring the idea of teachers ascribing meaning to their professional lives matched the researcher’s desire to investigate graduates of a career change opportunity as they settled into life as educators in regional and rural schools in NSW.

This chapter includes discussion on qualitative methodology and an argument intended to demonstrate why this approach was deemed appropriate in this study. The theoretical framework emerges from workplace learning theories, in particular the work of Billett, (2001, 2011) and Engeström (2001, 2011). There is also an exploration of case study methodology, in particular how the cases are bounded and defined within the study. There is discussion on the data collection and analysis methods employed, in particular the researcher’s approach to interviewing and engaging in ongoing emailed and telephone discussions with the participants. The use of discourse analysis for additional data analysis is discussed. Interview topics for all participants and the time frame are included as well as the interviewer’s approach and stance. Limitations and ethical issues are also included in this chapter.

Qualitative research
Creswell (2008) highlights a number of cogent reasons to select from the qualitative paradigm for certain types of research. To summarise, qualitative research provides a way of examining human behaviour in natural contexts where the data that emerge are descriptive. It offers a means to focus on the perceptions and lived through experiences of the participants and provides an opportunity to examine the way they see and make sense of these experiences (pp. 162–163). Qualitative data “are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations in identifiable local contexts” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1) and allow the voices of the participants to
be fore-grounded and 'heard' by the researcher and more importantly by other readers and researchers. Stake (2010) concurred that qualitative studies are suitable when the researcher’s intentions are to examine the ways that individuals are operating. “A qualitative study is interpretive, experiential, situational, and it works to understand ‘individual perspectives’” (p. 15). Stake advises researchers to pay close attention to the participants’ word and actions in order to understand their realities. Because I was primarily interested in the meanings that these new teachers ascribed to their professional lives and their identities (and how these two intertwined) it seemed appropriate to construct a qualitative study. I encouraged my respondents to tell their own stories and explain their perceptions so that they could focus on aspects that were important to them. Qualitative methods are suitable to investigate the words and actions in qualitative data in a way that is difficult, if not impossible, using other research methodologies.

Yin (2011) identifies five aspects of qualitative research that match the purposes of this study. These are summarised below:

1. It provides an opportunity to investigate the meanings in individuals’ lives in everyday conditions
2. The perceptions, attitudes and perspectives of participants are able to be represented
3. The contexts of the participants can be included
4. Insights gained from such research contribute to explaining the actions of participants
5. The possibility of exploring multiple sources of evidence (pp. 7-8).

In my research there is a positive interpretive stance for two reasons. The first is the researcher’s role as a former lecturer of the participants. This means, as a researcher, I acknowledge my stance as problematic, as the tendency to see these participants in a positive light as new teachers. Like all researchers, I acknowledge bringing my own subjectivity to the research, in this specific case this subjectivity is coloured by the extended time the participants have been in a teacher student relationship with the research participants. Second, the participants themselves are clearly motivated to show their own prowess and skills in becoming good teachers to their own former lecturer. Despite these limitations, the deeper understandings afforded by an ongoing relationship with these twelve participants also means that they are prepared to trust the researcher and share their thoughts, perceptions and beliefs quite openly with me.
If the effect is more positive than could be expected, and the findings and interpretations of these influenced by the researcher’s stance, this may be balanced to some extent by the inclusion of the participant’s own reflections and voices. In discussing this, Cousin (2010) asserts “our knowledge of the world is always mediated from a particular stance and an available language” (p. 10).

**Conceptual influences**

Theories of workplace learning try in a variety of ways to explain the ways in which novices develop appropriate ways of transforming themselves into functioning members of a particular social context. In this research study, this applies on two levels. Firstly, the roots of this research are found in the industry workplaces from whence the participants came to make a transition to teaching. This means that the values and traditions of the participants can be seen as having their foundations in the workplace. Secondly, the concepts of learning that these teachers espouse have their basis in workplace learning models such as those developed by Engeström (2001, 2010) and Billett (2001, 2010). Engeström (2010) defined workplace learning as an “expansive learning activity” (p. 87). By this, he meant that learners in a setting such as a workplace, for example, had to make meaning out of a complex context where the intersection of established practices, rules and processes, individuals and groups, objects and artifacts force the learner to constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their responses and actions. Billett (2010) accorded with Engeström’s (2001) definition of work as an activity system producing opportunities for expansive learning. However, Billett (2010) added the concepts of “personal agency and subjectivity on negotiating between the social and individual contributions that constitute engaging in and learning through work” (pp. 60-61).

In terms of my research, a school can be viewed as an activity system guided by precedent, rules, social constructions and expectations with its main task being the teaching and learning engaged in by both staff and students. However, attitude and participation are crucial indicators of personal agency and subjectivity (Billett, 2010). To relate these ideas to my research, the participating new teachers have spent most of their working lives in a context where the learning they were engaging in was typified by problem solving, adapting practices to respond to changing conditions and requirements and learning what was required as it was found to be
necessary. In the new school workplace, the investigation of their pedagogical practices can be informed by questioning whether the workplace models of learning from their lives before teaching are influencing their new roles. Billett (2010) also makes the link between constructivism and workplace learning as he argues that “Constructivist theories hold that everyday conscious thought is active in seeking to make sense of what is encountered” (p. 61). Similarly, Engeström (2010) links Vygotsky’s (1934) theory of social constructivism, in particular the idea of the zone of proximal development, to his own ideas by redefining the zone of proximal development as “the space for expansive transition from action to activity” (Engestrom, 2010, p. 89).

How these ideas frame my research is that through watching the participants in the school workplace and by listening to and examining their words, the ways in which they are both learning in their new environment as teachers and the ways in which they are constructing learning opportunities for their students can be explored. If the roots of their workplace learning are in their former workplaces, in which they have operated for extended periods prior to their career change, could it be that these experiences blossom and fruit in their new environment?

**Why use a case study approach?**

In this chapter the introduction to the social constructivist theoretical foundation of the research from the opening sections is further developed through discussion of the approaches taken in gathering and analysing data. A case study methodology was chosen deliberately for this research for a number of reasons, but the initial choice was because of the ability to use case studies to:

... investigate little-known and complex phenomena ... (which) ... contain a large number of variables and relationships. They are difficult to overview and predict, and they are ambiguous and fuzzy (Gummerson, 2007, p. 87).

Although there are many studies of teachers in general and beginning teachers in particular, a longitudinal study of new teachers from an accelerated and condensed teacher preparation course who have entered tertiary study after a career in a mainly non-academic trade area affords an opportunity to examine closely and individually the practices and approaches these new teachers develop. These teachers provide the empirical data on which this research is based.
In this study, the research interest is initially on each of the new teachers as a case in a particular context and time period during their initial years as teachers. “Qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation” (Stake, 2006, p. 2). In this multi-case study, the 12 new teachers have similar career backgrounds, as they all were selected to participate in a teacher education program because they had the required qualifications and experience in their industry areas. All participants were all in the same cohort of pre-service teachers undertaking an accelerated teacher education program. They all took up places in what were designated ‘hard-to-staff’ secondary and central schools by the employing authority which had sponsored their teacher preparation.

The central research question concerns the way in which each new teacher constructed and re-constructed their teacher identity during their early years in the profession. Hence, each of the individual case studies needed to be examined rigorously “to learn about their self-centering, complexity, and situational uniqueness” (Stake, 2006, p. 6). It is hoped that the case studies “capture the sparkling complexity of reality” (Gustavsson, 2006, p. 108), which is the reality of life as a teacher as perceived by each of the 12 individual teachers and as interpreted by the researcher. A limitation of this type of study is that, in research about the experiences and perceptions of becoming a teacher, it is not possible to make generalizations (Ewing & Hughes, 2008). However, Ewing and Hughes argue, despite their specific contexts and approaches, studies into the individual concerns and perceptions of beginning teachers “help employers, policy makers, mentors and other teachers in such a diverse range of contexts understand the issues facing beginning teachers” (p. 518). Despite the limitations, there is inherent value in investigating the perceptions and processes of these early career teachers as they adapt to their new professional lives.

From a close analysis of each case, a multiple case study emerges, where all case studies are re-examined as an investigation of the similarities and differences encountered between and within each case. This leads to responding to the adjunct research questions concerning what these teachers bring to the school in terms of
their experiences prior to teaching, their attitudes to and beliefs about the role of the teacher and their pedagogical approaches in their new career.

One purpose is to find out, through comparative analysis, what evidence is found in the data that a consequence of taking on mature adults with a predetermined set of skills and attributes is the creation of new teachers who have different approaches to teaching. Additionally, a consideration of the potential benefits and limitations of such an alternative pathway to teaching can be undertaken. In Stake’s (2006) terms, the “quintain, or target collection of cases” (p. 6), provides an opportunity for understanding beyond the individual cases and the researcher’s dilemma is deciding and moving between the value “of the generalizable and the particular” (p. 7). However, as Stake advises, both the individual case studies and the quintain, or collection of case studies, are more concerned with their individual and aggregated features than in generalization. What is being examined in each particular case is its unique context and situation, so that the aggregation of cases leads to an analysis of the ways in which the individual responds to that specific school environment and situation and the differences, similarities and unique constructions of themselves in the role of teacher.

Presentation of the data is followed by problematising and discussing differences and commonalities in order to discover whether these new teachers can be characterised as a new ‘type’ of teacher in what they have to offer students in NSW schools, in particular, in rural, regional and remote schools, where these new teachers were living and working.

A different approach to interpreting and considering case study research explores what the author terms “misunderstandings” about this approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 219) which influences the analysis of the data. Flyvbjerg emphasised the importance of learning from and about human beings through close scrutiny of individual cases. His emphasis, in refuting that theoretical knowledge is to be valued above practical knowledge, is on the value of “concrete, context-dependent knowledge” (p. 224). That is, knowledge that is developed through close study of an individual case, for example. The contribution of case study based knowledge is not embedded exclusively in attempts to generalise from single cases or groups of cases.
For researchers, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important in two respects. First, it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory. Second, cases are important for researchers' own learning processes in developing the skills needed to do good research. (p. 223)

These aims closely match my intentions in this study.

**Influences**

In the opening chapter, I introduced the particular lens which shaped my philosophical perspective in undertaking this study. Specifically how my own experiences in education and the work I have done with teachers from an industry background have influenced my approach. As a researcher, in my practice as a teacher educator as well as in terms of a lens for research, I begin from a social constructivist paradigm (Windschitl & Thompson, 2006). Hence the focus of the analysis is on the meanings attributed to the reality of their teaching lives of these new teachers (Scott & Howell, 2008) and their experiences adapting to their new profession. Using the perspectives of the participant is an emic approach (Creswell, 2008) so that the views of the participants construct the reality under discussion. It is acknowledged, however, that this is a 're'-construction of the information gathered as the researcher is ultimately the analyst and arbiter of what is to be included and omitted.

Despite every effort made to encourage the participants to read and critique these interpretations and findings by member checking, through returning all transcripts and discussion papers to the individual participants throughout, few comments were returned except assertions the transcripts were reasonably accurate. Consequently, the result is an approximation in an endeavour to understand the lived reality of the first three years of the teaching careers of the participants as they re-construct themselves as secondary school teachers. To match the purposes, data style and scope of this research, as a writer I have attempted a clear and reasonably fluid style of writing. This is also an attempt to follow the writing styles of the two authors who have had the most influence on this study, Dewey and Lortie, both of whom have the ability to offer much insight and knowledge without resorting to over complicated and lexically dense academic language and style.
Although an etic approach (Creswell, 2008), where the researcher establishes the
criteria, is not adopted, as I have neither been a trades qualified teacher nor have I
taught in any of the schools in the study. However, I have taught on the ATTP
program over the ten years since its inception in 2001. This means I have had
experiences with at least 500 pre-service teachers with similar backgrounds. The
influence this has had on the study, in particular the analysis and interpretation,
should be taken into account. All data collected emerges from the experiences of the
new teachers, relational to their biographies, their industry backgrounds, their
experiences during university studies and most importantly on their lives over the
first three years as teachers. This has provided the opportunity to attempt to make
sense of, describe and analyse the world they inhabit in their work lives. “That lived
experience shapes the researcher’s approach to data collection and analysis”
(Creswell, 2008, p. 68).

Data collection - the process

An iterative approach to collecting, examining and analysing the data was used in
order to firstly discover how these new teachers constructed their teaching identity.
From the first cohort of accelerated teacher education students, twenty four pre-
service teachers volunteered to become involved in the research at the third and final
residential school in July 2002. Once the graduates were allocated to schools, only
those posted to rural, regional and remote schools were invited to participate, partly
because my own career and life experience as a teacher has been in rural education.
This also limited the study to the context of rural education contexts as a focus for
study. After ethics approval was granted by the NSW DET and the University of
Sydney’s HREC (Appendix 2), 17 of the original volunteers were eligible through
being granted positions in rural and regional high schools and central schools. From
these, 12 were selected as offering a range of disciplines which mirrored the industry
areas represented in the cohort. Ultimately, after the first year of teaching, 12
participants remained in the study.

Qualitative research interviewing was the primary method for eliciting information
from the participating new teachers, who are the focus of the study, as well as from
other colleagues and school principals who provided perspectives and observations
about these new teachers. The interviews were conducted by telephone in the case of the two formal interviews with the participants. The first interviews were conducted in their second year of teaching and the second in their third year of teaching. In the case of the other teachers interviewed in each school, these were face to face interviews. The interviews with principals were varied as often during site visits, the principals wanted to provide further information about their teachers. If time allowed, and the participant agreed to the request, those interviews were completed directly in the school. However, in three cases (Steve, Myron and Claire), at the principal’s request, telephone interviews were arranged. All interview data were transcribed by the researcher.

The caution inherent in Wengraf’s (2001) assertion that the data generated from interviews “are data only about a particular research conversation that occurred at a particular time and place” (p. 32) guides the study. This means that the research interest is on the statements made as conveying the perceived realities of the interviewees in that context at that time. Rather than taking the realist view that the purpose is to gain “a better understanding of reality” (pp. 3-4), the philosophical position taken is that there are many realities, and it is the reality expressed by the interview subjects, as interpreted by the researcher, that is the focus of the study.

This consideration of data as perceptions or assertions rather than ‘factual evidence’ means that, rather than a methodological process in the grounded theory manner, where induction and interpretation assist the researcher to deduce what theory is able to emerge from the data (Glaser, 2007), the analysis in this study is based on a constructivist model where the reality for the participants and other interviewees provide insights into their perceptions of themselves as educators. To clarify, rather than attempting to define or defend the ‘reality’ or truth of the data gathered through interviews, as a researcher I am trying to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the realities expressed by each interviewee at the time of our conversations. This is then mediated in analysis by the stance of the research analyst, who is also the interviewer and transcriber of each interview. The constructed realities that emerge from this process embody a qualitative approach and allow the researcher insights into the experiences and perceptions of the participants and allow their voices to be
privileged in the findings through the use of their words to gain insights and understanding of their lived experiences as mature early career teachers.

At the first residential school at the commencement of the accelerated teacher preparation course all participants experienced as pre-service education, which is described in some detail in the context section of the introduction, a brief survey was completed by the entire first cohort in September 2001. As this was prior to ethics approval, participants granted ‘retrospective permission’ for the researcher to use these data. The interview strategies used to elicit information were reliant on the established connection between the interviewer and the interviewee, developed during their course, over the period prior to data collection. The limitation of the ‘former student’ being the interviewee and the ‘teacher educator’ as interviewer was partially redressed by the well established history of communication with the participants, although the issue of power in the relationship was not disregarded. Through “empathy, close listening, close attentiveness to what is said and not said” (Wengraf, 2001, p. 32), the interview conversations were valuable in producing data worthy of careful analysis. Topics of interest to the researcher were explored or ignored by the interviewee, whilst aspects of becoming and operating as a teacher in the specific context of that site were discussed. Brief interviews with each participant were undertaken during their first year of teaching, in 2003, although these were mainly used to establish their interest in participating in the research. Much of this early communication was unsolicited by the researcher as the participants voluntarily emailed and phoned me to discuss their new lives. However, notes from these interviews and copies of emails assisted in establishing the location, context and initial approach and attitude to teaching described and discussed by the participants. More formal telephone interviews, which were recorded and fully transcribed by the researcher, were undertaken during the later months of 2004, when the research participants were in their second year of teaching.

Another rich source of data included biographical details and ‘life history’ documents the participants emailed to me during their first two years of teaching. Emails, both solicited and unsolicited, have been exchanged with many of the participants throughout the study. For example, all interviews were sent to each interviewee once they were transcribed. Although, disappointingly, the participants
rarely commented specifically on these transcriptions and other material sent to them, they always responded to emails and often phoned as well to discuss their lives and work. Notes from phone calls and the information from these emails also added to the data collection with the written informed consent of the participants. During all of these semi-structured interviews, I attempted to make these telephone calls more like conversations than formal interviews, starting each interview with a sentence such as “I will suggest about seven or eight topics but you can suggest some topics too if you want”.

**Interview topics and timelines**

The interview questions, or topics, as approved by ethics (Appendix 2) were:

- Major concerns about beginning teaching
- Teaching – planning and implementation issues
- Managing classrooms
- Communicating and working with students and staff
- Monitoring and assessing student learning
- Reflecting on teaching
- Beliefs about teaching at this stage of their career
- Their journey towards becoming a teacher
- The teacher preparation they experienced both at University and in schools during their course.

The final stage of data gathering was undertaken during 2005, the participants’ third year of teaching, when I visited each of the twelve new teachers in their schools. During these visits, further conversations with each participant, observations of the classroom context in which they were teaching and field notes afforded me an opportunity to understand more about each context as well as to see these teachers in action. During these visits, another teacher, who had already been approached by the research participants themselves, was interviewed. These interviews were also transcribed and analysed. It is acknowledged that there is a limitation in asking the participants themselves to arrange the ‘other teacher’ to be interviewed as they naturally selected colleagues they felt comfortable with. However, the data gathered from these ‘other teachers’ provided another data set to triangulate against the self-
reported data from interviews and discussions and the field observations. Again, the research attempted to make these interviews conversational using similar topic suggestions and approaches to those used with the participant new teachers, with the variation that these were based on their, acknowledged potentially favourably biased, perceptions of their new colleague. The interviews with other teachers encouraged the interviewees to provide a general commentary on how the participant was adapting to teaching in that particular school environment.

The interview topics for the ‘other teachers, as approved by the ethics committees (Appendix 2) appear below:

- Perceptions of how the participant is coping as a beginning teacher
- Planning and implementing teaching and learning
- Managing classrooms
- Communicating and working with students and staff
- Monitoring and assessing student learning
- Approaches to and beliefs about the profession and becoming a teacher
- The teaching preparation and background the participant brings to the school.

During many of these visits, the school principals, who were of course approached to gain permission to visit each school, often provided unsolicited but illuminating comments. It was also evident that most of them wanted to provide information about their new teachers. After seeking the permission of the participants themselves, many of these principals were interviewed either during or after the visits as an additional opportunity to gather data. These interviews were unstructured and notes were taken rather than transcripts from recordings in most cases. Only nine of the twelve principals were available to be interviewed.

To summarise the data collection process, a timeline of the participants’ stages of pre-service and teaching appointment details appears below (Table 1). Phone calls and emails with participants that were less formal and unsolicited continued throughout the data collection period and beyond and have not been included in this timeline.
Table 1 - Data collection processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details - participants</th>
<th>Details – data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2001</td>
<td>First cohort of ATTP commenced university study</td>
<td>Survey administered – data from final question – why do you want to become a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 1 2002</td>
<td>First professional experience – three weeks supervised practicum</td>
<td>Practicum report – limited data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 3 2002</td>
<td>Problem based learning (PBL) - understanding the realities of programming and assessment through preparation of portfolios and preparation for teaching on internship in the same school</td>
<td>Comments from forum posting during PBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 4 2002</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>Internship work reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>First year teaching</td>
<td>Informal phone conversations and emails – establishing involvement in research and context details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Second year teaching (note – 3 participants appointed to second school – above establishment position for first appointment)</td>
<td>Transcribed phone interviews - Term 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Third year teaching</td>
<td>School visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- observation, field notes and conversations with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- transcribed interviews with ‘other teacher’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- follow up conversation with Principals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis – the process

Analysis was undertaken as an iterative process, which was initially an exploration of each individual case in details. This had two purposes – firstly to come to an understanding and present detailed and rich descriptions of each individual teacher, including details about their background, life stories and work history. The second purpose was that this provided a platform to begin the next stage of the process, an analysis of their construction of a teaching identity. Additionally, it provided an
individual context which was then shaped and re-shaped through the three years of observation. There is a progressive attempt to search for any indications of a typology to prepare for cross case analysis to investigate whether the commonalities of background and study contexts provided any indication that this pathway, to even a limited extent, produced a certain ‘type of teacher’.

Throughout, I have been aware of avoiding comparisons with other new teachers, as the intent of the study is not to champion alternative pathways into teaching as ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than the more usual stages of school, university then certification as a teacher. Rather, my intentions were to closely study these particular teachers in these rural and regional schools over the period of their first three years of teaching in order to understand more clearly what the results of such a pathway created. In the analysis of each individual case, a minimum of three sweeps across all data produced a series of themes or ideas, which were then re-examined in the cross case analysis where there is a shift from analysis to discussion and tentative conclusions.

Whilst maintaining an awareness that the limitation of numbers of participants and the restriction of the settings to rural and regional schools mean that these findings are bounded in many ways typical of case study research, the value in the research rests in the presentation of the unique voices of a group of early career teachers. There is inherent value in this close study and consideration of these individual teachers through rich descriptions and careful reflection on their approaches and practices. In particular, by examining each case individually, I am able to provide descriptions of real people, and take advantage of a qualitative methodology in the luxury of examining the data in some detail to experience, in at least a vicarious way, some of the schools, adaptations, attitudes and pedagogies perceived by and about these new teachers.

The analysis involved close questioning of the data gathered to begin to theorise about some of these questions in terms of the verbal, behavioural and contextual resources indicated in the data (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008) against aspects such as the chronology. I was aware of the timing of the participant’s behaviour by gathering data over a three year period to check for changes in attitude, confidence or any other noticeable shifts.
Although intentionally avoiding the idea of models as a framework to examine the reality of these data, specific recurrent themes and findings encouraged the development of typologies of approaches and beliefs common across cases, which in turn lead to consideration of ‘teacher types’. As I began the research from a theoretical perspective of a social constructivist, the methods undertaken and data produced are reliant on the structure and meanings perceived and attributed from within that perspective.

From the inception of the study through to the analysis, the choice of methodology reflected the research topic, the overall research strategy, and ultimately structured and shaped, or limited, the analysis within the constraints of case study research. The cases were bounded by the selection of participants, as members of the first cohort of pre-service teachers who had taken up the education department’s offer to move from a highly specified industry background to become technology and vocational education teachers in hard to staff schools. The next layer of boundary was that they were volunteers. Once they had received their school placements, if they had been offered positions in rural and regional school settings they were invited to become part of the study. This was an attempt to limit at least some of the permutations of diverse teaching sites. However, what was sacrificed in terms of diversity is intended to be compensated by the depth of the study to give the data ‘integrity’ through preserving “wholeness” as proposed by Stake (Cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 437).

Through combining an individual case study approach, where there is limited value in attempting to generalise beyond the boundaries of that case, with a cross case analysis of all twelve cases, the intention is to provide some insights from the collection of cases, in Stake’s (2006) terms, whilst investigating what phenomena may be seen to fit a number of similar cases. Validity and reliability were considered when the researcher’s findings about practices, attitudes and beliefs of the participants, as stated in the interviews, conversations and emails, were compared across cases. The next step was to compare this with what was observed and noted during the site visits. The data provided by other teachers in each school, and in most cases with the Principal of the school as well, were included in cross case analysis. The final stage of triangulation was through discourse analysis of the data.
In writing about the findings, I am indebted to the model proposed by Wengraf (2001, pp. 320 – 321) where there is what he refers to as a “zig-zag” between the interview material, or data, in which material from other researchers and the literature is included, and the researcher’s “theory language”. This model proposes starting with a theoretical stance, considering the material gathered in data and in the literature, followed by further “theory language” reflection. More material is then considered. In my instance, this is the iterative analysis of the cases, then the cross case analysis, which ultimately arrived at conclusions. Although the latter may propose theory ideas and possibilities, they are still far from broad generalisations. Instead, they are intended to contribute to knowledge about pathways to teaching for a specific group of new teachers in the contexts explored through the study.

Limitations and ethical issues
The identities of the participating early career teachers, their colleagues and the school sites have been obscured by the use of pseudonyms to ensure ethical research practices were observed. The relationship between the researcher and the participating new teachers, which was developed during their teacher education studies, was both an asset and a limitation. This can be balanced to some extent by the relationships the researcher and participants were able to develop over an extended time frame. This meant both the researcher and interlocutor were able to discuss the interview topics in a more relaxed manner than would be possible with strangers. The participants were enthusiastic in responding to interview questions and also emailed and phoned me frequently with updates on their lives. They gave written permission for all of their correspondence and conversations to be included in the data set. The limitation was that there was a potential element of demonstrating their embodiment as good teachers in their commentary when communicating with a former lecturer. However, the limitations will be considered in data analysis and discussion. All of the participants granted retrospective permission for the researcher to use data which originated from emails, a residential school survey and conversations prior to ethics approval. This included reports from professional experiences in schools undertaken during their studies.

The limitation of potential candidates to participate in the research included the following: all were pre-service teachers in the first cohort of students who graduated
with a bachelor’s degree in Technology and Applied Studies; all volunteered to participate in the research over the first three years of their teaching career, immediately following graduation; all were appointed to rural or regional schools in the state, where they were contracted to work for three years in order to fulfil the requirements of the deed of agreement they had signed with the education department in order to have their study costs covered during their teacher education. However, as there were 12 very separate school environments and twelve new teachers reacting to and adapting to those different contexts, the cases were all relevant to the central question of constructing a new identity as a teacher. The diversity of contexts and individuals provided an opportunity to learn about “complexity and contexts” (Stake, 2006, p. 23) and evaluate some of the issues both particular to each new teacher and, where it occurred, repeated across cases. The aim was to gain the best possible understanding of how these teachers adapted to life as a teacher in a rural school environment. A consideration of how to best explain what kinds of adaptations and constructions of identity these new teachers appeared to be involved in resulted in the decision to use multiple cases and interpret these in the qualitative tradition of case study analysis (Creswell, 2008; Stake, 1995; Stake 2006; Yin, 2004). Although with the limitations of examining only 12 cases in detail, there was a deliberate effort to maximise the diversity in the cases examined (Firestone, 1993). An effort was made to mirror the gender balance of the teachers who applied and were selected for teacher education. This resulted only in three participants out of the twelve being female. There was also a purposive selection across the teaching specialisations under the technology discipline, so that the areas of food, agricultural, information, wood and metal technology specialisations were all represented. Thus, although not as representative or diverse as in Firestone’s model, there is an effort made to ensure that the cases selected were as close as possible to covering the potential field of inquiry. There is no claim that the cases are representative, but there is an attempt to present variety from the options available. The aim is to provide an honest and accurate representation of the cases as a tapestry of findings specific to the individual case studies and either contributing similarity or divergence in the cross case analysis in order to understand the journey from a career in industry.
to a career in teaching more clearly in these cases and potentially beyond the scope of this study.

Stake’s assertion that “comprehensive, idiosyncratic, irreproducible interpretations are a contribution to understanding” (2006, p. 87) underpins this research in terms of the limitations of the selection of cases contributing to the study and the analysis of the findings. In this way, the study is following Aristotle’s idea of ‘phronesis’, an understanding of past experiences of individuals in a particular context in order to gain knowledge from that experience. Kemmis and Smith (2008, p. 16) refer to this as a “double task”, where the aim is to be concerned with the individual (learner) while simultaneously aiming for the good of humankind. Issues and factors arising from cross case analysis may demonstrate tendencies, typologies and possible theoretical assumptions, yet the detailed discussion of each individual teacher’s journey can be seen as the essential benefit of undertaking a case study approach over an extended period, as in this study of the first three years of a mature beginning teacher’s construction of his or her teaching identity.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter the choice the researcher has made to follow a qualitative methodology has been explored as a means of finding out about the perceptions, experiences and approaches of a group of individuals who chose to become teachers after working in a trade during the earlier part of their working lives. Qualitative methodology encourages and provides opportunities for the researcher to closely examine how this group of teachers coped and adapted to their new careers to find out more about how they perceived themselves in their daily lives as teachers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This qualitative approach fits the main purpose of the study, which is to understand the fundamental nature of the experiences of second career beginning teachers in schools and the impact that their past experiences have on their current role as a teacher. The main focus of this study concerns the researcher’s reflective interpretation of the teachers’ descriptions of their experiences in order to determine and seek potential meanings embodied within them.

This chapter also reflected on the influences and approaches that guided this research. The timelines and interview questions were included to illuminate the
extended nature of the data gathering process. Interviewing as a method of research was discussed, particularly in terms of ascribing meaning to interview data. This was regarded as a form of inscription by the researcher rather than naturally occurring phenomena, an approach endorsed by Yates (2003).

The chapter explained the selection of case study methodology and the issues in this method, in particular cross case analysis. The aim to really hear and understand the unique voices and perceptions of each participant must not be undermined by losing the reality of their experiences in combining findings without due respect for the individual variations and different contexts. The motivation is to explore these career changing teachers, their school lives in particular, while considering beginning teachers in general without proposing either pathway as more meritorious or effective. Instead the researcher aims to understand the differences and look for value or dangers in this particular pathway. It is hoped that by contributing to the knowledge on career change teachers, specifically teachers who come to the profession with industry experience rather than an undergraduate degree, the recruitment, teacher education and retention of such new teachers will support the profession in an area of continuing teacher shortages. It is intended that this study will provide useful information to policy makers, other researchers in this field and teacher educators as a scholarly contribution to the collective knowledge of how new teachers understand and construct their identities as teachers.
Chapter 4. The case studies- locating similarities

Introduction
Before a close examination of individual cases, it is emphasised that the new teachers who are the focus of the 12 case studies emerged from the same pre-service education program and shared many aspects in their pathway to teaching. This is the main focus of this chapter prior to individual case analysis in the following three chapters. A discussion of the common features includes the following factors: for all participants, this is a second or later career choice, as it was for the entire cohort; they were all between the ages of 30 and 40 when they began the course; and they had all completed years of industry training and experience prior to applying for a place in the program. In this chapter, their shared backgrounds and pathway to becoming a teacher is discussed. Their pre-service teacher education program of study is briefly described to provide some contextual details. Finally, on completion of the course, the teachers in this study were appointed to schools west of the Great Dividing Range. Their locations and the types of school are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Commonalities
The teachers who participated in this study shared many commonalities as well as being presented as unique individuals in each of the 12 case studies in context. All made the daunting decision to leave behind the trade and industry careers and identities which had defined them since, in most instances, their mid teens when they began their apprenticeships or other initial trade training. Their acceptance into the Technology and Applied Studies Bachelor of Education degree means that they were able to demonstrate the required experience and attributes.

For admission, they had to provide evidence of the completion of a full apprenticeship in the eligible trade option: a Certificate III in Hospitality for example, or an equivalent qualification in Information Technology. This trade qualification had to be completed in a workplace, rather than as part of a vocational course. They also needed to be able to demonstrate that they had progressed beyond
the initial qualification and spent at least three to five years working in that industry area.

In selecting candidates, the process favoured those who could provide evidence of further learning and professional growth in their trade area. They were also invited to provide evidence of any involvement with working with young people as an attribute relevant to moving to working with adolescents. Almost all candidates offered evidence of working with apprentices and trainees, and many also pointed to sports coaching, working with marginalised and disadvantaged groups, or other interactions with young people prior to commencing the program of study. All of the participants were also parents.

These requirements were designed to try and attract people to the program who combined extensive industry background, training and experience with potentially a very positive attitude towards working with secondary school students. Life experiences were valued as entry criteria when evidence was supplied about the applicability of the experiences to the roles anticipated in the new career of becoming a teacher in secondary school technology areas. These decisions were made in the belief that the attitudes and convictions they brought to the program, their commitment to trust in the value of a career transition for themselves and their future students and communities would sustain them through a very challenging pathway.

Formal education in terms of schooling was incomplete in some cases, long ago in all cases, and not considered as a pathway to further academic study. The challenges of returning to study at a tertiary level via distance education were exacerbated by the accelerated design of the program as students completed the program in eighteen months of intensive study. They were also required to supplement their industry qualifications in specified discipline and aligned industry areas to allow them sufficient teaching areas. Specifically, carpenters were required to undertake vocational studies in metalwork. Chefs were required to supplement their knowledge of the hospitality industry with academic study of nutrition and food science. The agriculture pre-service teachers had to include both plant and animal knowledge in their repertoire.
The successful graduation of each of these participants, and the other 600 graduates of the program, is a testament to their dedication and self-efficacy. It was also due, perhaps to a lesser but still important extent, to the encouragement and support provided by both university staff and in particular the magnificent teachers in many schools who scaffolded the learning and shared their knowledge with these pre-service teachers during professional experience placements, problem based learning completed in schools sites and the internship which completed the program of study.

The program of study
The other commonality shared by all participants in the study is that they all completed the same undergraduate degree course in the first cohort of pre-service training in an accelerated program. A brief overview of the salient features and design of the course is provided below as a contextual frame. In common with alternative pathways to teaching in the USA and elsewhere, this program deliberately sought “candidates with a demonstrated knowledge base of and practical experience in a discrete subject area” (Halladay, 2008, p. 1). The discipline in question here was TAS so it was the strong industry background and experience which privileged applicants to be accepted rather than a strong academic background which is more typical of the alternative certification programs in the US, the UK and in Australia.

The course was planned as an alternative pathway to respond to the shortages, predicted and actual, in the TAS and VETiS areas of study, particular in ‘hard to staff’ schools. In NSW, the ‘hard to staff’ schools are typically the schools in western Sydney and the rural, remote and regional schools of western NSW. The team devising this program of study, including this researcher, planned carefully to cater for different learners in an accelerated and intentionally innovative course offered using distance and online education, problem solving methodologies and site based workplace learning opportunities.

The professional practice and problem solving elements of the course promoted a partnership and a dialogue between current practitioners in the field and the pre-service teachers as researchers and apprentices. The fact that over one third of the 18 month course was completed in schools was planned to ensure the change of culture
from industry to schools as work places was sufficient for mature students whose experiences of school were from at least ten years prior to commencing study.

The design of the program was guided by a detailed reflection on the essential elements of a program of teacher education. This was combined with an understanding developed by staff through courses developed for teacher preparation of vocational education teachers and trainers in technical and further education settings. The decision to offer the course using distance and online education meant that potential students who would have difficulties accessing on campus courses, either because of their location, or their work and other commitments, would be able to access teacher education. This also meant that some students were from, and remained in, rural and isolated areas which have often been difficult to staff.

Developing a community of learners

Problem solving methodology was designed to encourage students to investigate the intersection of curriculum theory and practice in the school workplace where their internship would also be completed. Problem based learning was also included as a way of building a community of learners (Cowan, 2012) in the school site through the development of portfolios focusing on curriculum development and assessment. Through using the teaching staff in the TAS faculty in each school as sources of data and the student teachers as new members of this “community of learners” (Shulman & Shulman, 2004, p. 259), each of the students was able to observe, question, reflect and learn about the actual roles and preparation undertaken by experienced teachers in the school workplace prior to becoming interns. Online support encouraged students to discuss their learning experiences both with the lecturer and each other as they formed online communities of learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998)). This was included as a crucial element for providing scaffolding in the problem solving activities in schools.

Extended in-school experience during the problem-solving phase, combined with the internship, was intended to encourage the enculturation process to help facilitate the shift in workplace culture from industry to school. Recognition of trade and other qualifications, and recognition of prior learning for work experience on entry meant that the industry expertise of the students was valued appropriately by the university.
This rich practical knowledge was often valued by teachers who regularly invited professional experience students and interns to offer current and recent industry professional development whilst they were in schools. The course was accelerated by using appropriate combinations of strategies, such as covering many key aspects of teacher training within the three extended residential schools and by combining curriculum methodology subjects in the work-based problem focused in-school phase. These strategies, combined with use of a summer school period, meant that the students covered two years worth of subject study in 18 months of time at university.

The course began with a residential school, which focused initially on academic literacy issues, such as essay writing, research skills and interpretation and the modelled deconstruction and analysis of assessment questions. During this residential school, the students also became familiar with online access to email, forums and other online facilities available through the university. Information literacy was explored and identified as an area that was further developed during the course. The students were encouraged to form study groups, which interestingly in many instances have been maintained beyond the course. These networks also provided support during early years of teaching. A second residential school preceded the first professional experience in schools. Here, the focus shifted to the skills of teaching, lesson planning, programming and classroom management. During the third and final residential school, students prepared to participate in the two-term in-school professional experience and internship that concluded their course.

In an accelerated program, particularly one designed for students who had not completed an undergraduate degree, it is essential to ensure support for the pre-service teachers during their degree and at the start of their teaching career. Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) discussed the requirements for adequately preparing new teachers using alternative, or fast-track, pathways. The requirements she recommended included adequate time in classrooms for professional experience despite the shorter time frames typical of such programs. The importance of close partnerships with the schools hosting the pre-service teachers, including ensuring the provision of practice teaching focus on the content area development of their
discipline subject areas. Curriculum and pedagogy studies of adequate depth and variety were recommended and Darling-Hammond also saw value in including a major project within their course which combined all of the elements of their learning prior to beginning teaching.

This summary of features was included because all of these were crucial to the teacher education program the teachers in my study undertook before they began teaching. In particular, in their final internship, all pre-service teachers had to prepare programs of work for defined curriculum and year levels with corresponding assessment, reporting and evaluations. They were required to assemble an extensive portfolio covering their philosophy and beliefs about teaching. This portfolio included their findings and observations from the schools in which they were placed for their internship, an extensive review of the literature on programming and assessment as well as the series of programs, assessment regimes and reporting procedures they had used during their internship under the supervision of the senior staff at the school in which they were located. The portfolios were appraised as the final major assessment item prior to graduation.

This aligns closely with Darling-Hammond’s (2010) requirement that:

Powerful teacher education programs have a clinical curriculum as well as a didactic curriculum. They teach candidates to turn analysis into action by applying what they are learning in curriculum plans, teaching applications, and other performance assessments that are organized around professional teaching standards. These attempts receive detailed feedback, with opportunities to retry and continue to improve, and they are followed by systematic reflection on student learning in relation to teaching (p. 40).

This concept of “turning analysis into action” was the rationale for the use of a problem based methodology for the series of teaching practice and curriculum methodology subjects combined in the six month period the teachers in my study spent in a school during the final stage of their program of study. The teacher educators were determined that the maximum time spent in a school context while learning about curriculum and assessment in particular would benefit the students in two ways: firstly by allowing time for a culture shift from prior workplace cultures to the world of secondary schools, the pre-service teachers would develop understanding of the current school contexts. The second reason was to develop a deep understanding of curriculum as it was enacted in the specific school in which
they were located whilst studying planning, programming and assessment as part of their school studies.

During the program, the interactive online environment designed to facilitate students learning increasingly became an essential method to communicate with the students and encourage them to support each other as a community of learners. The most basic facility, and the one most students most frequently returned to, was email. Students emailed each other frequently, in subject interest groups, maintaining close contacts despite time and geographical limitations. This aspect has inadvertently facilitated the research reported on in this longitudinal study as all participants in the study were comfortable and familiar with online communications and were prepared to communicate frequently during the data gathering phase, as well as prior and post this period. Most pre-service teachers completing the program quickly became adept at using the facilities of the university's online services. For example, during the two professional experience subjects, students could write about their problems, triumphs, issues and questions before, during and after their in-school experiences. This meant that the entire community of learners could share their learning experiences and reflections.

Prior to the professional experience, the forums set up for the practicum subjects assisted students to gain an understanding of the key areas of preparation required. They were also offered and shared advice about potential pitfalls in classroom management and related issues. The electronic discussion list was supplemented by lecturer comments and student discussion on the postings. Each subject offered in the course also used an online forum, which was open to all members of the cohort enrolled in that subject. This was used for subject discussions and the sharing of resources, in particular web-sites and other online resources. Questions were raised and advice given on assignment work and in depth feedback on assignment work was presented electronically.

Residential school topics and questions, as well as feedback from students on the residential school experiences and needs, were other opportunities for learning and discussion. The conversational tone and the knowledge of other participants' activities also indicated the level of continuing discussion and support students were
offering each other within a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). An example is the manner in which students from all over the state were able to source appropriate vocational programs and locations to supplement and complement the trade qualifications with which they started the course. The frequency and level of shared information and support was a key element in the success and attitude of these students.

The selection of a school site as a learning context for pre-service professional experience meant that students could learn about curriculum while having a significant time for enculturation during the ten weeks when they were situated in the school but they were not teaching. During this period, the students were preparing for teaching by planning programs and assessments which were the basis of the assignment activities and portfolio construction. The teacher educators believed that the change of attitude and direction for these students required time, which was the underlying intention of basing the problem-based learning activities in the same school where students would be teaching for ten weeks, using materials prepared during their professional practice time. This also meant that the assignment work was authentic (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000) and situated in a school context. Darling-Hammond and Snyder argue that using problem based learning tasks and portfolios as assessment in pre-service teacher education programs helps promote the development of understanding in student teachers in the evaluations of teaching situations and diverse circumstances. The authors also assert that these types of assessment provide evidence of the pre-service teachers’ learning and development.

**Portfolios for learning and assessment**

In an article examining teaching portfolios, Berrill and Addison (2010) reflected that these had been used typically as an exit requirement for pre-service teachers for over 20 years. They noted that there was often confusion about the purpose of these. The authors identify the two main purposes for their use being to encourage reflection and development in the student teacher, or alternatively, to assess the effectiveness and competency of the pre-service teachers. They found in their study that pre-service teachers found these portfolios to be “a powerful tool in the construction of their teacher identity” (p. 1182) irrespective of the intended purposes. In the
accelerated teacher program, the portfolios were used to encourage reflective and analytical practices; to explore curriculum and assessment issues in a school site and in their study materials and reading, and to produce a statement of findings which encapsulated their beliefs about programming and assessment. They were also the major assessment item in their final study session and provided an opportunity for these pre-service teachers to demonstrate their understanding of preparing, assessing and evaluating teaching and learning programs for real students in the authentic context of the school. They then used the materials, programs, assessments and resources they had developed during their internship in the same school under the guidance of their assigned mentor.

As the portfolios also required students to make sense of the world of the specific school’s processes and approaches, taking into account the requirements of the syllabus set by the state Board of Studies and the literature relevant to programming and assessment, there was a specific requirement for them to respond in an extended statement, in the style of an exegesis, in terms of their own beliefs and plans when they were in their own schools. The teacher educators planned this approach for multiple reasons. The pre-service teachers, under the guidance of experienced teachers and university staff, had an opportunity to understand the reality of the ways in which their school enacted curriculum. They could then evaluate these practices in light of the syllabus documents, readings and materials on theories underpinning various approaches and then make decisions about how they intended to plan, assess and evaluate when they were teaching. This encouraged them to see themselves in the teacher role with guidance from the worlds of practice and theory, which would form a starting point for their identity and approach as beginning teachers. The other intention of the teacher educators was to encourage independence as many of these teachers would be appointed to small rural schools where there would be limited support in the new teacher’s discipline area.

In a German study of 144 pre-service teachers and their teacher educators on the use of portfolios, the authors found that the effectiveness was dependent on the way the portfolio tasks were framed, monitored and assessed within the program as well as the personal competence of both students and those supporting, monitoring and assessing the tasks (Imhof & Picard, 2009). By combining the supervision and
support of teaching staff in the school setting, online monitoring and scaffolding by
teacher educators in the accelerated program, pre-service students were encouraged
and guided to make decisions, evaluate and reflect on the practices they would adopt
as new teachers and the theoretical underpinnings of various approaches. Although
there were variations in terms of assistance and support of school personnel,
efficiency and responsiveness of the teacher educators who worked with the small
groups of pre-service teachers working on their portfolios, overall this capstone task
fulfilled the requirements Imhof and Picard found were essential for this to be a valid
learning experience.

Communication was continuous throughout the process of researching, preparing
and compiling these portfolios and strategies such as mentor workshops for school
personnel and an extended residential school with the pre-service teachers prior to
their six months in schools was intended to ensure that all involved were very aware
of the purposes, requirements and construction of these major works. The findings of
this thesis and the perceptions of the beginning teachers who all successfully
completed portfolios in the final session of their course allow an opportunity to
evaluate the ways in which these new teachers were independent operators in their
enactment of the curriculum in their new contexts.

Problem based learning
Problem-based learning (Hushman & Napper-Owen, 2011), which is a feature of
many professional preparation programs, was used as a way of designing the
curriculum while placing students in the constructivist role of problem solvers.
Accordingly, it also became a teaching and learning strategy which invited students
to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities in a context, working on an ill-
structured problem which reflected the real world. Hushman and Napper-Owen
contend that problem-based learning, if well thought-out prior to the experience,
helps students prepare for the real life challenges they will face as beginning teachers
where they are expected to respond to a range of situations contexts and students.

The problem based learning component of the course consisted of the amalgamation
of three university curriculum subjects to cover and combine the outcomes of the
three subjects. While in the school, the students were required to seek their own
individual solutions to the problems, using the school, their mentors and the school community as a primary source of information. The university group facilitator scaffolded the problem solving activity by providing further materials, direction and questions to support the study.

The two questions which underpinned the problem-based learning activities were deceptively simple. "What are the programming and planning strategies in schools?" was the first question. "What are the assessment and reporting strategies in schools?" was the second. In responding to these questions and providing their own solutions, students had to research the specific school's practices then turn to the literature and course materials to compare and contrast the 'ideal world' of theory with the actuality of the students, teachers and classes they were working with. Their task was to prepare programs and assessments for their three subject areas, the materials prepared being used by them during their ten weeks of teaching in the next term at their schools.

The portfolios presented on the two 'problems' included detailed analyses of the programming and assessment practices in the school where they were located, which gave a perspective of current practices in a specific school. They were also expected to use the curriculum requirements to prepare the work for at least three clearly defined subject and year level classes in Design and Technology, their own industry linked area of technology and their VET specialisation. The portfolios were supported by artefacts and samples gathered from schools with critical commentary provided by the pre-service teachers. They concluded with a statement of findings, where they had an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and learning. The statements also discussed the 'ideal world' of the syllabus and the literature recommendations about programming and assessment. Each portfolio concluded with the intentions of each student on their intended approaches and core beliefs about programming and assessment when they were teachers the following year.

Learning to become a teacher is not an easy journey (Murray & Male, 2005). To move from a career in an industry context to the world of school, and to participate in a transformative journey involving apprentice status, required many personal and professional accommodations. In some ways, these new and different teachers
mirrored or reflected the changes in the senior schools’ system with the introduction of VETiS, as well as being part of a response to implement these changes. Researching their teaching journey is intended to add to the knowledge collected about other types of beginning teachers, as they construct a teaching identity (Danielwicz, 2001). The teacher educators believed that to complement their trade knowledge, these students needed systematic preparation in the classroom. By offering the maximum time in schools, supervising teachers worked collaboratively with the intern student as they provided support, models and experience to contextualise the learning of the novice.

The program, as with most teacher preparation initiatives, depended on forming partnerships with other education and training providers. The program also asserted and demonstrated that teachers could come from a multiplicity of backgrounds. As teacher educators, the teaching team endeavoured to facilitate the crossing of boundaries, building on experience and expertise to offer teacher preparation in a culturally and socially sensitive way. The process for successful outcomes included student determination and growth as learners and teachers; the supportive learning community built through both virtual and real discussions, debates and knowledge sharing; the excellent advice, nurturing, modelling and encouragement provided by the in-school supervisors and mentors; the introduction to the possibilities of theoretical knowledge and research through academic study and the efforts of the teacher education staff who developed and implemented the program. The first graduands, from whom the participants in this study were drawn, when they returned to collect their testamurs in April 2003, were inspiring in their discussions of the challenges being faced in isolated, remote and city ‘hard to staff’ schools. This systematic and longitudinal study of their approaches, attitudes and values over time demonstrates the effect of these factors on the teaching identities these educators construct.

**Locations**

The course was located physically in a regional university which is a multi campus provider in central and western NSW. However, because the course was designed and completed via distance education, the students were located throughout NSW, and in some instances, outside the state. They were required, on completion of their
degree, to work for the then NSW Department of Education (DET) for three years in schools to which they were appointed, although in some instances they were given provisional appointments for the first year while vacancies were being sought for a permanent position. All participants were appointed to schools located west of the Great Dividing Range. These schools are very different from city schools with their distances from major services and other unique features. The map below shows the school districts in NSW and the 12 teachers were all appointed to schools to the left, or west, of the thick white line drawn on the map.

**Figure 1 - NSW School Districts**

Introduction to the participants

Table 2 provides a brief summary of the participants in the study. All teacher names and school names are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of all who contributed to the study. The intention here is to briefly show the range of backgrounds and the way these are linked and developed into teaching areas. However, as many of the participants are located in small country schools, all participants taught many subjects outside their specialist areas. In particular, all TAS teachers in are expected to teach the mandatory technology range of subjects, which has been represented here by the umbrella term ‘Technology’.

The schools named as Central Schools are those mostly found in very small rural towns where one school serves for classes from the primary years, Kindergarten to Year 6, right through to Year 12, the final year of secondary school. The right hand column in Table 2 (below) concerns their movements from appointment to the end of data collection and beyond.

Graduate teachers who were not allocated a substantive appointment in their first year were appointed in a temporary capacity during all or part of that year as ‘above establishment’ staff. This term means that they are not part of the allocated staff in the usual way but may be used as an ‘internal casual’ member of staff, or assigned duties as school management decrees. This practice has become more common since the course began as vacancies do not always occur in a way which allows all bonded graduates or scholarship holders to be placed in a continuing position. Although it can be a very stressful way to commence a teaching career, with the lack of security concerning how long they will remain in this position, the temporary first posting has mainly been to a school in the new teacher’s locality, often one at which they completed their practicum or internship, as is the case in most of these instances.
### Table 2 – Teacher appointments and locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Trade area</th>
<th>Major teaching areas</th>
<th>School(s)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Hospitality, Food technology, Technology</td>
<td>Table High (First year), Southern High (from second year on)</td>
<td>Martha was given a year ‘above establishment’ until she was offered a permanent position, where she is still on staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Computer – technical support</td>
<td>IT VET, ITC subjects 7 – 12</td>
<td>Deans High</td>
<td>Steve stayed at this school and since has become a HT and acting DP at a smaller school in the same region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Administrative officer</td>
<td>IT VET, ITC subjects 7 – 12 Technology</td>
<td>Big Hills High (First semester), Border Central School (Kindergarten – Year 12)</td>
<td>Claire was given an ‘above establishment’ position in her local High School before being appointed to Border CS. She has since moved to a northern region in a larger K – 12 school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>VET Metals, Technology – metal and wood Technology</td>
<td>Rural Valley High</td>
<td>Tom has remained at Rural Valley although he has tried to get a transfer closer to his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myron</td>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>VET IT, Metals technology, ITC 7 – 12 Technology</td>
<td>Central River High</td>
<td>Myron was fortunate in being placed in his home location and has remained there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tess</td>
<td>Farmer Shearer / wool classer, Agricultural worker</td>
<td>Primary Industries, Agriculture, Junior Science</td>
<td>General High</td>
<td>Tess was appointed to the school closest to her farm and has remained there – part time currently because of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>Paul teaches across the curriculum in this very small school although he is a Metals and Technology teacher</td>
<td>Stump Central School</td>
<td>Paul’s wife came from this remote area where he was appointed and he is still there, often acting as Head Teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Walter
- Mechanic
- Manager
- Fitter

### Liam
- Chef
- Part time TAFE teacher

### Lauder
- Electrical mechanic
- Communications Engineer

### Mick
- Horticulturist
- Landscape gardener
- (‘23 different professions’)

### Ralph
- Plant mechanic
- Automotive Mechanic
- Fitter
- Mine worker

### Industrial Technology
- Metals Technology

### Riverland High
- Walter taught at Riverland for the three years required by the Department before accepting a Head Teacher position in a private school interstate

### Grant High
- Liam was appointed to Grant and has remained there since

### Waters High (first year)
- Hidden Valley Central School
- Lauder spent his first year as an ‘above establishment teacher in a local area school before being appointed to Hidden Valley where he has remained

### Flats High
- Mick was appointed to Flats High on graduating and has remained there

### Mines High
- Ralph was appointed to Mines High, one of two regional areas he would have preferred not to live in. However, he remained for the required three years before taking an appointment in an Australian Technical College

### Conclusion

All 12 participants in the case studies have similarities in background and experience. All have undergone a career shift from industries such as hospitality, agriculture, the metal trades and information technology to become teachers. They have been accepted into an accelerated program of study which required them to become academically proficient in order to successfully complete their degrees.

This teacher preparation program required them to spend extended periods in two different school locations, as student teachers, as pre-service teacher - researchers
and finally as interns. They have then taken up teaching positions in the western areas of the state in challenging school locations deemed "hard to staff" by their employer. The next chapter examines those who went to the smaller schools where support and leadership in their own discipline areas may have been limited or even unavailable. The collection of data gathered from interviews, site visits, discussions with other teachers and management as well as multiple emails, provides some insight into their experiences and perceptions as 'inscribed' by the researcher (Yates, 2003).
Chapter 5. Individual case studies - small and remote schools

Introduction

In this chapter the focus turns to the individual teachers in this study in order to try and understand something of their contexts and begin attempting to hear their voices emerging from the site visits, observations, commentaries and interviews on which these data are based. This section introduces the three participants who were appointed to central schools within the context of three remote and challenging locations. The rationale for introducing the participants in some detail prior to further analysis is to develop some sense of the individual locations, biographies and attitudes of these new teachers.

The qualitative approach selected for this study means it is essential to closely examine individual cases, or teachers, in some detail as it is the holistic appreciation of each participant which provides the rich descriptions informing the discussions and findings. There are benefits as well as limitations in such an approach. Yates (2003) cautions:

The point of dealing with small numbers of subjects in a lot of detail is to see specificity and context in some fine grain; the problem of dealing with small numbers is the potential over-reading we bring to it, either in what we make of these individual stories, or in the claims we make from them about our big issues (p. 224).

In this article Yates is arguing that the authority to make interpretive claims from small number longitudinal qualitative studies, such as this one, rests on the researcher’s persistence and reflexivity in interpretation of such data.

Firstly it is important to acknowledge that the depictions of these participants are my constructions as researcher rather than mirrored in a photographic accurate reality. This detailed approach affords “a research paradigm which provides a social constructionist perspective at the level of both interactive realisation and pre-active definitions” (Goodson & Walker, 1991, p. xiii). This fits well with the aim to understand something of the lived realities and perceptions of the participants in their individual contexts over the first years of their new career. Secondly, following Yates, this approach allows the researcher to interpret the data by being able to:
engage in implicit dialogue and comparison with the specific subjects in our study, with the study as a whole, and with research and theorising outside the study, and in doing so, we engage in a process of inscription: we name them and thereby locate them in broader patterns of theorisation (Yates, 2003, p. 230).

**Individual case study explorations - locations**

To reflect the difference in locations, the 12 cases have formed three groups (Table 3). Although pseudonyms are used, as ethically required, the school district names are included for contextual information.

**Table 3 – School locations and dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type and size of school</th>
<th>Participant (pseudonym)</th>
<th>School (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Major teaching area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Schools (3) (140 – 160 students)</td>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Border Central School (Riverina)</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Stump Central School (New England)</td>
<td>Industrial Technology (Metals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lauder</td>
<td>Hidden Valley Central School (New England)</td>
<td>Industrial Technology (Metals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Rural High Schools (5) (200 – 400 students)</td>
<td>Tess</td>
<td>General High School (Western NSW)</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mick</td>
<td>Flats High School (Riverina)</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Rural Valley High School (New England)</td>
<td>Industrial Technology (Metals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>Riverland High School (Riverina)</td>
<td>Industrial Technology (Metals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Grant High School (Riverina)</td>
<td>Food Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Regional High Schools (4) (500 – 1100 students)</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Deans High School (Riverina)</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Central Schools

Central schools, as they are termed in NSW, offer classes from Kindergarten to Year 12 on a single site. They are typically small and the majority of students are primary school students. These schools are often, though not always, isolated geographically, which is the case in the three schools included in this study. There are many reasons that these schools tend to be ‘bottom heavy’ with more primary and younger students than senior students. These include students leaving to go to another school after primary years as a parent and/or student choice to attend a boarding or alternative school as subject choices are naturally limited, to some extent, by the small numbers of secondary students. Online subject options are often offered to ameliorate this; however, students may still choose to work with larger classes, particularly in senior years and subjects. Sadly, other reasons for small numbers may include absenteeism and early school leaving situations. The three central schools and the case studies of the three teachers in these contexts are discussed first as the small staff; the isolation and the need for self reliance and autonomy mean that these three teachers are challenged to become competent in their new professional life with limited support.

Paul: Stump Central School

Paul decided to select ‘anywhere in rural NSW’ in his ‘deed of agreement’ with the department despite his personal home area being in Sydney. His wife had come from western NSW and was enthusiastic about a move away from the city. Stump Central School has a very isolated location and the majority of students are from an indigenous background. The school is located in a low socio-economic area in the remote north west of the state. The main problems the school has to face are low enrolments, particularly in secondary classes, and high rates of absenteeism. Just
before my visit, Paul told me that although the secondary section of the schools had fifty three students enrolled, the typical attendance at this time was about 40 most days, a fact which horrified Paul and was also the main focus of the principal. The equipment and resources available through the disadvantaged schools programs mean that the school has excellent resources.

The school was part of a group offering a ‘Senior Access Program’ that was intended to expand the subject choices for students in Years 11 and 12. It also offered TAFE classes which were often attended by adult community members as well as being available for school students. Paul was very involved with these TAFE and VET classes and taught automotive classes to a mixture of school students and community members, two of whom visited him during the school day during my site visit.

Paul’s original career was as an electrician, where he was following in the career path of his father and paternal grandfather. Paul is a very introspective and reflective person and also very ready to discuss issues via email including the idea of social class in Australia. The extended quote below is from an unsolicited email he sent after we discussed his biographical details. Paul gave permission to include the emails he sent during the conduct of this research. I have included it both because it shows a lot about Paul’s nature and attitudes and it also covers a number of wider issues and his opinions on these. The ‘kids’ Paul is referring to in this email are his students at Stump Central School.

Social class is a big issue except for those who are doing alright. Financial prosperity is one thing but that can be overcome if the chips fall the right way – eg go mining or invest the right way. What I notice my kids miss out on is stable relationships and seeing how to interact with others in a manner that will get you ahead. Our kids are either painfully shy so people walk all over them or have a chip on their shoulders so doors close on them before they get a chance. Apart from that many doors are still closed because they are Aboriginal which I can sort of understand as reliability etc are a genuine concern for businesses. I get really annoyed when I hear people bagging out our kids as I think they put up with so much rubbish they don’t need that. Having said that, they still frustrate the hell out of me.

Annette, I may be waffling, but basically how are they meant to know if they just don’t know? If they haven’t seen someone go to work, show affection in an appropriate way, have someone put them first – how are they supposed to know what they can strive for?

I am starting to sound very dramatic- Australia as egalitarian ... bullocks. Actually we are so obsessed with our own lot we as a nation care less about our
community. Instead of social issues, we would rather sit around drinking Crownies talking real estate and how well we are doing. (I am as guilty of this as the next person. (7.8)

The reference number (7.8) is linked to the data archive (Appendix I) where the interested reader can locate the quote or reference to ascertain details such as whether the information has come from an email, an interview or other source as well as the date and year of teaching of the participant teacher.

In this quote, Paul’s frustration, his concerns about the comfortable lifestyle he had as a Sydney electrician and now as a teacher contrast vividly with the difficulties encountered in the remote small and troubled town where the school is located, show his growing realisation that many of the problems he faces at the classroom level are located in wider social, cultural and economic issues. The harsh sounding comments about indigenous employment reflect his, at this time, three years of experience of absenteeism and social realities and difficulties of the community in which the school operates.

Paul: Life history and education

Paul was one of the youngest students completing the program and he began teaching at the age of 32. His school career was stronger than many of the industry entry students as he completed Year 12 with excellent results, so it was not surprising that he gained mostly distinctions and high distinctions in his course work. He explained that he had completed all of his own schooling at independent schools south of Sydney. To use his words from an email about his school career:

I started doing pretty well around probably Year 9/10 but didn’t really rate my ability. Did Year 12 and brained it as I studied pretty hard but didn’t really have much direction. Got into uni to study electrical engineering but left soon after as my Dad encouraged me to get a trade. After doing that, I found I was not satisfied with that type of work. So I procrastinated for a while then heard about retraining as a teacher and the rest is history (7.4).

In a previous interview, Paul had spoken of his dissatisfaction with being an electrician. He had travelled for a period then tried being a sales representative, but he “hated that even more than electrical” (7.1). He had often thought about teaching, a career option two of his sisters had taken up, as he had loved teaching apprentices. The opportunity offered by the course was the impetus he needed to try changing direction.
School visit: Paul

During a site visit in Paul's second year of teaching, I arrived early in the morning and found Paul one of the few people already at work. This became a pattern during school visits with virtually all of the 12 teachers. I always arrived as early as possible as they were always found at school organising their days at least an hour or more before most other staff. Paul seemed both completely at home, particularly in the well equipped workshop area, and at the same time quite isolated from other staff. The overall atmosphere among the staff in the secondary section, with a couple of exceptions, was that this isolated and challenging school appointment was something to be endured and left behind as soon as possible, Paul explained. He was very committed to the school and planned to stay beyond the three years he was bonded to stay – in fact he has remained there until the present, where he is now the Head Teacher, Welfare.

The school day started with a brief assembly. Because of the poor attendance, part of the reason for the secondary school assembly was to work out how the day would be organised. He told me later that, because of my visit, he had worked hard to ensure that as many students as possible would attend. His teaching room was alive with indigenous posters and interesting quotes on the walls. He was teaching maths to a small group of Year 9 and 10 boys who were all on individual programs devised by Paul. He was being drawn to teaching more and more mathematics because poor attendance meant extended projects in design and technology became more or less impossible to complete. He explained in an email in his first year of teaching:

I think the kids are fantastic and has given me a new perspective on Aboriginal Education (to give hand outs or not, who knows). Some weeks I am my harshest critic and it is easy to bag yourself out for having done this or that or not managed to engage kids in your subject but the days it does click (ie they stay in the classroom) it is fantastic. The biggest thrill I have ever had in my working life was when a kid casually worked out 3 times 36 in his head. That was huge considering he had to count on his fingers and couldn’t add up 10 + 30 at start of the year. Believe me I have not had that sort of success with others, especially in the workshop (7.4).

During the classes I observed that day, Paul was constantly on the move, checking, challenging and interacting with students. He showed me some very quick projects he had devised so students could complete a significant although small and simple job even if they were sporadic attendees. The issue Paul and other staff have
concentrated on more than any other aspect of school life has been that of attendance. There had been improvement at times, but it remained a challenge. The three classes I observed were all junior maths classes, all with small numbers, allowing Paul to work with individuals all the time. At one stage when he was attempting to explain decimal points and multiplication, he actually wrote on the carpet and on the desks in chalk to show the concept and when this did not work, he jumped on and off a desk to show the different ‘number columns’ as the numbers were divided and multiplied by ten. At times, he acted like a football coach, making the class seem exciting and continually reflecting any successes and steps towards understanding. The most outstanding feature of the morning was the sheer amount of genuine encouragement and the energy Paul brought and expended in teaching.

In the lunch break, Paul took me up the back of the school as he explained he finds the secondary staff room a negative space and the pleasant wooded area behind his workshop allowed a private conversation. His enthusiasm has been criticised by some less happy staff, although the few more stable staff, mainly casuals, are more supportive. He has had three principals in the eighteen months he has been in the school but he is happier with the current one as she is connected to the local area and might stay.

During his teaching time at Stump Central, his interests have moved from workshop subjects to mathematics and student welfare. He also felt less confident about design and technology. He had found out from the department that the electrical trades were no longer considered a suitable entry trade for the teacher education program he completed. The broad range of practical skills required to be a TAS teacher concerned him during the course, especially as he saw the practical skills of students with a background in wood and metals. During his internship, his mentor noted in the work report:

In the workshop, he produced high quality demonstrations and jobs to show or assist students with their practical work ... he has greatly developed his hand and machine skills (7.7).

Paul has investigated retraining as a maths teacher and may pursue this in the future, although as the father of two very young children he had not started any further study at this time. During our conversation, the main impression I took away was of a young man completely immersed in his students and his developing confidence
and competence as a practitioner despite the ‘bagging out’ this sometimes entailed from colleagues.

Claire: Border Central School

From the far north west of the state, where Paul was teaching, the location moves to the far south west of the state to consider Claire who moved there half way through her first year of teaching. Having completed her internship at the school in her home district in the eastern Riverina, she spent her first six months of teaching in the same school before being given her permanent position at Border Central School. Border is a small but quite economically strong community.

Although the school has only around 60 students enrolled in secondary classes, the numbers are augmented by the programs offered by distance education throughout the district for students who are unable to attend a local secondary school. The school specifically aims to offer a range of programs to ‘overcome disadvantages resulting from isolation’, as stated on its webpage. As Claire is an Information Technology teacher, she is very involved with the distance education aspect of the school. For example, in her first year of teaching at Border, she had four distance education classes and only one Year 9 Computing Studies and a Year 12 IT class on campus.

At first, on appointment she found the move very daunting as she had to leave family and familiar surroundings after the death of one of her parents and relocate five hours driving distance to a very small town where, like all three teachers living and working in Central Schools in my study, she lived in subsidized teacher housing. This subsidised accommodation was an aspect all three found excellent in terms of the cost and condition of the accommodation which the department offers as an additional incentive for teachers in remote locations.

Claire started well in the school and enjoyed the support and close working relationship with the small but dedicated staff and community. As she stated, her belief was that “In a small community such as (Border), a school and the staff in it are central to the well being of the town financially and morally” (3.8).

Unfortunately, after the first four years, many changes in school management and what Claire perceived to be limited opportunities to develop in areas such as
working on the school network and increasing her work with indigenous students despite her repeated requests for such changes, led to her transferring to another school after five years at Border Central School.

Claire: Life history and education
Claire was older than many of the other ATTP candidates and started teaching in her late forties. She was born in Sussex in England and her father was in the Royal Navy. When the family moved to Australia, Claire was ten. Her father re-enlisted in the Australian Navy. Claire wrote in her life history document (3.3) that her father’s family was “more upper class than Mum, and Mum was never really accepted by Dad’s parents”, a contributing factor to the shift to Australia. Claire left secondary school at the end of Year 11 and worked in administrative and secretarial positions for most of her career.

In the five years before starting her teacher education, Claire returned to study to complete a Diploma in Business Services and a variety of IT and other courses at her local TAFE college. She had issues with confidence during her first year of teaching which she attempted to address through extreme care and effort in preparation. As she explained in an interview conducted at the end of her second year of teaching:

I go in prepared but I’m still thinking – um – they might throw me a hairy question or something ... (laughing ... so I’m always – sort of – um – a bit apprehensive. I suppose you could say – that maybe something might happen that I’m not prepared for or I don’t know ... but I think I’m getting over that now (3.1).

This topic was returned to by Clare later in the same interview when she was reflecting on her teaching. She alluded to the potential feeling of being under prepared, which some other graduates from the course have mentioned and which may be connected to the different pathway to becoming a teacher.

Usually I reflect back and say – well I sort of talk to myself – what a bloody idiot you were, you know, because there was nothing to be frightened of and, you know, what on earth can they do that’s going to, you know, be negative really. So I think it’s possibly more of a personal thing or a confidence thing ... ‘cause I’ve found as I’ve gone along that’s getting less and less. I think it might have come back to the issue of not knowing the actual syllabus and the text books and the subjects and that kind of thing. (3.1)

The concern about ‘not knowing enough’ about the actual school processes and resources recurred in several interactions with Claire and some other teachers from
the program. It may reflect either the disadvantages of an accelerated program or it may equally represent typical novice lack of confidence, particularly in an older graduand who prides herself of always being well prepared for any situation in her previous careers. This theme will be considered further in cross case analysis.

School visit: Claire

When I visited Claire part way through her second year of teaching, I found her ensconced in a warm and friendly staff room in a small and very neatly presented school with beautiful grounds and reception area. It was evident that Claire got on very well with other secondary staff who all shared the same staff work room. Claire had trouble with some aspects of management during her five years at the school, partly because of too frequent changes. Unlike some other participants, Claire looked younger and happier than she had done during her course of study and she told me she was, at that time, thriving on teaching in this location although the great distance from family and friends was of concern.

The day started with a meeting between Claire and the Head Teacher of Distance Education (DE) during which all Year II distance students' marks were checked and entered. He commented on Claire's excellent ability in meeting deadlines. Claire was also involved with preparing a new subject for DE, Year 9 Information and Software Technology (IST), as well as developing support materials for other subjects. She told me about the satisfying aspect of being able to drive and visit some of the distance students, particularly during the early stages of their study, to get them started individually. She was involved in teaching Year 11 and 12 Business Services, a VET subject, as well as Information Processes and Technology (IPT) and IT VET to senior students all by distance education. She had been responsible for developing the VET materials for both subjects, very much basing these materials on her industry background. Preparing these materials was underpinned by the learning she had done in her, much larger, first school where she had completed her curriculum subjects in the problem based learning stage. She had continued there to complete ten weeks of her internship before being given a temporary appointment at this same school. When she was in a more isolated location such as Border CS where she was the only IT teacher, she was able to access her own produced materials as well as gaining support from her previous school.
One of the on campus classes I had the opportunity to observe was her Year 9 IST class who were very excited as they were making a film involving water pistols, which seemed a particularly appropriate subject given the extreme heat of the early summer day of this visit. Claire seemed to have a very formal approach with students lining up very quietly and being evidently very clearly inducted into the rules and manners expected in an IT class. The routines seemed very well established and she told me she became very annoyed by issues of poor behaviour in computer rooms as she feared "kids were sometimes ‘trained’ to behave badly in computer rooms" (3.5).

The students were very engaged in writing their scripts – they were preparing storyboards and were very busy with the process. Claire returned draft material to some students and individual consultations on their efforts continued throughout the lesson. Claire spoke very quietly to students who seemed to respond very well to this soft spoken dialogue. In my field notes, I described the rapport I observed as ‘almost magical’. The class room atmosphere was very relaxed and communication was similar to what one might find in a busy studio or other creative office workspace, even though this was a Year 9 class at the end of a very hot morning near the end of the school year. To exemplify from the field notes:

Claire is in control but because everyone is so engaged in film making task – for example, when Claire was trying to run through someone’s script, a girl ran up and read it better, apologising as she ran in that she was sorry but it was hard for Mrs C to follow – Claire took this in the spirit intended. One boy was very keen on showing off – Claire paid limited attention to him while he was ‘carrying on’ – then looked at him and took notice when he was doing the right thing. (3.5)

The class ended with Claire calling ‘Action’ followed by numerous rehearsals of the materials. She seemed to be adept at encouraging the students while discouraging silly behaviours and she had the students acting very cooperatively. They seemed quite inspired by their project. My inscription and interpretation of this scene was that Claire’s maturity and experience of working in office environments seemed to underpin the atmosphere and conduct of her classes. Not for the first or last time during data gathering, this classroom reminded me more of a quiet workplace than a usual class environment.
Lauder: Life history

Lauder was in his early forties when he began his career as a teacher after a varied earlier position as a telecommunications technician was discontinued in his home area in the north of the state. He was fortunate as the two schools he was appointed to initially were both located reasonably close to his home.

Lauder’s family had migrated from Europe when he was eight. He struggled greatly with school and language, describing his early impressions of school in an email sent early in his first year of teaching:

My first experience with school was in a private Catholic school in [location]. Memories from this time are not pleasant as I was seldom understood and struggled to hide being different and not comprehending what was going on around me (10.1).

He went on to comment that “teachers failed to see the problems that I experienced”.

Despite these hardships, he later found his prowess and interest in sport combined with his determination and “an attitude that I would succeed despite any negative attitudes that I encountered” (10.1) saw him completing Year 12 and gaining a traineeship with State Rail where he completed his apprenticeship in the metals trade. He went on to work with a State Electricity Commission before his eighteen year major career as a telecommunications technician. He wrote proudly to me about his work with some of the first optical fibre networks at the site where later the Olympics were held – terming this one of the highlights of his career. His father was described by Lauder as an extremely hard working man who started as a Fitter and Turner and studied at nights to become an engineer. Sadly, Lauder had a more difficult relationship with his mother whom he described as:

... a very strong, dominant and critical personality. I grew up with no praise and she was always very critical of my ability – with no belief that I could make it through university (still to this day!!) pushed into a trade (10.7).

School visit: Lauder

When I visited Hidden Valley Central School I was very impressed by the beauty of the surroundings and the well kept and old fashioned style of the school with flower beds and small older buildings dotted among the ubiquitous demountables and more modern classrooms. Lauder was found in his workshop classroom preparing for the day. In fact he did not seem to use the staffroom except as a storage space and for
meetings. He had set up his work and focus of attention in a large combined workshop/classroom. It was an unusual set up but Lauder explained he had rebuilt the room himself so that students could complete theory work and other tasks and still be under his supervision if he wanted to use the tools and equipment in the large well set up workshop and storage space behind the desk area.

We discussed his progress as a teacher. He told me he had become a lot more confident in his second year at the small central school even though his appointment there meant he had to stay away from his family during the week and drive the two hours home for weekends. Similarly to Claire, he had spent his first year in a temporary position at the large regional school where he had completed his internship but he had not really thrived in this environment as he was given a variety of teaching across the whole TAS faculty as an ‘above establishment teacher’. This meant he filled in for others like a casual or replacement teacher. He told me that as a beginning teacher:

The biggest concern that I had was actually standing up in front of a group of students giving them a talk ... because in the past, coming from a background of industry, we were always working on a site so it was easy just to say “This is what we need to do guys – do it”, whereas now you’re standing in front of a classroom filled with students and I just felt – oooorgh – I don’t know, this is going to be a bit daunting (10.2)

**Hidden Valley Central School**

Hidden Valley drew students from a wide area in a sparsely populated region in the north of the state and many students attend school by bus. I noticed that in the primary school there were a higher number of Indigenous students whereas in the secondary section, there were very few Indigenous students. Lauder was embarrassed when I asked about this discrepancy and he attributed it to absenteeism initially. He then explained that indigenous students either accessed TAFE or alternative education opportunities although he was not sure of the history of this anomaly. I was welcomed by the principal who was very impressed by Lauder’s contribution and energy at the school. The principal also had a TAS background in Agriculture and he described Lauder as “a perfectionist – so keen” (10.6). He also expressed the belief that new mature graduate teachers take teaching far more seriously than most straight from university. He saw Lauder as “prepared –
incredibly prepared” (10.6) which could, however, in his opinion, lead Lauder into frustration when things interfered with his plans.

Observation and discussion: Lauder
The first class I observed was a combined Year 11 and 12 Design and Technology class where the students were covering theoretical aspects of design in a very interactive question and answer session. Lauder was extremely focussed and the practically oriented session progressed quickly to a move to the workshop area except for one person who did not have the required safety shoes. Lauder is so insistent on occupation health and safety that he warned me prior to my visit that I would need to bring ‘closed in’ shoes or I would not be permitted in the workshop during class. I complied of course.

As I observed Lauder in the workshop, again I saw the workplace style of the class where Lauder kept himself and the 16 students very active, ignoring non-productive comments, which were rare, in favour of moving on and creating a sense of progress. Lauder also told me of the various adult classes he runs during the evenings as well as adding unemployed adult learners to his VET Metals and VET Construction courses for senior students in school time to increase the numbers and viability of the programs. He pointed out the window to show me a shed he had remodelled as a welding workshop so he could keep the main workshop for wood and other tools.

Lauder was also teaching Technology Mandatory to Year 7 and 8 classes and Food Technology to Year 9s as he was the only technology teacher on staff. The small class of students selecting Food Technology were making fruit cocktails. Once again, a student who did not have the required equipment or materials was assigned alternative activities and not permitted to participate in the practical session. The main focus of the topic was commercial and Lauder had linked the activity to the increased number of juice bars in the nearest shopping mall. Much of the lesson focussed on costings and discussion of juice bars as a business opportunity in their tiny town.

I interviewed another teacher who was a casual teacher and lived in the town unlike many of the staff who commute. She commented:
A lot of people think teaching is just part and extension from school. Not Lauder. It's very much I'm preparing these students for a... a workplace—and I think that's underlying with all his work—he's not just here to fill in the gap---to fill in the time---if the kids want to do the subject, I'll teach it...to get the adults involved with the school, that's the first thing (he has done)...but to get them as students of the school—to extend them... in a small school you have got to mix—you have to be part of the community, not just the school community—the wider—and he has done that and that's important...in our school you have to be able, like me, to be able to teach a bit of woodwork, metal work, science, maths, whatever and Lauder has been able to do that—he does—he teaches cooking!

(10.5)

When I spoke to Lauder again after this interview with his colleague, he also spoke of teaching swimming at the local pool, coaching soccer and the evening VET classes he was running in Construction and Metals, explaining these as activities to fill in his week while he was away from home. He was also, like Paul much further west, renovating old houses for an extra activity after what they both saw as a short work day.

**Conclusion**

Later in the discussion chapters, the analysis of some of these data will continue but the glimpses afforded through the introduction to three very different teachers in small remote central schools already suggest a very different approach to some aspects of beginning as a teacher. This seemed particularly evident in the smallest schools, such as these, as head teacher roles are across a range of subject areas, rather than linked to their own discipline areas, which means much of the planning and decision making has to be done by new teachers.

In Hidden Valley, as in the other central schools participating in the study, staff turnover is very high and new teachers inherit very little in terms of programs and assessment materials and other resources. Their stamina, energy and commitment made these school visits a wonderful experience far beyond what I expected from the interviews and emails that preceded them. In email and phone conversations prior to the site visits, there were more frequently threads of concern about how well these new teachers were adapting to their new life. There was also an interest in discussing other aspects of their lives, possibly partly because of the ‘university student/lecturer’ aspects of the relationship between researcher and participant. Being aware of the ethical aspects of this relationship, having the opportunity to
observe and follow these teachers at their school sites as well as speaking to other teachers and principals of their schools, added a strong cross checking aspect to the study.

In the next two chapters, the other nine participants and their school contexts are introduced. In Chapter 6, the teachers who were appointed to medium sized secondary schools form the group under observation and discussion. In Chapter 7, the final group of teachers who were appointed to large regional secondary schools are discussed before moving on to cross case analysis and a more general discussion of the findings.
Chapter 6. Individual case studies – medium sized rural schools

Introduction
Five of the 12 teachers in this study were appointed to rural high schools with an enrolment of 200 to 400 students. In this chapter, the five teachers and their backgrounds are introduced accompanied by some of their perceptions and experiences. The individual voices of each of the teachers contribute to the depiction of the changes and accommodations required by their career move. The schools to which they were appointed form the context for their first three years of teaching and, in most cases, beyond.

The major difference between these schools and the central school contexts which formed the backdrop in the previous chapter is that these five teachers had other staff in their major discipline area of TAS. Although the small staff might not be in the same technology area, they were experienced teachers with advice and potential support to offer new teachers. There still may not have been a TAS Head Teacher in most cases, but there were other experienced teachers within the discipline who could potentially provide mentoring, resources, programs, assessment schedules and experience in that context. In this chapter, each teacher is introduced and their backgrounds and location examined. As in the previous chapter, their perceptions and commentary allow the initial themes to emerge from the data.

Breaking the participants into three groups for the initial analysis and introduction enabled the importance of a potentially more supportive context in larger schools to be considered as these new teachers adapted to life as educators. These medium sized secondary schools were not as isolated as the tiny central schools. Most had access to a larger regional centre within a reasonable distance enabling more opportunities for professional development and collegiality between different TAS staff members. However, the evidence emerges from the experiences and perceptions of the five teachers discussed in this chapter and it must be emphasised that each school is an individual site with its own context, distinctive issues and challenges.
Tess: General High School

From the first time I met Tess at the first ATTP residential school, I was aware that she was a strong, determined and feisty individual. Her background in agriculture was extensive and varied and it appeared evident that she was a natural leader. As the teacher education staff were aware of some of the prejudices these students could possibly face as teachers from a different background, we decided to explore some of the attitudes and issues in a social setting during a barbeque held during the first residential school. We arranged a one-on-one debate where one side argued for traditional teaching pathways and exaggerated the disparity between 'highly academic' style teachers and those from industry. The other side argued for the benefits of an industry background and a vocational and practical approach to teaching. The teacher education staff modelled the debate, with the rule being that if another person wanted to enter the debate on either side, they 'tagged' the speaker and replaced them. I started the process in the role of a newly appointed industry teacher confronted on her first day in the staff room by a senior history teacher who pretended she thought the new person was the new tuck shop coordinator rather than the new food technology teacher.

After a few turns, where students and staff took on the different roles, the Course Coordinator was having a turn as a highly academic teacher of science and agriculture. Tess became so agitated by his words that she rushed forward and literally tipped him off his stool so she could take up the debate. Her impassioned speech concerning what she believed she could offer students in Agriculture and the VET Primary Industry course was inspirational and took the 'fun' debate to a new level of discussion. Students were inspired by her attitude and assertions, and the debate ended with a very positive atmosphere for these pre-service teachers. I included this brief anecdote because the visual memory I have of the incident embodies the journey and cultural shift required to leave behind the world of trade, in this instance the world of the woolshed, and move into academia and then to schools. The passion and belief that Tess espoused about what she could offer schools students collided with the reasoned academic approach of the experienced teacher educator playing the role of academic – a clash most staff and students could
immediately identify. It also underlined the changes in language and demeanour required to succeed in a professional educator’s role.

**Tess: Life history and education**

Tess became very involved in agriculture from early in her secondary schooling. It dominated her school career to such an extent that her main extra-curricular activities were showing cattle and attending judging schools with the agriculture teacher. She emphasised that she was a ‘town student’ in a rural school and was drawn to farm life and agricultural pursuits. In her last year of the teacher education course, she emailed me to tell me that “on the whole, I didn’t much like school, but I spent every last minute down at the Ag plot” (6.1). Tess completed her HSC and hoped that her marks would allow her entry to study Agricultural Science at university but this did not eventuate. Since she has taken up teaching she has also completed a degree in agriculture. Her journey explains in part why she became so outspoken during the residential school debate as she heard the Course Coordinator, the embodiment of her original goal of completing university qualifications in agricultural science, speaking lightly and humorously about the academic route to teaching agriculture being the only pathway.

Despite not gaining a university position, Tess went to an agriculture college which, to her, offered a more practical approach to learning. She was the Dux in her final year, an honour which had not been awarded to a female student before her success. She worked as a stud cattle groomer and showing cattle continued to be a major focus of her life. However, the seasonal aspects of this work led her to a succession of rural careers including wool classing, management and overseer roles on bigger properties. At the same time, she started on an agriculture degree part time, deciding that her best avenue to teaching would be to complete her degree then complete a post graduate teacher qualification. However, the opportunity to apply for a place in the ATTP course offered her a perfect opportunity to gain her teaching qualification first and rapidly.

In the introduction to the study I asserted that the fact that this program was offered by distance education made it possible for students from rural and regional locations to access the course and potentially remain in the same rural location. This has been
true for Tess who lived and had property in the same district where she has now been teaching since 2003. She summarises what her decision meant for her in an email sent during her fifth year of teaching:

I hadn’t even decided that I wanted to be a teacher when I first applied for the program. I just thought of it as a new challenge. If I liked it I would do it. If I didn’t, I would stick to what I was doing and change careers or jobs in the farming sector every few months, earning crap money, which at the time did not really bother me. As I look at it now, I really have the best of both worlds. I work at a job that is different every day and always satisfying. I can pass on life experiences to young people who are interested in the things I am. I can say that I tried that and I have been able to fulfil my childhood dream of owning my own property (6.9).

Tess completed her internship in her local district high school and then was very excited to be appointed to the same school, General HS, on the completion of her studies. Her work report at the completion of her internship asserted that she had:

... proved herself to be an outstanding practical student. She organised two over night excursions (during her ten week placement). Her programs and attention to detail meant she had no problem delivering her lessons. Her fair treatment of all students has resulted in strong support from parent, students and staff in her program (6.11).

This accolade and the high standards she achieved during her two terms in the school meant she started teaching in a very positive frame, teaching in the same district where she had been a farm contractor, a wool classer and a farm owner. Her local connections have supported many of her endeavours to provide students with authentic learning opportunities and underpinned her credibility as an agriculture teacher.

**School visit: Tess**

When I visited General HS, I found that again, if I wanted to find Tess, she would be unlikely to be in the staffroom, which was a science staffroom. Instead she would be out on the school farm, running cattle club for students during lunch and recess or preparing resources and materials in her agriculture area. We were all concerned about her ‘woolshed and farm’ language, and it was a concern she also shared. In fact, she also shared an incident when she did use inappropriate language. In her second year of teaching she tried to introduce aquaculture to the school with a yabby growing project which had not been a success. She had some Year 7 students assisting her to dismantle the equipment when she felt a stabbing pain in her finger.
When she glanced down she saw her finger was impaled on a dead mouse skeleton and muttered an expletive. All of the students clustered around her immediately and rather than being concerned at her injury, they started chanting “Miss dropped the F bomb – Miss swore”. She believed that experience allowed her to accept that this was a singular occurrence and that she had adjusted to the vocabulary and language of secondary schools.

The school for Tess was divided into students from farms and those students, as she was once herself, who were not from farms and thus did not have the background which allowed the agriculture teacher to assume knowledge. She showed me how she was careful in her planning to cater for these different backgrounds, and it was yet another reason for her extensive involvement in the ‘cattle club’ she had started. In her words she saw the establishment of this club, and the Angus stud she had started, as a means “to allow students opportunities to achieve credibility and break down barriers” (6.3).

I spent some time at cattle club and students told me they saw it as a privilege to be able to join as applicants had to demonstrate commitment and a good attitude before being invited to join (6.3). The science teacher I interviewed about Tess pointed out that many very troublesome students apply to cattle club and it has proved to be excellent for improving their attitude and attendance (6.4). Tess’ classroom was full of displays of medals and trophies that the agriculture classes generally, and the cattle club specifically, had won at agricultural shows, including a Reserve Champion ribbon from the large town nearby.

Of the group of 12 teachers in the case studies, Tess was the only one who was, at least during the data collection period, not really very involved with the TAS department. This was because at General HS agriculture remained in the science faculty and Tess has taught junior science throughout her time at the school. At times this has required further study and learning for Tess, a challenge she embraced as being an opportunity to increase her own knowledge. She has studied to complete her degree since becoming a teacher and takes great pride in being a model of a lifelong learner particularly for senior and VET students. As well as adhering to the syllabus’ direct focus on intensive animal production for Years 9 and 10 Agriculture,
Tess had set up enterprises within the school using the VET Primary Industries course as an organising element. Tess ran about four of these enterprises per year in diverse areas such as hydroponics, animals, poultry, viticulture and the unsuccessful aquaculture to name some examples.

One class I observed was a Year 9/10 group who were digging holes for fencing. This was set up as a collaborative learning activity and all students were very involved. The group had seemed a less than enthusiastic group of learners during a theory class I had observed, but out in the paddock, they were organised, hard working and efficient. Tess believed “that disaffected students (boys in particular) loved getting out in school time and getting involved in practical tasks” (6.3). This model of increasing engagement was repeated across many of the school visits I made to participants and also has triggered anecdotal comments from school staff members beyond the 12 case studied teachers.

Interview with another teacher
In order to provide a more balanced view of Tess and her orientation to teaching, I spent a long time interviewing her colleague in science who had been teaching at the school for almost twenty years. Although he also commented very favourably on her strengths, particularly in her industry knowledge and her planning and programming, he pointed out a feature which I had observed during other site visits and even while monitoring professional experience. Charles expressed it as follows:

(She) is a bit earthy; she is from the shearing culture. She is from the culture – you know – they say what they want when they want – they’re not going to muck around – and she relates well to those people. She doesn’t, in fact, like those smarter classes so much – she thinks they’re a bit too precious. They play mind games – she doesn’t like that (6.4).

This theme of being more focussed on lower ability and struggling students is repeated throughout the study. To a lesser extent, this may be companionsed by less interest in high academic achievers. My own experiences of teaching in secondary schools leads me to assert that the enthusiasm most teachers show for more academic and well motivated students, which is seen as a natural predilection and unproblematic, could be complemented by teachers who take an interest in and identify with more disaffected and less academically competent students. This theme
will be returned to in the cross case evaluation from Chapter 8 as it can be analysed as both a positive and a negative aspect of industry entry and career change teachers.

**Mick: Flats High School**

To visit the next teacher appointed to a small rural secondary school, I needed to drive six hours south west away from the green rolling pastoral country surrounding General High School to a much drier and flatter region. Mick is the other agriculture teacher who volunteered to participate in this study and his background was the opposite of Tess’s animal production and shearing work environment. The contrast was as stark as the disparity in their locations. Mick spent most of his life in a coastal area north of Sydney so relocating to a very isolated region in the far south west of the state could have been challenging. However, Mick has had a very positive attitude to the school and community and has remained as a teacher there well beyond his contracted period. His background in agriculture is in the horticulture industry.

To explain how the teacher education program attempted to complement students’ backgrounds, Mick was required to complete some animal agriculture subject whereas Tess completed some studies in horticulture and plants. Like Tess, he was the only agriculture teacher in the school, but his Head Teacher was the Maths Head Teacher rather than Science, which meant he also found it difficult to become more involved with other TAS teaching areas with the exception of the specific areas of Technology Mandatory aligned with Agriculture for Years 7 and 8. He continued to attempt to integrate specific learning areas from his discipline across other subject areas, particularly TAS, but in his opinion this has been a mainly unsuccessful struggle.

**Mick’s enterprises efforts and experiences**

As soon as Mick was appointed, he decided to launch the senior Primary Industries classes into a market garden enterprise. The principal allocated an area of the extensive school ground for the project and Mick phoned and emailed me several times to express his excitement about the project. Unfortunately, the river which dominates Flats flooded to an unprecedented level just as the market garden was coming up for autumn harvest and the project was ruined. Although Mick was
disappointed that all the efforts the students made were destroyed, they immediately started a herb garden in a higher section of the grounds and went back to rebuilding the enterprise. Mick told me he used "that flood as a big teaching aid" (11.4) and planned in a more environmentally appropriate way for their next gardens. They supplied fresh produce to teachers, local enterprises and of course to the students themselves. The harsh climate meant that learning was authentic with the highs and lows of an agricultural life being experienced by the students.

Other enterprises Mick had set up and trialled included different kinds of animal husbandry such as poultry, guinea pigs, some cattle which he started in his second year, merinos for wool and meat, as well as Wiltshire horned sheep. The latter were interesting as they are fast growing sheep which 'self shear' automatically as they are not 'day length dependent'. The students enthusiastically showed me the small clumps of wool which were not used here, but which could be gathered and sold. He has also started a wide range of horticultural projects such as cultivating salt bush, which they propagated from cuttings and sold as a fodder crop. Permaculture had been introduced for sugar snap and snow peas. Fruit, amaranth, worm farms and fava beans were other crops and activities Mick introduced. Walking around the enormous agricultural plot with Mick and the students, it was wonderful to see the engagement and enthusiasm of the classes. Vandalism had been a problem, particularly in Mick's first two years, but this had lessened as more and more students have experienced agriculture classes. Since Mick had been at the school, he had doubled the number of agriculture classes and offerings.

Despite this school being larger than the Central Schools discussed in the previous chapter, Mick did not have a colleague in his own discipline. He was supervised by the Maths Head Teacher who was supportive in many ways. She was, however, troubled by Mick's commitment to working within the community context. For example, he traded student labour and his own labour for fodder when it was possible. His senior students started community interest groups where "kids are teaching market gardening and landscaping" (11.4) outside school hours. He was also called on as a community resource to give advice on bloated cows and crop issues. These extra-curricular interests and involvements beyond the school were not always seen favourably by some staff although Mick saw them as providing
credibility and experiential opportunities for his classes. He expressed concern about his relationship with senior staff, and in particular mentioned that the principal complained that Mick did not listen to advice and warned he did not want any “empire building” by his staff (11.4). Of the 12 teachers, Mick seemed to have the most problems fitting in with management which could have been partly because of his rather direct and abrasive communication style, as well as his determination to trial and develop as many agricultural pursuits and enterprises as he could to enthuse and engage the students.

Problems and issues
Mick also told me a story on the telephone about a negative experience he had in his first few weeks of teaching at Flats High School. It was his second week at the school and he was allocated a sports group during the afternoon sports activities for all of the junior school. It was a very hot day and his group was the walking group so he decided it might be pleasant for them to walk along the edge of the river. Soon, disaster struck as a few students jumped in the river in their uniforms and started fooling around. Mick tried to get them to come out, but more of the group merely followed suit and soon most of the group were fooling around in the river. In Mick’s words:

"Literally in your first year, if you could do anything wrong, I did it nearly - like when you take them for walking sport - one of them decides to jump in the river - then before you can stop them, the rest of them jump in the river - like, an entire class in the river!" (11.2).

He saw another staff member coming towards him and shouted for assistance or advice. However, the staff member turned away and headed for the school office. “This teacher went back and basically mentioned it to the principal so the principal bit my head off” (11.2). Mick managed eventually to get all students safely back out of the water. However, the stern talk given to him by the principal and what he saw as a rather childish failure to support a colleague by the other teacher was still upsetting him long after the event. This event and the isolation of teaching were stressful and worrying for Mick, particularly in terms of confidence.

"My biggest problem was my first year; I’d get in there and go – crap – if I tell someone I’m not handling this, what is going to happen? It was just sort of in my mind – I don’t think – it wasn’t in any of the other teachers’ minds but other people – through the ATTP course – said the similar things. If you’re in an industry job, if you said you could do something – or you’re employed to
These conversations led to a discussion on mentoring. With a few exceptions, the first group of graduates were not offered mentoring when they took up their positions, although each subsequent group was offered and felt supported by a mentoring program. Mick was matched with a mentor, unlike most of his cohort, but he stated that:

... nothing really happened - I picked one and he was too busy. Then we went to a complete school-based mentoring thing but the meetings weren’t enough (11.2).

**Interviews with the principal and another teacher**

When I spoke to the principal, he was concerned about Mick’s approach in his first year of teaching, asserting that an ‘abbreviated program’ (*sic*) did not allow the pre-service teachers time to develop, although he conceded that he “has seen growth over the three years that Mick Has been at the school – I extended his probationary period” (11.3). The principal saw advantages in industry background teachers as they “talk to the kids about the relevance ... *of what they are learning* ... real-life things” (11.3). He also referred to a VETiS audit of the Primary Industries programs and delivery and was very proud of the fact that Mick’s was taken back to the department as an example or model for other schools. He saw Mick as having good intentions but “sometimes he is a bit unrealistic” (11.3). In summation, the principal believed:

He is very committed to the school. He has very good intentions. His personality puts some people off side (and) people may be unforgiving about mistakes in early years of teaching – but he comes to every school function. He drives a bus for the staff Christmas function. Extra things - anything he is asked to do, he does (11.3).

During a visit to Flats High School, I also interviewed a colleague of Mick’s, an experienced science teacher located in the same staff room. His comments illuminate the principal’s concerns in an indirect manner. ‘Don’ told me that he believed:

... rapport with students was a strong point - a strength he brought with him to the career. Added to this, his wide and broad industry experience and background knowledge. School routines and strictures were his biggest problem – paperwork – crossing t’s and administration in particular (11.5).

In summary, Mick had some issues with the expectations of the daily routines and administrative side of teaching. However, from the moment I arrived at Flats High School for a field visit to when I left, I saw Mick’s constant involvement with
students in class and all over his school farm. It seemed as if his strong views on treating students with respect. Modelling this meant that at times he might have been out of step with other staff and this issue concerned him, yet it was in part because of his personal philosophy and approach.

I actually prefer being out in the playground yakking to the kids than being in the staff common room yakking to the teachers ... because of the complaint cycle thing – what about that kid when he did this in my class – and it brings out that whole sort of – expectation of what the kid’s going to be like before you even walk into class (11.2).

This conception of being there for students is a theme which recurred throughout the data and will be returned to in later analysis.

Walter: Riverland High School

Riverland High School is situated in a medium sized town west of Wagga Wagga. The town is in a low socio-economic area and there are many Indigenous students at the secondary school, the only high school in the town. The town was also home to a large and active TAFE College which offered the VETiS subjects to students directly rather than having duplicated courses in the school setting. Walter was an Industrial Technology teacher specialising in Metals. Riverland HS offered a well established TAS faculty with a small group of teachers who seemed to work very closely in a collegial manner. Again, there was no TAS Head Teacher and the English Head Teacher was Walter’s direct supervisor. Unlike some other schools and participants I visited, it was evident that Walter appreciated and felt supported by his colleagues as well as being well respected himself. The principal was particularly impressed by Walter’s commitment and attitude to teaching.

Walter was not an enthusiastic student during his own schooling and left at the end of Year 10 to become an apprentice mechanic. He completed his apprenticeship then went on to become a fitter and turner as well, although he did not find this career fulfilling. He then went on to become a Customer Service manager for an Industrial Services company – a position that was stressful and challenging but which also saw him working extensive hours and prevented him spending time with his family and his major hobby, which is playing in and leading brass bands. These were part of the motivating factors in his decision to seek a career change in teaching.
The teaching profession gives me so many areas to continue: job satisfaction in being able to educate other people, a solid career path, family life, financial stability and an endless need to continue to study (8.1).

The theme of lifelong learning and continuing study has emerged from almost all of the case studies and will be revisited in the analysis and discussion chapter.

School visit: Walter

When I visited Riverland, many of the other teachers approached me with unsolicited comments about Walter in a way that did not occur at other schools. This may have been because I was geographically located closer to this school so I had visited it for many reasons and knew many staff members. The food technology teacher told me:

He’s fantastic – he’s taken up being a Year Advisor, the SRC staff representative – he has great rapport with the students and his general professionalism is impressive (8.3).

Immediately before my visit, Walter had been featured in the local paper for winning marching band awards at a National Championship in South Australia. The principal, who had an Industrial Technology background himself, told me that Walter’s maturity and wealth of industry experience compensated for the lack of familiarity with schools when he first started teaching.

It is a long time since being in the classroom itself – big changes – and a rude shock for him. He was a bit blinkered about how classrooms operate now (8.5).

During the day spent observing his teaching and walking around the school with Walter, my field notes comment that he was more conservative and traditional in style compared with the other case studied teachers. This may have reflected the conservative context of the school, his personal predilections or even the fact that he was older when he started teaching in his mid forties. It also could reflect the high level of management he was involved with during his immediate career prior to teaching where, in his role as a State Manager, he was running multi-million dollar operations.

In class, Walter spoke very quietly to students, responding quickly and in a low voice to student requests with no evidence of behaviour management issues. He was also very clear and direct about rules and expectations. The Year 10 metal work students were busy with an engaging design process. They were enthusiastic to show
me their projects, which were weather vanes of individual designs yet within strict parameters in terms of design guidelines. My field notes reflect that the students "seem to be given lots of leeway but they are all 'doing the right thing' – he treats them as mature – it's a given for Walter" (8.3). However, behaviour management, as well as absenteeism, were major problems at this school. In an interview during Walter's second year of teaching he alluded to the problems he had during his first year:

Well, probably look at the school, in particular, that is that the first 12 months, I think it's like any beginning teacher, it's hell, in particular because of some of the cohorts of the school that I was at, it was extremely difficult, and you question whether you've done the right thing, in particular coming from a trade then moving into teaching. (8.2)

I asked him if he would describe the school he was at as a fairly challenging school. He replied – "it's getting easier" (8.2). However, from experience with student teachers and through the knowledge that this is a 'hard to staff' school with a high turnover of staff, this was a challenging context to begin a teaching career. Walter also believed he had 'inherited' many of the behavioural problems from the teacher who had preceded him as routines had not been established and the workshop and classrooms were in a poor state. No programs or other resources or recent teaching materials were on file at the school.

Walter, unlike every other teacher included in this series of case studies, lived in another area and had less involvement in the local community. This may have affected his standing, especially in his first year. Another TAS teacher I interviewed at the school shared this view stating "I think it is a definite benefit to be in town. I go to the local footie and things like that all the time" (8.4). However, this same teacher asserted that Walter had compensated for this through building up good rapport with students during the school day, arriving early and leaving later to ensure there were opportunities for students to access the workshop areas outside class times, especially for senior projects.

Similarly to Tess and others, Walter also expressed concern about being prepared for all eventualities.

I'm always - sort of - um - a bit apprehensive I suppose you could say - that maybe something might happen that I'm not prepared for or I don't know... but I think I'm getting over that now (8.2).
My observations and interviews suggested Walter spent additional time planning and preparing for every eventuality, lesson and program. The principal also commented favourably on Walter’s professional approach to planning, preparation, assessment and reporting. After completing his required three years at Riverland High School, Walter applied for a senior position at a private secondary school in Canberra. He emailed me during his first year at this senior college saying:

I am already a head teacher at one of the largest private schools in Canberra with a staff of eight under my direction. The students respond to teacher direction and enjoy coming to school. The morale of the staff is high and this reflects in their individual teaching. I have so much to learn as a teacher but I am enjoying the journey now (8.7).

This quote suggests that Walter was very careful in our interviews and discussions to avoid areas of difficulty – a situation where his desire to be seen as doing well as a teacher probably inhibited his responses with a former lecturer – a limitation of the researcher also being a former lecturer of the participant.

After he had left Riverland High School, Walter told me about an incident during his second year of teaching where a male student alleged Walter had assaulted him during a class. This was investigated over an extended period where Walter was given limited to no information about the progress of the situation.

This was uncomfortable for all as I did not know what internal affairs were looking at and there was no communication from the principal. This was another time when I thought ‘Have I made the right decision?’ The final wash of the case was that the student was allowed to return. I was not disciplined (8.7).

Despite the fact that Walter and I were communicating quite regularly during this period, Walter never mentioned this difficulty directly, which also reflected the importance of confidentiality in such situations.

**Liam: Grant High School**

Although Grant High School is about the same size as Riverland High School where Walter was located, there are a number of secondary school options in the larger town where it is situated. Liam attended school himself at the other government school in the town, so being appointed to Grant High School also meant a return home after many years away during his career as a chef and restaurant proprietor. He left school himself in Year 10 as soon as he turned fifteen as he was offered an apprenticeship in Canberra which he successfully completed before becoming the
‘Chef de Partie’ at Parliament House. He went overseas and spent some years as a chef in London and later in Switzerland before returning to Canberra where he opened a restaurant and taught hospitality at the Canberra Institute of Technology. He enjoyed teaching apprentices and vocational students so much that he decided to attempt to become a teacher. (9.1).

From his first practicum experience and through all the time I have known him, Liam seemed to me to be what some people would term a ‘natural teacher’ as his personality and energy matched very closely those required of an educator of adolescents. Liam arranged his internship program with some food technology teachers at a school near Canberra while the Head Teacher, a traditionalist, was on long service leave. She was upset on her return as she disapproved of industry entry programs and was not happy about having a male chef in her department for twenty weeks during his curriculum problem based learning and internship phase. However, he impressed her enough to change her opinion and she wrote in his work report at the end of the internship:

‘Liam’ is becoming a confident and articulate classroom practitioner. He has established a rapport with his students and is attuned to individual needs and abilities. ‘Liam’ willingly listens to advice and critically reflects on his own practice. As a result he endeavours to use a range of teaching and learning strategies. He has been a valued member of the Home Economics faculty (9.11).

This is an impressive report for a student teacher, and for it to be made by a Head Teacher who had phoned and asked me, in my role as internship coordinator, to try and find him an alternative placement prior to his time at the school was even more remarkable. The entire report glowed with praise and commendation.

**School visit: Liam**

Grant High School has a challenging mix of students from the town and its rural surrounds and, at the time, the student body included a high number of Indigenous and Pacific Island students as well as quite a high number of students from a lower socio-economic background. Liam, unlike most of his university cohort, was matched with a mentor as soon as he started teaching through an in-school scheme.

We had a teacher mentor at school in my first year of teaching and she’s still there and that’s been really good. She offers lots of classroom support when other teachers are not around (9.2).
He was also supported by having a Head Teacher in his discipline area of Food Technology, with the TAS faculty having four teachers on staff in this area. Liam really enjoyed learning how to become a teacher in such a highly supportive team atmosphere with shared resources and ideas. Other support was also available through working with:

the Aboriginal liaison officer to help with Koorie kids. She is extremely helpful and happy to attend any classes if you wish or take students out of class to complete their work if they can’t manage themselves in the classroom. They only have to go to her once or twice and after that they know you mean business (9.4).

Despite this support, Liam was very concerned at the start of his teaching career about classroom management and how to “handle all the kids” (9.4). He was also worried about how he was:

... going to deliver a unit of work. A big concern I had half way through a unit of work was – have I covered it properly and am I going to be able to finish it ... these sort of things I could ask my head teacher and she was very good (9.2).

He provided a number of examples of her offering advice and going through his program with him. During an interview in his third year, he stated that these concerns lessened over time and with experience.

When I visited Grant High School, the close relationship the Food Technology Department had fostered within their staffroom was clearly apparent. I noticed from the first class observed, Year 7 Food Technology, through the whole day that Liam spoke in a very different manner using a slower delivery and a ‘teacher voice’. I hypothesised this may have been because he was part of such a close teaching team where members of staff walked in and out of each other’s classrooms freely. This meant that the teaching and learning seemed to take place in a more public space than was typical of most other schools I had visited as part of this research. The main difference, particularly in junior classes, was the tone he used. Liam spoke to students as children whereas the other case studied teachers spoke to their students more as if they were workplace supervisors addressing a team of adult workers. Although Liam exhibited a relaxed and warm manner with his students, his was a very directive style. He gave instructions continually and expected and waited for his directions to be carried out by students. His style meant that students were kept very busy. He told me informally that he believed the very directive style calmed students
and his intention was that all students should always know exactly what they should be doing at all times.

In a Year 10 Food Technology practical class I observed later in the day, I noted Liam’s extensive knowledge of the students in his class – their own interests, eccentricities and individual abilities. For example, he had additional activities and challenges for a gifted student which replaced revision and simpler activities other students were engaged with. He combined instructions with warnings in a warm and engaging atmosphere with directions such as “you need to listen carefully to this or it is not going to work out” (9.6). His energy, moving around the kitchen rapidly to check and advise students, he described as a benefit from working in a busy catering environment. This formed an interesting contrast between the busy chef with the voice and the pedagogical practices of a traditional teacher. He shared the interest, previously noted in earlier case studies, in lower ability students and taught VET Hospitality rather than Food Technology to senior students as he found the syllabus and teaching content “too complex” and felt he was better “to stick with areas of strength” (9.6).

Perceptions of another teacher and the principal
The other teacher interviewed at Grant High School was a senior Food Technology teacher with twenty five years of teaching experience who will be referred to as Olivia. She had completed a traditional pathway to teaching through a major city university course and had reservations initially about teachers from an industry background. However, working with Liam and also supervising some other industry background teachers during professional experience and internship had changed her opinion to some degree. When asked about Liam’s time as a beginning teacher at the school, Olivia commented: “he coped really well – right from the start and I think despite the fact he was on the fast track on that program – his resilience as an early teacher was wonderful” (9.7). I asked for further explanation and she stated:

Just resilience with tough kids – or with situations where a lot of our younger teachers, with not a lot of life experience, don’t seem to be able to move on – accept or learn from a mistake. They tend to – not chuck it in – but just – I look at some of our newer graduate teachers – and then at ‘Liam’ and another fast track student I was mentor for at the school – and I look at those teachers and their life experience and their maturity seems to – and their training – whatever you guys did with them with training – has made them more resilient with.
difficult students; in dealing with challenges that come their way; in dealing with adjusting to a different working environment from what they've come from (9.7). Olivia went on to say that Liam has since his first year "gone mega miles and is keen and enthused to look for those opportunities to develop" (9.7).

Finally, the interview conducted with the Principal of Grant High School was very interesting in that she had experienced many teachers with an industry background at her school and was troubled by some features she had found problematic although throughout the interview she referred to Liam as being an exception to many of her comments.

Some industry background teachers think they are on some sort of cause / mission – 'save the kids' type of mentality. They have been away from kids long enough to no longer know what adolescents are like – transitions can be difficult (9.8).

Of Liam she commented that he was "absolutely up to scratch" and that he "gets on really well with students". She admired his dedication to "ensure every kid achieves their potential" (9.8).

**Tom: Rural Valley High School**

The final teacher in this set of five case studies from smaller rural high schools is Tom who was appointed to a small high school in the New England district. Tom was a very quiet man and he was more difficult to interview than most of the others because of his manner. Tom is the son of a factory manager and school secretary who had emigrated from England (4.1). Tom was brought up in Sydney. He left school after Year 10 to do an electrical apprenticeship at the factory his father managed. After his initial apprenticeship he spent thirteen years in the United States developing skills and expertise in neon and other display lighting.

When he returned to Sydney he realised the prohibitive cost of living for a married couple with young children and one of the reasons he applied for a place on the course was to find a career that would allow a move out of the city and better working hours which would allow him more family time. Interestingly, during all the interviews, discussions and emails I conducted with participants, Tom was the only one who never mentioned a prior enthusiasm or desire to become a teacher. It seemed a purely pragmatic choice, possibly influenced by his wife. Sadly, during the
completion of his studies, his wife left him and moved to the far north of the state with his children.

**Issues and concerns for Tom**

Relocating west of Sydney was difficult for Tom as it took him further away from his children. He responded to my question about major concerns about beginning teaching by saying “I guess the move to the country and the wife leaving was the (major concern)” (4.2). He was also worried about his ability to “slide smoothly into an existing, you know, an established country school staffroom” (4.2). However, he found he was able to “slip right in there as teachers seem to be a reasonable bunch of people” (4.2).

Tom found the small rural town and the supportive staff helpful. He mentioned there were teachers on staff from a variety of backgrounds, including one who had done a similar course at a different university. He adapted as well as he could to his new career, which he found challenging particularly because he found himself teaching across unfamiliar disciplines. The first example Tom provided was when he was given a Year 8 Physical Education theory class which he taught “only once a cycle” which meant he saw them for one period every fortnight. He described it as:

... a Year 8 PE theory class with 28 – 30 kids – they knew I was out of my teaching area and I just went – God ....for me it was a nightmare – I used to really kind of stress about – or worry about that class then – a few weeks later, I got given another – a Year 9 PE theory class with the worst kids in it – they were standing on desks and they were throwing stuff around... they wanted to be outside because it was PE and they were doing theory. I got the head teacher, who is actually the maths head teacher because it is a small PE department – I had to write a report and the kids’ names – he just dragged them all down with me at the start of the next lesson and kind of, you know, laid down the law and really helped me out. .... they know it’s not your subject area – you’ve got nothing going for you – I’m not used to being – standing in front of a class that size. I’m not a shouter – I refuse to stand there and scream at people ... but it all panned out okay now – just my classroom management now – is so much more confident that you could pretty much throw me anywhere and I’d be all right – sort of thing (4.2).

**School visit: Tom**

When I visited Rural Valley High School, the main feature of Tom’s teaching style was his very quiet yet casual way of addressing students. I described Liam in the previous case study as exhibiting a very conventional teacher style of
communication with his use of a 'teacher voice', Tom was the opposite. Even reading the daily notices to his roll class and asking about uniform discrepancies, Tom addressed the group in a very low voice and students had to be very quiet to hear him speak – a strategy that seemed to be working well for him.

In his third year of teaching when I visited, Tom was very pleased to be teaching Metals Technology to Years 9 and 10, Year 8 Technology Mandatory mainly in wood electives and VET construction, for which he was being provided with additional training as this was not part of his original trade area. He agreed with the point made by Paul at Stump Central School, the other electrician given a place in the program, that an electrical trades background did not fit particularly well with school syllabus requirements in the TAS areas of study commonly taught and he agreed with the NSW Department of Education's decision to no longer offer places to electricians. Despite this problem, Tom was really enjoying his VET construction class who were working on six major projects around the school.

Observing the Year 9 / 10 Metals technology class, again I observed the 'consultative foreman' style of teaching which had been so evident in almost all other workshop classes observed with other participants. Tom had combined elements of art within his metal classes in a deliberate attempt to boost numbers so, for instance, there were girls doing jewellery making projects. The whole class was very enthusiastic about making projects for "an expo that was coming up" (4.4). Tom seemed much more relaxed and natural in the workshop environment and I really appreciated the warm and friendly tone he adopted when addressing students - more frequently speaking to individuals and small groups rather than to the whole class.

Most students were very engaged with projects involving recycling horse shoes creatively. Tom quietly pointed out a slightly older looking student who seemed very engaged with a number of projects. Tom told me this boy had issues with literacy and learning. He worked on a horse stud, which involved him getting up very early in the morning before he came to school, and had resulted in much absenteeism. Tom had found out about his passion for collecting and making items from recycled horse shoes and this had inspired this session's series of projects for the 'expo'. The
boy had collected and donated the horse shoes and the students who were not making jewellery had taken on a range of metals projects. Tom encouraged the formerly difficult student to assist in monitoring and advising on the projects and this strategy was working very well for teacher and students.

Rather than being student focussed, this long session actually seemed to be student led, although it was Tom who had carefully set it up this way. For example, when a student came and asked a technical question about the required thickness of a metal piece, Tom immediately responded you tell me and mentioned some possibilities, allowing the students to find the solution himself. My field notes commented that this was “one of the friendliest atmospheres in a classroom that I have been in for a long time” (4.7). This was remarkable in that it was evident that this was a class made up of mainly of boys who did not seem well oriented to study. The class lasted for one hour and fifteen minutes, a long time for a group of fifteen year old students. Tom ensured they were engaged and learning for the entire time, monitoring their progress and moving through a range of teaching opportunities and activities organised, to some extent, by the students themselves through his careful scaffolding and organisation.

Interview with another teacher
The other teacher I interviewed at Rural Valley High School had also emerged from a different industry entry program and was also working in TAS. He had been teaching for about two years prior to coming to Rural Valley. ‘Wally’ was a fitter and turner by trade and had worked for a major mining and engineering company close to the school location. One of the first statements Wally made about Tom was that “he knows his content; he teaches it well; he has good rapport with the students and he handles behaviour management well” (4.4). He also pointed out that he had not been at the school during Tom’s first year.

We briefly discussed the class I had observed immediately before this interview, where students were all very engaged with different projects. Wally had visited this class several times while I was there. Wally did not approve of Tom’s approach, although he said he knew Tom believed it motivated students and kept them engaged. Wally said:
I like to be structured. I do like to have one project and I know how to make it myself and I — it’s easier for me then to assist the kids if they have got problems, whereas if they’ve got their own project they are off and running — I actually squashed the idea in my metal group because a lot of them didn’t have the skills to do the jobs they wanted to do and I found myself spending time on that one child showing him how to do something (4.4).

I found this an interesting quote on many levels — earlier in the interview, Wally had asserted many times that in their approach and style, he believed Tom and he were ‘the same’. However, my observations suggested that Tom had a very different style and approach favouring individual and independent learning opportunities wherever possible and committed to a low key style of classroom functioning.

Despite Tom’s concerns about his own technological expertise given his electrical trades background, it seemed as if he was prepared to accept quite challenging situations where his trade knowledge would need to be supplemented by his own efforts as a learner. Wally sees this arrangement as ‘an organisational nightmare’.

Wally and I deviated from my main questions into an extended discussion on different styles of teacher training and approach. Wally asserted:

If I work with teachers who have come straight from university, I find they do have a classroom mentality, you know — they’re the boss and you do what I tell you to do — but when I’ve dealt with and worked with ex-tradespeople, it’s more like we do with (Tom) — it’s more of a work program and is more laid back and as long as the kids are learning skills we require them to learn and are building something they enjoy building, we feel like we have done our job (4.4)

**Discussion and perceptions**

Tom seemed to provide many puzzles in the data as he spoke slowly and reluctantly during interviews and discussions. He also appeared tentative and lacking in confidence when responding to questions about his early experiences of teaching. He was concerned about the status and esteem the TAS faculty and practical subjects were held in by teachers and students. He said sometimes teaching TAS seemed like babysitting and he would like to make “the TAS area more valued — it is one of the hardest stereotypes to break” (4.2). After more prompting for further explanation, Tom said:

It’s inherent in the children’s attitudes — it is just a break in the day for them from the norm, you know — and it’s just the nature of it being a practical subject that they can kind of — yeah — it doesn’t kind of seem that valuable to them — even you know when the kids — I try and get them to make bigger and better things for
the ones that are capable and—ah—they seem to get into it. But a lot of the kids—it’s just, you know, if you can get through the lesson without anyone getting hurt and you’re doing all right (4.2).

This contrasted very vividly for me with the quality of classes I observed and with the comments of other teachers including the Deputy Principal, whose usual position was TAS Head Teacher. From observing students, looking at Tom’s planning and assessment records and resources he had developed, I would assert this quiet and perhaps reluctant teacher was making a huge difference in the lives of some otherwise very disengaged students.

Conclusion
In this chapter, the analysis of the experience of five teachers located in small secondary schools in five very different rural settings have exemplified the diversity and complexity involved in a study of individual teachers beginning their careers in five quite different schools. However, at the same time, themes emerge which provide a continuing narrative development across disciplines, gender and individual backgrounds. Themes such as, for example, using experiences from industry as teaching points, abound through the data. Similarly, the lack of familiarity with the formality and structure of current school requirements are seen to be problematic by many teachers.

There are suggestions that a lack of confidence may continue to haunt some of these new teachers, but this may be seen as typical of any new teachers or professionals in any field. Further exploration of these emerging themes as well as others from the data set forms the basis of the discussion and cross case analysis in Chapter 8. The four teachers appointed to larger regional high schools are introduced in the next chapter.
Chapter 7. Individual case studies – large regional schools

Introduction
In this chapter, the last four of the 12 teachers participating in the case study are introduced and some of the perspectives they have brought to teaching are discussed. These four teachers were appointed to regional secondary schools with between 600 and 1100 students. There are other secondary schools, including other government and independent schools, in each of these four large towns which meant more opportunities for professional development activities and professional learning with colleagues. All four of these new teachers, unlike most of the other participants in the case studies, had a Head Teacher in the TAS discipline in their school as well as a larger number of other TAS teachers in their faculty. This could have meant better support for these early career teachers in their first few years of teaching. An examination of each case investigates whether starting teaching in a larger team proved to be a direct advantage to these four teachers. In the previous chapter, Liam’s experiences in a larger rural high school demonstrated that a strongly led and supportive team approach to teaching in the Food Technology area was of great benefit to him.

Martha: Life history and education
Martha entered the course as a Food Technology and Hospitality pre-service teacher because she had the required qualifications in the Hospitality industry and over ten years of food industry experience. However, her background in industry was varied and she had worked and studied across a range of areas which link well with TAS.

Martha left school after Year 10 and started her post school education by enrolling in a secretarial course while working part time in a fast food restaurant (1.1). Finding she enjoyed her part time job more than her studies, she changed to working in the food industry, completing her chef’s training whilst working at a regional restaurant on the Central Coast. At the same time, she completed an Advanced Certificate in Fashion Retail, specialising in dressmaking. In between having children, Martha made clothing and also ran a small business making and decorating cakes. Her
talents in both the cake and dressmaking areas were confirmed for her with awards in both areas in several of The Sydney Easter Show exhibitions.

After the birth of her third child, Martha decided to study again as her husband had set up a horticulture and nursery business. She completed a Horticulture Certificate and worked in the business with him, laying pavers, building retaining walls as well as growing plants and running a commercial fruit farm as part of their extensive business. This was going well until a serious car accident meant Martha could no longer assist with the hard physical work required by the business. At this stage, Martha found out about the course, successfully applied and completed her studies as a teacher.

**Martha’s first position**

On completing the course, Martha was rather disappointed to receive a ‘mobile’ appointment for one year at a small rural secondary about six hours north west of her home and their business. A mobile position – often referred to as ‘above establishment’ – means that the teacher is typically allocated classes across a range of subjects and may often be expected to take on the role of a casual teacher who is on staff for a defined period of time. As it was a temporary placement, Martha and the children moved whilst her husband stayed with the business for that year. The main difficulty she recalled during that year was the long drive ‘home’ as many times as she could during the year.

Martha found ‘Table High’ an interesting place to start her teaching career as she taught subjects such as Art and Agriculture as well as Food Technology. Her classes were almost all in their first two years of high school, although she enjoyed teaching a Year 9/10 Food Technology class – partly because she kept this class for the whole year. Other classes were arranged from term to term, or were on rotations as is usual in Technology Mandatory. Martha described the Head Teacher of TAS as:

> ... the most organised person on this planet. She has put together work books on all food and textiles classes. She has everything on computer ready at the click of a button and makes me feel extremely inadequate. I’m glad she is like that as I have no lesson plans to worry about as the program in my booklets (teacher’s copy) is set out lesson by lesson (2.1).

She was less fortunate in Art, where the other teacher gave her cryptic notes immediately before classes stating, for example, “Pop Art, Andy Warhol, discuss”
(2.1). Overall she enjoyed her time at the school as the staff were supportive and there was a strong student management system which Martha encountered early on. A student had been disruptive and argumentative in an Art class and she sent him to the Head Teacher.

When we got there, his parents were notified by phone and in writing, he was excluded from Art for one week, placed in Level One and made to apologise to me. I’ve had no trouble from him since (2.1).

**Starting teaching in a ‘mobile’ position**

Three of the 12 teachers in my study started teaching in temporary or mobile positions, where they were expected to fill in staffing gaps rather than taking up a substantive position. Martha was the only one of the three sent to an unfamiliar school in a different region. Lauder and Claire had both completed their internships at the school where they were offered a mobile position until a permanent placement could be found. As I was unable to visit these first schools, the main focus of the research for these three beginning teachers is in their permanent school, where two of the three remain to the present day. Claire moved to another school after five years at Border Central School. All three found the temporary placement challenging, particularly in terms of the classes allocated, but they also all commented that they learned how to adapt to different curriculum areas and endured and even enjoyed this different start to teaching. All three were very excited to be offered a permanent position despite the fact that all three permanent placements were far from their home area. Martha was the only one of the three who enjoyed her first school so much that she would have been prepared to stay. This was mainly because of the “well mannered students” (1.2) and supportive environment.

**Martha: Southern High School**

When Martha was offered a permanent position at Southern High School at the other end of the state from her first temporary position and still a long way from the Horticulture business and her home, she was thrilled and let me know immediately. The family had considered moving to this area previously so this had been her original first choice of location and school. Southern High School is a very traditional high school with a strong reputation academically as well as for well behaved students. The area was suitable for relocating Martha’s family business and there were plenty of options for schools and other activities for their children.
Interestingly, although all of the 12 participants in the case studies have children, Martha’s are the only children who attend the school where she teaches – she pointed out one of her sons in a Year 7 assembly during one of my visits to the school.

At first, Martha found the much larger school quite challenging.

Last year I had a really cruisy year. I had the most organised head teacher you have ever met. There was only her and I and then two guys downstairs one for wood and one for metals – it was a little school – there were only 350 kids so you got to know the kids – and then I came here – over a thousand kids – and I think it was half way through term 2 before I got off the ground floor and that was because I had an extra (class) (1.3).

School visit: Martha

When I visited the school, a year after the interview cited above, I found Martha had really settled in to her new teaching environment. I encountered the principal as we walked to Martha’s staffroom and he spoke highly of Martha and seemed to be impressed by her involvement in school activities, both in and beyond the classroom. Martha was teaching from her areas of strength: Food Technology, Hospitality – which was taught at a TAFE commercial kitchen outside the school; textiles and Technology Mandatory. The only subject she was finding more difficult was a senior subject called Community and Family Studies (CAFS). As Martha said:

I had no idea what that was until my Head Teacher handed me a text book and a program and said ‘This is what you are teaching next week’ and I went ‘oh fun’ (1.3).

The other teacher I interviewed during the school visit also referred to difficulties she perceived Martha having with the CAFS class.

She took them on last year and just didn’t understand the depth that is required in the senior course ... probably took it more like you would teach a junior year. She just didn’t have any concepts about where to go with it and the kids fed into that – they’re smart kids – they’re perceptive ... and they became in some ways, aggressive in that in some ways they felt she was lacking (1.5).

When observing Martha in the classroom, the class I found most engaging and interesting was a practical lesson in Year 10 Food Technology. The class consisted mainly of boys and they were all engaged in making finger food. Martha described this group as her ratty class although I saw little evidence of this until the end of the lesson when some students began to be slightly loud and poorly behaved during the clean up time. Most of the class involved Martha speaking quietly in a very matter of
fact way with low key explanations of what was going on. The class was excited when Martha pointed out that all students would try all hors d’oeuvres, as each student was making a different tray of snacks. I found it rather confusing as every student seemed to be doing very different things. One was even having his practical assessment on his work as he had been absent when the rest of the class completed theirs.

As in a workplace, all students were very quickly on task and Martha moved quietly but constantly around the class speaking mainly to individual students, although gaining the attention of the whole class when she encountered relevant teaching and learning points. Again, the teacher’s actions were more like a team leader or leading hand than like the more formal approach and she did not use the type of ‘teaching voice’ many teachers adopt. Martha acted as if she was part of the class team and students seemed to be very busy keeping up with their work quietly mainly and reasonably efficiently. Martha moved among the students constantly, speaking quietly to individuals, correcting, advising and discussing the progress of their dishes. Despite constant questions, the students seemed to know exactly what they needed to be doing and had recipes and notes from an earlier class. When they did call for Martha’s attention, it seemed to be more a need for interaction and attention than for explanations. They were fully engaged and her establishment of routines and her expectations contributed to the calm atmosphere – although I noticed her distributing and removing sharp knives continuously as they were required.

Other teacher interview and literacy issues
Prior to data collection, I anticipated that the issue of the different pathway these teachers had taken to become qualified in general, and their own often early school leaving specifically, to come up continually through the data. In particular, I was concerned about teacher literacy issues emerging. Whilst noting frequent references to preferring teaching VET classes in senior rather than the more academic subjects such as Food Technology or Design and Technology for senior classes, the issue of the teacher’s own writing and reading abilities did not emerge at all until I interviewed another Food Technology teacher at Martha’s school, the same teacher who was concerned about Martha’s capacity and ability to work with the CAFS class. ‘Mary’ asserted that Martha’s problem with senior classes:
... goes right back in that I don’t think her English is good enough. I would go so far as the fact that she hasn’t done Years 11 and 12 where the emphasis is very strongly on the written language where you have to actually write a lot of essays and do a lot of response tasks (1.5).

Mary and I discussed this at length and she concluded by speaking about Martha’s ability to engage lower achieving students, boys in particular, while finding academically orientated students, girls in particular, more challenging.

She might have to take a senior class through and I am very sceptical – like I don’t really think she’s got the language skills and the back-up of not having had that senior (experience) – I think there’s a hole right back not just – you know I don’t think teacher training would have patched that hole (1.5).

This teacher had assisted Martha with planning; she had shared resources and helped with report writing. She was very positive about many features of Martha’s interactions and style with students despite her less academically orientated style and approach. Her final comments indicated the concern Mary had with teachers who come from an alternative training program:

I think she thinks her background’s better than it is and it seems to me there are lots of areas that are lacking and she tends to brush over some of them and I think it’s those deeper ones that she will have trouble with – I mean she recognised that she can’t do reports properly and that, you know, she’s tizzy and stuff like that ... I don’t think she recognises that she doesn’t have a background. She sees that working and making clothes is a good background in textiles - I mean that’s only a small fraction of what textiles encompasses - she doesn’t understand the gamut of the subject (1.5).

**Interview with the principal**

To complete this discussion on Martha, I interviewed the principal by phone (1.6). His views contrasted with Mary’s perspectives in some ways. The principal was very experienced and had encountered many beginning teachers, including a number from alternative pathways. He believed that the critical issue was the individual – he asserted that they need to develop as a teacher in a way he saw Martha developing as a teacher, whom he described as *having it*. He stated that he was very interested in offering diversity in his staff. He described Martha as:

a fabulous teacher – she has really come along. She is keen to learn and a great listener. She is prepared to ask what she does not know (1.6).

He was very pleased Martha had volunteered to have extra training in textiles the following year. He also pointed to the positive aspects of the way Martha related to students.
She is very matter of fact—she has no issues at all in behaviour management—this is partly because she doesn’t back students into corners—a really good feature (1.6).

He also believed that as a teacher, Martha displayed a sense of understanding of equity issues and brought that as well as her understanding of the workplace into the school.

**Myron: Life history and education**

Myron was appointed to a school in his local area where he had lived and worked in a number of positions in the large regional town, identified here as ‘Central River’, for an extended period. He completed his internship at the end of his teacher education at Central River High School. He was very pleased to be offered a position at this school as, unlike most graduates, and all except Tess and Steve in the group of case studied teachers, he did not have to move to take up his position. Myron was eager to discuss his appreciation of being able to participate in Higher Education as he would have liked to complete secondary school.

Myron’s own school career was truncated as he had to take up family responsibilities instead of completing senior schooling. He sadly lost his father when he was near the end of Year 10. His father was an electric train driver who was accidentally killed in a rail accident.

Mum could not afford the school fees, the compensation barely paid off the house so I went out to work, as did Mum, who up till then had been a stay at home mother to the five kids (5.1).

Leaving school was not his choice, he had been doing well in most classes, and the principal told him “you will end up a toilet man” (5.1) if he left school at that age.

Myron went straight into a trade—apprenticeships were not difficult to find during the late 1960’s. Myron’s first training was as a motor mechanic, although he recalled that he would have liked to be a teacher even at that time. In his career in the motor industry, he was promoted regularly partly because he kept studying and working very hard. He eventually became first an area manager then the zone manager for a big motor vehicle company. He started training car dealers and their staff, which provided his first opportunity to try teaching. Following this, he was appointed to the advisory board of TAFE NSW to develop an Automotive Replacement Parts trade course. He also had the opportunity to do some teaching at TAFE during this stage.
of his career. He attributed much of his success in his automotive career to life-long learning as he completed any courses available, becoming used to studying at night. The pinnacle of this stage of his career was when he was invited by an American motor company to write and deliver the Australian version of a motor industry quality assurance package. He delivered this training ‘all over Australia’ (5.1) before delivering it to the Americans in Detroit.

Myron seemed to be an ambitious and highly energetic person throughout his career. His goal in the motor industry had always been to have his own car dealership. When an opportunity finally arose, he decided to go into a partnership. Unfortunately this business venture did not go well and Myron did very poorly financially when it collapsed. During this period he had a life-threatening medical condition, which caused him to reflect on and re-evaluate his goals in life. When his daughter graduated from University, despite being in his late forties, Myron expressed his dream of teaching to her. His daughter encouraged him to enter a pathway course to university which eventually led to his inclusion in the ATTP course. He saw this opportunity placing him “on the threshold of a new exciting reinvention of myself” (5.1). Although he was qualified in many aspects of Industrial Technology Metals, and in fact he has taught workshop subjects, Myron best fitted the criteria for Information Technology, his passion, and this became his major teaching discipline.

**Initial concerns and attitudes**

Myron was initially quite concerned about how he would be perceived as a teacher before he began his first teaching position. His greatest fear was lack of acceptance, as he explained:

> What people would think of me as a person moving from a pretty robust industry life and moving into the teaching profession because there is this thing in industry where they say the only people that are in teaching are those who never decided to leave school - or those who failed in business decided to take up teaching as a career because they could not make it out in real life and I was a bit - I was very concerned about that ... and I was concerned about the acceptance that I would receive by existing teachers who had been teaching for many years - that they would see me as a ‘Johnny-come lately’ and ... with little to give other than criticism of their profession and here’s this knight with white armour coming to try and save them (5.2)

He found, during his in-school experiences and during his early teaching, that this fear was not realised and his acceptance, particularly by his students and also from
the principal of the school, had not been problematic or even an issue. His energy and enthusiasm for teaching would make it difficult for others to be over-critical. He attributed his approach to students to his own background in the motor industry:

I tend to treat people ... even though I understand they’re adolescents and that sort of stuff ... I try to treat them as I would if it were one of my employees (5.2).

Again, in interviews and during a visit to the school, I identified the recurrent theme of treating students with respect and particularly as if they were workers in a shared enterprise. He went on to elaborate:

I had to get the things I wanted done - I had to construct things that gave people a vision about where we were heading and why we were doing some things and I tend to do a fair bit of that in classes. I understand some people say to me 'Well look, they’re only kids and at the end of the day they’ve got to learn the traits you’re trying to put on to them’, but I find it works for me and I find that people are responding in a positive way (5.2).

School visit: Central River High School

When I visited Central River High School, I had breakfast with Myron and arrived at the school with him. Despite being early, a number of students were entering the school and Myron amazed me by stopping and speaking to, or being addressed by, virtually every student he saw on the way in. He greeted them by name although quite informally, and discussed a range of topics such as the school dance, sport, their families and other interests. He told me that he liked to believe he knew most students by name after two years in the school and considered the relationship built up with all students was one of the reasons he had not encountered many behaviour management problems. This was despite what he referred to as his tendency to be:

... a little tiny bit more laid back than what some would probably like me to be. I tend to not see or hear things the first time as long as they don’t involve safety or are impinging on other people’s ability to learn or my ability to teach (5.2).

He has found this technique most often leads to self management by the students. If or when this does not happen, he jumps on it but that is not the usual progression for him. This lack of confrontation as a teaching style has emerged from virtually all data collected on all of the 12 new teachers and will be explored further in the discussion chapter.

After the almost ceremonial long walk up to the school office, I was interested to meet the principal who wanted to discuss a ‘youth at risk’ workshop he wanted
Myron to attend in Sydney. I found out that Myron had been acting as the Careers advisor for a term – an interest he has taken further since this acting position. The maturity of a ‘new’ teacher like Myron means he has been the chair of the Occupation Health and Safety (OH&S) committee since his first year at the school; he has become involved in training and implementing a youth mentoring program called ‘Creating futures’ pathways program as well as taking on a temporary role as a Careers Advisor during his second year of teaching.

This is another theme which is explored in cross case analysis. Other staff and the principals were the informants concerning these additional positions of responsibility taken on by this group of beginning teachers in rural schools, rather than the new teachers themselves. This may have been because I did not initially specifically ask about positions of responsibility as I incorrectly anticipated these would not arise in the first three years of teaching typically. In almost all cases, additional duties have been taken on by these 12 teachers. A principal attending a professional development day for mentors expressed it strongly. He believed the better ATTP graduates combined the enthusiasm of a new teacher and the wisdom and experience of an older person.

Central River High School was very similar in size and atmosphere to Southern High School where we met Martha in the previous case study. It was a rather formal school, insistent on correct uniforms with an emphasis on manners and respect. It was also a school proud of consistently strong academic results. Following Myron about the huge campus, I discovered he moved at a million miles an hour while staying very calm. He started his teaching day with a strict compulsory reading session, where he provided a paper for me to read so I could join in. Immediately following this Myron ran down to check on the possible extra class he thought he would have been allocated. His timetable was slightly unusual because of his time filling in for the Careers Advisor. He had been given an English class to cover as a replacement teacher – these classes usually being referred to as ‘extras’. Myron and I ran down to the English staffroom to check on the work left. Myron expected this to be organised but there were no notes or lesson plans organised. Myron told me he was nervous about being observed teaching out of his own teaching areas so I offered to miss out that class. He preferred that I stay with him as a shadow for the
full day, as I had been doing at all the schools visited, and started to make some plans for the extra class.

In his staffroom I met the large TAS staff while Myron checked for any updates on OH&S regulations. He also started discussing the senior formal with other teachers. Myron told me that he tried to be involved in all aspects of school life and his discussion was clearly aimed at encouraging other staff to attend and wear bow ties for fun. Myron believed that being involved in extra-curricular activities was another way to get to know more of the students and to build relationships with them. When we arrived at the 'extra' English class, Myron soon discovered the class had been working on a unit about radios and radio stations. He launched into some communications material – for example the difference between open and closed questions in an interview context. All of the class became quite quickly engaged in the tasks given except for one boy who was evidently not interested in the lesson. Myron spoke to the boy very clearly and privately and he settled down to work, satisfied with the attention. As the class had an unexpected room change, which meant that students did not have their books, Myron taught this as an interactive lesson and supplied paper for activities he had devised. Myron was concerned that the first class I observed him teaching was out of his subject area completely, but it went very well and his rapport with students shone through. His flexibility and responsiveness were evident to the observer.

The next class was a Year 8 computing class which was usually one of his own his classes. He had been absent for some weeks because of filling in the careers advisor position, so he had arranged for students to present their learning and their projects as part of this well planned session. Students had been making rather complex and interesting websites using a range of software and working in teams. They were very proud of their work. When he introduced me as a lecturer from his teacher education, he challenged the class to locate me and or my university. They had no difficulty finding material instantly. He acknowledged students' contributions generously, for example offering praise for a student who defined ergonomics really well and presented an additional website in this area of interest to her. When the class became a little overexcited and loud in discussion, Myron used a comic voice to say quite
quietly I don't want to get cranky and the class returned to the activities and tasks they had been engaged in.

The same calm and controlled atmosphere also appeared in the Year 9 Electronics class Myron took me to later in the day. There were some apparently poorly behaved boys in this class judging by the number of behaviour cards handed to him. Myron appeared very surprised that these particular individuals were being monitored for truancy or poor behaviour, and when some protested their innocence, he joked that "teachers can make mistakes" (5.3) and the class got on with the work of the day. He had a discussion on suspension and the consequences of poor behaviour in a friendly way before telling the class that he was paying them for their attendance by offering them "an education - and you can't put a price on that" (5.3). The students were working on circuit boards which were in some way connected to the co-creation of a computer game the students had been engaged in constructing.

All through his class, there was an emphasis on respect: respect for education and its link with the ability to earn a living; respect for individual students and respect for students' activities and efforts. While students were soldering and working on their electronic games, Myron moved around and again spoke to each student as required, often encouraging them to make their own decisions on the questions they ask him. Again the scene had more in common on some levels with an electronics workshop or workplace than a school classroom or workshop. Myron was passionate about the subject of electronics and was fighting to retain it as it promoted higher order thinking in his opinion and was a strong interest of his own. However, it was not adequately funded as a minor subject so it was possible that it would be discontinued.

A couple of years after this visit, I noticed that the top performing student in HSC Information Technology was from Central River High School, a most unusual occurrence as these top places are typically earned by city students rather than those from a rural area. Perhaps Myron's insistence on really understanding what they were doing and what they were attempting to achieve may have underpinned this student's success. When questioned about this, Myron identified the student as one
of his but he modestly laid no claim to being responsible and instead attributed the student's success to a strong work ethic and ability.

**Interviews with the TAS Head Teacher and the principal**

Finally, before leaving this quite extended introduction and discussion about Myron, I will briefly touch on some salient points from the interviews conducted with the Head Teacher from the TAS faculty and the principal about Myron. ‘Tim’ shares an industry background with Myron but he completed his training a few years earlier at a different university. At the time of interview, it was the end of his fourth year at the school where he held an acting position as HT for the rest of the year. Tim was a fitter and turner by trade and understood the background Myron had come from, although it seemed possible that Myron’s preferences for information technology, electronics and even his interest in the careers advisory role were not as popular with Tim. He was regretful that Myron was not more engaged in more workshop classes, particularly in Metals and Engineering with his mechanics background. Tim himself had retrained in Construction and areas of wood technology to more fully embrace the main subjects offered in TAS. Although he was circumspect, he would have probably been more forthcoming about Myron had he followed a similar pathway. This was the least informative of the many interviews conducted as part of this study as there were many interruptions and Tim was a very quiet interviewee.

The principal echoed the assertion of the principal from Martha’s school. No matter which pathway teachers take into the profession, “how good they are depends on the individual – ‘Myron’ is fantastic” (5.5). He described teachers from industry bringing different perspectives to the school and often having different viewpoints. He used Myron as an example of a teacher with a passion for what he termed “an occupational health and safety perspective on things – he knows what it’s for and he has to talk other teachers around to its significance” (5.5). The principal also valued the real world perspectives he observed Myron bringing to the classroom. He warned that some *mature age starters* may have difficulties connecting with the school environment and adolescents, although he assured me this was not the case with Myron. One of the assets the principal identified in Myron was that he was:
... really well respected in the local trade area – he can advise regarding credibility beyond school – he can play a dual role when students are seeking work or placements (5.5).

Myron's words from an email sent as part of the last stage of data collection, when he was in his fifth year of teaching at Central River High School, was intended to provide a chance to catch up on his current situation. However, it also encapsulated a theme which has emerged from every new teacher in the study. In shifting from his former career he had brought an immense dedication and energy to his new role.

I am not interested in moving from the school I am in ... I am part load as a careers advisor also. I am still very happy with my change at this stage in my life but as I say, I would not have been ready in my earlier career. I do sometimes miss the cut and thrust of management and the perks (trips away, conferences designed for fun and relief from the tension of management etc) that go with that. I am still in awe of the job that teachers in the main do with the resources and the clerical assistance they do not get. It is still seen as a process worker's job in the main, keep them working, give them very little, and blame them when production is slow while we (society and the hierarchy) take all the junkets. I think the school still sees me as a very valuable asset, (not blowing my trumpet) but I do get involved in the whole school approach, and this is seen as important, albeit they do try to whip the horse that is willing to pull the weight to cover for those who do not (5.6).

Steve: Deans High School

Steve’s decision to move from life as a computer service person to life as an Information Technology teacher seemed a more natural progression than many of the other study participants. Both of his parents were teachers, in fact his mother was a TAS teacher specialising in computing studies. His father had been a maths teacher and was a long serving principal. He was actually the Principal of Deans High School when Steve was given his first appointment to the same school in the large regional centre where he had completed his studies. Neither father nor son had anticipated such an appointment but it did not seem to create too many problems for either during the time Steve was teaching at Deans. However, as Steve's appointment was one of the first made public, some students from his cohort of pre-service teachers queried the situation and made Steve feel very uncomfortable. The principal told me he had asked the staffing officer at the department whether they were aware of the family relationship and he was told that there was one IT position in the district and that Steve was the only graduate from the program who matched the criteria and teaching specifications.
The last stages of the course, where students discussed everything on the shared course forum, became difficult for Steve, but he did not engage in any discussions where the processes of employment for the following year were the topic. The other reason that schools were familiar to Steve was that his former computing company spent much of their time servicing and setting up computer systems in schools during a period where the demand was high for installation of IT systems. He had been familiar with schools most of his life, unlike most of the other ATTP applicants.

Life history and education: Steve

Steve completed Year 12 before leaving school and spent the next ten years working as a computer technician while also studying Information Technology at TAFE. He told me that he believed he had a clear insight about the positives and negatives of teaching from listening to his parents during his youth.

When Mum and Dad were talking around the dinner table, it was a bit hard not to sort of get involved in their work talk – so I understand ... I understood where they were having problems in terms of sort of being a teacher – um – where they were struggling in terms of behaviour with kids – or with the workload and that – so I think I had a more realistic view (2.1).

Like many graduates in Information Technology, Steve was almost immediately made a Computer Coordinator, which meant a demanding role troubleshooting and assisting when new equipment, software or hardware arrived at the school. This was particularly stressful during his first year when he was adjusting to teaching but his computer skills were sufficient to set up systems and keep on top of the demands.

The week before our first interview, in Steve’s second year of teaching, he told me 24 new computers had just arrived at the school. I asked him how he coped in these circumstances and he replied:

I get seven hours a fortnight to do it plus with the VET kids, you try and involve them with the work but you know – you’re only as strong as your weakest student a lot of the times they’re ...um .. also that’s probably my hardest ... when the computers go down, my classes go out the window as well! You always have to have two sorts of lesson plans for kids – one which doesn’t involve computers and one that does (2.1).

He also explained he was often interrupted and almost felt on call when other teachers had problems with technology during classes. He said he sometimes felt as if he was “basically trying to do what I did in my job before then add the teaching on top” (2.1).
School visit: Steve

When I visited Deans High School, I saw for myself the way in which Steve had put strategies in place to assist him in fulfilling the dual role of providing technical support and teaching. He had adapted a former drama room into the nerve centre of the computer systems through classrooms by turning the former stage area into a network centre. He then could teach whenever possible in that classroom and combine teaching and monitoring his classes with troubleshooting. Technical duties could be attended to by moving to the stage area which he had made into his operations centre. The first class I observed was a Year 9 IT class. The students were engaged in a project involving developing data bases. As in visits to other schools, the atmosphere seemed closer to that of a workplace right from the start of the class. This included a well established routine to start the day’s work. Steve’s instructions were minimal and quiet but the expectations were clear and unspoken – most students became involved in their projects as soon as they sat down. Steve told me he had developed a style based on individual programs and activities for most of his lessons. He taught the whole class theory and introduced projects and activities allowing individual variations and setting up goals and tasks for students depending on their interests and abilities.

Observing this class was strongly reminiscent of Tom’s metalwork classes at Rural Valley High School as students waited for Steve to make his rounds, which he did very quietly, to ask questions or show him what they were up to. This pattern was repeated in all of the classes observed. He believed students were more engaged if he “knocked the theory over then get them into activity” (2.3). The atmosphere in all of the classes I observed seemed relaxed, but students were very engaged in their own work. Steve invited me to see what various students were doing, for example, in the second Year 9 class, I saw the websites these students were creating around a theme of ‘their ten favourite things from that year’. Steve told me he had set a minimum amount of work to be completed. However, one student had actually created thirty individual pages for his website and many others had done far beyond the minimum.

Deans High School was situated in a lower socio-economic area and had the reputation of including more challenging students than the two other public high schools in the town. There was no indication of poor behaviour or lack of effort in
the classes I observed, and the boy who had created the huge and complex website was proud to say that this was the most school work he had ever completed. Steve’s quiet encouragement and locating and encouraging students to follow their own interests seemed to provide the impetus and atmosphere to really make an effort in the classes I observed. He also expressed the belief that his involvement in school sport, in particular basketball, both during and outside school was a good way to get to know students in other environments. Like Myron, he seemed to speak to students on multiple topics everywhere we went in the school. Getting to know the students as individuals was very important to him and part of his behaviour management strategy as well. He told me it was far more difficult to have a stand up argument with students who knew you were interested in them as individuals. This is another theme which will be returned to in a later chapter.

In the next class, all students were immediately on task working on a different database activity within seconds of starting the period. Steve walked around checking details, but all students seemed very clear on what they had to do. Steve marked the roll and checked some paperwork, moving quickly and busily around his own tasks, before moving around the room and interacting with individual students. The assumption that all would be working was clear and contributed to the workplace atmosphere. Steve showed me how he could use the network and the data projector to monitor where the students were up to with their work.

A student who had completed her work came over to Steve and appeared very comfortable in asking what she should get on to next. Steve sat down with her and asked her a series of questions which involved her making choices and decisions and he guided her quietly to what she thought she could do next. What was interesting was the way Steve managed to always make it her choice, gently prompting her when she went off track. Try a different approach – what do you want it to look like? What do you need included? It seemed as if Steve kept the focus on the task, rather than on the teacher, and was aiming to provide a sense of autonomy in his students. The calm and quiet atmosphere seemed to make the students feel quite secure. Steve told me by keeping calm, providing step by step instructions when necessary, as for a girl who arrived late to class, students become more engaged in what they are doing. He asserted “methodical work calms kids and makes them feel as if they are
in control” (2.3). He described his method as “strongly scaffolded” (2.3) freedom as he always tried to give students an element of choice, even if at times this was limited.

**TAS Head Teacher interview**

During this visit to the school, I also interviewed the Head Teacher of TAS. He told me that Steve had found the first year difficult because he was teaching other subjects such as Design and Technology and Maths, which were right outside his teaching area, as well as working on computers and networks. Even though Steve was teaching in different areas – as ‘Bob’ described it:

> Steve had everything all over the place yet he was always confident in the room – I think working in industry helped with that (2.2).

He commented that Steve seemed much happier now all of his classes involved teaching only in the Information studies and computing discipline. One of Bob’s main issues with Steve was that he was not involved in the staff room – “we never see him – he locks himself away and just plays with the network and fixes machines” (2.2). Interestingly, I also saw Steve very much as ‘a loner’ during the course and he worked independently throughout the program. Whether this is an individual propensity or linked with his passion for computers and technology would be difficult to ascertain.

At the same time, Bob admired Steve’s work ethic describing him as:

> ... well structured – he puts me to shame – he’s so well organised – almost anal – he gets in there – he’s just bang bang bang – all his marks are done – he knows exactly what the kids are up to and where they are (2.2).

Bob also saw Steve’s dedication and rapport with students, in particular with indigenous students, which he attributed to the fact that much of Steve’s own schooling had been at a remote western NSW school which had a large indigenous population where Steve was in the minority group. “He went through the hard yards when his Dad was a teacher there” (2.2). Steve himself attributed his engagement with indigenous students to his interest in all students, although he explained that he had spent his formative years with mainly indigenous friends. Deans High School had a significant number of indigenous students and as we walked around the large school grounds, I noticed how many of these students addressed Steve and joked about with him.
Bob told me Steve was “just like his father (the principal of the school) – he gets to know the kids names in the first week or two – it still takes me a month!” (2.2) Bob was very enthusiastic about teachers with an industry background as he had a number of them on staff:

... it was a real win – people like that here on staff. It’s not just that they’re older – it’s the experience they’ve got – the people we’ve got. I’m just so lucky – we have two trained chefs in ‘home ec’ – and another who had twenty five years as a mechanic and engineer in Industrial Arts (2.2).

Bob was a most enthusiastic supporter of industry entry pathway teachers, and the five on his staff had come through different programs and pathways.

The positive comments included about Steve have been supported by his career trajectory. After fulfilling his obligations to the Education Department by spending the mandatory three years at Deans High, he applied for and was offered a Head Teacher position in his fourth year of teaching. He was subsequently appointed as the Deputy Principal and acting Principal in this small regional high school.

**Interview with the Principal of Deans High School**

With Steve’s permission, I also spoke to his father, the Principal of Deans High, for most of the period Steve taught there. Rather than just speak directly about his son, many of ‘Doug’s’ remarks were about Steve and another Food Technology teacher in the school who had followed an alternative pathway to teaching and also had an industry background.

They are both excellent classroom managers –when someone says – what do you look for in a teacher; I say ‘fire in the belly’. If there is a passion there for what you teach, you know you are nine tenths of the way there and I say to people – the first thing that comes out of your mouth is just so important and the way you present yourself and getting off to that early start and then having a sense of enjoyment. Now it can vary so much from subject to subject and from person to person and when (Steve) comes into a room, he certainly brings in the computer network and the philosophy comes in with it. The computer network has to be built properly from the ground up – and it is not there to be played with – it’s there to do an job – and when it is doing its function, well there’s real beauty and a real functionality to it and that becomes the colour of the teaching he brings – you know – so you know – so you build things from the bottom up and you teach those skills – to navigate etc – and then from there the kids will sense – this is ‘ridgy-didge’ – and this is not made up stuff... and if you are not prepared in a lesson and you walk in and try to fudge it – they’ll work you out in 20 seconds. So I think that’s important and then translates into classroom management (2.4).
This extended quotation was included as Doug identified several ideas which have been implicit in much of the data. Firstly, the idea that teachers who have changed career bring industry practices, ideas and beliefs with them and inculcate some of these into their classrooms. Secondly, they are very passionate about their own subject areas and have expertise beyond training and study in that discipline. Finally, these teachers have energy and are prepared to work very hard to achieve results through preparation, attention to individual performance and involvement in every aspect of the school life.

Although many early career teachers may share many of these attributes, the teachers in this study reported on being used to working very long hours in their former workplaces as standard practice in many industry positions in mines, commercial kitchens and other trades. This means that they have been habituated to allocating more hours per day to work oriented activities. It is not suggested here that these teachers are inherently better or more dedicated. Other beginning teachers are not examined in this study, so no comparison can be reasonably made in these contexts. These ideas about the work practices of second career teachers are examined in more detail in the cross case discussion and compared with findings from the literature relevant to approaches and attitudes to teaching during the early years of becoming a teacher.

**Ralph: Pitlock High School**

The last participant to be individually introduced is Ralph, who graduated as an Industrial Technology teacher. Ralph’s story is more dramatic than many and includes many highs and lows. He was completely committed to becoming a teacher, so eager that he actually relocated from a great distance to complete the course and was prepared to teach anywhere in NSW. Ralph told me before the course finished that he was hoping to be appointed to the western district of the state, particularly in the region surrounding Dubbo where he had completed his internship and where he had connections. Ralph named two schools, or rather towns, where he hoped not to be appointed. Ironically, Pitlock was one of those two towns. He was distressed as he had spent time in this area as a mine worker in his previous career in Metals and Engineering and tried to negotiate a different placement. This was unsuccessful and he reluctantly took up duty at Pitlock High School the next year.
Ralph's project

Despite this difficult beginning to his new career, Ralph spent three years dedicated to the school and attempted some quite ambitious projects. This included spending an enormous amount of time and effort attempting to get his senior Industrial Technology students, and other students from diverse areas such as Hospitality and Science, involved in the Solar Car challenge which runs each year from Darwin to Adelaide. He organised sponsorship and spent many hours planning and preparing for the project. Ralph emailed me near the end of his first year of teaching:

I mentioned previously that I wanted to build a solar car for the Darwin – Adelaide World Solar Challenge. Today I got clearance from the principal to start building the car. I also have the backing of my HT. I am pretty excited about the result as it has taken a fair bit of work, research and lots of applied psychology to get this far, but that is nothing compared with what we need to do now.

I intend working with my current Year 9 metals class as they go into Year 10 next year. We will continue into Year 11 VET. They are a good group of kids and this gives us two years to get the whole project done. I originally wanted to run it for VET years 11 and 12 but the race is in the middle of the HSC so I have to use Year 11 at race time.

I will use the Year 7 and 8 Technology classes to design a team logo, uniforms, paint schemes etc. The VET Hospitality teacher has also shown some interest in having some of her students do the team catering for the race (four weeks all up) and the Science Faculty are also looking at what they can program in to coincide with the car development.

There are a million ways the project won’t succeed, but we’ll go down fighting. The worst result is the students will have an interesting way of getting their skills instead of making a coat hook or something equally boring. The best result is we’ll succeed and the students will have an experience they will remember for the rest of their life.

Look out world here we come (12.3).

This was an enormously ambitious scheme for any single person to take on, let alone a recent graduate in his first year as a teacher. Unfortunately, immediately before I was due to visit his school, Ralph emailed me during his second year about the project.

The Solar Car Project has been totally abandoned. The students' behaviour was so bad I have refused to take them off the school grounds. I had arranged $90,000 worth of sponsorship; specialist engineers etc and after six weeks, the class had not even come up with a team name. Two years work down the drain (12.5).
The phone conversations and emails I had with Ralph immediately before my expedition to Pitlock High School made me anxious about the visit as he seemed very negative about the school, the students and his career. I offered to delay or postpone the visit, but he was adamant that he had been looking forward to it. It was during this visit that I discovered that Ralph was fully committed to the job of being the best teacher he could with all of his classes despite his private negativity about the school, the management of the school and his own efforts. I mentioned in the opening of this section that Ralph was a dramatic person who worked obsessively hard to achieve his goals. At the same time, his commitment and passion to engage in such a major project was difficult to realise in an economically depressed region such as Pitlock.

Life history and education

Ralph’s background was ‘working class’ by his own estimation (12.1) and he personally worked in part time jobs from the age of 15. When he completed his final examinations in Year 12, he was hoping to be eligible for a Mechanical Engineering or an Industrial Arts teacher preparation degree. He did not achieve the results required – despite doing very well in class work; he “bombed out on the exams. Looking back, I don’t think I handled the pressure well” (12.1). The financial position of his family meant that, as his marks were not sufficient for university entry, he instead took up an apprenticeship in Plant Mechanics, specialising in heavy earthmoving and open cut mining machinery. Later in his apprenticeship, he was awarded local apprentice of the year and ended up gaining a classification of ‘Tradesman Special Class’ (12.1). Despite doing so well, sadly Ralph told me:

I hated my job and anything to do with it but the money I earn(ed) compared to my options meant I remained in the industry in various positions until recently (12.1).

Similarly to Myron and other participants, Ralph kept doing short courses and later ones which led to promotion opportunities. He also partly completed an Associate Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. During his time in the mining industry, he progressed from “tradesman to leading hand, foreman, workshop manager and eventually project manager” (12.1). He was very excited when he saw the opportunity to have his trade skills and experience recognised in a program that
provided the opportunity to become a teacher. He was very well oriented to study to reach a goal he had been unable to attain when he left school.

**School visit: Ralph**

When I visited Pitlock High School, I met Ralph at the office and he told me that as well as his class load of three Technology Mandatory classes, a Year 9 Industrial Technology Metal class and year 11 and 12 VET Metals and Engineering classes, he had also taken on the role of Year Advisor for Year 9 despite only being in his second year as a teacher. He told me immediately that he was not happy with his location; in fact he was living in the next town. He pointed out the windows to show me how you could see a large open cut mine directly behind the school as evidence that this location was not far enough away from his former career. There was pollution “when the wind was blowing that way, and ... (he believed) ...that had a detrimental effect on student behaviour” (12.6).

He also told me several times that any students in his VET Metals and Engineering class who showed ability and learned how to weld effectively would ultimately end up gaining an apprenticeship and not finish their secondary schooling (12.3). Ralph had structured the senior VET program so that students could do well if they wanted to try for an apprenticeship while at the same time he resented the fact that the best students would most likely follow this pathway leaving him with the less able students as his senior class. “Last year I started with 18 students in the Year 11 VET class and all bar 5 got jobs” (12.6) leaving him with only the lowest achieving students. He saw that as a successful outcome for the students who had gained employment or apprenticeship but difficult for his teaching.

After briefly visiting the large TAS staffroom, Ralph took me down to the TAS metalwork rooms. He told me these had been in a complete mess when he started at the school and he was concerned that the workshop needed to be adapted to render it safe for his students by his standards.

> It did not provide a safe working environment. Now I have managed to implement some changes about the placement of welders and workbenches and other safety structures and rules (12.6).

Again, like Myron, the understanding of OH&S was very important to Ralph in the real sense of taking responsibility and ensuring that the areas in which he was
teaching would be fit for safe workshop practices. OH&S is given high priority by most TAS teachers. However, this foregrounding of the issue was a specific theme recurrent through the data in this research.

While we were looking at the room and Ralph was preparing the workshop for his first class, he continued to speak to me about the issues he was troubled by at this school. He was concerned that because he was in a technology discipline, Metals in particular, he feared his courses attracted mainly “low level kids” (12.6). After this rather negative discussion to start the day, combined with the very unhappy emails Ralph had sent before my visit to the school, I was very concerned about his attitude and the effect of this potential negativity on the classes I was to observe. However, it seemed as if the Ralph who had expressed such strong dissatisfaction with the school, his classes and his experiences, was also a teacher who was committed to learning for his students. In fact, his demeanour in the classroom was completely different from his conversations and emails outside the teaching space.

As a teacher, Ralph spoke to the students and taught as if he thought all students were competent and capable of achievement. He put a great deal of energy into each lesson, particularly in encouraging full participation for all students. One class I observed was a Year 8 computing class whom he described as “my best class in terms of academic achievement” (12.6). While the students were getting started, Ralph showed me a web page he had developed for this class so each student could check the essential information for each class from home or at school. This site included assessment items, design briefs, marking criteria, content and web links and search suggestions for those students who wanted to learn more. Ralph told me all of his lessons, resources and assessment items were on the web and all of his students knew how to access and use this information. The amount of preparation, the friendly and accessible style of the material and the easy way Ralph interacted with the class all seemed completely at variance to the person who had spoken so bitterly about this school and his experiences there.

His aim with this Year 8 Class in particular was to have virtually no paperwork as everything was online. He had also made a place online for his Technology Mandatory design briefs and job sheets. He kept the outline of their competency
records online, in much the same way it has been required for senior VET classes. OH&S information and tool identification and rules for use were also available and Ralph had students read from this during the class. He had set up the system so that he could frequently print out achievement sheets and the students could track their own progress in the subject. He had personalised his own web design and he showed me some student examples of how he had encouraged them to create their own models so that they had a sense of ownership and were responsible for their own work. For instance, the schedule and criteria for the portfolios the class was just starting to work on so students would have “clear and explicit instructions for the requirements of their tasks” (12.6). His idea was that they would then develop these ideas as a template using his as a model for their own portfolios and they could then check and set their own time frames. This was a very good example of both scaffolding the learning and activities while allowing students to feel as if they are working independently.

As I wandered around the back of the workshop, Ralph also showed me another of his innovations – he had implemented an award for “Metal worker of the Year” where students made artefacts such as a ‘trebuchet’, which is a miniature of a medieval catapult. The appeal to students was evident and several students came over to stare at the exemplars and tell me about them before returning to their tasks. The competition involved strong applications using the least metal. Ralph told me the students found this very motivating and he was pleased that these awards were now included in the school awards ceremony at the end of the year.

After the Year 8 Computing class, which was actually a rotation of the Technology Mandatory options offered over Year 7 as an introduction to Technology, Ralph had time to show me the classroom safety contracts he had designed for his classes. All students must have signed a safety contract to be able to enter the workshop, even the senior students. With the Year 7 students, Ralph had them design their own logos for their own safety contracts, where he also kept an ongoing record of which options they had completed in Technology Mandatory. This meant that at the end of Year 8, all students had a record of how they had progressed and what they had achieved over the two year period. All of these rather innovative ideas seemed to be
Ralph’s own work and he implemented all of these ideas with the knowledge of the head teacher, despite the fact that he was the only one on staff working this way.

The next class was a practical class for another Year 8 group of Technology Mandatory students working on Metals projects. Again a workplace style routine was evident as students filed in, found and put on their aprons and moved quickly to their work stations. Ralph spoke very kindly to members of the class making sure to particularly speak to a student on a ‘behaviour’ card. This was a class mainly of boys. He started by returning the students’ designs which he wanted them to scan and place on their own web pages so they could keep the original in case it got dirty when used in the workshop. The students then all found pieces of scrap metal to begin preparing to cut their design on to. They then sketched their own drawings on to the scraps of metal using the correct sizes.

Ralph gave very clear directions and again it was a very interactive class. Ralph was relaxed and the assumption that all students would follow the instructions was clear. When he heard a fairly mild swearword from one group, Ralph was quick to warn them – “Don’t you dare swear in here” (12.6) and the class became briefly very quiet. Most of the time there was a quiet buzz of chatter as students engaged in the set tasks. I noticed the boy who was on the behaviour card seemed focussed on his work and Ralph told me that this student was quite dedicated as he felt Ralph accepted him. Ralph addressed the class with brief catch phrases such as battle along; sort it out among yourselves and help each other as students were waiting for his individual attention. The small metal pieces with the designs turned out to be ‘tribal jewellery’, a project allowing students much creativity while learning basic metal skills.

The contrast between the way Ralph had spoken about his beliefs and perceptions about the students who took his classes and his negativity to the school was also evident in another class I observed on this field visit. This time it was an elective subject, Year 9 and 10 Industrial Technology, Metals. Ralph referred to this class as his wild children. They were working on a replica canon which one female student warned me would “blow up in your face if you fire things out of it” (12.6). Students could also elect to make a plant holder / metal bracket and students were engaged in
both tasks throughout the hour long lesson. Again, all students seemed to be doing different things around the design briefs set. Ralph's work ethic, good humour and tolerance was evident. When I asked after this lesson about the way in which he worked with the students he stated he was just doing his job and he asserted he saw himself as a professional despite his misgivings about the school and students.

Interestingly, of the 12 teachers case studied, Ralph was the only one to leave teaching after four years at Pitlock High School. He accepted a position as a Head Teacher at a newly created Australian Technical College in the same area. Unfortunately, due to political changes and low enrolments, this position and College only lasted for a short period before Ralph had to reinvent himself as a TAFE teacher, a position he remains in currently as a Head Teacher.

Other teacher interview
To conclude this discussion of the most puzzling of the 12 case study introductions, I spoke to another experienced teacher from Ralph's faculty. 'Ted' had been a telecommunications engineer in the UK before retraining as a teacher and moving to Australia. Ted had been teaching at the school for many years and was due to retire the following year. He told me that Ralph had "got used to the ropes extremely quickly – since I've known him he has taken on more and more responsibilities, such as Year Advisor for 150 students" (12.7). He commented on Ralph's skills in planning ahead and his capacity for organisation. Ted referred to one area of difficulty Ralph had referred to in an interview – there were students with very challenging behaviour in the school and Ralph had experienced difficulties with some problem students which had caused his many concerns. Ted told me that there were "some fairly unmotivated students in this school" (12.7) and that Ralph had particularly found unmotivated senior students very frustrating. He linked his comments about poor student behaviour with a comment on Ralph's preparation for classes:

Because this is his first teaching post, he's come up with all these things himself – he's quite innovative in what he decides to do – so he is disappointed when they do not go his way (12.7).

In our discussion, Ted and I agreed that there seemed to be a disparity between the efforts Ralph was making and the satisfaction he was getting from working so hard
with, to his perspective anyway, limited results. Ted referred to this as frustration with the system. "His problem was not getting motivated kids" (12.7).

The final words of this case study are from an email from Ralph after the visit.

I feel I work hard at keeping the students interested and motivated in class and that means they work. Unfortunately I have limited control over what they do outside my classroom and many of my ‘A’ students are continually in trouble in other classes. Part of my frustration is seeing these students fall behind and lose interest in metals because of their troubles in other lessons (12.8).

The data gathered from Ralph are extensive but this introduction allows his voice to be heard and the observations of some class time and activities noted. Further analysis of this particular case study will be returned to in later discussion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, four teachers have been profiled: Martha, the Food Technology and Hospitality teacher in the large school in the south where the collegiality of the staff in her faculty seemed to contribute to her orientation to teaching; Myron, engaged in Information Technology and career education at a large central state school; Steve, another IT teacher at a large school, although less engaged in the large faculty of TAS staff because of his dedication to network duties; and finally the hard working individual Ralph in the school he found so challenging yet to which he dedicated so much effort and energy.

The themes encountered here are revisited in the next chapter in the cross case analysis. The significance and influence of an industry background; the benefits and issues of working in a larger discipline area with a Head Teacher as contrasted with working as a single teacher in a specific curriculum area as in smaller schools; the creation of a workplace ethos and routine in classrooms; the importance of building relationships with students and the willing way in which so many of these teachers have volunteered for additional duties and positions of responsibility are some of the themes worthy of further consideration.
Chapter 8. Cross case analysis – examining the themes

Introduction
In the previous three chapters, through a series of vignettes based on data from interviews, field visits, conversations and emails, the case study teachers have been sketched and their voices foregrounded. In the next two chapters the most important themes arising from the data are examined in more detail. These themes have been identified multiple times in the data for a majority of the participants. Although the findings are presented as important because they have been confirmed across multiple data sources, they are not intended to be interpreted as conclusive beyond this study. Rather, the perspectives of these particular participants are considered as they begin their journey as teachers and adapt to schools, or even adapt schools. At the same time, my analysis suggests resonances in approaches and philosophies. These may be typical of teachers who have changed careers, particularly those who are from a trade area that subsequently becomes the core of their teaching discipline. There is no intention to propose that these teachers’ approaches are superior to other pedagogical strategies and beliefs about schools and teaching.

This chapter reports on both what was observed and the participants’ comments across the cases. A descriptive approach is and through iterative analysis, meaning is inscribed to the data. Links with the literature on career change teachers, and to a lesser extent other beginning teachers, are included as a point of comparison or confirmation for findings when appropriate.

The chapter includes a discussion of different conceptions about the nature and purposes of schooling. Significant themes emerging from the analysis included the view of school as being both a workplace itself and a preparation for becoming a well prepared member of the workforce. The ways in which these particular teachers drew extensively and frequently on their life experiences also emerged as an important theme. This theme resonated well with the literature (Allen, 2007; Chambers, 2002; Halladay, 2008; Mayotte, 2003). The workplace ethos developed by the participants and encouraged by the practical environment in the discipline area of TAS is linked to teacher identity formation in this discussion.
The approaches to teaching and learning and some of the pedagogical strategies employed by the teachers are also explored. The emphasis that participants frequently placed on students as central to their decision in becoming teachers, and the way in which the idea of forming relationships with students is fundamental to their lives as teachers, is considered in this chapter. Ideas about social class and the ways in which the participants saw themselves as different to other teachers in their schools are discussed, followed by a concluding section about their own motivations in becoming teachers. Threaded throughout this chapter and the next, there is a recurrent theme of considering the discursive construction of a new type of teacher, a teacher who may be quite different in their beliefs about the purposes of schooling and the role of teachers.

**Schools, workplaces and teacher socialisation**

Lortie (1975) pointed out that those who come to teaching in a traditional pathway “have normally had sixteen continuous years contact with teachers” (p. 60). As a contrast, the participants in my study had a similar amount of time away from school environments. For them, there had been a long gap between completing school and returning as new teachers. During those years between school and becoming teachers, they developed different career identities and they were socialised into industrial workplaces. The socialisation of a teacher who is a mature entrant to the profession is a very different process from those who start as soon as they have finished school (Chambers, 2002; Chin & Young, 2007; Lortie, 1975). Although this was a difficult topic to identify in the interview data, the school visits gave some indications of the ways in which these new teachers were becoming part of the schools in which they were teaching.

During analysis of my field notes taken during site visits I realised that I had rarely observed any of the 12 participants, with the exception of Liam, in the faculty or school staffroom. Participants reported spending time when not teaching, including breaks, either in the playground or in their workshops. In this study many classes are located in workshops, commercial kitchens, computer labs or out on the farm. Such contexts encourage such an approach. However, in many ways, in my experience, these teachers take this further than I have observed when visiting TAS classrooms over the past ten years. In every class I observed, whether the class was in a
traditional room with desks or in a practical area, the tone of voice, the routines followed by students and the atmosphere of being ‘on the job’ was striking.

In a study of second career teachers which was designed to examine acculturation of second career teachers to the school context, Allen (2007) found that:

... career changers reported that the most important consideration in identifying as a teacher is the relationship with the students. Positive student interactions lead to satisfaction with one’s position as a teacher (p. 7).

This finding concurs very closely to the findings in my study. More research to identify the links between teacher socialisation and mature entrants to the profession is needed. The participants themselves saw the school as both a workplace, and a preparation for work. This meant they ‘worked’ most of the time they were ‘on the job’, associating work with spending time preparing for or interacting with students.

In a qualitative study of eight new teachers who had followed alternative pathways to a new career in education, Swain, Schmertzing & Schmertzing (2011) found that the attitudes and knowledge that these new teachers had developed in their previous careers were the main influence on their approach and philosophy as teachers. Similarly, in my study, one of the most striking commonalities shared by all 12 participants was the creation of an atmosphere reminiscent of a workplace, or even more specifically a workshop or work team, with the teacher identified as the team leader or leading hand.

**Voice and identity as teachers**

The first feature defining this workplace atmosphere which became apparent was the way that 11 out of 12 participants spoke to students. Liam was different, so his approach is considered later in the chapter. In every class I observed with the other 11 participants in the study, the teacher used a very quiet, casual yet audible voice. Although I am not attempting to comment on teachers’ use of voice in most classrooms, the use of a particular voice as a teacher is able to be identified by anyone who attended a school. Teachers’ voices may be authoritative, well enunciated, sarcastic, informative and usually very easy to hear, even in noisy classrooms.

In a lecture given in Sydney last year, Linda Darling-Hammond (2011) played a short segment from a 1986 film called *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*. She played the clip
to show a history teacher who was addressing a very unresponsive class. He used an upward inflection and left ‘fact gaps’ in his presentation where he intended students would furnish responses. For example, he stated: “In 1930, the Republican controlled congress, in order to alleviate the effect of ...... anyone? .... anyone? .... the great depression ....” Of course, this was an actor satirising a particular style of teacher, but the manner of exposition was familiar to all judging by the audience reaction. Darling-Hammond used this as an example of what she asserted is a common traditional image of teachers, in particular a view of teachers as filled with content knowledge and charged with the task of transferring that knowledge into the heads of their students so that they can pass tests and examinations for example. However, Darling-Hammond described that role as part of last century and not suitable for the twenty-first century requirements of education. These requirements include:

... an understanding of the meaning and relevance of ideas to concrete problems; an ability to apply core concepts and modes of inquiry to complex real-world tasks; a capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new situations (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

As Darling-Hammond urged her Australian audience to consider curriculum, assessment and teaching in new ways to meet new demands and new ways of learning which are very different to those used last century, she pointed out that the students emerging from schools need to be self reliant and self-motivated with knowledge that can be applied to changed contexts and situations. In using a voice such as the one typified by the history teacher in Ferris Bueller, the ‘teacher’ is retaining the position as the purveyor of knowledge to the learners. Lortie also refers to the perceived role and approach of teachers and asks “what child cannot, after all, do a reasonable portrayal of a classroom teacher’s actions?” (1975, p 72) The data in my study suggests that those who come to teaching after being away from the classroom for a long period may choose to take a different approach to the role, including speaking to students in a different tone and style.

Teacher educators and the associate teachers who supervise students during school placement place much emphasis on improving student teachers’ vocal delivery. Developing a teacher voice can be seen as an integral part of developing a teacher identity (Joseph, 2011). While a focus on voice is an important aspect of preparing
for the classroom, it needs to be linked with the pedagogical approach being taken, so the students are not 'delivered' content as the only or main strategy for encouraging student learning and engagement. The teaching of pedagogical approaches and learning theory is intended to allow new teachers to reflect on a range of learning theories during their pre-service study. However, the influences of their own teachers could be pre-supposed to be stronger (Lortie, 1975), for those whose experiences of school and education are more recent and more extended than many of the career change teachers in my study.

On the other hand, in the specific case of these new teachers, as mature entrants they have in fact continued to use the type of voice and conversational style they had from when they began the course. This was a style which was reminiscent of the way they would have spoken in their previous vocations. In essence, they spoke very informally, using a style and tone of voice which was usually much quieter than many teachers. Their voices did not change because they were in a classroom. They spoke to their students as if they were less mature fellow workers under their supervision. Their manner of addressing students seemed to show respect for their individuality. When they wanted the attention of the whole class, they rarely raised their voices. Instead they moved to a central position and looked about until there was silence. When follow up questions were asked about this, responses about their maturity as beginning teachers were cited. There was also a perception by the participants that they would not have been like this if they had begun teaching at a younger age. Ralph said:

*I am confident that I now have enough understanding of the ways we learn to not try and push ideas down the throats of my students. Instead, I lead them to learning. I would not have been confident to teach my own way if I had completed schooling as a younger man (12.13).*

**Relationships, attitudes and atmosphere**

When I directly inquired about their use of voice and their attitude to students, the participants all referred to building relationships with students which formed the basis for the rapport they had developed. Beutel (2010) observed that "supportive classroom atmospheres are characterized by mutual respect and support between teachers and students, and among students" (p. 86). I observed this relaxed but very active atmosphere during most of the visits made during the three years of data
collection. Naturally a visitor or observer in a classroom does affect the class. However, the similarity of the teacher tone, the students' way of speaking to the teachers and the level of independent activity were recognisable in each context.

Martha told me “I hate raised voices – my memories of school are dominated by teachers yelling at me to ‘get out now’” (1.7). She deliberately decided to not have conflict in her classrooms if this could possibly be avoided and specifically spoke to students in quiet tones and a friendly manner. She also spoke to them very clearly, using workplace language, to show her expectations. She told a student who was not compliant about assessment work: “if you can’t be bothered getting your assignment in, I wouldn’t employ you” (1.4). These cautions worked for her and she felt she was able to make statements such as this as students had a positive relationship with her. Mick took this further when he asserted he believed that he was “managing classrooms through, to some extent, having personal relationships with the kids when they know (that) you know them as people” (11.2). Using discourse analysis strategies (Fairclough, 1992; 2003), the participants used words such as job, work, sacked and training in every interview while teaching was aligned with terms such as learning, skills and projects. On only one occasion was the word children used in an interview or observation about school students. Although difficult to asset, this could suggest that the teachers in this study do not consider their students as children, and there was certainly evidence that they addressed their students as young adults.

The classroom talk was reminiscent of conversations where the students’ own knowledge, experience or ideas were always included when relevant so the teacher was continually attempting to engage their interest while checking their prior knowledge. The other teacher interviewed at Tom’s school, who had come from an industry background himself, conjectured that teachers who had been to university after school and then returned to school as teachers had a “classroom mentality” (4.4). He believed that could influence new teachers to adopt an authoritative teaching style in his opinion. As a contrast, he argued that he and colleagues like Tom had a more relaxed approach and it is “more of a work program” (4.4). He argued that his conception of his job as a teacher was to engage students in learning through project work, a view shared by other participants in the study.
Liam: A different approach

Now, to consider the teacher who was very different in his voice and manner with students in the classroom? Significantly, although I observed all of the other participants interacting with students outside class, I was only able to observe Liam speaking to students in class as he spent other time in the staffroom or kitchen unless on duty. Liam used a more typical teaching voice and style, by which I mean that when listening to him teach, his voice slowly stepped students through the material he was presenting or the instructions being given to them. It was actually listening to Liam’s ‘teaching voice’ that made me notice that it was very familiar in style, and that it was quite different from the teaching voices of the other 11 participants. He spoke with rising intonation patterns at the end of many sentences, and paused to check students were engaged and to ascertain their understanding frequently.

The other participants all spoke less and questioned more so that they and the class worked together to learn new content, arrange projects or demonstrate or practice new skills. There was much less teacher talk and more collaborative learning approaches most of the time and large content areas were broken into smaller sections. There were frequent brief discussions with student participation encouraged. Examples were given from workplace contexts or the teacher’s life experience whenever possible. However, Liam seemed more attuned to the ethos of the school and had formed strong relationships with his colleagues. There was limited evidence of such collegial interaction in data related to the other 11 participants.

Liam worked from programs and lesson plans developed collaboratively with the rest of the teachers in Food Technology in his school. He responded to my questions about the way he spoke to students as being a deliberate strategy he had adopted as he believed it kept students calm and focused on their learning. His style and approach was more familiar to me as an observer, as he acted and spoke in a way I had observed in many other classrooms. In the calm atmosphere, students seemed to be mainly engaged. The less direct approach adopted by the other participants seemed less efficient but it could be contended that this less direct student-oriented approach promoted a very positive classroom climate. Rather than considering the efficiency of the two approaches and styles, it seems more interesting to see these as
possibly appealing to different students in the system. More research is needed on
the outcomes and perceptions of school students experiencing different teachers with
an emphasis on career change teachers, an aspect which is difficult to locate in the
literature.

The vocational purposes of schooling
Teachers from industry were more clearly linked to the vocational purposes of
schooling than more academic aspirations. In a recent article on the policies,
funding and purposes of schooling, the authors argue that in Australia there has been:

... a retreat from the democratic equality (public) purposes of education to a
much greater prominence on social efficiency (economic) and social mobility
(private) purposes (Cranston et al, 2010, p. 194).

In a paper discussing the academic and vocational divide in schools, Reynolds
(2004) argues that in America:

This divide is a separation of the two curricular pathways which induces
students and others to see vocational education as an inferior curriculum. Due
to this perception many students may choose the academic curriculum route
even though they have no aspirations of earning a college degree (p.1).

In this article, the author argues that pathways for all students need to be provided
and schools privilege academic pathways even for students who may not have the
interests, abilities or aspirations of continuing to university. Halliday (2000) argued
that developing critical thinking skills, for example, could be achieved in both
vocationally orientated and academic disciplines. Finally, when considering Dewey’s
definitions of vocational and general education, it can be argued that:

Dewey refuses to take sides in the tired debate over whether education should
prepare students for a life of ‘getting and spending’ or lead them to higher
things. Instead, he tries to weed out the very opposition between liberal and
vocational education (Higgins, 2005, p. 443).

The career change teachers in my study find their direction in the vocational and
technical subjects they teach which positions them as vocationally rather than
academically orientated. It is possible to argue that schools benefit from a range of
teacher orientations and that teaching applicants selected on the grounds of
vocational skills offer different perspectives and opportunities for students. The next
section explores the conceptions of the purposes of schooling as perceived by
teachers with an industry background.
Influences on and beliefs about schooling

To revisit the idea of the ways in which the teachers in my study saw school and their role as teachers, throughout the data the analysis indicated that many of them commented on the perception that they were very different to other teachers in many ways. Myron referred to the influence of his former career and he also asserted that he saw himself as operating quite differently from other teachers.

I believe my past experience allows me to see beyond school. Unlike many teachers I had at school, (and still appear to be around), I am not interested in educating the students only to pass exams. I want them to learn things that will help them all their life; if they pass an exam it's a bonus. It is a bit like a driving instructor. They can teach you to drive, or they can teach you to pass the driving test. My aim is to instil in the students a work and social ethic that regardless of what career path they follow, they will be useful members of society (5.2).

In this comment, Myron shared his approach to the purposes of school in terms of preparing students for life beyond school. For him, that life was not necessarily linked to using an assessment system to aspire to a university pathway. In fact, references to the Higher School Certificate and students progressing to university were limited in the data. The teacher preparation course that students undertook emphasised junior technology subjects, VETiS courses as well as curriculum for technology subjects included in the HSC. However, the attention of my participants was rarely directed to succeeding at higher level examinations. Although Mick referred to being worried about not preparing students sufficiently for examinations at the beginning of his time as a teacher, he later confirmed this had not been a problem for him as he had discovered careful preparation and research covered this aspect adequately for him. The silence about preparing students for tertiary study emphasised the beliefs these teachers espoused about the prime importance for them of schools as mainly a preparation for work rather than for further study. This view can be considered limited but it is a view which matches the pathways of the majority of students who do not elect to go on to university after school but instead move to jobs or further vocational training. Chambers (2002) contends that she found that “having had considerable experience at applying their knowledge in the workplace, these second-career teachers are committed to helping students begin making that application in the classroom” (p. 215).
Five principals commented on this knowledge of the world of work influencing the attitudes and approach of teachers from industry in the cases of Myron, Lauder, Mick, Martha and Steve. The comments referred to their different style where the teachers were seen as rarely confrontational with students. They were reported on as having less behaviour management problems than other beginning teachers with the exception of Mick, who experienced difficulties with classroom management in his first year of teaching. The principals directly attributed their lack of student discipline issues to their maturity and specifically to their experience in communicating and managing staff during their earlier careers. For example, the principal of Martha’s school spoke about her ability to manage even challenging students without escalating any issues. Martha’s colleague, Mary, also commented favourably on Martha’s ability to work with problem students and she also contended that was because of her prior experience in industry.

Liam’s principal told me she had three teachers from industry on staff and she believed that “their philosophy is the same all the way through – having every kid achieve their potential” (9.8). Liam’s colleague, Olivia, had experienced working with five second career teachers and she believed:

They’ve got a fire in their belly – this is something they really want to do and they’re going to make it work – it’s their passion – that’s what they want to do and they’re going to make it work (9.7).

The term fire in the belly was also used by Steve’s principal in a discussion on teachers from industry (2.4) and their enthusiasm for teaching. Tess felt her main job as a teacher was “to provide kids an experience (of school) that they will enjoy and remember” (6.6). She specifically did not want their school experiences to be like her memories of her own school career.

Martha thought carefully when I asked her about what was important to her as a teacher.

I think it’s important to get the most out of the kids, and also for them to realise that school’s not going to suit everybody - whatever they chose to do, they don’t have to stick with it as long as they can continue to learn – so I try to get a love of learning into them (1.7).

She also told me:

I see my role as a teacher, inside the classroom and out, is to assist students to be the best that they can possibly be and to do the best that they can do (1.7).
When observing Martha in her classroom I saw her directions and actions were more like a team leader or leading hand rather than resembling a more formal approach to teaching. She was another participant who did not use the type of ‘teaching voice’ many teachers adopt. Martha acted as if she was part of the class team and students seemed to be very busy keeping up with their work quietly and reasonably efficiently. Martha moved among the class constantly as if she was in a restaurant kitchen, speaking to individual students, groups of students and the whole class in a quiet and understated way. The students were clearly informed on what they were engaged in.

**Drawing on life and work experiences**

One of the recurrent themes in the data was that the study teachers were continually drawing on their work knowledge in their industry area in particular and their life experiences in general to adapt to their lives in the classroom. All of the respondents asserted that they used their workplace experience and knowledge continually in their teaching. They also believed their approaches to pedagogy and delivery, as well as their attitude to students, was influenced by their workplace experience. Martha reported that she found that as she had been used to “dealing with conflict and different situations on a daily basis, I constantly draw on experiences from industry” (1.3). She went on to explain that she saw herself as very different from the teachers she was working with. She avoided engaging in direct conflict with students by always making the focus of interactions the desired actions or behaviour and avoiding personal recriminations or references to past offences. She believed her constant efforts to form relationships with every student she taught made this strategy work well for her, although she believed that senior students were more challenging to convince.

I observed Mick with students in the agricultural technology classroom as well as out on the school farm. He described his approach as ‘holistic’ and explained that by that, he meant he did not confine learning to the subject or content area under scrutiny. He described himself as “treating kids like adults where possible” (11.4) although he admitted this was not always feasible. He also said that this attitude at times meant that the learning outcomes could take longer to attain. However, treating students and their questions with respect was fundamental to his approach to
teaching and the basis of his behaviour management strategies. One of Mick’s main strategies as a teacher was to try and put the learning in a “real world situation” (11.2). He achieved this by “telling stories about my background and how it relates to what I am trying to teach them” (11.2). He believed it improved students’ engagement and retention of information and, more importantly for Mick, they could link this learning with life outside school.

The focus on students

The importance of forming relationships with students was referred to multiple times by Mick, Tess, Steve, Myron and Ralph. The idea that the social and emotional links made with students could be judged fundamental to learning and teaching and that considering students’ emotions as important as their intellects is an argument proposed by Parker Palmer (2007). Ideas aligned to this perspective were voiced by most of the participants. All of the participants referred to the importance of having respect for their students as fundamental to their approach to their classes and the school. The connection they had with the young people they were teaching was referred to much more frequently than relationships they were developing with their colleagues. Although specific questions were asked about communicating with other staff and students, most responses were limited in terms of comments about working with other teachers, with the exception of Liam. Instead, they all spoke of the satisfaction they experienced as a result of interactions with students. They all commented that they believed the forming of relationships with their students was part of their strategy to engage students and by getting to know their students as young people, they would encounter less problems with behaviour management. It was also evident, particularly during site visits, that these teachers, like all good teachers, valued their students as individuals.

Lingard, Martino, Mills, & Bahr (2002) argued that:

The nature of teacher-student relationships and the quality of pedagogic practices are key factors that impact on students’ engagement with schooling. Individual teachers contribute more significantly to changes in student achievement than other factors (p. 44).

This study was particularly concerned with boys’ education and literacy. However, it is relevant here as this belief in forming relationships with students was referred to in many responses from the participants in my study.
In his study of 12 teachers in six schools in Georgia, Lee (2011) found that his participants also claimed they dealt with stress better than some of their colleagues because it was part of their previous life and career. They also referred to the benefits of maturity to a beginning teacher, an aspect I perceived in my study. Lee’s study had some similarities to mine, but again the participants were in different stages of their teaching career from one first year teacher through to a person who had been a teacher for more than twenty years. The teachers in Lee’s study were from many different career backgrounds and pathways to becoming teachers, yet there are similarities in the findings of Lee’s study and the findings reported here.

**Behaviour management**

An aspect of learning to teach which is very dominant in the beginning teacher literature is difficulties encountered by beginning teachers with behaviour management (Barnes-Ryan, 2010; Beattie, 2000; Le Maistre & Parc, 2011; McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006). Whether it was because of the maturity and experience the new teachers possessed prior to coming to the classroom or whether it was their attitude and efforts to engage in broader and reflective relationships with students is difficult to ascertain. There was a deliberate effort to investigate behaviour management during interviews with other teachers and principals. In every case, with the exception of Mick’s problems in his first year, all respondents referred to the lack of difficulties these new teachers had with managing student behaviour. The principal of Martha’s school confirmed that Martha related well to students and had experienced very few discipline problems.

She is very matter of fact—she has no issues at all in behaviour management—this is partly because she doesn’t back students into corners—a really good feature (1.6).

In his first year of teaching, Mick was given advice by his head teacher which he attempted to follow. He told me he had tried to:

... come in and show them where the lines are drawn so they know clearly where the borders are and where the expectations are; and if they step out of it, then you hit them really hard (11.2).

He found this approach did not work for him at all. “It was terrible. It did not suit my style; it did not suit my personality and it did not suit the kids” (11.2). He moved to his own style, which he described as a combination of treating students with respect
and getting to know them as individuals. The classroom management problems he experienced in his first year as a teacher had been minimized. In his words:

I'm listening to all these kids and they talk about other teachers, and these teachers they are arguing with don't give them any respect. The biggest word was respect. They don’t give them any personal interaction. Therefore they get in there and muck up in the classroom and they did it because they thought the teachers had not respected them so why should we respect you? (11.2)

He had been able to progress with most of his students to what he termed self regulation which was working well. In this system, students have few rules but these were fundamental to safety, good manners and giving all other students a fair go. If a student transgressed, they were then required to explain their actions, reflect on the effects of their behaviour and accept consequences for their own actions as negotiated with the teacher. For example, the biggest punishment or consequence was being disallowed from a practical lesson as Mick has negotiated with his head teacher that transgressors would spend one or more practical lessons revising under her supervision. He rarely had to apply this consequence since introducing it.

Mick believed that he had a different attitude to students when he compared his attitude to his colleagues. He believed:

... if I want them to behave a set way, or if I want them to treat me a set way within class, I have to treat them that way first (11.4).

One of the ways he achieved this was by “taking a personal interest” (11.4) in students. He spent spare break times wandering about conversing with students “whether or not I’m on playground duty” (11.4). He spoke to them about their lives, what they had been doing over the weekend or during holidays.

I’ll get there and ask him what he’s been up to. Some of the stuff he may have been up to at the weekend may really not be wise for a teacher to know. But the fact that I asked him that – I have no problem with that kid in my class (11.4).

Paul’s approach to student behaviour management was also based on an individual approach. He explained that he had often watched colleagues dealing with difficult students where he believed the attitude of the other teacher was making the situation worse. He explained this view by telling me about an incident he had witnessed.

There was this kid ‘Brian’ who wasn’t coming very often and then he was sitting in class with me when this bloke came in to teach with me. Brian was just sitting there and he couldn’t do something so he was just waiting there
quietly for me to help him. This other teacher came up to him and just said um ... you know, and started helping another student. He said ‘I’m not helping you Brian because you choose not to do any work.’ Brian sort of didn’t react and then it started escalating and I could see how hurt Brian was and the next minute he is up and chucking a chair (7.2).

Paul told me about speaking to the other teacher later:

I said to him (the other teacher) – you know you’ve just got to back off. He (Brian) was sitting there waiting for me and he didn’t need someone reinforcing the fact that he can’t do something (7.2).

Paul was attempting to support students to raise their self-esteem and to encourage more regular school attendance, particularly for those students who were struggling with all aspects of their schooling. To remain teaching in a complex and challenging environment for an extended period provides a demonstration that Paul’s choice to work on providing learning opportunities for his students motivated him in his teaching and attitude to his students.

The comments in the next extended quotation from Ralph are also linked with the following section about the role most of these teachers referred to as preparing students for the workplace.

Over the last 20 years I have noticed a definite decline in the standard of youth we were getting in industry as apprentices. They lack prior knowledge and attitude to work. Most have no idea of work ethic and this leaves them in culture shock for the early part of their apprenticeship. Many of my friends in various trades also agreed with this outlook. For many years I tried to enter teaching in TAFE (to try and make a difference) but my trade was very specialized and positions were rare. I always wanted to teach in schools but more recently to get the students before they entered work (12.2).

This was written in an email the year before Ralph started teaching. This attitude explains some of the reasons for both his efforts to prepare students in his Year 11 class so they were accepted to apprenticeships, despite the fact that this effectively removed the more able students from his senior classes. The work ethic idea was very much embodied in his attitude in class where all students were working at all times under his constant supervision, encouragement and monitoring. Engaging students in their learning tasks was also an effective tool for behaviour management – students literally did not have time in the classes I observed to behave badly.

However, observing him in the classroom as well as listening to his comments also fore grounded Ralph’s view that the major role of the school system for him, and for
other participants, is as a preparation for the workforce. This is discussed in the next section.

**Schools as preparation for work: class issues?**

Although the theme of schools as preparation for work intersected with other themes such as differences in ideology and attitude to other teachers perceived by the participants, it is revisited here for further exploration. In his second interview Ralph, responded to a question about what he saw as his main role as a teacher with the following:

> My main role is to get them a work ethic and enough knowledge to be able to go and actually get into work; get their whole attitude changed. I get them so they’re not allowed to sit down in the workshop – they’ve got to continuously work – and I don’t have any problems with them. They work flat out all through the classes – well, they do now. They didn’t when I got them. I run it as a workshop, not a school room (12.9).

I observed this busy atmosphere when I visited the school the previous year, confirming his approach was very task orientated and busy. This was replicated in almost every school visit with all of the participants. Paul commented:

> My aim is to instil in the students a work & social ethic that regardless of what career path they follow, they will be useful members of society (7.1).

This broader view of the purposes of school was reflected in other responses in the data, including the statement by Myron cited earlier in this chapter. It could be argued that being ready to be useful and functioning contributors to society after school is an aim shared by almost all teachers, particularly in the secondary context.

This view of the purpose for schools being a preparation for becoming good workers could also be aligned with the working class ethos of these new teachers, as well as their experience with apprentices and school leavers while they were in the workforce. It also aligns with the traditional vision of the purpose of public schools as defined by Campbell (2007):

> Schools had multiple purposes in mind for working class children and youth. They were to receive a basic education, making them workers and/or mothers who were educated enough. They were to receive training in certain values, including self-discipline (p.140).

This changed to some extent in the late twentieth century where access and equity became key ideas (Campbell, 2007, p 141). This was also the time when technical schools were no longer offered as an optional secondary school attended mainly for
those, typically working class students, who wanted to go into a trade or other blue
collar employment.

Sifting through the data, the values about preparing students to become good
workers are important to the participants in this study with references to preparing
students for the reality of work recurring in interviews and discussions. Identifying
and making links to former career identities and beliefs as part of the process of
adapting to school was seen as part of the transition to becoming a teacher according
to Tigchelaar, Brouwer & Korthagen (2008). More research on teachers’ beliefs
about the purposes of schooling would identify this area more clearly in an era where
schools are expected to produce students with employability skills as well as
academic credentials as typified by VETiS courses, for example. The question
remains, in starting teaching as mature adults, are these new teachers reflecting an
earlier era and position towards schooling? Could this be a class based perception?
The data does not conclusively provide evidence to respond to this question, but it is
worthy of future investigation. Social class as a concept can be problematic in the
Australian context (Campbell, 2007). However, in the next section, social class
issues are examined as part of the context of my study.

The label ‘working class’, in fact any discussion of class, is not a clear concept in
the Australian idiom. McGregor (1997) argues that “Occupation typically defines the
working class – or lack of it as unemployment is higher among this group” (p 182).
Access and completion of education can also be considered a class marker in
Australia (Lamb, 2011; Teese, 2000, Teese & Polesel, 2003). This is particularly true
in rural areas. One of the many reasons Tess decided to switch to teaching was the
instability of employment in rural agriculture for example.

Ten of the 12 participants in the study identified themselves as believing they were
from the working class. The exceptions were Steve, whose parents were teachers,
and Claire who stated her father was middle class and that the family move to
Australia was linked to her mother’s working class origins. Her father was in the
navy in both the UK and when he moved to Australia. However, McGregor (1997)
cautions that survey data in the past have shown that over a third of Australians
identify themselves as working class (p.182). Using McGregor’s list of working
class occupations (pp. 181-182) the occupations of the participants’ parents mainly fit his definition as the following examples indicate. Myron’s father worked for the railways, Tess’ father worked as a bricklayer and her mother worked as a bartender. Tom’s father worked in a factory, later as a manager, and his mother worked as a school secretary. Lauder’s father was a fitter and turner. Mick’s father was a miner who later worked as a ‘jack of all trades’ while his mother was a contract cleaner. Ralph’s father worked as a slaughterman then as a truck driver and his mother was a nurse. Martha told me her father had worked as a draftsman and she mentioned working with a teacher whose father was a principal. She believed this teacher:

... talks and looks down on me. One because she does not approve of the way I became a teacher and two because of my lower class background and my not having ‘completed’ my schooling (1.7).

There was only one participant who left school to attend university. Paul’s father was an electrician with his own business. Paul gained sufficient scores in his HSC to be accepted into an electrical engineering degree but he “left soon after as my Dad encouraged me to get a trade” (7.1). By becoming teachers, or professionals, it could be argued that these new teachers are shifting across the social scale, a shift Lortie (1975) identified as a possible reason as well as an outcome from becoming a teacher in the United States.

The school system itself was historically divided into Catholic and non-government schools and government schools. Government schools were particularly for those who would be leaving school and going into the workforce early, where there was an emphasis on ‘practical’ subjects and skills development, for example, “cooking and cleaning for girls and woodwork for boys” (Campbell, 2007, p 134). Campbell continues on to make a link to the current context where:

... working-class youth, though now remaining in secondary schools for several years, tend to take up VET subjects rather than the more abstract mathematics, sciences and foreign languages (Campbell, 2007, p. 134).

Other researchers have more recently referred to VETiS as being taken up in far greater numbers by students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Lamb, 2011; Polesel, 2010). The teachers under scrutiny in my study have themselves followed what Campbell described as a working class pathway through school and trade training. Now they are teachers and they are facing students who may follow similar pathways.
However, as the basic subjects in technology are mandatory during the junior years of secondary schooling, these teachers encounter most students in a school during their first two years at high school. More research into how secondary students perceive such teachers and these subjects would be helpful to investigate further the effects of class and subject choices in secondary schools.

Campbell points out that, on the other hand, non-government schools catered more for middle or higher class students. These schools initially, according to Campbell, “developed a strong control over the character of secondary education, and that secondary education served the interests of middle and ruling class families” (Campbell, 2007, p. 134). Although including vocational education and extending the school leaving age in most states has been an attempt to include a broader range of options for students, the influence Campbell refers to in terms of subjects and prestige allocated to more academic subjects and ‘better’ schools continues. Teese (2000) and Teese and Polese I (2003) compare school locations, results and after school student destinations showing that university places are allocated at much higher rates to non-government school leavers. Vinson (2009) argued for policies encouraging social inclusion having demonstrated the social and economic disadvantages in rural areas in Victoria (Vinson, 2004). He compared rural and urban school results, finding that educational disadvantage was evident in rural schools as well as those in lower socio-economic locations. Vinson (2006) proposed that programs specifically directed to rural areas of economic disadvantage could redress the balance.

Ralph told me, as did almost all of the other participants, that he believed:

... probably my biggest success is getting through to the kids that -- um -- would normally not get anywhere -- you know -- fall through the gaps type of kids (12.9).

More research is needed to clarify and substantiate this claim, but the data suggested strongly that teachers in this study found more satisfaction from working with less academically oriented students, perhaps from less academic pathways. The other teacher interviewed at Tess’ school reported that:

She manages classes that are at the lower end of the ability scale far better than I do. I believe they can relate to her – I’m an academic – they think I’m a bit of a nob (6.4).
At General High School, the fact that many students from the small town attended private schools rather than the local public schools was commented on, as it was at all of the schools in small towns visited during data collection period. In rural areas, there is a divide between students who remain at a local government school and those who attend private schools either locally or as boarders. In the case of Stump Central School, indigenous students attend the school while non-indigenous students either attend a bigger school across the border in a larger town or go to boarding schools, especially if they are from farming families. This makes for a challenging teaching environment in small rural schools.

**Differences explored**

When questioned about whether they believed they were different as teachers, the respondents reported that they believed their attitude to their jobs as teachers was markedly different to their colleagues. References were made to hours of work frequently. For example, when I met Myron at his school, it was just after eight in the morning. A few students had arrived, but other than the principal and some ancillary staff, Myron told me he was the only teacher who was regularly on site long before school started, normally an hour or so earlier. He had arrived late because of meeting me for breakfast. This pattern was repeated at every school I visited with the exception of Martha who had young children to have ready for school. All participants arrived early and left late. Comments about the longer working day in industry were linked to habitual work practices. Lauder informed me that he believed he took longer to prepare materials and resources than many other teachers he had observed. Being very well prepared was of great significance to him. He found the extra time at school allowed him to always be very well prepared. The amount of time and effort in preparing programs and lessons for students is a major theme in the beginning teacher literature for all new teachers (Barnes-Ryan, 2010; Beattie, 2007; Ewing & Manuel, 2005). The practice of being at school longer was remarkable in the data, although the discussion on keeping up with preparation for teaching links these early career teachers with most neophytes to the profession.

Ralph and Mick both referred to their belief that workers in other industry areas would be fired if they were not more energetic and efficient than some of the teachers they were working with. Ralph spoke quite bitterly about a teacher in his
staffroom complaining about teaching every period in the day, pointing out that was a total of six hours maximum, while in the mine he had worked in previously, it was expected that he would work for ten and 12 hour shifts. The term work ethic appeared regularly in two contexts: beliefs and perceptions about the participants’ own work ethic and the need and desire to instil a strong work ethic in their students which was referred to previously. A study of 12 teachers who had changed careers in the US reported that the participants referred to working with a sense of urgency and strongly developed management skills differentiating these teachers from others, in their own perceptions (Lee, 2011, p. 8). This sense of urgency and workplace energy was observed very markedly through all of the field observations completed in this study.

Paul described his feelings about the differences he perceived between his background and other teachers his age who have been in the system for ten or more years as teachers.

I’ve found coming from a trade to teaching, one of the greatest frustrations is dealing with other teachers that are just so set in their ways. They shouldn’t be teaching because they have lost the spark (7.1).

During my visit to this remote school, Paul insisted on going up behind his workshop classroom to have discussions as others on staff would be quick to criticise him for showing enthusiasm. Paul believed this to be in part a result of teachers being appointed to a difficult and isolated school when they would have preferred a more supportive and less remote location. The turnover of staff at this school was very high, although Paul has remained there for over seven years and adapted well to this environment, teaching beginning mathematics to struggling learners as well as his workshop subjects.

**Motivations for becoming teachers**

Altruistic motivations for becoming a teacher appeared frequently in the literature on beginning teachers (Manuel, 2003; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Richardson & Watt, 2005). An Australian College of Educators (2003) study found that new teachers who had moved from other careers were frequently motivated by altruism as they wanted to give back to the community and make a difference for young people through their experiences at school. Their findings also mentioned stable employment and income. These types of motivation were shared by the participants
in my study although there were other reasons provided which were more about the perceived quality of life as a teacher. Although the participants told me that they were drawn to teaching for a variety of reasons, one of the benefits seen by all was the desire to have a more reasonable work life balance. Ralph told me he was shaken when he realised his son had told a friend that he barely ever saw his father. Liam was very tired of working at night during the years he was a chef and had enjoyed his time as a TAFE teacher in part because of the more family friendly hours. The stability of the known work hours and time frames were referred to by Martha and Tess who had both experienced widely varying hours and periods of limited employment.

Despite spending longer hours at school, and acknowledging the exhaustion they often felt after some teaching days, the participants reported that they were very pleased with their choice and glad of the opportunity to join the teaching workforce. They also reported a sense of satisfaction in what they were achieving with their students. Many mentioned that teaching gave them far more satisfaction in terms of adding meaning and value to their lives when compared to their former careers. Claire spoke about her previous administrative and computer positions in a local shire council office as repetitive and dull. As a teacher, she saw changes and enthusiasm in her students “often enough to make me notice their development” (3.1). The phrase *making a difference* came up frequently in the data. This phrase was used in promotions for the course by the education authority and resonates with teacher literature through the decades, particularly in the Australian literature (Connell et al, 1982; Lingard, Mills & Hayes, 2000; Turney et al, 1992). It was also the phrase associated with the Teach for America program, which recruited graduates to move directly to teaching after a brief teacher education program (Zeyu, Hannaway, & Taylor, 2011).

Paul reflected on his own philosophy as a teacher which was encapsulated in a brief phrase.

If they didn’t learn, I didn’t teach them. We can come up with all these excuses – but this is it [our job as teachers] in a nutshell. I guess that’s my reason for my teaching – why I reflect so much on it and keep working on improving as a teacher and seeing better results in my students (7.2).
Paul was never satisfied during his first career as an electrician and then as an electrical equipment salesperson. He decided on teaching as both of his sisters were teachers and he "loved teaching apprentices" (7.1), which he saw as the best part of his trade career. After teaching two years in a challenging and remote school in the far northwest of the state, he expressed his enthusiasm in an interview.

I love it. I really do. It's bloody hard work. I don't know if it is just this school, but this is a pretty hard school to crack them — to get kids working. But I really enjoy that, working with kids like this who have got a bit of spunk about them - yeah, I just love it. The holidays tend to drag on for me (7.1).

Myron thought about being a teacher when he started his apprenticeship but the opportunity was not available as he had to leave school to earn money for the family when his father died suddenly. His experiences as a casual TAFE teacher indicated that teaching appealed to him. Mick started his teaching career believing it was the "teacher's role to impart knowledge to students" (11.2). Now he saw that as "the poor teacher's version of what we do" (11.6). His belief has become that the main role a teacher has was that:

We're actually preparing people for a life outside school. We're teaching them how to live in society and function as human beings (11.6).

In an earlier study of pre-service teachers (n=15) who were changing from other careers, Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) aimed to understand the way the participants adapted to their new roles and made sense of the transition during their teacher preparation. They categorised these new teachers in ways useful to consider in analysing the data from this study.

'The home comers'

Firstly, there was a group Crow Levine and Nager (1990) named 'the home comers' (p. 204). 'Home comers' were defined as individuals who had always wanted to be teachers. Ralph had always wanted to be a teacher, although he was also strategically motivated to be able to spend more time with his family as his career in mining had meant that he was absent from the family too frequently. Ralph had completed year 12 but his low marks, which he attributed to difficulties with examinations, were not sufficient for university study. He said that he had worked hard but did not do well with exams. His goal was further study, but it ended up that he was encouraged by his family to take up an apprenticeship in plant mechanics as his only option, one
which he resented. "Twenty three years ago my dream of being a teacher died when I opened my HSC results. I was one of those students who didn't handle exams well" (12.4). However, after teaching for four years, Ralph reflected that:

At school I wanted to be a Metalwork teacher but looking back from where I am not, I would have made a really lousy teacher. I would have been qualified at 23 and I was definitely not ready to influence people's futures. I still did not know who I was or what I wanted from life, let alone try to guide others (12.9).

However, of the other 11 participants, only Myron had also identified himself as having considered teaching as an initial potential first choice of career. It seems ironic that although these 11 are still teaching in schools, Ralph taught for five years before transferring firstly to a trade school, which did not retain funding because of low enrolments, and then began teaching in a TAFE college. It should be noted that after nine years, all 12 participants are still working as teachers, ten in the government school system, one in an independent school and one as a TAFE Head Teacher.

Liam also believed he was a better teacher because of starting later as a second career.

I'm glad I had all those years of life experience before I became a teacher because I think it makes teaching so much easier. In some ways you have a wider understanding of why these kids are doing certain things or you've got more patience with them... I think if I was 21 and I was teaching, I'd leave (9.2).

'The converted'

The next category identified by Crow, Levine and Nager was 'The converted' (1990, p. 207). These people had not considered teaching until some event in their lives encouraged them to reconsider their career options. This category accords well with the new teachers in my study as the common initiating influence was the availability of a program of teacher preparation that acknowledged and gave them advanced standing because of their prior careers. Most of these participants had worked with young apprentices and sincerely believed they had an aptitude for instructing them.

In the case of Liam, he stated:

I got a taste for teaching (as a TAFE teacher) and I got to like it from that and then I decided to change over for a better way of life - a better lifestyle for the family (9.2).
Teacher working hours compared very favourably with working restaurant hours as a chef. Unlike the participants in Crow, Levine and Nager's study, most of these new teachers were not disillusioned with their previous careers, although the theme of spending more time with family and better working conditions is threaded through the data. Paul did not find enjoyment in his two prior careers as an electrician or as an electrical parts salesman and he was aware of what a teaching career could provide for him as his sisters were teachers. The other person who reported feeling trapped in his career in the mining industry was Ralph. He combined always wanting to be a teacher with a desire to leave the long work hours and difficult conditions for what he saw as a more family friendly career in teaching even though he had a significant loss in remuneration when he became a teacher.

Similarly to the Crow, Levine and Nager's (1990) study, all new teachers had to accept novice status in their new career. However, this was not identified as a problem by the participants as they became involved in their own classrooms and with students rather than being concerned with staffroom politics. All participants asserted that they believed they were very different from traditional teachers. Ralph reflected that "it was a bit hard at first – we're talking two different worlds – like with the staff" (12.4). He was explaining that he spent time either in his classroom workshop or out with students during most of his school day and saw the large TAS staffroom as a storage and meeting area to be visited only when required. He had been used to putting in very long hours in his former job – in fact not seeing enough of his family was one of the many reasons Ralph was interested in a career change. He was frustrated when teachers spoke about a tough day because they had taught all periods in the day without time off. In his job:

I worked flat out – there was no tenure – you either performed or you were out and that attitude I had where you’ve got to perform 100% all day every day seemed a bit foreign should I say (12.4).

He also pointed out that he either worked, teaching VET classes for example, or had meetings four out of five lunch breaks and arrived at school earlier and left later than most staff.

Tess believed she got on well with all staff, but that she was very different as a teacher in how she approaches her job and in how she deals with students.
I pretty much talk — general stuff with the kids, you know — try and get involved and find about more about them. Sometimes if I'm not on duty I'll just wander around the playground, you know, and go up and have a yarn to one group of kids and they'll say — 'Are you on duty? — Why are you out here?' and I say 'because I want to be outside' — I often poke around the school and have a yarn and see what is going on (6.3).

When deciding to become a teacher, Tess was initially undecided. "I've had heaps of different careers and I just thought — well if I do this one, am I going to like it?" (6.1) Later, in the interview in her second year of teaching she told me in response to a question on her decision to become a teacher, "I definitely want to do it now — best career move I've ever had I reckon" (6.2). Now she has become a teacher, Tess sees herself as:

... a bit of a role model for some of the students. Because I didn't do very well at school, I explain to them that you need to get through this stuff and if you don't do it well, you do need to try (6.2).

Tess told me she was very satisfied with her decision to become a teacher as she felt she had the best of both worlds — involved in agriculture while teaching.

I work a job that is different every day and always satisfying. I can pass on life experiences to young people who are interested in the things I am (6.6).

The idea of being a role model for her students was also spoken of by Martha, although part of her reasoning was that she had been able to overcome not doing very well at school herself. She wanted her students to think about the idea that learning can support a variety of career opportunities.

Liam was enthusiastic and positive about becoming a teacher — it was what he expected and wanted as a career. He also believed that teachers like him with an industry background were very different to other younger beginning teachers.

From an experience point of view, I think you're ready to handle a lot of situations that get thrown at you — you're able to handle them in a more logical way — the life experience is what it boils down to (9.2).

Walter became a teacher to be able to spend more time with his family as did most of the other participants. He hoped teaching would provide him with:

... job satisfaction in being able to educate other people, a solid career path, family life, financial stability and an endless need to continue to study (8.1).
‘The unconverted’

‘The unconverted’ (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990, p. 212) were defined as those who had achieved well in prior careers in terms of position and status. Strangely, this small group had taken a place in a teacher education program to see if this was a potential pathway out of their previous career. One of the main issues identified in this group was an aversion to the novice status they were accorded during professional experience. One of the reasons the accelerated teacher training program included a three week professional experience placement in the second session of study was to ensure that these career changes had made the right decision and that they were suitable for this role. In the case of the course as a whole over its nine years of operation, there were always some ‘unconverted’ who were identified by supervising teachers or who found the role not what they expected. However, in terms of the group in this study, as is evidenced by their volunteering to participate in the study and in their remaining in their teaching positions for over three years, with all except one remaining in the school system to the present time and the one who left teaching in a different context, none could be described as ‘unconverted’.

Traditionally, careers in teaching began with entry to a teacher preparation course at a teacher’s college or university immediately after completing secondary school. This meant that teachers began their careers in their early twenties and, except for part time or casual work during their education, seldom worked for extended periods in other vocational areas prior to returning to the classroom as teachers. Now, it is much more common for teachers to complete their teacher preparation as mature adults having already experienced at least one if not a variety of work experiences prior to becoming teachers. Valcour and Tolbert (2003) point out this is part of an international trend in all vocational areas, particularly for women, as career changes are becoming normal rather than an unusual pathway for many workers. As many as half of all teacher education applicants are mature entrants to the career (Kember, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Wilson & Deane, 2010). In some cases, as in my research, the career experience forms an essential part of the entry criteria to the program. Matching career experience and teaching specializations is recommended by Hess who argues that “specialists could be identified and prepared in a meaningful fashion” (Hess, 2009, p. 460). Applicants for the ATTP were only able
to gain entry to the program if they had an appropriate set of trade qualifications and experience in the identified and prescribed industry areas.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter the data have been examined across the 12 case studies to ascertain features and approaches that to some extent define this group of teachers. Qualitative data, like people's lives and schools, are based on perceptions of reality and can be, as a consequence, messy, individualistic and complex. It is not often helpful to count and order the data in the way quantitative data can be shaped. However, the words of the participants show their attitudes and beliefs sufficiently so that their continuing construction of themselves and their perceptions of their roles as teachers emerge from the data. The recurrent and main theme explored in this chapter has been the idea that the workplace has been a major influence of the construction of these teacher's identities and their approach to teaching in the school system.

In terms of their teaching material and pedagogical approaches, the former careers and life experiences of these teachers are a dominant influence. They believe they are preparing students for life after school and their desire to make sure the students achieve their own goals recurs throughout the data. The academic pathways from school to university for further study were not evident in the data, perhaps suggesting it was not of prime importance to these participants. The main senior classes taught by the participants were VETiS classes where the vocational qualifications potential in these subjects are commonly seen as more important than the potential academic pathway through completing the optional HSC examination in the VET subject. The idea of the major function of secondary schools as a preparation for work and life after school was linked to these perceptions.

This chapter also considered social class issues in the construction and history of public education as it intersects with these teachers who were not eligible or able to attend university as school leavers. The atmosphere of the classrooms of the participants was discussed, in particular the way these teachers developed a workplace ethos, voice and teaching style. The one teacher, Liam, who was more influenced by the style of colleagues and the school routines, pointed to the benefits of working closely with supportive colleagues if the new teacher was to be socialised
into the way the school was already operating rather than constructing their own workplace style version of a classroom or workshop.

The influence of their workplace experiences could be construed as the basis for their lack of problems in managing classrooms and student behaviour problems were less important to these teachers than that reported in the beginning teacher literature (Barnes-Ryan, 2010; Lortie, 1975; McCormack, Gore & Thomas, 2006). Many of the participants spoke frequently and extensively about how important it was for them to have formed relationships with their students to improve classroom discipline and management. Evidence of this construction of their teaching identities as inextricably linked to the students they were encountering in their classroom and workshops, as well as in the school outside class, was observed during site visits.

This chapter continued the considerations of the participants’ motivations to change careers and become teachers. Their own educational experiences were examined and the influence this may have had on their own teaching styles was introduced. They perceived themselves as quite different from other teachers in most instances, although Liam was far more closely aligned to his local colleagues than any of the other new teachers. Finally, the specific skills and experiences these mature new teachers had brought to their new roles was a recurrent motif throughout this section as well as being the dominant influence on the identities these teachers were constructing for themselves as teachers.

In the next chapter, further themes from the data are explored and again the findings are linked to the literature on beginning teachers, with more emphasis on the literature concerning career change teachers. The 12 teachers in my study share similarities with beginning teachers. However, it is the investigation of the specific attributes, attitudes, perceptions of these specific individuals which remain at the heart of this study.
Chapter 9. Further cross case analysis – examining the themes

Introduction
This chapter opens with a discussion of what has been termed the vocational and academic divide in schools (Rose 2008). Students in the senior or post compulsory years of school in Australia can select from a range of subjects, some of which provide a clear pathway to university level study. Others are more directly linked with vocational pathways, such as the VETiS courses. Although these divisions may be complex and at times arbitrary, they focus on common perceptions of practical and academic subjects. Most of the subjects in the TAS discipline area are deemed practical in nature. The topic of the vocational and academic divide is particularly relevant as the teachers who are the focus of my study have entered the teaching profession from the vocational sector. Their pathway into the profession has been confined to teacher education as they did not complete an undergraduate discipline oriented degree. This examination main focuses predominantly on the vocational aspects of senior schooling in particular. The school careers and vocational pathways of the participants are shared in this section of the discussion.

From the time of their arrival in the schools to which they were appointed, many of the teachers in my study made adaptations to their workshop environments which reflected their own concerns about OH&S for their students. The changes these new teachers made to their school environments are described in this chapter. The teacher preparation the participants experienced is another topic also explored along with examples shared by participants of what they perceived as their successes as new teachers. Reflecting on planning and programming is interwoven in the final part of this section of the discussion.

The vocational and academic divide
An American author, Rose (2008), revisited a debate which has its origins in classical times arguing that the perceptions about intelligence which favour academic or intellectual pursuits, the brain, over practical disciplines, the hand, limit the opportunities and options for young people during their education. The author had just concluded a study of the workplace skills and judgements required to
successfully complete work tasks in what he identified as “blue collar and service work” (p. 632). He argued that the intellectual tasks of work from these vocational categories are frequently diminished in comparison with more academic or professional domains. He also contended that the school curriculum in the USA, and it could be argued similarly in Australia, has been split along academic and vocational divides in a way that limits options for young people.

The debate about parity of esteem for VET courses compared with general education courses is discussed in the VETiS literature (Lasonen & Gordon, 2008; Polesel, 2010). In a report concerning vocational education and its image prepared for the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDFOP), there is an extended discussion on the issue of vocational courses and teachers being seen as lower in status by other educators and students (Lasonen & Gordon, 2008).

Parity of esteem between vocational and general/academic education is related to the societal rewards resulting from education and training whereby the concept is linked to the attractiveness of VET. Such rewards may be the social status, the salary, prestige and chances for further education and career development (p. 18).

The authors argue that well prepared vocational teachers, studies of student outcomes and pathways and further vocational education research may contribute to improving the image of VET.

The increase in vocational education courses offered in schools has proliferated in terms of both numbers of students selecting VETiS courses and the wider range of courses available. VETiS courses are offered to younger students where the school has the resources and interest in offering alternative pathways to disaffected students. VETiS in Australia was initially seen by many schools, teachers and students as an option for less able students, and this may arguably be an excellent option for those who aim for a vocation. However, Rose (2008) argues that we should:

... consider the distinctions we readily make about work that carry with them powerful implications about the work and the worker. These distinctions are usually expressed as oppositions: brain hand, mental versus manual, intellectual versus practical, pure versus applied (p. 633).

He also argued that these distinctions limit options for students as they are linked with the historical belief that:

The purpose of schooling was to create an efficient school system to guide people into their likely positions in the social order (p. 635).
Rose discussed the way some students may be encouraged to select an academic pathway as they are identified as more intellectually suited while others are encouraged into 'manual' or technical subjects. He deplored the links with social class, ethnicity and location which could lead curriculum towards a narrow focus on training for jobs. He also expressed concern about the effect on the sense of self identity and beliefs about their own intelligence and intellectual capacity fostered in young people who are trying to create their own adult identities "within the tensions and restriction of the academic/vocational divide" (p. 638).

Polese! (2010) discussed problems with VETs in Australia. VET participation and destination data indicated that higher numbers of participants are from disadvantaged and low socio-economic backgrounds. This:

... raises concerns regarding social selection and it suffers from problems of low esteem and variable quality, with its place often questioned within the traditional academic culture of secondary schooling (p. 415).

Polese argued that a more integrated approach would encourage a wider range of students to participate in VET to "create quality pathways for students of all backgrounds" (p. 416). The correlation between VETs and equity issues was addressed in a large research study in Sydney (Connell et al, 2003).

Lamb (2011) also found that disadvantaged students had a higher representation in vocational subjects. He argued that technical and vocational education should have:

... the potential to not only deliver higher numbers of skilled workers, but also to bridge the gaps between the poor and the wealthy, between those who have been excluded from the benefits of education and training in the past and those who have been more traditional users or beneficiaries (p. 60).

However, he found that the perceived low status of technical and vocational education continued to be problematic, particularly in senior secondary school subjects where academic subjects are privileged. Lamb argued that for VETs to become more accepted it would require:

... not only a blurring of the boundaries between 'academic' and 'vocational' but a pedagogical transformation which operates across all strands of teaching and learning to support young people from all social backgrounds, to create education for all (p. 67).

The article concluded with a positive set of suggestions about how both in schools and post-school options, technical and vocational education could offer a pathway to university as well as an avenue for the disadvantaged and others to undertake
employment training, which was the original intention of offering alternative senior curriculum options. Of course these vocational options did not exist in their current forms when the participants in this study attended school. The next section reflects on the case studied teachers own experiences of school.

School backgrounds reviewed
As the new teachers in this study were identified for inclusion in the accelerated teacher training program because of their vocational skills and background, this debate and these perceptions about the vocational and academic division of the school curriculum are central to their new roles as teachers. Their own education was not part of the entry requirement for teaching. Half of the participants had left school without completing their senior years to start an apprenticeship. This means that the teachers in this study are teaching students who have progressed above the school year levels they experienced themselves. This was only seen as problematic by Martha’s colleague who expressed concerns about Martha’s ability to teach at the senior level in any subjects except for the VETiS course, Hospitality. This subject, like all of the VETiS subjects, has an optional HSC exam and limited coverage of theory, which is evident, especially when compared with the much more academically oriented Food Technology subject in the HSC. Neither of the Food Technology teachers in my study was engaged in teaching the latter subject.

The school pathways and the reasons for early leaving offered by the participants provide very clear evidence of the position of these new teachers on the vocational side of the perceived divide as far back as the end of their own school careers. For example, Liam left school at the end of Year 10 and took up an apprenticeship as a chef. Tom also finished school at the end of Year 10 to take up an apprenticeship as an electrician. Martha left school during Year 10 as “I was advised in Year 10 that I should leave” (1.3). I asked her if this was so she could take up an apprenticeship but she told me it was “because I was naughty” (1.3). She also became an apprentice chef soon after leaving school. Myron also reluctantly left school early due to family circumstances and he became an apprentice mechanic. He attributed his desire to assist his own students to prepare for life after school to the influence of his own school experiences. Walter went to school up to Year 10 when he started his apprenticeship as a mechanic despite the fact that the vocational guidance teacher
told him it was a “dead end job” (8.2), an opinion which Walter himself eventually agreed with. At school, Walter was not enthusiastic as he was “not academically minded. It was just a place to be” (8.2).

Tess completed Year 12 despite intensely disliking secondary school. The only subject she really enjoyed was Agriculture as “she could see the relevance of what we were learning” (6.1). She was disappointed she did not attain the marks required to allow her entry to a university agriculture course so she completed a vocational qualification in agriculture instead. Tess stated:

> My agriculture teacher realized I would have trouble with my HSC because I didn’t have much of an idea on how to answer specific questions in writing, if I was asked orally, I could answer straight away, She addressed this problem and lifted me to a higher standard (6.2).

The case of Tess demonstrates that she is a persistent learner despite experiencing difficulties with academic subjects and examinations. For example, as well as continually participating in short courses, at times due to career shifts within the agricultural industry, Tess was very proud of completing her degree in Agriculture a year after becoming qualified as a teacher. She is currently completing a science degree to add more depth to her knowledge. Continuing to learn while working seemed to be a pattern throughout her life and this certainly was continuing during her new career as a teacher. Similarly Martha demonstrated her own persistence as a learner as she was retraining as a textiles teacher since starting teaching in order to add another subject to her repertoire.

Data indicated that the practical aspects of the TAS discipline were more familiar to the participants while theory was seen generally as more confronting and challenging. In the VETiS subjects, every one of these 12 teachers took leadership roles in the regional VETiS teacher networks. However, with the exception of senior agricultural technology subjects taught by Mick and Tess, and the senior Engineering Studies class taught by Ralph in his third year of teaching, there is limited evidence of the involvement by these teachers in senior technology specialisations. In fact, when Martha was given a senior Family and Community Studies class, she was eventually replaced as she found the depth of theory required beyond her capacity. It is possible that other teachers had already been given these senior non-VET subjects, but there is also a suggestion from the data that these particular teachers were more
drawn to students who were less academically gifted. Further research with larger numbers would be required to substantiate this tentative finding.

**Workplace influences, technology and VETiS**

Whilst observing Walter in his Year 10 Metals technology class, I saw students working very independently, busy and engaged while Walter worked with individual students on incomplete projects or when they were stuck. I saw this in every workshop subject I observed with every teacher except for Liam, and that may have been because I did not have an opportunity to observe Liam in a practical class. This workplace atmosphere may predominate in other technology classes with teachers from other backgrounds, but I have not personally observed this despite being linked with TAS subjects and teacher education over an extended period. However, it was evident in the instances found in my study. To return to Walter’s classroom, he was always on the move, quick to intervene where there were issues, especially when one student was behaving carelessly with a welder.

Observing Tom in his workshop, I noticed his workplace style of understated supervision which made it seem as if all the activities the class were involved in pivoted around him. The mutual respect between students and teacher was evident and despite the relaxed atmosphere, all students were engaged and interested in their own individual projects. The field notes included comments about the very positive classroom climate. Tom attributed this to the routines he had developed within the classroom and to the respect he had for students. He was proud of the fact that in the two years he had been at Rural Valley High School he had lost no equipment from his workshop, which had apparently been an issue in the past.

In our discussions of workplace influences, Martha developed the idea of correct behaviour in an industry setting into a narrative about appropriate dress, language and performance in a commercial kitchen. Similarly to other teachers from this study, she used the technique of telling stories from her industry background, particularly to her senior classes, as she explained:

> Hospitality kids and year 10 as well - they want to know what it’s like out there. They want to know what really goes on.... And I tell them ‘I’ve sacked staff for less than this’ (when they do something wrong). When they argue “Oh no you haven’t” I tell them ‘I have, honestly I sacked a girl because she turned up consistently with nail polish on so we spent ... every morning she
would come in, she would sit down for half an hour and take her nail polish off and I was just - after about a week of that, I would clock her off and I'd go 'you take it off on your time, and you start your shift when you're done'. She didn't like that because she was losing pay but she still did it and after about three weeks I said 'Look, this isn't working, you can find somewhere else to work' and terminated her employment. She was not impressed but when she tried to go to the Union there was nothing she could do because the job uniform description stated 'no nail polish'. The kids just look at me and say 'Wow, you're really hard' and I go 'No, life is really hard out there and you know - the hospitality industry is so cut throat that if you don't want to comply, there's always someone to take your job, in fact there's always 10 people who will take your job - they really enjoy hearing things like that (1.7).

When the participants were speaking about their VETiS classes, it became evident to the researcher that this was the school discipline area where they felt most confident. They had established their identities as specialist teachers on the vocational side of the schools' subject offerings. However, most schools can only offer one or two classes in the VETiS subjects, so much of their teaching time was taken up with a group of junior subjects under the umbrella title 'Technology Mandatory' which is offered in the first two years of secondary school. Despite the difference in the student year levels, to some extent these teachers used the models from their vocational classrooms across all classes, particularly in terms of the way they spoke and interacted with students. This is an aspect of their teacher identity formation which appears in the data but which would require further specific examination in future research to evaluate.

**Espousing constructivist approaches**

Linking constructivist practices and learner control of projects and learning was described by Windschitl and Thompson (2006). The authors assert that it is essential for learners to “construct their own models and conduct their own inquiries” (p. 71) in order to develop deep understanding. In the data, most of the 12 teachers based the majority of their class work on offering individual programs and activities for many of their lessons, particularly in practical or workshop activities. Martha, Steve, Tom, Myron and Lauder all specifically referred to teaching whole class theory linked to previous projects and learning about tools, equipment and procedures before they introduced projects and activities which encouraged students to be creative with their projects. Ralph referred to the individual contracts he made each student sign in
terms of safe behaviours in the workshop and assisted individual students to set goals and parameters depending on their interests and abilities. By continually monitoring the progress of each student in such a strategic way, the teacher is employing a strong constructivist model where:

... learners connect new information with existing ideas to inform meaningful knowledge that has a measure of internal coherence, can be integrated across topics and can itself act as a tool for further constructions (Windschitl, 2002, p. 136).

The NSW curriculum documents in Technology Mandatory and Design and Technology (NSW BOS, 2005) espouse a design approach based on constructivist models in terms of skills development in each technology discipline. Constructivism was also a model for the teaching and learning practices encouraged during the participants’ teacher education. However, part of the approach taken by the majority of the teachers in this study, appeared to be linked to a workplace learning approach where expectations about knowing the ‘trade’ of the discipline, whether it is in the discipline of Food, Metals, Information Technologies, led to an iterative approach to skills development and learning about the required skills and knowledge of the subject area.

Windschitl (2002) provided a series of indicators which he asserted were desirable conditions for increasing meaningful learning. He referred to these conditions providing a “framework of dilemmas” for teachers (p. 135). These indicators include:

- Connecting new information with existing knowledge
- Eliciting students’ ideas and experiences to encourage “internal coherence” (p. 136)
- Providing opportunities for students to participate in complex and authentic problem based activities
- Scaffolding students and assisting in establishing connections and applications of knowledge and skills
- Supplying resources and tools, both cognitive and technological, to assist students in mediating their learning
- Encouraging shared and collaborative learning opportunities
- Explaining the teachers’ own thinking processes as a model for students to emulate
- Providing opportunities for students to construct and apply knowledge in meaningful and authentic contexts and tasks
- Encouraging and valuing autonomous thinking
- Assessing and giving feedback related to processes as well as products.
Using the items from this list, the data can be linked to many of these conditions. Whilst not arguing that these teachers would use or even discuss the theoretical perspectives Windschitl examined in this article, the observed examples throughout the data resonated well with these conditions. This approach to learning has similarities to the problem solving and learning from experiences typical of workplace learning in contexts such as construction, welding and farming (Billett, 2001).

The adoption of this pedagogical approach creates additional work in planning, monitoring and assessing students' work. Despite this, it is the workplace learning style espoused by almost every teacher in my study. This is hardly surprising when their life history and work experiences are considered. However, the effect on students, particularly students with lower abilities and less confidence, was both evident and surprising, although the 12 teachers themselves all virtually automatically adopted similar approaches. However Liam, who had a close and supportive staff and whose head teacher was very involved with his classroom and teaching activities, less frequently adopted this type of strategy. The following examples illustrate the match between Windschitl's (2002) theory and the practice found in the data.

1. **Sharing ideas and knowledge**

The first premise is that constructivist teachers ask students to share their own ideas and knowledge before leading them to new areas of learning. This seems very ordinary and achievable by any 'good teacher'. However, the studied teachers emphasised learning through making projects, attempting skill development when students showed understanding and ability and discussing their learning throughout every lesson observed. This also emerged from interviews and emails. For example, in the metals activities that Tom was engaged in with his class during my visit, each student was working on a different metal project linked to their own experience and skill level. In the computing classroom with Steve, in three different junior classes working on data bases and the creation of websites, students were working on projects designed to extend their knowledge and skills while encouraging individual creativity.
Finally, I saw a wonderful lesson with Lauder and a class of students with low ability levels from low socio-economic backgrounds completely engaged with a lesson in Food Technology. The class was working on making fresh fruit juices. They began by an intensive discussion on fruit juice as a business opportunity covering the students’ mostly limited experiences of these types of shops. Their experiences of drinking or preparing such juices were also not extensive. Once the students had noted some key factors to consider about the product and its possibilities as a business venture in their little town, Lauder took an experiential approach. The engagement was fostered by Lauder’s constant questioning and checking of understanding combined with their opportunity to experiment and create using the ingredients. Collaboratively, the class narrowed down favourable options, demonstrated that they knew the processes and procedures to operate the juicers and other equipment, and began planning to offer freshly made juices for sale at a specified occasion.

2. Engagement
Lauder’s food technology class started with an atmosphere of resignation to being at school on a warm afternoon but soon moved into an excited small food production company. They all acted as if they had expertise and confidence in producing saleable goods and knowing how to price and prepare these for other students. It was evident in the routine manner in which these students so quickly became engaged in their learning, they had been given many opportunities to become involved in quite complex and meaningful activities, which is the second condition in the Windschutl list of features of a constructivist teaching and learning styles. Students engaged in task orientated discussions, often mainly with the teacher although when the whole class were together, there was collaboration.

3. Teacher scaffolding
The teacher ensured learning resources; tools and equipment were available and monitored learning needs constantly, another condition of both good teaching practice and the constructivist approach. I observed Steve modelling the formats required for the data base by checking the students could understand the terminology and reproduce the formats. Paul showed me how he had devised projects that could be completed in one or two sessions so he could ensure students could be scaffolded
through the entire process and not be disadvantaged in terms of project completion. An example was a mouse mat with indigenous designs on the face. Mick had arranged a vegetable project so the first bed was one where students completed all tasks under his direct supervision so that each step in the process was lead by him. Students involved in the vegetable project then moved to their own plots and worked more independently once they had grasped the key steps in the process.

These small examples do not really do justice to the manner of scaffolding employed in the classrooms of the case studied teachers as it was continual and constant. In the workshop, as in a workplace, the teacher moved around the room checking all students could progress on their jobs or activities so scaffolding, like workplace learning, was provided when and as it was required. The main concern was that students were given assistance individually and as a group throughout the lessons, particularly in practical classes.

4. Real world application of knowledge

Finally, students:

... are routinely asked to apply knowledge in diverse and authentic contexts to explain ideas, interpret texts, predict phenomena, and construct arguments based on evidence, rather than to focus exclusively in the acquisition of pre-determined 'right answers' (Windschitl, 2002, p 137).

Lauder explained that students often presented products from their work to the school and wider community. In the project on juice bars, students were engaged in researching then running a small juice bar in the small town on the occasion of a community fair. Other features which seemed remarkable in this lesson were that Lauder is an industrial technology teacher with a background in metals and engineering, not a food teacher. The other surprise is that the equipment the students were using had been sourced by Lauder from the community.

This knowledge construction, the explicit and direct information sharing from the teacher and class was typical of many of the classes observed. In Liam’s case, I had no opportunity to observe or interact with his VET Hospitality class which may have included such constructivist strategies. These classrooms were far more like workplaces engaged in daily work activities where the ‘leading hand’, in this case, the teacher, and the ‘workers’ or students were working together to ensure work was
completed reasonably efficiently and learning thus became a normal work activity. The context for most of these observations was junior technology classrooms, the learning was not of the scholarly type, but the learning was happening, students were engaged and participating as part of a well ordered classroom routine. These classes seemed often to embody the central constructivist goal, as defined by Windschitl, based on his study of constructivist literature, of ensuring that student understanding was the central focus of classroom practice. These approaches were very much in keeping with models such as quality teaching (DET NSW, 2003) and other authentic learning frameworks, for example the Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) in Victoria (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009) and Productive Pedagogies in Queensland (Education Queensland, 2001). Although an exploration of the NSW quality teaching model was introduced to these teachers in their pre-service education, the evidence from the data suggested the source of this approach for these teachers was embedded in their practical workplace experiences.

**Impact on the school community**

One of the findings in this study which would have been difficult to predict was the way in which most of the participants had changed or rearranged the actual fabric of the school, virtually as soon as they arrived. Some of these were quite major undertakings in terms of materials and construction tasks. For example, in his small central school, Lauder had transformed a former storage shed into a safe welding and metalwork room. This was to fit in with his very strict rules about OH&S. It was also to cater for the increased numbers of students he encouraged to join the VET Metals and Engineering classes in their senior years, asserting that he believed it could provide a pathway to employment. In the original workshop, he had made the main area a wood construction area, well designed to fit in with departmental requirements and his own views on safety and convenience. He had turned part of the capacious room into a well stocked store room. The area at the front of the room was a small area with desks for theory work or other purposes. Lauder also used it as a withdrawal area for miscreants as he explained “they are right under my eye” (10.4). Lauder had sourced materials either very economically or even free from his contacts in industry and through his community contacts.
Steve's set up with the computer network in a former drama stage and classroom was described earlier in the work. The other information technology teacher, Claire, had changed very little in the fabric of the school, but she had changed the way distance education was delivered in her teaching. All students who were studying by distance were introduced to email and feedback was direct and frequent. Claire told me that, although technology was used prior to her arrival at the school, distance education was really managed as a postal service with little direct interaction with students. In her opinion the students were only considered as a group rather than individuals with different abilities and interests. There is no way to check if this contention was true and the data did not offer other indications. The Head Teacher was very complimentary about the differences Claire had brought to distance teaching and learning, but his conversation was focussed on pleasing results rather than detail during a visit to the school. However, it is worth noting that some of the sense of achievement Claire felt from her new career could be attributed to her perception of making a difference. She had also encouraged and participated in home visits to students when this could be arranged.

The food technology teachers in the study, Liam and Martha, had not made changes in the school, but both were very involved with arranging catering and events for the school community and the wider community to allow VET Hospitality students to practice and demonstrate the competencies they were acquiring. This type of activity is encouraged and typical of VETiS everywhere. Rather than specifically citing their efforts as remarkable or unusual, their facility at achieving these activities was assisted by their industry knowledge and contacts.

Walter had introduced a project involving making dice with Year 7 students in conjunction with their mathematics teacher. He had also cleared out the workshop rooms so they were functionally divided into wood and metal rooms. He described them as a mess and dangerous when he arrived at the school. Tom, Paul, Myron and Ralph had also completely rearranged workshop spaces. Ralph had divided the workshop with barriers between areas to comply with his standards of safety.
Paul described how he had spent a weekend constructing some round tables for his classroom as an experiment to try and encourage group work and also encourage more regular attendance as absenteeism was a major issue at his school.

The kids are painting logos and stuff all over them [the round tables]. They are very poor at working together but also management – when they were in single desks I found I would have three kids over one end of the room trying to work and another group working at the back and then in between would be kids just causing a ruckus (7.2).

He described how engaging students who were working at the round tables allowed him to say to non-engaged students:

If you're not working, go back up there. Your decision not to work but you're not affecting these blokes (7.2).

He believed this was very motivating as they all wanted to be on the round tables. Paul told other teachers in his staffroom about this round table project. Several apparently told him that he was wasting his time as it would not make a difference. In contrast, he had found in the short period since he had added the round tables to his room, engagement in lessons had improved, particularly in mathematics. Additionally attendance had improved and he hoped this would continue.

The other change that Paul had introduced was combined vocational classes for members of the community. Classes in Metals and Engineering were held for Certificate I students during school time and more advanced classes were arranged for one evening a week. Lauder had similarly arranged evening classes in both Construction and Metals and Engineering in the evening in his small community and these were well attended. Access to further education and training was limited in these isolated communities.

**Measuring their achievements as teachers**

One of the questions the researcher asked the participants, both formally during interviews, and informally during conversations, emailed and via telephone, what they saw as examples of their own success as new teachers. Near the end of his first year of teaching, Ralph emailed me to update me on his progress and the main topic was the way in which he was building up his class numbers and offerings.

My first year has gone well even if some students are on the updated species list. This year I only had 12 Year 9 Metal students in a Year 9/10 composite class and fourteen in Year 11 VET. Next year I have 47 signed up for Year 9 and 23 for Year 11. We will also be retaining the Year 12 VET course in the
school instead of farming them out to TAFE as we have done in the past. I feel this is a bit of a feather in my cap and had given me a boost after a year of wondering if I was ‘doing it right’ (12.3).

He added that teaching was “the greatest job I’ve ever had” (12.3). In his third year of teaching, during our second interview, Ralph told me he considered his biggest success as a teacher was that he “had been able to basically communicate with the kids – get to them on their level” (12.3). He went on to say that his other big success was in:

... getting through to the kids that would normally not get anywhere – you know – fall through the gaps type of kids (12.3).

Ralph had also reduced the number of reported poor behaviour incidents with his Year 9 group as Year Advisor – when he took on the position as Year Advisor, the school system of recording problem behavior was recording up to 60 entries a week for Year 9 and he got this down to about 15 records and it was even lower on average as this cohort moved into Year 10.

Olivia, another Food Technology and Hospitality teacher at Liam’s school responded to a question about how he has adapted to being a teacher provided the following response:

He knows he makes a difference. He feels he makes a difference and he said, you know, even though some days are absolute disasters, he will still, at the end of the day, walk out and say, well I might have made a difference for one kind – and in a tough school, that’s a really important thing. He values kids and he values learning (9.7).

Liam told me that one of his most rewarding experiences was when one his Year 12 students won a regional ‘best vocational student’ award for her outstanding work in Hospitality at the end of his second year at the school. He added the other rewarding experience that came to mind was when he was supervising an extra class in mathematics.

It was a Year 7 class and a student was doing a puzzle and I ended up explaining what units, tens and hundreds were and she understood at the end of the lesson and told me ‘Sir, you should be a math teacher’ (9.9).

When I invited Tess to tell me of some success she had experienced since beginning teaching in her second interview, she recounted a brief story about a boy she had some success with in her Science class.

I had him in Year 8 and he was really an odd sort of kid – anyway, I’ve made legend status with his family apparently because I made a bet with him
about being on time for school – and he’s on time for school. He really loves Science and he’s pretty much gone right up the ladder in Science – it’s just really good to see a kid who had that much difficulty flying ahead (1.7).

Myron’s personal measure of success was very simple yet quite powerful.

I see teaching as a profession, not a view held by the public, and I believe in teachers – I get a real buzz out of knowing something we have done has made things better for some students (5.6).

Myron’s principal expressed the view that Myron’s personal philosophy as a teacher brought a broader world view to the classroom as he had a “different perspective” (5.5) as he saw himself as “preparing kids for life – he has a picture of life beyond school” (5.5). This made him invaluable as a careers teacher in the principal’s estimation. In a later email during his third year as a teacher, Myron expressed the following view:

Having been involved with training of adults, professional and now young people, I believe these experiences help me now to be a little more tolerant of people and I think that my classrooms are more relaxing environments, coupled with high accountability, and I think my students like this (5.3).

In these, and other stories of successes, the idea of working with students who had not been achieving well, in essence the concept of making a difference, which was discussed in the previous chapter, was important to these teachers, as it is for many teachers of course. They measured their own successes in terms of their contribution to the learning and life prospects of their students and their promotion of their own subject areas was linked to preparing their students for life and work beyond school.

Pre-service teacher education
This was a problematic discussion topic in interviews and during discussions on site visits. As researcher, I was also a teacher educator on the program so this may have inhibited comments. However, the main area that was seen to be lacking was what Martha referred to as “the other aspects of being a teacher other than in the classroom” (1.2). She referred to talking to parents and parent teacher interviews as examples of areas she found challenging when she started teaching. This is a common criticism of teacher education programs. Lortie (1975) also found that pre-service training did not prepare teachers for reality of being a teacher. Martha felt there was:
... so much we just didn’t know, that I still don’t know but I am still learning. It’s only the fact that I spent so many years in the workforce that I can bluff my way through (1.2).

Further discussion during this interview showed that Martha had felt more confident at the smaller school where she had spent her first year as a mobile as she had direct support from her head teacher. In the larger school where the interview above was conducted during her second year of teaching, the larger and more formal approach undermined her confidence at least initially. She also referred to the more guided approach to planning and programming at the first school comparing it favourably to the complex system at Southern High. At her second school, there was a system of large programs with multiple resources from which teachers could select and write individual programs which she found “confusing” (1.2). However, by the third year, Martha told me she had become familiar with the system and as she tended to work with individual programs for different students, the multiple resources were helpful for her. Liam encountered a similar system in his school and he found it suited him very well as he could select and change resources and approaches depending on the class group.

**Reflecting on planning and programming**

Mick was worried about teaching senior classes when he first began teaching.

I was terrified that I was going to make a mistake and screw up someone’s life through lack of a proper education. I felt worried if I teach a senior class and it’s their HSC. If I get there and do something wrong, or don’t teach them something, not only am I in trouble but I’ve stuffed them up for the HSC (11.2).

However, since being at the school he has taught senior agriculture and the corresponding VET course, Primary Industries, and has achieved good results. He realised quite quickly that he would need to learn more content areas himself and this was part of the reason for completing other studies in land management and conservation. His confidence has increased since he started teaching through ensuring he is always prepared in unfamiliar aspects of teaching the subjects related to agricultural technology and he told me he believed he had actually become a more active learner through his experiences teaching at a school where he was the only teacher in this discipline area. He also realised that his fear was misplaced in some ways as:
The content or the knowledge is easy to get. There are so many resources out there to get the content you require. It’s the actual application of that content to the students in the room (11.2).

Myron saw planning and programming as the key to successful teaching. He was critical that many of the programs he had encountered during his first years of teaching seemed “to be documents that were written five years ago” (5.2). He explained that he worked hard to maintain what he termed “living programs” (5.2) by which he meant continually evaluated and updated documents and plans tailored to the current students in his class. Living programs needed to be interesting for the teacher as well as the students and “even if it only runs for a semester ... or a year ... you’ve still got to be looking at it and seeing if there’s ways of improving it” (5.2). He continued to clarify by stating that as well as meeting syllabus needs, the program needed to match student interests so that the best programs “delivers the outcomes that the syllabus class for buttailors it more to what the student interests are” (5.2).

Myron had a negative experience with a teacher outside his discipline area.

This teacher heard me being enthusiastic about going in to classrooms, you know, and talking positively about the kids that were in there and what we were doing (5.3). The teacher told Myron “That’s OK for you – you’ve only just come in to it ... you won’t be like that in a couple of years” (5.3). Myron did not like the prediction that he would become more cynical over time, and he recently emailed me about his new role as a careers advisor and added that if he found himself displaying a cynical attitude, it would be time to leave teaching. More experienced teachers curbing or mocking the enthusiasm of beginning teacher was also referred to by Paul, Martha and Mick. In the beginning teacher literature, this concept appeared in the stories of new teachers (Beattie, 2007; Manuel, 2003).

Paul was worried about implementing the curriculum in his isolated school with Indigenous students making up most of the school population. Engaging and inspiring students were more important goals for him.

It’s more important for me to find a job that’s engaging the kids and they get excited about it and want to go in and finish it at lunchtime and stuff rather than sitting down and doing the design cycle in a theory lesson (5.2).
Paul had also begun working with others in the school on literacy learning for his students as the school had been identified as having very poor results in English Language and Literacy Assessments (ELLA). Paul told me that at the time of the school visit, during his second year as a teacher that Stump Central was found to have one of the lowest literacy levels in the state so they had started a school-wide literacy program.

I don’t do much literacy in the workshop but I do a lot in the maths room. We are learning how to teach reading and writing it’s making a huge difference. We’ve got kids who improve out of sight in six months. We’ve all got a few kids we’re responsible for and one of the kids I had, he’s here every day now and he’s willing to have a go. His reading’s improved dramatically. That was the greatest thing that contributed to behaviour, poor behaviour, and not getting through any of our work was a kid couldn’t read and write and spell. Probably 90% of things people use in other schools we can’t use as the reading level is too high (for our students) (5.3).

**Literacy and learning**

Literacy as an issue appeared in the data in a variety of ways, including a suggestion by another teacher that one of the participants had issues with literacy levels herself in the case of Martha. The other teacher interviewed, Mary, told me about assisting Martha with a senior subject, Community Family and Society, which had literacy tasks Mary asserted were beyond her capacity. In fact, due to student issues and Martha’s problems with the course materials, she was taken off this class which was then reallocated. It was when Mary was discussing report writing that the discussion focused on Martha’s problems with literacy.

At one stage I was reading her reports because (the Head Teacher) wasn’t here and I was doing her reports and I turned around to her and she said – what do you think? – And I said they’re disgusting – and we both laughed. Then I said, right, let’s start and so you know – I could say that to her. She knew, you know, that we had a long way to go and we sat there and we worked through them and she was really good (1.5).

When I spoke to Martha about issues with literacy, she agreed that many of the materials she had encountered in her studies prior to becoming a teacher and in senior subjects at school were very difficult for her to understand. However, she did not see this as a major problem as she could continue to work on it. She also repeated that she saw more value in practical subjects and liked working with students who themselves struggled with their learning and literacy.
Ralph introduced the topic of literacy himself in his first interview—"we get kids in with an assumed—well I assumed they can read and write and that sort of stuff and a lot of them can’t" (12.4). He told me that much of the Year 7 first written assignment work was made up entirely of downloads from the internet. He responded by teaching students to write extended pieces. "I’ve had Year 12 students who can’t read and write—and yet they got through to Year 12—I think it’s disgusting" (12.4). Liam was also concerned about student literacy issues but he was able to seek support from specialist teachers who:

... help you prepare specific lessons for a specific purpose for example to improve students' literacy skills or numeracy. There is a lot we can do in our subject area to help kids improve their literacy and numeracy skills (9.2).

The last theme explored in the final section of this chapter is student safety in the TAS workshops, commercial and school kitchens and out on the farm.

**Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)**

The participants in this study were all very concerned about OH&S in their classrooms and workshops. All TAS teachers share this concern as they work with tools, machinery and activities that have potential dangers for students and engender additional responsibilities for teachers to ensure safe practices. However, these teachers and their industry background make this area of special interest for them. Myron, Liam, Paul, Tom and Lauder all took up positions of responsibility as the chair of the school OH&S committees from their second year of teaching and most of the other teachers were involved in the committees in their schools. The department had developed guidelines, but these teachers went beyond these frequently. These concerns were often directly linked in the data with behaviour management. Lauder’s comment on his classroom rules were all about the occupational health and safety issues as being of major importance to him as to most of the participants. Lauder made these comments as a response to the question on managing classrooms. It was the most extensive of his comments as he is a very quiet person who needed prompting for further information throughout the interviews except here.

I set down ground rules, we all adhere by it. I don’t have one thing for students, one thing for teachers. Everybody who walks in a woodwork room, a metal work room, a cooking room—they all come under that same, you know, ground rules—Don’t have proper shoes on, don’t come into the
classroom – Don’t have the right protective equipment, don’t come into the classroom – and those boundaries don’t get changed therefore I don’t have management problems, because everybody gets there, everybody knows the rules, the rules are all written up on the board – like on the back, on these walls that I’ve got and they don’t change, so they all know where they stand if I walk into the classroom. So you know, from that point of view I’ve made it fairly easy for myself as far as you can manage your work by just watching and showing the students what they’re doing right or wrong, and you don’t have to keep turning around to make sure people have got things like safety glasses on. The signs are there, the way that we walk into the classroom are there, everything’s ... and nothing changes. Just because we are a student in there or whether there’s another teacher comes into the room, the rules are all exactly the same (10.3).

Liam also associated safety and student behaviour in his comments. He told me that his classroom management in his second year had improved, which was very important in a school with many challenging students. He had decided clearly what behaviour he found unacceptable, particularly in the kitchen environment, and worked to maintain consistency. “I’ve used that philosophy the whole time and the kids know what the rules are and they know the consequences straight away and I don’t budge from them” (9.2).

This can be considered particularly remarkable in that during this period, Liam told me that his school was reported to have the most suspensions of any public school in the state. If this factor is combined with what the principal reported about the school having a large staff turnover, perhaps in part because of the discipline issues to some extent according to both the principal and the other teacher interviewed. A teacher interviewed at Liam’s school was very impressed by his attitude as a beginning teacher because of his:

… resilience with tough kids – or with situations where a lot of our younger teachers, with not a lot of life experience, they don’t seem to be able to move on, accept or learn from a mistake (9.7).

Tess told me she also saw safety as paramount when working with students out on the farm or in the classroom. She reported that she had not had many issues with behaviour management either during her internship or teaching at the same school. Like many of the other participants, she returned to the theme of positive student relationships as the key to maintaining safe and well disciplined students.

You have to have a relationship - a positive relationship with students – that’s what I’ve found – try and be as positive as you possibly can – try and speak to them instead of speaking down to them. If there are issues I quite often ask
them – why are you doing this? – or – do you think you should be doing that? They have to think about answering instead of just saying – don’t do that – trying to make them responsible for what they’re doing and things – I think it is important (6.2).

Conclusion
In this chapter, more themes emerging from the data as selected and identified, or inscribed by the researcher (Yates, 2003) have been discussed. As this study uses the participants’ voices and cites their words whenever possible, it may seem that they are being compared with other teachers undertaking different programs. This is not my intention. I acknowledge that many teachers may share these characteristics, approaches and beliefs. What has been identified as different to many other early career teachers are the vocational background and predilections of these new teachers. They rearrange or even rebuild sections of the school to better serve their workshop and other requirements. They are almost obsessive in their concerns about occupational health and safety in their workshops. Another teacher in Lauder’s school told me “it’s not an industrial site for goodness sake – they are not in manufacturing” (10.5) as a way to express her belief that some of the OH&S rules and requirements were, in her opinion, over restrictive.

At the beginning of this chapter, reference was made to the existence and potential limitations of the academic and vocational divide, which, it can be argued, has always been and always may be part of the Australian school system. The teachers in this study are very firmly, and it seems willingly, positioned on the vocational side of this divide. Their teaching disciplines, in particular Technology Mandatory, other junior school technology subjects such as Metalwork and Woodwork, VET subjects such as Construction and Hospitality, are also identified with their vocational purposes in ways that disciplines such as English and Mathematics. The latter are seen less frequently as having clear vocational purposes, even though comments in the media often suggest this is a problem with educational outcomes.

Preparing students for life as a worker is a key theme emerging from the data as previously discussed, and none of the participants found this purpose of schooling problematic or of concern to them. Instead, in each case study the idea of preparing their students for acceptance and skills in workplace settings is part of their
mandated role as teachers, in particular VETiS teachers where preparation for work placements is a major aspect of their roles in these subjects.

The school career of some of the participants was examined in this chapter with a particular emphasis on those who left school before completing senior studies. Their reasons for leaving school and their subsequent vocational and career pathways were included. The stories they told about their own evidence of successes as teachers were mainly focused on the idea of improving outcomes for struggling students in particular and the idea of making a difference in the lives of these students. Concerns and fears about becoming teachers was one of the first questions asked in the first interview with the participants. These mainly revolved around not being adequately prepared or having insufficient knowledge and skills for classes. All participants asserted that their fears, even about teaching outside their own discipline area, had not been realized. There was a discussion of the types of approach to pedagogy taken by these new teachers with the argument that the syllabus documents, particularly in technology subjects, meant that these teachers based their approach to some extent on constructivist principles. This theory of learning had been introduced during their pre-service program. However, this could also arguably be interpreted as being directly aligned with the workplace learning model discussed in the previous chapter.

Reluctance to comment negatively on the teacher preparation these teachers had experienced could be attributed to my role as both the researcher interviewing the participants as well as a lecturer during their teacher education program. However, in the discourse analysis section in the next chapter, some of the responses are examined through the lens of the language the respondents used in their responses. Final topics discussed in this chapter included the views and experiences of these participants in planning and programming for teaching. The importance of currency and relevance were the key messages emerging from this data with the students’ interests being included as key to successful learning outcomes. In the next chapter, these themes are revisited through the examination of comments using the tools of discourse analysis.
Chapter 10. Discourse analysis

Introduction
This chapter uses discourse analysis as an interpretive tool to examine some of the responses to interview questions from the data. From the interview data analysed, participants’ responses are included with interpretive comments. The main purpose for including these is to consider whether the researcher’s interpretations are confirmed in the language used by the participants and provide crystallisation (Richardson, 2000) of the data using a different lens. Through closely scrutinising the language of the responses, the attitudes, identities and other aspects of becoming a teacher that the participants articulated as significant can be further investigated. These include the major concerns the participants expressed as new teachers: the issues of planning and programming for teaching; managing classrooms; and communicating with staff and students. Transcripts from the second interviews, conducted during the third year of the participants’ teaching careers, were analysed to seek evidence of changes of attitude and language after a more extended period as teachers.

Language as a social practice (Fairclough, 1992) carries the implication of context. The relationship between interviewee and researcher and the hermeneutic process of analysis, particularly in shorter texts, is problematic. Despite these difficulties, there are insights to be found in looking more closely at the language of the participants in the interviews. Crystallisation is a metaphor first used by Richardson (2000) and later developed by Ellingson (2011) to suggest that experiences can be viewed from different vantage point to develop further insights and questions. Using discourse analysis strategies provides an opportunity explore “divergences and contradiction between one’s own analysis of the mediated actions one is studying and those of participants” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 31). Throughout this chapter, the question of identity, defined by Gee (2000) as “a kind of person” (p. 99), is explored in the voices, language and actions of the participating new teachers.
Discourse analysis
Discourse analysis has been defined as the analysis of text with an “aim to identify the knowledges contained in them” (Jager & Maier, 2009, p. 34). Adopting an interpretive and functional approach, I carefully examined the interview data to seek further evidence of the ways in which these particular teachers from industry spoke about their roles as new teachers. The initial decision to use discourse analysis to deepen my analysis of the data was influenced by Fairclough’s work (1992, 2003). However, his emphasis on social conflict and power relations did not fit comfortably with the data. Gee’s (2010) more recent work, directed towards uncovering additional meaning from conversational type texts, seemed more appropriate for application to the research conversations and interviews. In particular, Gee’s original guide to discourse analysis (2005) proved to be extremely useful in analysing responses to questions from the data. My primary motivation was to investigate available insights into the ways in which these new teachers were constructing, or reconstructing their identities as teachers.

Teacher identity
The idea of identity as a teacher is a complex and flexible concept. While people adopt and adapt identities to fit in to specific contexts and expectations, the concept of identity used in this study is “being recognised as a certain ‘kind of person’ in a given context” (Gee, 2000, p. 99). In particular, this study is concerned with the context of a specific school setting and the participants in the role of a technology and YETiS teacher. Close examination of the words and actions used by these case study teachers enabled some other understandings of their adaptation to their new roles to emerge. Gee identifies four ways to view identity which are useful.

i. **nature identity** described as being developed from *forces in nature*. In terms of this study, this is the identity fundamentally established throughout the lives of the participants.

ii. **institution – identity**, where the focus in this study is the change from a former career to the school context and the institutional requirements of being a teacher. This institutional identity is concerned with the role or position that the individual holds. This is of particular interest as the participants in this study have dual identities to some extent, as their former
trades and industry skills are closely linked with their emerging identities as teachers.

iii. individual traits, or what Gee named discourse identity include the distinctive features which make one person different from another based on character, experiences and predispositions creating unique identities which can be recognised by others.

iv. shared experiences in 'affinity groups'. This referred to specific shared identities. In my study, it refers to identities as teachers working within a defined context, sharing experiences and discourses within the context of the school. Gee argues that identity is influenced and created by the affinities developed by members of the group (Gee, 2000, pp. 100 - 105).

The methodology involving individual case studies means that affinity is difficult to analyse in this study, although the repeated comments emerging from the data about developing relationships with students seemed to suggest that within the school contexts, affinity with students may take precedence over affinity with colleagues for these teachers. However, more research would be required to investigate this specifically. For the purposes of considering the identity formation of these new teachers, the discourse identity is the focus of the analysis aligned with their institutional role as teachers.

Thus my intention in using discourse analysis techniques is to assist in seeking linguistic evidence of the ways teachers perceived and created their professional identities as teachers. “Accounting for teachers' representations of their experiences through talk is essential to our understanding of their professional identities”, Cohen asserted (2010, p. 273), whilst acknowledging that the concept of identity is a dynamic and evolving one. In her close study of three teachers in conversation with the researcher, she divided the texts into two genres she named as “personal story telling” and “analytical talk” as two reflective styles (p. 275).

Gee’s (2005) approach to discourse analysis has been adapted for use in this study by applying three of his questions to the interview data to search for further meaning in the language and grammar of the texts. These are:
Significance (in what ways does this text attempt to indicate certain things are significant or not and how?);

Enacting identity (what are the identity markers being used in this text?)

Knowledge systems (how does this text privilege, or not, different ways of knowing or believing) (pp. 11 - 13).

These are referred to by Gee as “building tasks” (p. 11) as the speaker is constructing versions of his or her perceived reality. In considering the functions and contexts of the selected texts from the data I have endeavoured to discover more about the ways these teachers are constructing, and in particular demonstrating their identities as teachers when they answer questions and discuss key issues about their roles as teachers.

For consistency, the excerpts are from the first telephone interviews conducted with each participant during their second year as teachers. In selecting responses from those analysed, the aim was to ensure each participant was represented. A common feature of these interviews is the relaxed vocal style of the interviewees, as they are quite accustomed to speaking to the researcher on the phone (see Appendix 1). One of the identity confusions in the data is that I was both the researcher and involved in the participants’ pre-service teacher education. This means there is an element of ‘student teacher’ in the responses. However, more positively, part of the context for these interviews is the “shared cultural knowledge” (Gee, 2010, p. 6) from the familiarity of the researcher and the interviewees as a result of the multiple conversations that the researcher and participants have shared over the three years prior to the first formal interview.

At the same time, the way these teachers spoke about their identities and roles as teachers was different to that in the early career teacher literature, particularly in terms of the use of informal language, clichés and abbreviated comments. Another limitation is that these excerpts are from ‘one to one’ conversations on the telephone. As a visitor and researcher, I had limited opportunity to observe these participants in conversation with colleagues except during site visits. The activities of a normal school day discouraged time for collegial conversations. This has not changed significantly since Lortie’s assertion that “The cellular form of school organization, and the attendant time and space ecology, puts interactions between teachers at the margin of their daily work” (1975, p. 192).
Although these teachers speak a variety of Standard Australian English, which Gee (2010) defines as the English considered correct by most people and typically used by public figures and the media, they also spoke informally. Colloquial language and grammar errors thus appeared frequently in the transcripts. In Gee’s terms, the interviewees privileged common language and they avoided sounding ‘academic’ in their responses. The researcher mirrored this informal language in an attempt to encourage further and more extensive responses (Weingraf, 2001). The comments on each text are not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, by using Gee’s discourse analysis tools, (Gee, 2010, p. 149), I am confirming or questioning my analysis from iterative readings of the data and seeking other themes not identified.

Following the material from the first interviews, excerpts from the second interview data are included to investigate any growth and development in the participants’ attitudes and identity presentation. It is emphasised again that these findings are evidence only of the conversations and interviews conducted with a specific group of teachers in particular circumstances and are not intended to be read as general comments or applied beyond these contexts.

Schroeder (2002) took a similar approach to discourse in her close case studies of five teachers who were adapting to their new careers during their pre-service accelerated course. She found that, although the participants believed that the strategies and skills they had developed in their previous careers were beneficial to their new profession, they were also, to some extent, an impediment to their teaching and learning goals. This may be explained by the fact that they were becoming English teachers and their previous careers were not directly or closely linked with their discipline area as teachers. However, the technology subjects the participants in the current study teach and the competencies developed in their former careers are very closely linked. The reason these teachers were selected as eligible to participate in their teacher education program was directly related to their workplace skills and knowledge. In the interview data, the respondents are speaking with multiple identities: as new teachers; experienced workers from trade careers; and, graduate students from a teacher education program as well as individuals with families and personal histories.
Major concerns as new teachers

In the first telephone interview for each of the 12 participants, I asked them what major concerns they may have had about beginning teaching. In selecting texts, the researcher has chosen a question then selected four responses from the data. The main criteria used for the selection was ensuring the responses to each question came from different participants so comments are included across the data set.

Below is a sample text from Claire who was concerned that she had not seen the textbooks used in the school during her studies.

Yeah I think, like I had all that, as I say, I had all that previous knowledge and I did have subjects within the course of course that helped me but I think maybe, I think maybe we should have had a bit more on what the syllabus is we are going to be teaching and get down on that level (3.1).

In this text, Claire is showing hesitancy about offering critical comments on the course she knows the researcher teaches in. This is indicated in the repetition and extended sentence construction. She is also identifying herself as a practically orientated teacher who wanted and expected materials in the teacher education course to match resources and texts used in schools. Her use of a diminutive (I think maybe and a bit more) and her ameliorative phrasing in her references to her own prior knowledge and that some subjects were helpful ‘soften’ the effect of the critical comment which follows. The significance of being well prepared for the context she would find herself in as a teacher is central to this comment. This comment was “analytical” (Cohen, 2010) and evaluative.

Claire’s identity here suggests she sees herself as a pragmatic teacher – “get down to that level” rather than remain at a theoretical or academic “level”. She would have preferred a more practical approach in her studies, which she implies were overlooked in favour of more academic subjects. She identifies gaps in her professional learning at university which could have been usefully filled by more practical materials. For her, as in the comments of other participants analysed, teaching is a practical job for which the main requirement is being prepared for daily tasks of planning and teaching.

The limitations of practical preparation Claire is referring to may have contributed to problems some participants reported on coping with the formality and structure of
school procedures and policies. In identity terms, the need to get the job done in an efficient and satisfactory manner may be already well developed from their first career (Mayotte, 2003; Tigchelaar, Brouwer & Korthagen, 2008; Wade, 2005). However, the very different institutional requirements and expectations of being a teacher have caused the problem perceived by Claire as being related to inadequate preparation for this new role.

Tom’s response to the question about major concerns is similar to Claire’s:

Um... The fear of the unknown I suppose...you...we had a short course but ah... realistically it prepared us for the academic side of teaching but it’s not until you actually step into the environment that you realise that somewhere along the line there could have been a bit more... um... in the realistic side of teaching... a bit more practical I suppose you might want to say (4.2).

Again there is a dichotomy between the academic aspects of the teacher education and the need to include more practical aspects when preparing teachers for the classroom. The term academic is associated by both respondents as aligned with the university context. What is significant to both respondents was the practical information they required to perform their roles. Here, Tom, like Claire, is hesitant about providing critical feedback to the researcher who was one of his teachers during the course. Again, his comments are analytical, evaluative and critical.

From this, three aspects emerge from the two texts. The power relationship between speakers shown in both responses interferes with the problem statement. The complex and convoluted phraseology in both could be interpreted as intending to lessen the effect of the critical comment at the end. The identity of the researcher as a representative of the academic is embedded in this dialogue. Secondly, both respondents are identifying themselves as concerned mainly with practical aspects of teaching, as is common with beginning teachers (Lortie, 1975). Finally, the language is casual and everyday. The interviewees are responding but they are not seeking to impress with complex language or academic discourse.

This linguistic style of using common language with few modifiers was typical of most of the texts analysed. The language used by the participants, whether during interviews or when observed in classrooms and staffrooms, was informal and typically extremely casual. The language these teachers used seemed, particularly in the first series of interviews and visits, more influenced by their former careers as
tradespeople and workers that the language and style identifiable as typical of many secondary school teachers. In Gee’s (2000) tasks of demonstrating identity, the discourse identity, or individual identity, has taken precedence over the shared identity and institutional identity of these teachers. For example, the researcher searched all of the transcripts and case notes for lexical items such as: work, job, work ethic, employment, fire, sack and industry. These words appeared frequently whereas terms such as children, exams, HSC, university pathways were rare. This analysis of the language in use is problematic and difficult to demonstrate, but the difference in spoken style between the teachers in this study and many other teachers, which was discussed in earlier in this thesis, was very evident when listening to all teachers encountered during site visits. One of the many reasons for including so many quotations from the data was to afford the reader an opportunity to hear these voices and perceive this different linguistic style.

Walter also refers to curriculum as a major concern.

Oh, syllabus knowledge more than anything. Um, and the scary thing, being in a rural school knowing you’re going to have to pick up subject areas outside your area of expertise. I didn’t have any problems in picking up knowledge in my area of expertise, and finding resources for that, but it’s that scary thought of having to teach history and mathematics and ... ah .. (8.2)

This comment was repeated in different ways by other participants. This identifies the speaker as expressing the fears of a neophyte. He also went on to discuss researching and preparing a subject, Commerce, which he had taught during his first year despite having no background in this area. He reported that it had gone quite well and that his experience as a manager had been helpful. This response gives direct information and his attitude displays that in his identity as a teacher, his aim was to be prepared for any circumstances. Arguably, in forming his identity as a teacher, he wanted to be professional and fulfil the roles required by the institution. His concern was that the knowledge systems of the school could be challenging if they were beyond or different to those from his experience in his former career.

The last response considered the question about concerns as a beginning teacher is Paul’s, which clearly indicates his fears of his the adequacy of his own knowledge and skills.
I didn’t think I’d be able to do it. Like, one, the Uni, I didn’t think I’d be able to do it ... um... in terms of beginning teaching I ... my big thing was I came from an electrical background and my skills I still don’t think were um ... I still don’t think, particularly relevant to teaching in a workshop and I felt very under-skilled compared to a lot of other candidates (7.1).

The grammatical structure, listing points he feared failing, gives this text a rhythm and escalating pattern before resting on the final personal inventory – that he felt inadequate when he compared himself to his peers in his course. This could be interpreted as an expression of lack of confidence in himself in the role of teacher. However, rather than coming from his teacher preparation, he perceives that this problem is from his former career identity and what he is identifying as a mismatch between his trade experience and the expectations of the institution.

The data concerning Paul also showed aspects of his lack of confidence, such as not speaking to the researcher in the staffroom but instead suggesting an outdoor location for these conversations so that his enthusiasm would not be evident to less motivated colleagues. However, my observations and perceptions of Paul led me to a position that it was exactly this lack of confidence that encouraged him to reflect, evaluate and strive continually to improve his teaching and achieve the best outcomes possible with his students. He was aware of the significance of being capable in order to realise an identity as a competent professional. It is significant also that Paul used other teachers from his cohort as a point of comparison or judgement rather than teachers he had encountered during his first year and a half of teaching. Another feature shown in the discourse analysis was that, although almost all the participants saw themselves as different to other teachers, they rarely made a direct comparison between themselves and their colleagues.

These extracts demonstrated two main features: firstly, the complexities of investigating aspects of the teacher preparation course and its weaknesses when the researcher is also involved in teaching on that program; secondly, the issue of confidence. Although this research was not specifically devised as an evaluation of the course, these comments suggest that in preparing candidates who had been away from schools for a long time, the teacher education program needed to include more practical and current information about being a teacher. These respondents felt that curriculum as it is enacted in schools was not sufficiently covered.
These interviews were undertaken in the second year of teaching, so issues of confidence and knowledge could be predicated from the literature on beginning teachers, particularly in the case of second career teachers (Chambers, 2002; Resta, 2001; Schroeder, 2002; Wade, 2005; Wilcox & Samaras, 2009). Second interviews and later data contained limited or no discussion of confidence issues in terms of adopting a teacher identity, so experience in the new role could be purported to eliminate these concerns to a certain extent. Linguistically, the set of responses to the first interviews are characterised by hesitations, silences and repeated phrases and incomplete sentence. All are features of conversation admitted, but the extent of hesitancy in the responses is noteworthy. In the second interviews, the teachers exhibited more confidence in expressing their responses to the questions and there were fewer linguistic markers delaying or diminishing their thoughts.

**Planning and programming**

The next question and set of responses focussed on planning, programming and implementation of classroom teaching. Mick’s responses to questions about curriculum development appear below:

**Mick**  
There is never enough time to do the programming and I’m -- I’m fiddling with the programs again

**Annette**  
When you got there, were there good programs in place or did you virtually have to start from scratch?

**Mick**  
(snorts) the programs in place were all right --um -- as far as the knowledge they required but with the switch over to the new syllabus, I'm having to rewrite everything

**Annette**  
Are you getting any support with that? Are you the only agriculture teacher?

**Mick**  
Not really --um -- I am getting some support in some areas where we’re doing cross curriculum stuff (11.2)

In this excerpt, Mick’s language showed some hesitation and the use of the word *fiddling* suggested he was adapting materials already found in the school rather than starting afresh. He identified himself as a busy teacher. Again the emphasis was on the practical approach as the most significant aspect: a busy person coping with syllabus changes as well as other teaching activities. Mick then spoke rather intensely about attempting to work in with other subject areas, particularly with his junior classes. He was very interested in cross curriculum approaches, and was aware of the potential in terms of knowledge systems. This was the only time Mick
made positive comments about colleagues and it could be interpreted as an indicator that his identity as a teacher was aligning itself a little more closely with his colleagues. In Gee’s terms, this was evidence that, at least to limited extent, he was working with his colleagues as part of an affinity group identity (2000, p. 105).

Teachers, as employees, need to comply with the institutional requirements of the school as well as the educational curriculum authority requirements imposed from outside the school.

The theme of changed or renewed curriculum recurred throughout the data. Coping with these requirements encouraged working closely with colleagues. The writing and planning of programs as a collegial activity was also referred to by other respondents. In particular, Ralph discussed the approach he took with his head teacher in responding to required curriculum changes. In terms of teacher socialisation, this move to collegiality could be viewed as strengthening the discursive construction of their teacher identities within the specific school context. Ralph’s response, which shared the notion of working together with colleagues, is below. When I asked him about programming he responded on this topic:

Yeah, no dramas --um -- we’re actually -- I did a --um -- programming system up in Dubbo -- I developed with the head teacher up there during my internship and I’ve been using that but we’ve just --um -- with the head teacher -- we’ve come up with an idea -- I got sick of everyone trying to reinvent the wheel with their programming, so the two of us sat down and came up with a system --ah -- and then we got --um -- two of the other teachers, they got a couple of days off to set up a system where the whole faculty runs as one program so you go in and -- if you’re teaching metals -- you go in and pick the --ah -- metal’s program off the wall and --ah -- that’s what you run with (12.4).

This quotation shows a development from the start Ralph made during his teaching during professional experience through to being involved in a collaborative approach to programming. He analysed what he saw the problem to be (reinventing the wheel) and described the response he took. The casual language (no dramas, they got a couple of days off) suggests Ralph may not have been conceptualising writing and planning programs as a high level academic task. The language suggests practicality (came up with a system; pick the program off the wall) was important to Ralph.

By the time of Ralph’s second interview, in his third year of teaching, he had transferred all programs and resources he used to a web based system (12.9), so
again the main feature was efficiency and practicality to serve the purposes of being clear with students and colleagues. There was an element of social language, or even intertextuality, in Ralph’s use of expressions such as *no dramas, trying to reinvent the wheel, pick the program off the wall.* All these phrases are typical of the TAS environment where the language is generally work oriented and informal, in Gee’s (2010) analysis, a social language type. In making the comments about this not being a particularly academic style, the features that are absent include *assertive modifiers,* complex noun structures and abstract terms. *Agency* is identified throughout, whereas academic language typically avoids attributing agency (Gee, 2005, p. 42).

To complete this set of responses to the questions about planning and programming, Tom was critical of aspects of his preparation as a teacher:

Tom  
um -- the one that -- the first, I think, major shock was registration -- we didn't really -- we covered programming in depth of course, but it was never, you know, the registration part?

Annette  
so the actual "how to" wasn't covered in depth?

Tom  
well no, our -- they required -- I don't know if it's at every school, but at this school -- ah -- twice in the year we have to register the programs, you know, and sign off that we've taught what we've said we've taught and that -- we did programming and, you know, but it didn't actually -- um -- say about this, you know, the registration part and -- um -- and, because, you know, they generally give the beginning teachers the junior years anyway it's not that big a deal but -- um -- yeah, I just -- I was surprised it was the first time I'd even heard that word was when I was teaching or a, you know, when I'd been teaching for a month, sort of thing

Annette  
okay -- and -- um -- do you do that collaboratively or you just do it individually?

Tom  
no -- individually -- but I was just very lucky -- the guy that was there before me had left -- um -- a lot of his, you know, programs and that there, so I just had to sort of modify them to what I was doing sort of thing, so I was quite lucky there (4.2).

Here Tom, like Claire and Walter in the previous question, appeared to be hesitant linguistically when critical of the course. This is demonstrated in the pauses and repetitions. However, he evidently felt quite strongly that he was not adequately prepared and was annoyed that he did not know about the registration requirements. His attitude is marked by phrases such as “the first time I even heard that word” (*registration*) and “I was just very lucky”. He was disappointed that what he perceived to be basic teacher institutional knowledge was not part of his preparation and feared this made him look unprofessional as he adapted to his role as a teacher.
He also spoke about *modifying* existing programs and his approach and identity again link to concepts of practicality and efficiency, which are significant to him and part of his identity as a TAS teacher. As a second year teacher, Tom appeared to have caught up with the requirements, but his first year experience may have undermined his confidence with this aspect of his role initially.

From the responses from three other participants, the brief analysis again confirmed the idea that the amount of teacher preparation these candidates required was extensive. A focus on the practicalities of the actual everyday institutional roles and expectations of teachers was of utmost importance to them. The data generally showed that this group of teachers was prepared to use any materials existing in the school as a starting point to work practically on their own attempts at planning and programming. The way curriculum studies were taught as a problem-solving activity modelled this approach during their teacher education. There were no responses to the questions on planning and programming through the rest of the data that suggested this was a particularly challenging aspect for these teachers.

In earlier data analysis, the idea of individual programming for the specific learning needs of students appeared frequently, but it did not emerge as a response to this specific question. In fact, it was observing the classes in action and speaking to other teachers that showed the extent of additional programming these teachers were prepared to undertake to ensure all students were engaged and learning. When observing the classrooms of these teachers, it was clear that their role of being teachers was underpinned by the specific context so the significance of meeting the educational needs of students as individuals became apparent.

**Managing classrooms**

The next question was about behaviour and classroom management. The first response examined is Liam's:

Yeah, that’s improved a lot. One of the very first things I learned on my very first prac with a teacher was, she said “Decide what you’re going to put up with in the classroom before you go in and don’t ever change’ and so I’ve used that philosophy the whole time and the kids know what the rules are and they know the consequences straight away and I don’t budge from them (9.2).
This is a significant comment as an example of a storytelling response (Cohen, 2010). The linked phraseology and the lack of hesitation indicated Liam had thought about his approach quite carefully. He sounded confident in his identity as a teacher who managed classrooms competently. He had already identified himself as a member of the profession and his language underpinned his sense of being linked to colleagues. He acknowledged that he was following advice from his first professional experience in adopting a traditional and practical approach to behaviour management. This is the aspect of teaching which tends to be the most problematic for beginning teachers. His use of a quote using the words of his associate teacher, perhaps, also indicated his adoption of ‘teacher language’ confirming the point made in the previous chapter, that Liam identified strongly with his colleagues and based his teaching on a shared view of ‘appropriate’ roles and behaviours by teachers. In this way, the data from interviews and visits with Liam was quite different to the other participants, particularly in terms of the language used: *I learned on my very first prac with a teacher; I’ve used that philosophy; know what the rules are and they know the consequences.* These are identifiable as ‘teacher talk’ rather than being related to Liam’s days in the workplace as a chef. He also displayed, in his comments, and most particularly during the site visits, that he had developed an affinity group with his colleagues, particularly the Food Technology staff.

This was not as evident in other participants’ comments or language. In analysing this segment this way, the researcher used “reflexivity” (Gee, 2005, p. 97) where language is seen as reciprocal in terms of reflecting the reality as perceived by the interviewee while at the same time constructing reality. Liam appeared to be constructing his reality, or to be more influenced in the construction and perception of the reality of his teacher identity, from his teaching colleagues. In this study, no evidence of this type of patterning teacher behaviour on colleagues appeared elsewhere in the data, which is interesting in itself. The researcher is thus able to question whether the identities many of these teachers may be forming are more aligned to their identity from their previous career than with the new identities as teachers. The influences on identity formation need further research to confirm or deny this tentative finding.
Myron’s response to the question on managing classrooms was complex and illuminating:

Well I probably – I mean – I don’t know whether I’m doing it right but I’m not having a lot .. a lot of problems – of course you have the occasional one or two that you think to yourself “what am I going to do with this guy” but – or girl – but I’m not really having a lot of problems (5.2).

I asked him if this had changed much since he started teaching. His response was:

No, not really – in fact I probably have – this may sound a bit stupid but I’ve probably picked up a couple more behaviour problems as I’ve got into it than what I had when I first started .I think that’s because I’m probably learning some of the traits .. or maybe listening to .. to .. no ... I don’t know... it’s difficult to say but I think that it’s.... I might be influenced by other teachers ... Yeah ... yeah I think that’s probably it (5.2).

Again there was hesitancy in the response, shown particularly in the repeated word probably. In this case, the hesitancy seemed to be more about becoming like other teachers – and the phraseology seemed to suggest this was not seen in this instance as a benefit to Myron. He labelled it as sounding a bit stupid. He was aware of the need for inclusive language, as indicated by ensuring girls were included in his example. This consideration of appropriate and inclusive language demonstrated he was serious about the use of professional language. The expression I don’t know whether I’m doing it right reappeared many times in the data across cases (n=9).

Teaching can be an isolated experience, particularly in small schools in early years, so a lack of confirmation from others can be disconcerting for new teachers. In reflecting on his difficulty expressing a general critical comment about other teachers (that is, the implication that copying other teachers’ style of behaviour management has not been helpful), Myron uses the phrase it’s difficult to say.

Without mentoring or very direct supervision, which tends mainly to occur when a teacher is identified as already having problems like Mick was in his first year, these mature beginners seem to have been left to establish their own identity and responses to behaviour management issues. Research has shown:

... that career switchers do not necessarily receive the support they need because they are often not viewed as novices due to their age and prior experience (Mayotte, 2003, p. 682).

To return to the questions about classroom management, Tess responded:

Yeah -- no -- it's pretty good -- I -- um -- I always put my hand up to take the -- um -- more difficult classes -- like the bottom end of the year (6.2).
When I probed further, in an attempt to elicit further information, Tess replied:

I don't know -- I just seem to get more enjoyment out of it -- is more fun for me to see them getting stuff out of it. If I get a -- you know -- it's a bit of a reward, I guess, if you see these kids -- that are all ratbags everywhere -- and then you see them learning -- and enjoying what they're doing in my science class (6.2).

The discussion concluded with Tess asserting strongly that she was not having many issues with discipline, which was confirmed by the interviews with another teacher in the school (6.4) and the principal- (6.5).

Tess’ response was interesting in that she turned the question around immediately so she was responding about assisting poorly behaved students to become better learners, or at least more engaged learners. It is also evident that her focus was on her own enjoyment of her role as a teacher helping the ratbags to experience success at school. Her identity as a teacher seemed to be aligned very closely with that of the one who could ‘save students’ who may have been dismissed by other teachers. The identity formation indicated in these comments was as a special teacher who was drawn to those who struggled with school. This aligned with the school experiences Tess had herself where she found many of the requirements challenging. Rather than having its source in her current school context, it referred to her own experiences as a less than successful school student.

The theme of paying special attention as a teacher to struggling students also came up in the data generally during field visits. Every time a student came into any class I was observing carrying a ‘behaviour management card’, allocated to students who may have truanted or behaved badly and were repeat ‘offenders’, the response from the teachers in the study was almost identical. They expressed surprise that such a good student should be carrying such a card and treated them as if it was very unusual that they were defined as problem students. Myron muttered to one student: teachers make mistakes. These attitudes, and Tess’ comments above, signify an identity that links with the idea of giving all students fresh chances each lesson, an attitude which was expressed in the data elsewhere as well. Ralph, for example, referred to some of his more engaged students faring badly in other classes (12.4). The principal of Lauder’s school was critical about some second career teachers being on a mission to save kids. This idea was evidenced in these comments.
Students on behaviour cards were especially made to feel comfortable in their classes, with the implication being that they needed to be supported as learners.

**Communicating and working with students and staff**

The next set of comments features responses on school communication. Steve responded, as did many others, about students first, perhaps indicating his priorities. The interviewer asked about “communicating with staff and students” while the responses in the majority of responses started with students and comments about communicating with staff were limited.

Yeah fine .. um ... because I was playing sport when I first came here, I picked up with the kids there fairly well. I tend to get out and kick a footie around... so all of that is pretty important up at this school because sport is, you know, pretty important ... the kids sort of focus more on that probably a little more than their studies... ah - Staff ... staff's fine. I probably tend to ...not get into the staff life so much, probably because of the old fellow I suppose (2.1).

Here Steve was referring to the principal of the school at the end of the comment *(the old fellow)* as the principal of the school was also his father. This made life difficult at times in terms of staff relations, potentially, and Steve chose to avoid the situation.

The head teacher, who was also interviewed, complained that they did not see Steve frequently as he was often busy with his computer systems. When Steve referred to the way he liked to *get out and kick a footie round*, this indicated to the researcher, especially when aligned to other comments found in the data, his identity as a teacher was intrinsically linked to students. This was found in other interviews and on site visits, where communicating with students, both in class and around school generally, was foregrounded by the participants.

Lauder also commented on students before turning, after prompting, to the question about communicating with colleagues.

Oh well, I try to get on with the students - I'll do the students first 'cause that's a good one - I like to do duties so I can actually get out and talk to all the students around the school. You know I have half a lunch roster but I'm out there all lunch time. I just chat to them and find out what their problems are and things like that, take that on board and say OK when they come into my classrooms, that's why they might be a bit ratty or that's why you need to separate those, whoever it is ... um .. whereas...with the staff ...well... that's a different kettle of fish (10.2)
I asked Lauder if that was problematic and whether he considered this to be because of his different background. He replied:

Oh... well ... from my background ... the fact that um – you know – I’m up front ... um ... if I don’t like something, I’ll usually say it ... um...
sometimes some of the people will just walk into you...into your classroom and want to take over, and you go ... “Hold on ... you’re coming into my arena, you ask me first. They’re the boundaries – you don’t just go and take over.” So I’ve trodden on people’s toes when I’ve sort of pulled them up and said “Excuse me, this is not your classroom” (laughing) (10.2).

I then asked him if he had experienced more problems in communicating and working with staff than with students. His response to this question included some interesting features:

Yeah – I think ... well – it’s political. Ah – being ... political being that there’s a hierarchy, there’s .... people ... people try to protect their jobs and if I wasn’t going to ...if there was no students at a school then I’ve obviously done the right thing or obviously done the wrong thing - either way ...
whereas I don’t sort of say ‘well I’m sort of trying to climb the ladder to success and I’ll tread on everybody’s toes on the way’ ... you know? (10.2)

Again, like many of the other participants, the students were highlighted in his response, perhaps because they were easier for Lauder to deal with and also because they were his key focus. Here, the prompting of the interviewer led to a comment on communicating with his colleagues. In his comments about staff, Lauder used the word political specifically to refer to ambition and status, with the phraseology suggesting these terms are used in a faintly pejorative way – for example the idea of treading on everybody’s toes to achieve their goals or maintain their position on the ladder. Traces of either his non English speaking background, or even his working class origins, appeared when Lauder made some grammatical errors (if there was no students) and his syntax is unusual and fragmented. As a teacher, Lauder was again foregrounding his identity as being there for students. He also did not see himself as similar to other teachers and his identity, at this stage, seemed to rest on his own personality traits (outspoken, opinionated, rules governed) rather than his identity as a teacher.

Finally in the section on responses to communication, the response given by Martha was:

Yeah – I don’t really spend much time with anyone outside of the faculty really and then – if you don’t see them – notes on the desk or ... have no problems talking to anyone or asking questions. Questions always get
answered quite... quite good ... um .. but no I don’t. If I need to communicate with anyone I can either ring them up or leave a note in their pigeonhole or go and find them (1.2).

This comment did not focus on communicating with students, as did most of the others, but Martha had already spoken about students in this interview, specifically concerning her engagement with them through her Cattle Club and her choice to spend most breaks out of the staffroom. However, this response did not indicate close engagement with staff outside her own area of expertise in agriculture and in science, the faculty where she is located. The casual language suggested Martha’s non academic background. She used everyday language and brief phrases. It was significant that she referred to communication in terms of functional aims such as finding out answers (Questions always get answered) or practical motivation rather than developing collegial relationships. Her identity as a teacher was not clearly revealed here, although her pragmatism was evident.

In these comments, it does not seem as if communicating with colleagues was a high priority for these new teachers, a view that came through the data in earlier analysis. The data is far more heavily weighted to considerations of the needs and interests of students and the teachers have found their own new roles far more important than engaging directly with colleagues. It would be valuable to research whether having mentors increased career change teachers’ socialisation and adaptation to their new career. This was, to some extent, indicated in this study by Liam’s identity formation as a teacher being so different from the others. He was the only one in a mentoring program during his first year as a teacher. It is also worth considering whether this mentoring, while helpful and positive in Liam’s perception, made him more like other teachers.

Beliefs about teaching
The final question to be examined from the first interviews concerns the beliefs and attitudes these teachers had about teaching or being teachers during their second year as a teacher. Tom gave a very practical response to this question:

Everyone said, and it was always drummed into us during the course, you know, making the TAS area more valued and stuff like that, but I think that’s just going to be one of the hardest stereotypes to break and -- um -- --cause it’s just like -- it’s just inherent and even with the -- the kid’s attitudes that -- you know, like -- I think -- it is a break in the day from them -- for them --
This response was a combination of storytelling and analysis (Cohen, 2010) as Tom reflected on his practice. Here there was a perceived devaluing of the subject area in the eyes of students, and perhaps other staff, because of its practical nature. Tom did not believe what the university tried to drum into the pre-service teachers about the value of TAS, which he indicates linguistically by referring to it as one of the biggest stereotypes to break. He noticed that the students do not value these classes except as a break in the day. This was rather a sad quotation as Tom also seemed to be concurring with this attitude to some extent. He ended with the line of least resistance about nobody being injured being the most he could aim for despite attempting to help students make bigger and better things. His identity as a teacher may be interpreted as being undermined by the devaluation of his subject area. Although he did not express this view, he implied that more academic subjects seemed to be more important to him and thus of higher value. The discussion on the vocational and academic divide in schools has relevance here: the teacher's institutional identity may be seen as being intrinsically linked with practical rather than theoretically based 'academic' subjects.

Myron answered in a more philosophical manner when he was asked about his beliefs about teaching:

I haven't wavered in ... from what I hoped that I would be able to do to what I'm doing now and .... I'm very very optimistic about the possibilities that it brings myself and also the students ... I'm still of the belief that if you treat the person the way you want to be treated .. um ... that you will achieve more and I guess that's the way I'm heading in my teaching practice and I still really believe that... that I'm trying to treat them as individuals and trying to treat them as people that ... um ... are not all one creed ... if you get what I'm saying (5.2).

Again, this was a very student focussed response. The language itself showed respect in the way students were referred to as persons. He connected potential student success in his language with the way they were treated by connecting the two ideas: respectful treatment of students and student achievement. Myron appeared to be
constructing his teaching identity around the idea of a mutual learning space with students being central to his role and he measured his success by this criteria. His opening sentence about not wavering seemed to infer that these goals preceded his position as a teacher and that he reflected on his own purposes, attitude and identity prior to becoming a teacher.

Tess provided a very positive response, a complete contrast to Tom's reply.

I think it's very valuable -- a very valuable profession -- it's a very positive one -- I really like it -- um -- yeah -- like I said, it's the best career move I've made so far -- um I think -- I see myself as a very positive -- thing -- in teaching -- I see myself that way -- I think I'm a bit of a role model for some of the students -- um -- because I didn't do very well at school -- um -- I just explain to them that you need to get through this stuff, and if you don't do it well -- well -- as other options -- but you do need to try -- like, I always say -- I did try -- yeah -- I think I'm a positive role model for the kids -- they come to me (6.2).

Her response identified with the students exclusively other than the reference to teaching being "a very valuable profession". Her concept of what it means to be a teacher was bound up with the relationship she formed with her students. She named this as positive as she wanted to reassure students that even if they don't do well, presumably academically, she can be a role model to indicate that other possibilities or opportunities may occur later in life. This was a very different conceptual position in some ways to that of many other teachers. Only Martha shared a similar viewpoint. Her very casual language again is typical of the responses in these interviews.

**Interviews as third year teachers**

When I asked Martha what she now saw as her main role as a teacher, her response was immediate:

It's a very general one -- but I see my role as a teacher, inside and out of the class -- inside the classroom and out -- is to assist students to be the best that they can possibly be and to do the best that they can do (1.7).

Later she told me she had been very influenced by a professional development seminar she had attended with Bill Rogers, an Australian expert on behaviour management. When I attempted to elicit some more details, the response showed in its language the position Martha currently seemed to occupy between her own
informal language and the language of the seminar and in fact, the language of teachers.

I asked her to give me an example of some strategies the seminar had recommended. Her response:

   -- off the top of my head -- no --um -- just things like setting rules and how to stick with them -- how not to let the kids wind you down -- how not to -- how to ignore them --how to --um --yeah -- basically ignore their behaviour until they do what you want them to do --(1.7).

I asked Martha if her comment was referring to focusing on positive behaviours. She replied:

   Yeah -- -- yeah -- things like -- one thing that he kept saying DOR which was --um -- I can't think of it now, but it was where you state the obvious and instead of saying to someone, why are you late, just say oh, I see that you are late, come in. -- and a bit later you say, you know, what made you late? So they have to -- it encourages higher order thinking -- they have to become aware of their behaviour so if you don't say -- why are you out of your seat? - - you say -- hmm -- I notice you are out of your seat -- why don't you go back? (1.7)

Here Martha was mixing genres with teacher talk, as heard in the seminar or the staffroom, such as setting rules; higher order thinking and becoming aware of their behaviour are interspersed with her own language: stick with them, how not to let the kids wind you down. Perhaps in this quote there was almost a sense of Martha moving from one identity world, the workplace or farm, to the other, that of a teacher. Again, the idea that a mentor would have made a difference in the ways Martha moved towards this teacher identity, is an aspect worthy of future research interest in studying identity construction, or reconstruction.

Liam provided an unusual response when I asked him what he saw as his main role as a teacher: “To get the kids, at the beginning, and see a result at the end” (9.9). When I asked him what he meant by the word result, rather than referring to outcomes, the term used typically by teachers, Liam moved to an expression of the idea that students arrive with limited knowledge. He responded; “Well, have them -- you get them, and they know nothing -- and at the end, they can do something” (9.9).

This is a problematic definition as it resonates with the theoretical belief that teachers fill ‘empty’ students with knowledge. This comment negated the constructivist ideas expressed through other sections of the data. Perhaps Liam was
providing a quick answer, although his method of teaching in the classroom also included aspects of providing students with knowledge and skills with the teacher as the source of this knowledge. For example, only Liam and Claire regularly used textbooks in their teaching while the others all favoured more constructivist and collaborative learning approaches.

Liam had also undertaken a seminar with Bill Rogers. He was as impressed as Martha seemed to have been. The main messages he took from the seminar were also practical strategies for behaviour management:

It was last year I think, I went to see him and I found it just brilliant and I use, you know, lots of his stuff -- it's just -- I just remember it and -- just a basic things though -- but they work -- and it can save you -- (9.9)

I asked if he could give an example. He said:

Oh, just not -- you know, when a kid -- you pull a kid up and say -- you don't throw -- oh you threw a pen in the classroom -- you don't ask them why they threw the pen -- they threw it -- and you just tell them -- you threw the pen -- you don't do that -- -- and when they go to backchat you -- you say, I'm not here to argue with you -- you threw the pen and you don't do that in my classroom (9.9).

Although both Liam and Martha correctly identified a key message provided by the workshop, they had difficulty explaining this message in academic or even school language. The idea that using different techniques could save you as a teacher indicated a view of professional learning as developing further pragmatic strategies and responses to difficult situations. The excitement expressed by both Liam and Martha about participating in professional development was pleasing as there were few responses about this type of shared learning with colleagues. The evidence in the data suggested that most of the professional development these teachers had undertaken tended to be a solitary rather than a collegial experience. For example, Martha had completed her degree in agriculture, Mick had completed further studies in environmental management and Myron had completed studies around the topic of at risk students. The major exception in terms of learning with colleagues in the data was in the VETiS regional committees where almost all of the teachers in this case study had taken a leading role in their industry training curriculum development networks. Paul and Ralph had also become very involved with learning about literacy teaching in a whole school effort to improve the school's performance in reading and writing.
One aspect of Ralph’s teaching duties which had changed since the last interview was that he had been allocated a senior (Year 12) engineering class which he described as “intellectually challenging”. At the beginning of the second interview, he was eager to tell me about this class:

They just want more and more information -- and trying to keep the information up to them -- and -- yeah -- you set them a task and they sit there for two hours quietly and do it -- quite a new experience (12.9).

This class was an opportunity for Ralph to identify himself as a teacher for motivated and perhaps more academically orientated students, something he perceived very positively. The repeated idea that these students were enthusiastic for more information and that this was unusual, or new for him as well as their response to school work in extended task completion were seen as exciting for Ralph. In conversations and emails with him, he referred to the difficulties of working with low ability students, who he saw as the main candidates in his practical metalwork classes, as one of the reasons he was finding teaching more challenging than he had anticipated. Despite observing some excellent lessons with some of these ‘low ability’ classes, Ralph was dissatisfied with the lack of academically strong students he was teaching. In this, his perception of teacher identity was quite different from others such as Martha, Paul and Tess, who expressed a desire to work with students who struggled with school requirements.

The assertions Ralph made about seeing his main role as a teacher being to prepare students for life at work were cited earlier. This excerpt from his second interview centres on how he attempted to achieve this outcome:

I run it as a workshop, not a school room -- um -- We actually produce a vandal proof garbage bin holders for the school. Each person gets their job and they have to work flat out and if it's stinking hot and they're sweating like a pig, basically -- the last bit’s the real world --- you've got to keep going -- I give them a five-minute break after two hours -- because we do three-hour lessons -- I give them a five-minute break after two hours -- the same as you would get at work -- and then, back into it — (9.9).

Here it is useful to refer to Gee’s idea of multiple identities (2000). When working with his students in most of his classes, Ralph used the workplace as the model for his pedagogy. Here he was specifically referring to his VET Metals and Engineering class of senior, mainly not academically oriented students. However, when he was
able to teach students in a more academic discipline context, he was perhaps identifying himself as becoming a teacher like other teachers.

I invited Mick to tell me about any aspects of being a teacher which he had found particularly rewarding over his first three years. His response:

The successes that -- ah -- that really made me feel as if I have achieved something was to actually see -- see the kids engaged -- fully engaged in a lesson -- so you could actually sit back, and there was no noise -- it was just total work -- they were -- ah -- focused on their little jobs, and they were discussing quietly amongst themselves instead of shouting and screaming and throwing things at each other and -- ah -- I found that to be a huge success -- and it took a long while to break that -- ah -- that bad pattern of learning for them (11.7).

Here Mick has moved to the inclusion of school language such as *fully engaged in a lesson* and blended this with his more usual workplace language seamlessly: *it was just total work; their little jobs*. He seemed to be more comfortable with the teacher's identified role of ensuring students are learning as well as behaving acceptably in class. The way he expressed this implied this was not a common occurrence in his teaching so far. His discipline problems during his first year were discussed in earlier chapters. However, it is possible to infer that he saw the role of a teacher in terms that are aligned to achieving positive outcomes, and this statement aligned closely to the goals of many teachers in the institutional context. The idea of development over time in becoming a teacher was more clearly evident in the data from Mick's case study than in the other case studies. This could be attributed to his more difficult first year.

When I asked Walter about how he saw his role as a teacher after his time at the school, his answer surprised me:

Yeah -- um -- I often ponder this question -- you know, you remember, you -- you said to us some time ago that we keep a bit of a journal on what we do -- and how we do it -- every now and then, this question comes up -- and I keep saying to myself, well -- you know -- what is our role? -- and effectively -- teacher's not the right word -- educator would be far better suited to it -- we tend to -- we educate them on the -- the ways of life -- but my role here would be -- um -- not only as an educator -- but as a -- as a mentor, and a guide -- um -- a problem solver -- um -- an educator -- an educator or a teacher, in that regard it is, I suppose, only a small part of the whole scheme of things, you know -- we need -- we need to be a lot of things -- um -- particularly where there's problems in a family -- you need to be a pretty good -- ah -- person -- or good listener -- so that you can help the kids out
through their hard times -- and, you need to be able to be a bit psychic too --
you know? (8.7)

Here Walter was defining the role, and his identity as a teacher, as broadly as he can.
This reflective comment was clearly analytical. He had conceptualised multiple
roles: educator, mentor, guide, problem solver and even psychic. Again, his identity
as a teacher, and his goals, were focussed intentionally and directly on student
welfare, student progress and their achievement beyond school. He identified the
ethical value he perceived in the role of teacher: “you need to be a pretty good -- ah-
- person -- or good listener in order to be able to assist students”. There are elements
of the missionary role of teachers in this comment, alluded to by Lauder’s principal
as a feature of second career teachers in his experience. In terms of teacher identity
formation, Walter has clearly defined his role, or one of his identities, as preparing
students for life despite any difficulties they might have experienced during their
school career. He did not overstate this perception as the time at school with him in
the role of teacher is “only a small part of the whole scheme of things”. The
reflexivity of this comment showed that in constructing his teacher identity, Walter
had considered student welfare as particularly important.

The final quote in this section of discourse analysis is a comment on what Myron
identified as the core business of teaching, which was planning and programming for
teaching.

Yeah, I found that programming is vital. I’ve found that if you try to think
you’ll bluff your way through classes with going in with ... flying by the seat
of your pants with no real idea of what you’re going to do other than a big
broad brush concept .. um to how you’re going to teach it. I’ve found and
I… I’ve found that you very quickly come unstuck and you end up with
behaviour issues and all of those things that go with it. I’ve found that to
make it interesting for yourself as well as the students and to be able to
impart the knowledge to the students that you want to impart you do have
to have a living program and what I mean by a living program you need to look
at it – if it only runs for a semester , if it only runs for a year or if it only runs
for two years, you’ve still got to be looking at it all the time and seeing if
there’s ways of improving it and that’s what concerns me about some of the
programs that I have seen is that they seem to be documents that were written
five years ago and then – well that was good enough for five years ago and
let’s keep running with it – you know what I mean – and that concerns me a
little (5.6).

This is again an example of the combination of the language of the educational
institution and the language of the workplace or everyday usage, although Myron
was able to clearly articulate his perspectives as a teacher on this topic. Myron referred to programs and planning in educational terms as *programming is vital*; *behaviour issues; to be able to impart the knowledge to the students*. Again, the final term suggested a behaviourist approach to teaching and learning, yet as a whole statement, the view expressed here was conventional and identifiable as teacher discourse. The confidence of the repeated *only runs for a semester* and so forth emphasised his readiness to express strong views about the issue of currency in programming. In this text, Myron expressed views that confirm his adoption of a teacher identity, the identity of a teacher prepared to keep his materials current and relevant. At the same time, there was an element of casual language: *bluff your way through: flying by the seat of your pants*.

**Conclusion**

Qualitative data provide insight into the perceptions of the participants while at the same time being complex and challenging to interpret. Avoiding overstatement or making significant claims from the case studies of 12 teachers each in their own individual school locations means interpretation is difficult and problematic. It is acknowledged that the researcher as analyst has also constructed the analysis discursively based on her own value systems and ideology (Jager & Meyer, 2009, p. 36). It is evident that many beginning teachers share concerns about being adequately prepared by university programs for the practical aspects of teaching. Many teachers speak informally, both in and out of classrooms. However, the similarities and consistency of the responses analysed indicate differences between these teachers from industry and other teachers. Using tools of discourse analysis confirmed some findings as well as adding other ideas to the discussion.

Despite having read over all data many times, it was not until discourse analysis was used that the positions of power in the interviews, where the researcher had also been a lecturer on the participants’ teacher education course, became abundantly clear. The criticisms of the teacher education program as not preparing these new teachers adequately for some practical aspects of their new careers was hesitantly yet clearly expressed. The implied criticism of the inclusion of too much academic material was not voiced and could be seen as open to other interpretations, but the language
pointed to this view, perhaps also implying that academic aspects of the course were less relevant and useful.

Throughout this chapter, there has been an emphasis on identity formation. Although the textual analysis suggested that the underpinning source of their identity as teachers was based on their experiences and skills developed in their earlier careers, particularly in the earlier interviews, there was some evidence of a shift to the language of schools and the context of education, particularly in the second interviews.

In interpreting the finding that these teachers could be seen as different from other teachers in earlier chapters, two factors were identified. The first was that, unlike almost all teachers in the secondary school system in Australia who gained teaching qualifications in the past twenty years, these teachers had no undergraduate degree. The teaching degree they had attained was accelerated and specifically designed to meet what were identified as their needs in learning about pedagogy, practice, curriculum studies, sociology and practicum experiences, for instance. This was also perceived by participants and their colleagues as a short cut to becoming a teacher. However, as their experiences in the school, and particularly their satisfaction with their classroom and workshop experiences, developed, they expressed very positive comments about their decision to become teachers. The language they used to express these convictions became slightly more formal and they had no difficulties using 'teacher type' language to express their opinions.

The second aspect that was interesting from this use of discourse analysis to examine some of the data was the shift from discussing their roles in terms of their identities as workers and beginning teachers to more confident expressions of their ideas and goals. This barely perceptible shift was indicated in the confidence of responses, the use of more educational language than colloquial language more closely associated with life outside school and the comments themselves. If their identities can be discursively constructed from their words, their actions and the way they relate to others in their working environments, the discourse provided elements of evidence that these teachers have created unique identities as teachers. They may be different in many ways, particularly in terms of their emphasis on developing relationships
with their students as an identifiable priority and turning their classrooms and workshops into workplaces in terms of atmosphere and practices. “Discourses exercise power in society because they institutionalize and regulate ways of talking, thinking and acting” (Jager & Maier, 2009, p. 35). Interpreting the ways that the participants spoke and behaved through analysis of the data as different from other ‘teacher discourse’ and the language of schools at the early stage of their career has implications for the recruitment, preparation and mentoring requirements of teachers who have arrived from a different background.

As a final indicator of their adaptation to their new teacher identity, the career development and positions of responsibility this group of teachers have experiences also indicates an acceptance of their teacher identity by their schools and their employers. From Year Level Coordinators (7/12); OH&S committee chairs (8/12); boys’ education leaders (1/12); through to head teacher positions (4/12) and even deputy and acting principal’s positions (2/8), these new teachers have shown that they can learn to ‘talk the talk’ and construct their identities as teachers as well as showing evidence of being able to ‘walk the walk’ and provide a positive contribution to education in rural and regional NSW.

In the final chapter, the findings from the data are summarised and compared. Identified themes are revisited briefly to provide a distillation of the outcomes of this research on teachers moving from industry workplaces to the classroom. Opportunities for further research are also indicated as small scale studies such as this one reveal more questions which require further investigation. In addition, recommendations for policymakers and for teacher education institutions are also included in the concluding chapter.
Chapter 11. Findings, conclusions and implications

Introduction
In this final chapter, the main findings from the study are presented as a response to the initial research questions about teachers from industry moving to schools. The discussion is preceded by a brief summary of new significant knowledge that has emerged from this research. As this study is a close examination of 12 beginning teachers, the findings are limited to these specific participants and their contexts. They are based on a close descriptive and interpretive investigation into the voices, perceptions and experiences of mature new teachers. These early career teachers were from a different background and had moved from industry through an accelerated teacher preparation course to take up positions in rural and remote schools in NSW. This chapter also identifies some areas for further research, and considers implications for teacher educators and for education policy makers.

Although this research attempts to allow individual voices to emerge because of its strong reliance on the words of the participants, there is also a sense of locating a group of new teachers whose approach and beliefs about their roles as teachers share commonalities but diverge from other teachers in the school system. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) cautioned that there is a danger in emphasising the program of study as an analytic tool for research. They advise that:

... a better unit of analysis would be a subgroup of individuals from different programs with similar backgrounds and experience who work in the same or similar school settings (p. 30).

Although the participants in this study were from the same program, they shared similar backgrounds and came to teaching from industry and their journey, and their efforts to bridge the worlds of work and schools provide the data analysed in my research.

Significant findings
The methodology combined case study research and longitudinal research design which afforded insights into career change teachers in the specific and under researched discipline area of TAS teacher education and induction. This provided an opportunity to understand the way the case studied teachers began and adapted to the
practice of teaching through hearing their words and sharing insights into their experience in the case studies. The work based learning style of pedagogy adopted by most of the participants during the majority of classes and workshops observed, and spoken about by the teachers, influenced their teaching in a manner not identified in prior studies. This vocational approach, specifically encouraged in VETiS and other vocational learning opportunities in schools, was adopted in classes across the complex TAS curriculum areas with classes from Year 7 to Year 12. This approach also reflected the emphasis on schools as a preparation for real life found in the language and pedagogy of the participants. They saw themselves as conduits between the worlds of school and work. Although this belief in schools as preparation for vocational or life purposes is not unusual, the combination of the vocational orientation and the background and pathways of these teachers afford a unique insight into their life world.

Another important finding from the study, with both positive and negative attributes, is the preference the participants showed for spending time and energy with students outside class times rather than spending time and forming relationships with peers and colleagues. Further research, particularly concerning more experienced teachers from similar backgrounds, could provide evidence about whether this changes over time. This predilection could be interpreted as displaying a lack of confidence in their own identity as mature new teachers. It also reflects their stated beliefs that they were employed to teach students, so forming relationships with students as co-workers was a deliberate part of their approach. Most of the participants believed that such relationships underpinned their engagement of student interest as well as their success in behaviour management. The negative corollary of this concerns their socialisation as teachers, discussed further below, and potential limits on their learning from more experienced colleagues.

The identity formation evidenced in the data suggested strongly that as teachers, they were more clearly influenced by their prior industry experiences and their vocational attitudes rather than by their teacher education program and their experiences in schools, even into their third year as teachers. The limited evidence of the formation of strong collegial relations with other teachers, with one noted exception, also strongly pointed to a discipline based identity. In this, they could be seen as quite
isolated at times from the wider school community, although this could be found to change over time if investigated. The reality that many of the teachers who graduated from the accelerated teacher program have taken up positions of responsibility in schools since the completion of this study suggests this to be the case.

The final finding in this section concerns the way in which the participants adapted the school environment to their own pedagogical and vocational purposes. Their insistence on professional standards and practices in occupational health and safety, their links with the wider community and their own industry areas in their locality and their preoccupation with the preparation for students to become good workers and useful citizens mirror the TAS ethos and approach. However, as clearly demonstrated in the discourse analysis findings and earlier reported in the data analysis, these new teachers privilege this approach in their entire identity and classroom atmosphere. They identified strongly with the links between their work-based knowledge and their teaching disciplines. This meant that they perceived themselves as different from other teachers, a matter which may be of concern to teacher educators and policy makers. This finding also meant that the students who connected strongly with these teachers were often among those who found school challenging, which can be viewed as a positive attribute in any new teacher. These and other findings are discussed in more detail below.

**Revisiting and responding to the research questions**

The key purpose of this research was to examine the effects of an industry background and an accelerated teacher-training course on the orientation to teaching and learning of teachers in VETiS. As this is the most general of the initial questions, most of the data reported on below and later in this chapter were related to this question. One finding directly linked to this question was that, despite the increasing numbers of senior school students who have been reported to be selecting VETiS subjects as part of their senior years of schooling (MCEETYA, 2005), the teachers in my study had timetables dominated by junior technology subjects aligned with their vocational areas. All participants taught VETiS classes to Year 11 and 12 students in Construction, Hospitality, Primary Industries, Metals and Engineering or Information Technology, but this involved one or two classes at most. The VET ethos of preparing for work appeared to dominate the technology classrooms of these
teachers. They saw one of their main roles as providing a bridge between the world of the school and that of the workplace. One of the most evident effects of their industry background was the way in which these teachers perceived preparation for work as a major part of their duties as teachers.

One of the findings of a study of career change teachers was that such teachers believe they bring "non-traditional methods and skills" (Chambers, 2002, p. 216) to their new profession. This finding accords with the data in my study as well as my experience as a teacher educator encountering and teaching more than 500 second career teachers during their pre-service education. They were also at the same stage of their career. They were all from trade backgrounds and shared many other features. In short, they had much in common in their approach and experiences.

**Attitudes to students**

The approach these teachers had to students seemed to be quite different from many other teachers in the way they gave priority to forming relationships and getting to know their students as individual people. This was strongly evidenced in the data. This theme of the connection formed between the participants and their students appeared to be linked to the workplace learning approach taken by these teachers as they treated most of their classes as a work team for whom they were providing learning opportunities as part of the 'job' of being a school student. This resonates with Lave and Wenger's argument "that learning must be understood with respect to a practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations – both within the community and with the world at large" (1991, p. 114). For the participants in this study, their community of practice was focussed deliberately and directly on their learners. The type and style of situated and collaborative learning observed and discussed in their classes bore more resemblance to the models of apprenticeship proposed by Lave and Wenger than to "school instruction" (p. 61). It appears that these teachers are drawing on the learning and teaching that has been part of their lives in the workplace working with novices and less experienced workers in their fields. The pedagogical connections between workplace learning practices and constructivism suggested in this study make a contribution to the development of new theoretical perspectives on learning in school settings from a different angle. The source of this approach is the workplace experiences and practices of teachers who have learned in
a different environment. Diversity in teachers and pedagogical approaches potentially offers more opportunities for students to be supported through different disciplines and follow a range of vocational directions.

The second question focussed on the approach that the participants adopted in the school context. The study investigated the ways they adjusted to their new careers to ascertain whether they became similar to other new teachers who had followed different routes to the profession. Without a larger study, it would be overstating to claim that the approach these teachers took to teaching and learning and the curriculum was markedly different from other beginning teachers, particularly within the TAS faculty. However, there were indications from the data that the pedagogical beliefs underpinning their teaching meant that they organised their classes as workshops and workplaces. Most of the participants created similar forms of classroom culture rather than adapting closely to the culture of their schools, although the findings do show that their identification with the school culture increased over the three year period of the study. That is, over time they began to adjust to the dominant cultural ethos of the school to become similar to other teachers.

The purpose of the final question was to investigate whether these teachers were operating as agents or signifiers of change. Alternatively, were they socialised into the culture and context of their school? The findings showed that, particularly in their first two years, the studied teachers reported that they organised their classes with limited interactions with other staff. In this way, in particular, they embodied Lortie's finding concerning "individualism" (1975, p. 210) which refers to "performing teaching in isolation from other teachers" (Hargreaves, 2010, p. 144). By the third year and beyond, working with other staff became a much stronger feature of the participants' emails and phone calls as they gained confidence in their new roles. The positions of responsibility they had adopted and the activities they were involved in demonstrated their increased involvement with other staff.

Although there was limited evidence that these teachers were operating as agents or signifiers of change across their school context, it could be argued that, by offering a workplace approach within practical contexts, they were changing their own
discipline areas. Certainly, within their own workshops and classrooms, they were adopting a different type of attitude to their roles as teachers. In particular, the way in which they addressed students and conducted their classes encouraged a supportive and respectful classroom climate.

**Satisfaction with their roles**
The participants spoke frequently about finding their satisfaction as teachers was directly associated with getting to know their students, both in classes and by spending much of their time at the school with students, even during breaks. Career change teachers were identified in the literature as finding much of their fulfilment in their new roles associated with positive interactions with students (Allen, 2007; Halladay, 2008). Particularly for students who were troubled or less motivated to succeed in their studies, the data indicated these participants believed they were making a difference in their lives.

**Early career teachers**
Beginning teachers can be divided into three groups with some common features and some differences. The first group, which has been named as the traditional pathway in the literature (Kember, 2008; Lee, 2011) and in this thesis, includes those beginning teachers who attended university either immediately or the year or two after completing school. This group had always wanted to become teachers and began their career as young people. They can be described as moving from "being students to teaching students" (Wilson & Deaney, 2010, p. 170).

The second group is made up of mature entrants who have had experience in other careers and enter teacher education as a later choice of profession. Typically, members of this group have completed an undergraduate degree in an appropriate discipline and undertake a post graduate teacher education program.

The third group, like the subjects in my study, is comprised of beginning teachers who have been able to change career through a pathway which allowed them to become teachers without first completing an undergraduate degree. Although they completed further education at TAFE or through other vocational providers, academic study was not part of their experience prior to starting their teacher education.
The mature entrants from the latter two groups may have more commonalities in their perceptions and experiences as beginning teachers. In particular, ‘older’ beginning teachers may be perceived by colleagues and the school community as already experienced and thus not be offered the levels of mentoring support and guidance needed (Anthony & Ord, 2008, p. 370). The evidence gathered from my study suggested that the one teacher who was allocated a mentor, identified more closely with his colleagues and worked collaboratively within his faculty in a way not identified by the other participants in their first two years. Mentoring and further socialisation into the new career could assist career change teachers into developing further understanding and appreciation of an emphasis on more academic pathways for students to provide a more balanced view of the multiple purposes and outcomes of schooling.

Another major difference is that mature applicants have been away from school systems in most cases for an extended period. In my study, the teachers had left school an average of 16 years before returning as teachers. Three of the school principals referred to the changes and differences in the school system between the participants’ own schooling and the current context as being a challenge for mature teachers. This could be construed as part of the reason that the participants displayed a reluctance to spend the limited time available with their colleagues in the staffroom. This could only be confirmed in a study which examined the school context in more detail and included more staff members as participants.

Teacher socialisation and identity
The area of most concern in the data was the lack of evidence of socialisation into the role of a teacher in terms of working and collaborating closely with colleagues. In the case of Liam, referred to previously, mentoring encouraged his socialisation and assisted him to become part of the school. The only other participant, Mick, who was offered mentoring support during his first year, found it irrelevant as it was offered as group mentoring and he believed it had limited relevance to his discipline area or his needs. According to Chin and Young (2007), for mentoring to be effective for these teachers, the mentors need to be aware of the implications of the new mature teachers’ background and the pathway that has led to teaching. More research would be required to confirm this tentative finding.
Although other researchers (Beattie, 2007; Cohen, 2010) found that the major influences in teacher identity formation were the forming of relationships, specifically relationships with colleagues and mentors, my study extends these findings. The data indicate that the studied teachers ‘re-created’ their professional identities without much evidence of forming strong collegial relationships. Instead the data suggested that they formed their identities from their discipline, their former career areas, and in their dedication to and relationships with the students they were teaching.

From their responses and discussion in interviews, the teachers in my study seemed to move between discourse styles, as discussed in the previous chapter. They identify as teachers although their language and ways of speaking about teaching are distinct from other teachers. They also identify very strongly with their trade or industry background and cross reference with other teachers who have followed similar pathways to teaching. Although only a small sample of teachers is researched in this study, their resilience as teachers is evidenced by the fact that all remained as teachers eight years after they began this new career. Even though one of these is in the tertiary system as a TAFE head teacher rather than in a secondary school, he spent six years in a school context before leaving as he became frustrated by what he saw as a lack of support from the school management.

An interesting aspect of the findings is that these teachers managed to create a professional identity in their new roles which “reflected the social and institutional expectations of the profession” (Pearce & Morrison, 2011, p. 55), while at the same time they were clearly identifying with their vocational background. The multiple links between their discipline areas and their expertise from their vocational background meant that there was little dissonance between their knowledge and skills and the core areas they were teaching their students. Pearce and Morrison’s contention that this identity formation as teachers is linked to their resilience as teachers could be seen to explain, in part, the participants’ continued commitment to remain in the profession. This demonstrates that in these cases, common attrition issues for new teachers who might find it difficult to construct a teacher identity were not evidenced. Although data are difficult to gather, anecdotally and through contact with schools, a high number of the teachers who have emerged from
accelerated pathways remain in the profession after the bonded three years they have agreed to teach in their deed of agreement with the education department. It could be inferred from the data that they have invested so much time, energy and money in becoming teachers that they want to remain to gain the benefits of such an investment.

The most convincing reason for seeing these particular teachers in this study as resilient and less likely to burn out was the very positive comments all participants made about their decision to become a teacher. Comments such as best job I have ever had; I love being a teacher; when I see the changes, even minor, in the students I am teaching... well it's a great thing, attest to this claim. It was interesting that when they were asked to provide evidence of their own perceptions of success as teachers, most responses in the data were stories involving the success of students who were struggling with their schooling. These teachers wanted to see that they were making a difference in the lives of such students in particular.

Workplace learning
A major finding in this study was that the teachers intentionally created a workplace environment in their workshops and classrooms. This was demonstrated in their own words and perceptions in the data as well as perceived in the observation of their classes in action during site visits. Their actions, their words and their stated beliefs indicated that they saw schools as preparation for work beyond school. The fundamental concepts of workplace learning involve learning what needs to be known when it is required by the situation (Billett, 2001). In this way, it has clear links with current conceptions of constructivism (Billett, 2010). In this study, the application of constructivist theories embedded in workplace learning strategies aligns well with the concepts of quality teaching promoted in NSW schools (DET NSW 2003) as well as being appropriate to the TAS syllabus approach to technology education (NSW BOS, 2005).

However, the precedent for these teachers to engage in workplace learning, and to model it for their students, was their own learning in the workplace. The attitudes, skills and knowledge of the participants were clearly associated with their own industry backgrounds. Their enactment of workplace learning approaches was
embedded in their beliefs about ensuring their students could adapt to life in the world of work. All participants spoke about the way in which they used stories from their working lives as teaching resources in the belief that students enjoyed hearing about what they often termed ‘the real world’ outside the school environment as this added meaning and context to their class work.

The participants’ experience in industry was seen as their main asset by these teachers, and also by the principals I interviewed. For example, Martha, Steve and Myron’s principals directly referred to the world view, knowledge and experience such teachers bring to the school. Several of these narratives were included in the discussion to indicate the way in which they shared this work world information with their students. They perceived their main role as a teacher was to take care of their students, treating them like less experienced workers. In fact, many of their practices were based on the apprenticeship model so familiar to the participants from their industry careers. They encouraged students to participate fully in the project work, activities and learning required in the context of the school.

The role of the teacher in this model of learning is to support and scaffold learners so they can construct their own learning from their own prior knowledge and experiences. The intention is to develop agency and independence so that the learners become motivated by their own development. This was supported in the classrooms observed during the data gathering by a friendly and busy environment where collaborative learning was encouraged. Individual work plans and projects were typical and were intended to ensure that the projects undertaken matched the abilities as well as the interests of individual learners.

The teachers, except Liam, spoke in colloquial voices rather than adopting an authoritative tone and manner. This style of pedagogy can be directly linked to workplace learning theory (Billett, 2001). The relationships they had intentionally developed with their students were essential to the promotion of such atmospheres and practices, in their own perception. The one participant who was observed taking a very different approach was Liam. He seemed to be more effectively socialised into the school way of doing things, and this could be attributed to the excellent mentoring he had experienced during his first year of teaching. Liam also had
formed strong collegial ties, with the other teachers in his discipline specifically, and across the school. There was limited evidence of such collegial relationships in the other 11 case studies. The latter participants, whether they were in small schools or not, appeared to be quite isolated and managed their transition to teaching through relying on their own resources and ideas about teaching, although this also needs to be supported by a larger study of such teachers.

**Behaviour and classroom management**

New teachers of any age often report on difficulties with classroom and behaviour management (see for example, Ewing & Manuel, 2005). One participant, Mick, had some difficulties in his first year which he had overcome by the time I visited the school in his second year of teaching. The rest of the participants reported limited or occasional issues with individual students but for the majority of their classes and interactions with students, they asserted that behaviour management was not an issue for them. Other voices in the data, including other teachers interviewed and the principals, confirmed that behaviour management did not seem to be problematic for these participants whose rapport with students was evident. This may be attributed to their maturity and the management skills they had developed in their former careers.

However, the participants themselves attributed their success with behaviour management to the respect with which they treated their students and, in particular, the relationships they had developed with them both within and beyond the classroom. The results of this approach were evident when observing their classes. Voices were rarely raised, a positive classroom climate was developed and the focus was on cooperation. These teachers performed as experts and leaders, but they also encouraged their students to construct their own learning opportunities and treated them as responsible and mature individuals rather than as children under their control. They scaffolded students, assisting them to link former experiences and knowledge with new learning. This was achieved in a calm and friendly environment conducive to collaborative learning. Again, these findings resonate strongly with the apprenticeship models common in trades and industry.

Managing student behaviour was an aspect of their transition to teaching where many of the participants perceived themselves as being very different from other
teachers they observed in their schools. Whether this perception was accurate is
difficult to ascertain. However, the stories they told of different attitudes were worth
noting. Ralph, Paul and Myron, in particular, regarded success in behaviour
management as part of developing a strong work ethic in their students. This was
related to their expressed desires to ensure their students would be well prepared for
work after school.

Motivations as teachers
The data showed that the motivations of these participants to become teachers had
much in common with the majority of beginning teachers and were shared with other
mature aged teachers in the literature. The mature beginning teachers in this study, as
would be hoped of any new teacher, were highly motivated to succeed in their new
careers. They arrived at school early and left late and spent many hours reshaping the
school environment to suit their purposes as teachers and to ensure student safety.
Although they may have experienced some difficulties socialising with other
teachers, they were spoken of very highly by the principals interviewed in terms of
their contributions to the school. Many of the VETiS class projects involved school
improvement ideas such as the 'vandal proof rubbish bins' fabricated by Ralph's
metals and engineering class. The contributions made were practical and are also
typical of VETiS classes. The difference was that the level of industry competence of
these new teachers ensured such projects were completed efficiently and effectively,
according to the principals.

This formed part of what I referred to in Chapter 8 as the increasing
vocationalisation of schools. By treating their classrooms as work sites and their
students as workers, these participants were demonstrating a different role. Whether
the increased vocationalisation of schools is a desirable goal or one driven by current
market and social forces is a question which needs to be addressed. However, for
certain teachers and students, this may be an appropriate approach and may produce
more positive outcomes for those who struggle with more academic approaches in
their schooling.
Questions of class

Most of the participants in my study identified themselves as having a working class background. Although several of them expressed a desire to participate in further academic study after school, and Paul was actually enrolled at university for a short period prior to his apprenticeship, the majority of them immediately took up apprenticeships in their vocational areas. With such a small number of respondents, it is problematic to make judgements on how class issues influenced their lives as teachers. Of course, teachers come from all social classes, but as a profession, it could be argued that a middle class ethos could be characteristic of, or adopted by, teachers. Lortie (1975) posited that the profession of teaching was one within which individuals could move up the class system.

The key question that arises from this study with regard to the issue of class would be what effect this has on the way in which vocational learning was privileged in the data by these teachers. Class issues may be implicated in the way these teachers self-identified as preferring struggling or disadvantaged students to more successful ones. Only Ralph referred to being excited about being appointed to a senior class outside VETiS where the students were highly academically motivated. There was criticism for several other teachers interviewed that the teachers from industry were not capable of undertaking the senior non VET classes. Without investigation into larger numbers of such teachers, and in understanding the way particular schools delegate classes and encourage options for students, it is difficult to evaluate. However, there was certainly a suggestion in the data that these teachers were appointed to junior classes in technology and VETiS classes rather than the more academic senior technology classes.

Completing senior schooling was not part of the experience of half of the participants in this study. Teaching VETiS students was familiar to the studied teachers as all of them had worked with apprentices and younger workers during their previous careers. However, on several occasions senior students with higher abilities were referred to as challenging, for example, in the case of Martha and Tess in particular. Perhaps there was some substance in the assertion by the other teacher in Martha’s school that she had literacy and learning issues from not having experienced senior school herself. Tess became more confident once she completed
her degree in agriculture, also suggesting there may be links between the academic achievements of these teachers and their confidence to take on senior classes outside VETiS.

None of these new teachers had completed a university degree prior to their teacher education. The pre-service teacher education they completed was an accelerated program designed specifically to meet the requirements of such candidates. They were carefully supported in their studies by university teacher educators. Thus their experiences with higher education prior to becoming teachers were more limited than that undertaken by most secondary school teachers. Issues of academic confidence may have encouraged further identification with vocational subjects and less academically orientated school subjects. Since beginning teaching, half of these teachers have independently undertaken further study suggesting that they believed they needed further academic qualifications for their new careers.

Class and VET in Schools

Two factors connected to the issue of class emerged from this study. The first, from the literature, was that students from lower socio-economic groups have been found in higher numbers in VETiS classes (Connell et al, 2003; Lamb, 2011, and Polesel, 2010). The second was that the schools to which these teachers were appointed were located in lower socio-economic areas in eight cases. VETiS has been found to have proportionally higher numbers in rural schools (Kilpatrick, Kilpatrick, & Bell, 2000; Teese & Polesel, 2003). Polesel (2010) actually referred to VETiS as "the pathway of the poor" in the title of a recent article where he was investigating the demographics of VETiS enrolment in Australia. This means that in smaller rural school where options for senior classes may mean deciding whether to offer a senior technology course such as Design and Technology, or a VETiS course such as Construction, the VETiS subject is more likely to achieve stronger numbers at the expense of the technology subject. This may mean that options to teach senior technology subjects may not have been available in some instances. Further, this tentative finding is not intended to imply that VETiS is only for students with less academic ability. Rather, the argument is that different subjects and varied approaches ensure that all students may be able to experience success during their schooling.
Resources
The resourcing of the schools emerged as a minor theme in my study, as these teachers made do, reconfigured and went to industry colleagues to supplement tools, materials and equipment where possible. One of the ways in which the 12 teachers in this study assisted in the resourcing of their school sites, as reported on earlier in this study, was to use their backgrounds and familiarity with trade areas and practices to support their practice as teachers. All of the participants proved themselves adept at making connections with available industries in their school communities. These links were useful in locating and arranging placements for VETiS students as well as providing resources and opportunities for their schools. For example, Mick offered assistance to farmers in his local community by working with his students on farms during harvesting and busy periods in exchange for animal feed and authentic experiences for his students.

Evidence that the studied teachers considered themselves as human resources for the school and community was found in the data. Two of the participants arranged VET classes for community members using the school resources and the rooms they had especially established to offer Certificate I and II level classes as there was limited opportunity for people to attend a TAFE college in that location. Food technology and Hospitality classes offered catering at events in the school and beyond. The latter was not unusual, but it was achieved as a consequence and demonstration of the school students' expertise in the subjects. Projects around the school are typical of VETiS classes and were appreciated in particular by the students and school management. While not contending these teachers went beyond expectations for neophytes, their prior experience ensured that being involved in these activities was an area where they could gain confidence as teachers and demonstrate their competence, and their students' abilities, to the school and the wider community.

Implications of the study
This thesis provides valuable insights and findings which contribute to the field both within its Australian context as well as internationally in a time of teacher shortages when recruitment of teachers from more diverse backgrounds has become important. In attempting to recruit potential teachers from other careers or from an industry background, the findings of this study support the assertion made that such
campaigns need to “target the multiplicity of factors that together impact the decision to enter teaching as a career” (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 52). The data in this study suggest that the match between the skills and attitudes of those candidates encouraged to change careers to become teachers must be explicit and clearly linked to their teaching disciplines when they are teachers. Such strategies would ensure that these new teachers had depth of expertise in their key teaching areas and would support their confidence as mature beginning teachers, as was found in my study.

As a teacher educator, the experiences I have had with reluctant teacher education students have typically been with those who have completed an initial degree and unenthusiastically enter a post-graduate teacher education program as they cannot find a career linked to their undergraduate degree. This conclusion resonates somewhat with a finding from the Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) study. These researchers attributed a lack of enthusiasm for becoming teachers to the fact that previous training and current occupation in the school did not connect. According to a quote from one of their participants, she found as a teacher that:

She could not see any links between her previous occupational skills and teaching. The only continuity she saw lay in her ability to “really take control” and manage her own experience (1990, p. 217).

There is a strong and explicit distinction between the Crow, Levine and Nager study as the participants in my study showed no evidence of reluctance or limited enthusiasm. The links between the industry areas of the participants and their teaching areas were well defined and cohesive from their acceptance into the program and through their teaching. This was referred to by the participants, as well as being observed in classes, as the source of their confidence as teachers. Rather than not finding links between their prior jobs as chefs, metalworkers, farmers or computer technicians, for example, the new teachers examined in this dissertation expressed frequently the belief that their industry background formed the core of the knowledge and experience they had to share with students.

**Further research**

The findings from small scale descriptive studies such as the one reported here require further investigation to confirm their accuracy. Additionally, this research into the new careers of teachers from industry uncovers future potential research
Research questions emerging from this study that may be worthy of further investigation include:

- What are the practices which ensure effective mentoring for mature aged early career teachers?
- What professional development is required to encourage mentors to adopt such practices?
- Are the pedagogical practices of early career teachers with industry backgrounds linked to their previous careers and life experiences?
- How do secondary school students perceive teachers from an industry background?
- What are the links between vocational approaches to education and class issues in Australia?
- What are the current conceptions of the purposes of schooling for new teachers and are these linked to maturity, experience, or philosophical beliefs?
- How can teacher socialisation be supported and encouraged for early career teachers?

Implications for teacher educators and policy makers

Teacher identity formation is a complex and problematic transition for all new teachers. This seems to be particularly true in the case of mature teachers (Chambers, 2002; Grier & Johnston, 2009). Recognition of the individual pathways and the career background and knowledge of such new teachers could help in the transition from one career to the other. Despite the fact that the participants in my study had undergone a pre-service teacher program specifically designed to support the cultural shifts required to move from industry to schools, the data implied that the main influence on the new identities these teachers adopted were essentially linked to their former trade areas. The findings of my study resonate with Beauchamp and Thomas’ (2009) assertion that teacher education courses need to “adequately allow for deep consideration of the self in relation to educational contexts” (pp. 185-186). Further to this, the effect of the pedagogy employed in teacher education has implications on the development of teacher identities necessary for successful transition into the
profession (Danielwicz, 2001). The issues identified in this study about the challenges for teachers who have followed an alternative pathway need to be more specifically addressed within the pre-service program. The match between workplace learning, constructivist pedagogies and teacher identity in my study suggests that such correlations should be encouraged and promoted.

The implications for policy makers from this study are more limited partly because of the small scale of the project. The teacher attrition rate was nil. The match between the skills, attributes and desired teaching disciplines of individuals recruited for specific programs to fast track teachers from different career background into teaching is essential. Program developers need to be aware of the backgrounds and experiences of such candidates and ensure that they are adequately prepared for all of the facets of their new career, including the practical and social aspects of being a teacher.

The implications for theory are embedded in the application of workplace learning models in school settings. Although this small scale qualitative study would need to be extended with other career change teachers from industry to confirm this finding, the social constructivist connections between the pedagogies of the participants, the curriculum area and the apprenticeship models of teacher student relationships all afford a different view of classroom interaction and culture in this study. The graduates of later industry to school programs were offered mentoring support during their first year of teaching, so this study is unique in allowing an insight into the studied teachers adapt independently with limited support from employers or colleagues. It would be interesting to investigate the differences mentoring was perceived to make in the adaptation of second career teachers in rural schools in NSW.

The accelerated pathway of the teacher preparation course the studied teachers undertook in their pathway to the classroom may have been inadequate in some ways. It has subsequently been replaced by a two year, rather than an 18 month, program of study. A short time frame in which to achieve a culture change from one career to a very different one may not afford enough opportunities for pre-service teachers to adapt. Despite the evidence that all 12 of these teachers made a
successful transition into their new teaching lives, factors such as their potential limitations in teaching areas, their reluctance to become familiar with other teachers and their views on the purposes of school suggests avoiding very short programs would be recommended.

Concluding remarks
In the opening of this dissertation, the intention to relate stories from the experiences and lives of teachers from industry as they began their teaching careers was declared. Through the extensive inclusion of the voices of these participants in the discussion, their perceptions and self evaluations have been revealed and inscribed with meanings through analysis. Although the findings are related to the specific participating individual teachers and their school contexts at the time of data collection, they also indicate some findings that are applicable to other career change teachers. The use of discourse analysis in particular suggested that these studied teachers formed their teaching identities from their prior careers mixed with developing experiences of the school culture. This could be interpreted as a positive attribute, as these teachers bring different pedagogies and practices to the school. It could also be viewed in a negative light as a limitation, restricting such teachers to certain classes and students linked with a vocational pathway, although this cannot be argued strongly from the findings in this study.

Finally, with the disappointing statistics on the attrition rates of new teachers, it is remarkable that all of the participants in this particular study are still teaching nine years after leaving university and taking up duty in their appointed schools. Steve is a deputy principal of a rural high school. Martha has retrained as a textiles technology teacher and is in the same school where she has become involved in student welfare. Tess has had some time out for child raising duties but she has continued to teach part time at the same school. Myron is a careers advisor and senior teacher at his school. Walter has left NSW to take up a position as a head teacher in an independent school. Paul is also a head teacher in his tiny school, which has a very high turnover of staff because of its remote location and challenging environment. Liam has become a leader in the VETiS network of teachers in his district and remains dedicated to his original school. Lauder remains in his school as a enthusiastic teacher across a wide range of technology and VETiS
subjects. Mick has moved schools and is still teaching and introducing new projects in his second school. Claire has also moved to another school which has an extensive distance education program which she manages. Tom has moved to another school in the same district and continues to enjoy his new career. Finally Ralph has moved to become a head teacher in a TAFE college.

These teachers and their journey to teaching has been a tale worthy of narration. As their former teacher educator, I am proud of their adaptation and contribution to education in NSW. As a researcher I have gained insight into their practices, their issues and their perceptions which inform my own practice as a teacher educator. This study is of value in its contribution to knowledge about such teachers and pathways in Australia. The ways in which the participants adapted workplace learning pedagogies, linked to social constructivist theories of learning, makes further scholarship into the application of learning theories to the classroom attractive as a subject of future research. Hearing their voices and ascribing meaning to their words, actions and perceptions has confirmed their resilience and positive attitudes to their new careers. The fact that these teachers were appointed to rural and remote locations and were quite isolated as new teachers in their schools makes their resilience even more remarkable.
References


Van Onselen, P. (2010, July 24). “Excuse me Miss, but the Prime Minister’s cheating”. The Australian. Retrieved from


Appendix 1 - Data archive

Notes:

These are sorted into separate archives for any information gathered on each participant, followed by other data from additional sources. All names of people and schools are pseudonyms. There were other emails, phone calls and conversations with all participants but those included in the file are those directly referred to in the work. The year of teaching at the time of data collection is indicated in brackets. In the details, the words used to describe the information are usually those used by the participant to describe the contents of the email and in many cases follow on from informal email discussion which has not been included as it does not add to the discussion.

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<td>Other teacher - Mary</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
<td>Principal asked for interview (Martha’s permission given)</td>
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3 Claire

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<td>Field notes</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>18/03/08</td>
<td>&quot;New school site&quot;</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Claire discussing why she left Border CS (and her new school)</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>03/09/08</td>
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4 Tom

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5 Myron

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<td>Phone interview</td>
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<td>Principal requested this and Myron also recommended</td>
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<td>Central River HS (6th yr)</td>
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<td>Reflection on career prior to teaching and family history (discussion on class)</td>
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6 Tess

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<td>Site visit (3rd yr)</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
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<td>Taken during observation, discussion notes added</td>
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<td>Other teacher - Charles</td>
<td>Interview HT Transcribed</td>
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<td>Interview HT Transcribed</td>
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<td>Principal requested this and Tess approved</td>
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<td>General HS (3rd yr)</td>
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<td>Second interview following email and phone discussions (too brief to interpret)</td>
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<td>03/08/07</td>
<td>General HS (5th yr)</td>
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<td>Update – now part time (parental duties)</td>
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<td>Now a year advisor (Yr 7) – sharing news</td>
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7 Paul

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<td>Date</td>
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<td>08/11/05</td>
<td>Principal Interview</td>
<td>Very brief 'unintended' interview</td>
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<td>08/11/05</td>
<td>Other teacher Interview</td>
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<td>Stump CS (5th yr) Email</td>
<td>Reflection - isolated school</td>
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<td>Stump CS (6th yr) Email</td>
<td>News = acting HT Welfare</td>
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<td>04/03/08</td>
<td>Records search Data from files</td>
<td>Notes from school experiences</td>
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8 Walter

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<td>Riverland HS Phone interview</td>
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<td>06/04/04</td>
<td>Newspaper photo and article (Riverland HS – 2nd yr) Clipping</td>
<td>Introduced as 'Industrial Arts teacher and band leader'</td>
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<td>Site visit (3rd yr) Field notes</td>
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<td>22/09/05</td>
<td>Other teacher – Brendon Interview</td>
<td>Note – other teacher also former Teacher Education student of mine (not ideal)</td>
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<td>22/09/05</td>
<td>Principal Interview</td>
<td>Both Principal and Walter enthusiastic about this interview</td>
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<td>05/08/07</td>
<td>Second school - Independent (1st yr there; 5th yr teaching) Email</td>
<td>Informing me about HT role he had taken on in new school (inter-state)</td>
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<td>Reflection on career to date</td>
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<td>17/09/08</td>
<td>HT (6th yr) Phone conversation</td>
<td>Update</td>
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<td>03/09/08</td>
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<td>Notes from school experiences</td>
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<td>Email</td>
<td>(Late) response to transcript sent and apology for delay</td>
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<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Principal insisted – Liam quite pleased</td>
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<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Second interview – following phone and email discussion</td>
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<td>River HS (5th yr)</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Update and brief reflection</td>
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<td>Discussing orientation to teaching – plans for market garden project</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
<td>Transcribed</td>
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<td>12.8 01/06/05</td>
<td>Pitlock HS (3rd yr)</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Reflections and continued discussion from site visit</td>
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<td>Pitlock HS (3rd yr)</td>
<td>Phone interview</td>
<td>Second interview – discussing issues from</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<td>Email</td>
<td>Reflection on working as a teacher for 5 years — issues and discussion</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<td>06/06/08</td>
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<td>Email</td>
<td>Email about family background and life history</td>
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<td>12.16</td>
<td>03/09/08</td>
<td>Records search</td>
<td>Data from files</td>
<td>Notes from school experiences</td>
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Appendix 2 - Ethics approval

Ethics approval was granted by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics committee on the 8th of December 2003.

The reference number of this approval is 6898.

The approval period was initially for five years subject to the annual monitoring returns, which were complied with. Subsequently this approval was extended for a further year to allow for completion of data gathering.

As the research was conducted in NSW government schools, approval for the research was also obtained from the then Department of Education and Training.

The approval number, or SERAP number, is 03.80.

This was extended to cover the period of data collection in schools to the 30th of June 2007.
Appendix 3 – Information sheets and participant permission forms

The information sheets sent to all participants and copies of the approved consent forms for participants are on the following pages.

1. The first document is the Information sheet which was sent to all schools and participants.

2. The second is a copy of a letter to principals which was sent to the Principal of all schools where potential participants were located.

3. The third is for the participants themselves. All consent forms have been received and held in a locked filing cabinet.

4. The fourth and final document is for the other teachers who were interviewed in each school. Principals who agreed to be interviewed also signed this consent form.
Research project - Bridging two worlds: From industry to school

This research project is designed to explore the attitudes and approaches to their practice of a number of teachers who have moved from an industry background into teaching in rural NSW schools, specifically to teach subjects in Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) and VET in Schools in their industry area. The participants, who volunteered to take part, are graduates of the Charles Sturt University (CSU) Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP) which was designed to offer a viable alternative second-career pathway into the teaching profession.

The debate on the purpose and values embedded in senior secondary schooling, and in particular the way education and training is offered in the 'post-compulsory' years, provides the setting for this study. Through an investigation of a group of beginning teachers who are both products of and potential contributors to this debate, the researcher has an opportunity to closely examine the shifts in the educational landscape in the increasing vocationalisation of senior schooling in order to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the effects of these policy changes enacted by new 'types' of teachers. The methodology selected encourages multiple views of VET in Schools from teacher perspectives to broaden the policy debates.

The central question is:

What are the effects of an industry background on the orientation of these teachers to their practice?

The research will be carried out through 4 phone interviews, emailed conversations and one school visit during 2003 – 2004. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcripts sent to each interviewee for checking and further commentary if desired.

The research is being undertaken to meet the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney.

All participants and schools involved in the research will have their confidentiality assured through the use of pseudonyms and generic rather than geographical descriptors of schools.

Anyone interested in the project is invited to contact the researcher, Annette Green at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.
Phone: 02 69332407    Fax: 02 69332888
E-mail: angreen@csu.edu.au

Post: School of Education, Charles Sturt University, PO Box 588, Wagga Wagga, NSW 2678

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager for Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 9351 4811.
Dear .........................

This letter seeks permission to visit your school to continue a research project involving the ATTP graduate who is a beginning teacher in your school. The topic of the research project is:

**Bridging two worlds: From industry to school**

**What's it about?**

This research project proposes to explore the attitudes and approaches to their practice of teachers who have moved from an industry background into teaching in rural NSW schools, specifically to teach subjects in Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) and VET in Schools in their industry area. The participants, who volunteered to take part, are graduates of the Charles Sturt University (CSU) Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP) which was designed to offer a viable alternative second-career pathway into the teaching profession. The debate on the purpose and values embedded in senior secondary schooling, and in particular the way education and training is offered in the 'post-compulsory' years, provides the setting for this study. Through an investigation of a group of beginning teachers who are both products of and potential contributors to this debate, the researcher has an opportunity to closely examine the shifts in the educational landscape in the increasing vocationalisation of senior schooling in order to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the effects of these policy changes enacted by new 'types' of teachers. The methodology selected encourages multiple views of VET in Schools from teacher perspectives to broaden the policy debates.
What would I like you to do?

I would like to your permission to visit your school in order to interview the ATTP graduate who is working in your school as well as to interview two of his/her colleagues. I have already interviewed the beginning teacher twice by telephone. The one visit to your school will allow a face to face interview with the participating teacher, plus, with their consent, I would like to interview some of their colleagues in TAS.

Setting your mind at rest

In case you have any concerns, I would like to assure you of the following:

- Any participant may withdraw from the research project at any stage.
- While information gained during the study may be published, participants will not be identified and personal results will remain confidential.

The University of Sydney Ethics Committee and the NSW Department of Education and Training have approved this research. If you have any specific concerns about ethical issues please contact the Chairperson of the University of Sydney Ethics in Human Research Committee whose address is on the attached information sheet with my contact details.

Thank you for considering this request.

Yours faithfully

Annette Green (Researcher)
The University of Sydney  
Faculty of Education  
Sydney NSW Australia 2006

Bridging two worlds: From industry to school

What's it about?

The attached information sheet gives an outline of the proposed research project which I am inviting you to take part in.

What would I like you to do?

I would like to invite you to take part in this project by permitting me to interview you by telephone about four times over the next eighteen months in order to discuss your perceptions, beliefs and experiences as a beginning teacher. Transcripts and notes of all interviews will be sent to you for comment, clarification and further discussion if you choose. During the project, one visit will be made to your school where we can have a face to face interview, plus, with their consent, I would like to interview some of your colleagues.

Setting your mind at rest

In case you have any concerns, I would like to assure you of the following:

- You may withdraw from the research project at any stage.
- While information gained during the study may be published, you will not be identified and your personal results will remain confidential. Your school will not be identified. Information from the study will be kept under lock and key at the School of Education offices at Charles Sturt University for seven years.
- The potential benefit to you in taking part in the project is that it provides an opportunity to reflect on your own development as a new teacher and encourage further evaluation and development in your own approaches and teaching philosophies.

The University of Sydney Ethics Committee and the NSW Department of Education and Training have approved this research. If you have any specific concerns about ethical issues please contact the Chair of the University of Sydney Ethics Committee.
Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager for Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 9351 4811.

If you are prepared to take part in the project, please sign the consent form below and fax a signed copy of this document to Annette Green on Fax 02 69332888

*Thank you for considering this request.*

I have read the information and agree to participate in the research project described above. I understand I may withdraw from the project at any stage.

Name .................................. Signature ................................ Date ....... ..
Bridging two worlds: From industry to school

What's it about?

The attached information sheet gives an outline of the proposed research project which I am inviting you to take part in.

What would I like you to do?

I would like to invite you to take part in this project by permitting me to interview you when I visit your school in the next eighteen months in order to discuss your perceptions, beliefs and experiences about a beginning teacher in your school. By the time the visit has been arranged, the new teacher would have already invited you to participate in this interview as part of my research. Transcripts and notes from your interview will be sent to you for comment, clarification and further discussion if you chose. During the project, one visit will be made to your school where I can have a face to face interview with this beginning teacher as well as with you and another colleague. The interview will take no more than half an hour.

Setting your mind at rest

In case you have any concerns, I would like to assure you of the following:

- You may withdraw from the research project at any stage.

- While information gained during the study may be published, you will not be identified and your personal comments will remain confidential. Your school will not be identified. Information from the study will be kept under lock and key at the School of Education offices at Charles Sturt University for seven years.
The University of Sydney Ethics Committee and the NSW Department of Education and Training have approved this research. If you have any specific concerns about ethical issues please contact the Chair of the University of Sydney Ethics Committee.

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager for Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 9351 4811.

If you are prepared to take part in the project, please sign the consent form below and fax a signed copy of this document to Annette Green on Fax 02 69332888

Thank you for considering this request.

I have read the information and agree to participate in the research project described above. I understand I may withdraw from the project at any stage.

Name .................................. Signature .............................. Date ...........
Appendix 4 - Data samples

This appendix includes samples from the data and transcribed interviews as listed below:

1. Emailed life history (Myron)
2. First interview with participant (Lauder)
3. Second interview with participant (Ralph)
4. Interview with ‘another teacher’ in a participant’s school (Mary a colleague of Martha’s at Southern High School)
5. Interview with a principal (Steve’s principal at Deans High School).

1. Life history document provided in an email by Myron:

Annette I am so sorry I forgot or I got so involved that I put it in the back of my mind and it took your email to jog me.

I left school in 1966 at the end of my intermediate certificate. My father had been killed, he was an electric train driver, and had to take a train which was on another platform and as the drivers and rail workers did he was crossing the line to get to his train and the noise of one train drowned the noise of another through train and unfortunately he was killed. Mum could not afford the school fees, the compensation barely paid off the house so I went out to work, as did Mum, who up until then had been a stay at home mother to the 5 Kids.

I always thought that I was doing reasonably well. I was a very poor writer. My school reports had me about the first 15 in most subjects with strength (near to the top) in Maths and English. I went to a catholic boys’ school and sometimes the psychology of that regime was to belittle you so you did not play up. They used corporal punishment frequently, like you stood around the room each morning and got a cut of the strap if you did not know an answer to the homework from the night
before. But all in all I learnt a lot and sometimes I think the regimentation at that schooling toughened me for life. I thought the lay teachers were sadistic and full of themselves and used their power to extremes. The brothers were tough but I think at heart they wanted us to have a good education and go onto make the school proud of your achievement outside the school. The day I told the principal I was leaving he stood me up against the wall and looked at me with threatening eyes and told me that I would end up a toilet-man if I left school now. He made me stand outside his office for two hours before he told me that his decision was that I could go.

I went straight to a trade. There was plenty of work around then, especially in the private sector, as a lot of young people went to the PMG (Telstra) or other government jobs so industry was scraping to get enough men to go into trades. I became a mechanic. I wanted to teach then but could not. However, I was promoted quickly and became a manager of a department in the motor trade just prior to my 20th birthday. I started coaching my people in job skills and task analysing things even then, I was always bent on customer satisfaction. Every opportunity to any course I jumped at I did courses in my own time at night and so on. I was fortunate that this enhanced my reputation and after some lucky career breaks I was approached to join [motor company] as a district manager, but got a couple of accelerated promotions to Zone manager. I started training dealers and their staff and was appointed to the advisory board of TAFE NSW to develop an Automotive Replacement Parts trade course. I taught at TAFE in [location] during the mid to late 1970’s. All of this assisted me to be appointed by [USA motor company] in Detroit to write and deliver the Australian version of a motor industry quality assurance package called SDS. I travelled all over Australia delivering this package and then onto Detroit to deliver it to the Yanks.

My motor career goal was to become a Motor Dealer, with my own dealership, so I went back into retail in [rural town] in pursuit of this. I got the opportunity to realise that goal by way of a 25% partnership with another well established dealer. Unfortunately, as I should have known, 25% partnerships do not work. I lost a fortune, both in monetary terms and stress terms. At the same time I had a medical misadventure when a simple procedure went wrong and the neck of my pancreas was injured. During the subsequent days I was transferred into the base hospital where
they told my wife to get the family and sent the priest in to give me the last rites. My poor eldest daughter was starting her HSC trials the same day. She went onto pass and completed her degree at [university name], and on her graduation day I expressed my dream of teaching. She encouraged me to enter a mature age course of action which saw me apply to the university for acceptance into a teaching degree. After some high jumps that I had to go through I was accepted and was merrily going about my three subject a semester doing a Bachelor of General Studies and Bachelor of Teaching with a major in information technology and minor in maths, until the ATTP came up, I applied and WOW they took me on. Now I am on the threshold of a new exciting reinvention of myself.

I have had a great year, very busy, teaching wood, plastics, metal, graphics and computers. I have two year 7 classes, one plastics and one metal, one year 8 class in graphics, two year nine classes - one in wood and one in metal, a year ten metal class and an IO class in metal. This term I did not get any computing classes. The school had a change of Principal but the new one is a very good person also. I just had my principal’s report completed on me and I am very happy with the things he has had to say about me. I am on the OH&S committee and I have been on a year 8 camp for a week, they asked me to form an INTERACT club starting in year 7 so they can carry it on. I have 28 students involved and they are coming up with some great projects like, donating toys to the local women’s refuge and starting a pancake breakfast once a week for students who do not get breakfast at home. I was lucky enough to get two Rotary clubs to donate $100.00 each to get the group started.

My first impressions are really very positive. I really enjoy the classes I have albeit some of the nines and 10s are challenging. I spend a huge amount of time preparing lessons and I believe it is paying off in the class as I have little classroom problems and the students seem to be reacting very well. I also perform formative assessment on my classes and have set up control sheets to do this for each segment of my teaching programme. I am thankful for the workload of the assessment and programming tasks last term as I have learnt so much about programming and can use the framework of the programmes.
I love the variation in career at this stage in my life and feel that I can contribute in a positive way. I am concerned about the manner of many of the teachers that I come into contact with, they seem very closed and in a way very negative and introverted which concerns me if that is what is being generated to children, who I believe need positive, happy, excited about life role models, but it is early days.

But for me, a bloke who had to leave school at 14 and 11 months because of financial restraints following the death of my father, who has tried throughout his life to learn and get ahead to be allowed the opportunity to be on this adventure through the six plus years I had been doing UNI and now to be involved in youth in such a positive way is great.

I hope this is what you need Annette. My alias could be Myron if you like.

2. First interview with Lauder

*Left school – Near end of year 12*

*Started teaching after ATTP at 43*

**AG** Ok, all I’m going to do with this .. um .. interview is just get some sort of background and I suggest a whole lot of topics *Lauder* but you can also suggest your own topics or change them or interpret them as you want .. so it’s more like a conversation than a true interview – OK?

**L** Yep.

**AG** Now first of all is there anything you can think of that was a really big issue or concern with you prior to and when you first began teaching?

**L** Um .. the biggest concern that I had was actually standing up in front of a group of students giving them a .. because in the past, coming from a background of industry, we were always working on a site so it was easy just to say “This is what we need to do guys – do it”, whereas now you’re standing in front of a classroom filled with students and I just felt – oooorrrh I don’t know, this is going to be a bit daunting ..

**AG** So that delivery aspect was . . .

**L** Yeah, the delivery because we were never ever used to it – now that was one of the biggest things that I had..... it was a fear factor (*laughing*)..
AG And how...how...how has that changed, if it has changed?
L Well it changed ...well where it changed, the thing was where we did those
design topics – design tech topics at Uni.....
AG Yes
L ... it might have been the last semester ...where we actually got in front of
everybody else and we were actually forced to do a presentation ...
AG When you did your design project – is that when you mean?
L Yes, yes...
AG Yeah, OK – way back then...
L So that was a big area because that meant that no longer could you dictate
what the work was going to be. You actually explained the work. So that was
a big thing. But how I got around it ... hmmm... I don’t know how I did that
... it was a big fear thing that I had built in mind that I didn’t know if I could
do that sort of thing ....
AG Perhaps just doing it...?
L Yeah, just doing it... umm .. I remember at that interview with .. um ..
[name] was there I think ... in Sydney. He said “Have you got any
questions?” and I said ..um “Standing up in front of people and explaining
what I want them to do – that was a fear factor”. He said “That’s fine, that’s
fine...”
AG Oh yeah, I think he’s right because if you haven’t got that fear you’re perhaps
a bit over confident in a way really...
L Hmm, I think so as well. Looking at it in hindsight .. yes .. it’s ... it’s a thing
everybody has to start with. Every new job you take on, there’s new aspects
that you have to overcome.
AG ..and you’d be what I’d call a quieter person - would that be fair comment
Lauder – in a way?
L Oh yeah, I’m quite reserved, quite shy normally.
AG Yeah, see ... you’re not a mouthy type to begin with.
L No.
AG But now days do you have any worries about that issue at all or ....?
L None at all ... (laughing)
AG It just comes naturally? ... *(laughing)*...Cause your boss was telling us you’re doing a few adult evening classes as well....

L Yep. Yeah no I um ...what I did was last year I did the Metal and Engineering and there was Year 11’s and year 12’s and we somehow had to fit in a few adults.

AG So this is your VET course?

L It’s the VET course, yep... and the few adults turned out to be 6 or 7 adults ... they dwindled away because of the fact that it was too hard to get to the school in school hours, and I looked at doing an ACE course, which I did, and that lasted one term, and people said – “That’s fine, we can handle these sort of hours”, so now I’m...

AG What hours were they though Lauder?

L Sorry?

AG What hours were you offering it?

L From 6.00 to 9.30.

AG So real evening, yeah.

L Hmm.... The evening one... and it sort of worked so we’ve gone with Design and Technology now in an adult course, and there was some people just wanted to do the metalwork, so we’ve made up a second group now on Metals and Engineering. And hoping for some of them....

AG So you have two classes a week?

L Two classes a week.

AG And are the school students in that as well or only adults.

L No, it’s just adults.

AG So no school students...

L No.

AG And are they doing any ... um like the same subject within the school as well? You know, are you teaching Design and Technology senior and Metals senior with the school timetable as well?

L Yeah.

AG So quite different classes.....

L Yeah *(laughing)* a bit different.

AG We might talk...
L A huge difference...

AG We might talk about this more when I'm up there.

AG OK, and I've just remembered, at the start of every interview – and I've forgotten this with you – I asked everyone the same thing... What year were you personally in when you left school?

L Um...

AG Did you finish Year 12 or...

L No, I didn't finish Year 12. I was going through with my HSC and I was snavelled by the railways to do a traineeship.

AG And that was during Year 11 or...

L During Year 12.

AG During Year 12.

L Right near the end of Year 12.

AG OK, and the other question, which a lot of people, actually ladies have refused to answer (laughing) ... but what age were you when you started teaching after the accelerated program – and you can refuse to answer if you want...

L My age....

AG Yeah.

L Well I'm 45 now so that's...what ... 43.

AG OK, I've only asked that because it is really interesting to see how long between school and school if you see what I mean.

L Hm.

AG OK, that was supposed to be at the start but I get things wrong in these. OK The next topic I want to talk to you about is teaching, planning and implementation issues – how do you go with planning?

L Not good.

AG (laughing) Tell us a few of your thoughts.

L Basically ... ummm.... for me the syllabus, when I came out to the school, was one thing... when I was ... like I was at [name of internship school] as you know – I did that 10 week program over there...

AG Yes.

L And they had a VU program in place.... So ....
AG That's where - vertical integration - where they go different years..

L Yeah, and the syllabus, which I was just getting used to then, was completely different from ... the way they operated within that syllabus was completely different from what they did at [name of another school].

AG OK - I remember some of this - yeah.

L And then ... they were saying at [name of another school] when I was there that some of the programs are going to be changed so while I was with a group of Industrial Arts teachers I said "Well what do we change?" and I got it in advance and we changed our programs to suit the syllabus.

AG This is the new current syllabuses?

L No, that was the old one.

AG Oh, OK.

L Which had only just been changed.... And now this year we are going through changing the syllabuses again, and I'm thinking 'this doesn't add up'.

AG So you think it's a bit too frequent?

L I think so because you don’t get a chance to .. um ... run with your syllabus, have a look at the mistakes you made, evaluate it - and what we're doing with kids, this is what they should be doing ... you know change the syllabus - you know, your program and then run with it, and then evaluate it again .. but in that second year - that’s it - you’re changing the syllabus again next time round ... and I’ve got all design and tech this year - uumm ... there’s no wood - wood tech. or there’s no metal tech - they’ve put it in as design and tech ...

AG ... under the new mandatory....

L Yeah ... see there used to be ...in industrial arts. You used to have food tech, the home science one, yeah ... the textiles one ....

AG You mean the way it's broken up as ...?

L Yeah, the way it's broken up and they’ve changed it which means that you come under different bodies, and in my group, which is wood and metal, they’ve come under what we call now design and tech, not technology mandatory, but design and tech and that means a complete change of the way you used to teach woodwork and metalwork...
AG So more around the design ... are you talking about the fact that it starts from design
L There's the design, the paperwork side of it, then the actual hands on side.
AG OK, and how are you coping with that change?
L Ah, at the moment it's week 5 and I'm still not on top of it yet.
AG OK - so you're working on that. What about your day to day planning?
L Oh - day to day lesson plans - I've got no problems whatsoever, 'cause the way I set mine up I've obviously hit the jackpot or suited me the best way right from the word go and my lesson plans are all done on a computer - so I do my lesson plans on the computer every day - so every day ... and it's done at the beginning of the week or whatever, and it just gets changed slightly where we mightn't be up to that point so I just go on the computer and say I didn't get to there so that just gets added into the next day and hopefully you can catch up on it, so ... yeah, the lesson plans and the way I do my lessons day to day, I don't have a problem. It's the actual 12 month plan that I have the hiccup.
AG The program. OK. And are you working with other people in your area or are you the only one?
L No, basically I'm the only one.
AG OK, that's interesting. I think I knew that. Now, the next topic we're going to talk about is classroom management, managing classrooms, and you can take that however you like - behaviour management or anything.
L Yep, yep. No - I set down ground rules, we all adhere by it. I don't have one thing for students, one thing for teachers. Everybody who walks in a woodworking room, a metal work room, a cooking room - they all come under that same, you know, ground rules - Don't have proper shoes on, don't come into the classroom - Don't have the right protective equipment, don't come into the classroom - and those boundaries don't get changed therefore I don't have management problems, because everybody gets there, everybody knows the rules, the rules are all written up on the board - like on the back, on these walls that I've got and they don't change, so they all know where they stand if I walk into the classroom. So you know, from that point of view I've made it fairly easy for myself as far as you can manage your work by just watching
and showing the students what they're doing right or wrong, and you don't
have to keep turning around to make sure people have got things like safety
glasses on. The signs are there, the way that we walked into the classroom are
there, everything's ... and nothing changes. Just because we are a student in
there or whether there's another teacher comes into the room, the rules are all
exactly the same.

AG Excellent, so that goes down well. Do you have any trouble with absenteeism
there at all – or not really?
L You mean within the school?
AG Yeah.
L Yeah.
AG And how do you cope with that?
L Well that's .... In the classroom that's really hard but the way I say it is that,
if you missed out on ... you know you weren't here at school this week, or
one day, tell your friends and get the information off them, or come and see
me and I'll give you a print out of what you were supposed to have learned
for that particular period. Most of those people don't bother, and at the end of
the year, they .... it shows up in their exams...
AG That's a shame isn't it...
L And hopefully I try and catch up ... you know .. before the end exam in Year
10 or Year 12 - I try and catch that up with them but sometimes it's a bit
hard.
AG Yeah. OK, the next topic is - by the way you can break in with your own
topics if you want to at any stage - the next topic's communicating and
working with students and staff, so you can look at two areas..
L Hmm n.
AG How do you get on with communicating with others in the school?
L Oh well, I try to get on with the students – I'll do the students first 'cause
that's a good one - I like to do duties so I can actually get out and talk to all
the students around the school...um...
AG You've got primary students too haven't you?
L Yeah – and that's a good thing as it ..... Even though they are separated in a
way we still have duties that a high school teacher might go in the primary
school and do a duty and, you know, and things like that... um, and they get to know you before they get to high school – the students at this school anyway, so they don’t come in to Year 7 and go ‘Oh no there’s another group of teachers’. They know most of the teachers. So from that point of view and the fact that I go out there and talk to them all day long ... you know I have half a lunch roster but I’m out there all lunch time. I just chat to them and find out what their problems are and things like that, take that on board and say OK when they come into my classrooms, that’s why they might be a bit ratty or that’s why you need to separate those, whoever it is ... um ... whereas...with the staff...well... that’s a different kettle of fish.

AG Is that a bit problematic? Is that because of your different background or ....
L Oh... well ... from my background ... the fact that um – you know – I’m up front ... um ... if I don’t like something, I’ll usually say it ... um...

AG Do you think you step on a few toes there Lauder?
L Ah yeah....

AG Is that what you’re suggesting?
L Well it’s testing times sometimes, because sometimes some of the people will just walk into you... into your classroom and want to take over, and you go ... “Hold on ... you’re coming into my arena, you ask me first. They’re the boundaries – you don’t just go and take over.” So I’ve trodden on people’s toes when I’ve sort of pulled them up and said “Excuse me, this is not your classroom.” (laughing)

AG Hmmmm, interesting. So you have a few more problems with communicating and working with staff perhaps than with students?
L Yeah – I think ... well – it’s political.

AG Can you explain what you mean by political? – this is very intriguing.
L Ah – being .. political being that there’s a hierarchy, there’s .... people ... people try to protect their jobs and if I wasn’t going to ...if there was no students at a school then I’ve obviously done the right thing or obviously done the wrong thing - either way ... whereas I don’t sort of say ‘well I’m sort of trying to climb the ladder to success and I’ll tread on everybody’s toes on the way ... you know? ... to get....’
AG So...so – are you suggesting that perhaps this school is the one where people are actually using it to make their mark – is that what you’re suggesting?
L Yeah .. yeah – guaranteed. Hm. It happens in industry too sometimes where..
AG Well I’ll be very alert to that when I come and visit you – I won’t say anything ... I’ll just be alert.
L Hm.
AG You never know what you’ll see. It’s harder to see things when you are a visitor though...
L Well that’s the thing, but see ... even in industry we... and you could do that in any area, you know Workcover does it ...when people come in to a school, that they .. they’re trying to ... dictate ... maybe not the right word.... It’s maybe too strong, but they’re trying to make their mark and they say ‘we did this... we did this’ and I say ‘stop saying ‘we’ and just do it and .. um go from there...
AG So you’re talking about sort of ‘big-noting’ or laying claims?
L Yeah... like, you know,... I think ...like I said, I’m not trying to climb a tree so ... on success ... I’m just enjoying the fact that I can teach kids but ... um .. from what I’ve found already in the short time I’ve been here is that if you can say you implemented a program then when you go to interview for ... um ... say a deputy’s job or whatever, um ... then that’s given you extra brownie points or something ... you know?
AG Oh, I’m very aware of what you’re talking about now.
L So, it’s that sort of thing, and if someone’s trying to climb that tree and they want the extra recognition or whatever, they’ll take things off you to do it. You might be doing a good program and then they’ll take over and say ‘well you’ve got your job to do – we’ll take this one on because you’ve got too much to do’ or something ... *(wry tone)* ... that sort of thing...
AG *(laughs)* Good point. Do you think ... um ... a lot of people during these interviews have talked about prejudice against them because of their .. or not prejudiced against them because of their different background ... have you struck any of that at all?
L Oh yeah – heaps.
AG Give us an example or tell us a story if you want ...
L  Oh I can tell you a couple of them – there’s a couple of good examples…coming from industry … ummm… one was that I’m, you know like .. it was at [name of another school].— I think I might have told you … but it was a fact that there was a teacher there who wanted to do .. go into the metalwork area …

AG  Yep

L  .. and basically …’What are you doing? You’re taking my area that I want to work in’ … you know … and gave me a hard time the whole time, you know … ‘You’re not doing this the way you should be doing it’ …

AG  I remember that …

L  … ‘You’re not doing this’… and I’m thinking “OK, I’ll take it all on board … I’m only here anyway as a part-timer basically … I’ll just take all what you’re saying on board” and at the end of it I said “Well, you know, I’m going to another school next year and .. um .. hopefully everything that you’ve said, that you’ll do” and they went ‘What?’ I said, “Well you told me to do this, this and this, and hopefully you’ll do that next year when I’m not here.”(Voice rising)

AG  (Laughing) …entertaining!

L  ..and went ‘What? Aren’t you staying?’ and I said “No, I’m not”. I said “You said this …you’ve got to do your workshop this way and I knew all the way along that I wasn’t going to be staying at this school, but you didn’t know that”…and they went ‘Oh sorry, we ’ .. you know, so things like that was an example of where – you know – you’re coming in from outside… industry.. that those sort of teachers who were trying to make their own little areas and were sort of a bit hesitant …um … so that was one big example there …

AG  Yep, good example.

L  ..and the other one is retraining … see if you come in from outside industry and they’re teachers within the school system and they’re teachers who want to be retrained and you come in and taken a position within that school then they look upon you as ‘why did you come here? – now I can’t get retrained.’

AG  Oh, OK. I haven’t struck that one before…

L  Yeah -it happened … not last year…that first year.

AG  Yeah, interesting…
‘You took my job. I can’t get retrained’ and I’m going “Huh?” you know ...like “What?”

AG You’re already in the system.

L You know, you’ve got your job to do... just do it..

AG Yeah ....

L You know ... I just shrug it off but...

AG Well I haven’t struck that one but we do strike quite often that you’re not retrainees and retrainees can be very much looked down on – people who change from one teaching area to another.

L Hmm (agreeing) and that’s the thing .. they just say ‘Oh well ... You’ve come in from outside industry. You don’t have any experience in the teaching industry. What are you doing here?’ ... and I go “well OK. We’ll just leave it at that for now and at the end of the day I’ll see.”

AG Good on you. Nice quiet approach.

L Yeah ... and it works here because if I wasn’t doing the right thing, as I said, I wouldn’t have people here coming in and saying can we do your courses or whatever.

AG Yeah, exactly. You vote with your feet.

L Yeah, so I just say, “Well, I’m enjoying what I’m doing. Get on with what you’re supposed to be doing.”

AG The boss was very good about you ... very nice about your achievements ... not that I was looking for it, but he was just sort of raving on about you. He seemed impressed. OK – next topic ... we’ve only got a few.. we’re half way though ... over half way – monitoring and assessing student learning. What’s your take on monitoring and assessing student learning?

L Ah well, I use my computer. All my assessment tasks are on there, and I treat every student equal. Um .. it doesn’t matter whether , you know, they’re German, Japanese, Australian, English – it doesn’t matter ... they’re all the same ... and I try and keep them all going in their individual paths so someone’s out in front then, as long as I keep pushing them. They’ll keep learning. As soon as they drop off, then I start jumping down their throat a bit but .. so I’m a bit of a .......

AG ... pushy?
L ... Gestapo type..

AG (Laughing)
L ... approach to that (laughs) ... but it's just that I've noticed when - even outside - like your swimming, your athletics, your soccer, that you've got to push everybody. I had to do the same thing myself. I've always got to push myself that bit further. Can I achieve the next thing? Can I achieve the next one? ... and just don't say 'well I've achieved that' then sit back. So... and that same assessment task I use through every day.

AG Excellent. I actually heard - at the last res school we had a different speaker and he was talking about creating a sense of urgency in the classroom - that's what he was talking about - push push push and I was very impressed by it .. and one of the students who's out on prac said that really worked for her - you know, getting that sense of, you know, let's go .. let's get into it urgently..

L Yeah...

AG .... rather than that sort of drifting that any teenager would jump at any time.

L Hmm .. yeah .. no, I just, as I said I just .. sometimes I say 'come on guys, let's get going' ... and they all just look at you... What are you doing? – No, not fast enough - let's move it.' Then sometimes I say 'well you've only got a couple of weeks left - let's go!' .. and knowing full well that that's the pressure that you're putting them under to actually start to excel a bit ...

AG Excellent. OK, now, what about reflecting on teaching? Do you do any reflection yourself about your ... you were talking about evaluating programs before ....?

L Yeah - all the time.

AG How do you ... what sort of techniques do you use to reflect?

L Umm - well first of all my comments, that I usually make to myself ..."I lost the class - usually a good one .. why?" .. so then it's the reason - why did I lose it? How can I make it better that I don't lose them? ..... ...What's more interesting or whatever? That's one way of reflecting I use. Another is the fact that I get results like .. um... week 6, say, we should be at that point - that's another way I sort of look at it and say 'oh well we're behind the 8 ball - let's move it' ... umm - sometimes I'll say we'll do a quick test with the
kids and – nobody understood anything I said – let’s go back to square on, re-evaluate … did I say that in English or did I say it in German?? (Laughing) Obviously I must have said it in the latter ‘cos nobody answered any of the questions right.

AG (Laughing) So, always monitoring that sort of understanding?

L Yep.... And the way I explain things.

AG OK, brilliant. Ah ... now .. what about your beliefs about teaching at this stage of your career.. and has it shifted or ...?

L Ah, no ... um, as I said, right from the word go the reason I went into teaching ‘cos I wanted to give something back that over the years I’ve been able to get ... so, the fact that I enjoy doing it, the fact that I can... I enjoy working with the kids to improve them ... umm .. that’s the only reason I am here for.

AG And it’s still satisfying to you?

L Oh yeah – extremely satisfying ... the fact that you can see results – and that’s basically what I’m doing it for.

AG Great. Ok, now what about your journey towards becoming a teacher – you’ve probably covered this a bit. Anything you’d like to tell me about that?

L Oh, only the fact that, you know, like the Industrial Arts area that I’m in ...um, the TAS area, now it’s called the TAS area ... is the fact that I can ... umm... do, or basically have the confidence to be able to teach because of the fact that I did it in industry for many years and being able to progress, whereas years ago there was no way I would have been teaching ... umm ... sport and rec, because as soon as I finished a course I didn’t want to do it. I wasn’t confident enough...

AG So you’re talking about the content and the skills knowledge?

L Yeah ... yeah – all that background knowledge that no educ ... you can, that you can only gain over years of experience, and not being afraid to approach it.

AG That’s a very interesting answer thanks Lauder ... and our last question, although you can talk about other things, is – what are some comments you would like to make about the teacher preparation you experienced, both at University and in those schools where you did prac during your course –
what were some of the good and bad features of that teacher preparation – did it get you ready?

L  Um .....well as I said, the big one at Uni was the fact that you stood up in front of – I don’t know how many we had in those groups – and actually did your presentation – that was a good one. Um, the downside to Uni is the technology side... ummm

AG  That you could have had more, are you saying?

L  Sorry?

AG  That you should have had more...?

L  Yeah, the way it was done maybe, I don’t know ... I think I told you when I was down there .... [lecturer’s name] and that – the fact that it was at Bathurst ... the fact that technology was taught ...

AG  Oh you're talking about IT....? Sorry...

L  Anyway .. yeah

AG  Oh sorry, yes, yes...yeah .... Can we talk about other things – it’s so embarrassing ... everyone’s brought that up – and that was appalling - I agree....

L  ... and the fact that there was no real ... see .. when we were at Wagga we always had a lecturer to say ‘listen here, what am I doing right or wrong? What can be different? What’ ... you know, all those that you can what, why, how – those sort of things.

AG  Yep.

L  When the course is in another campus and you never get to go there and you never see anybody ... and when you do it’s all done on distance ed, and there’s no correspondence, it makes it extremely hard.

AG  A very fair point Lauder, and I think we’ve all covered that. I hope we’ve improved that a little but not as much as I’d like.....

L  Hm.

AG  ...but I couldn’t agree more.

L  We did a bit when we were – and I think this was where [lecturer’s name] was trying to change it – we did a bit when that presentation ....

AG  Yep.
... where we actually did a power point presentation – those sorts of things...

But maybe, just maybe, a bit more can be covered at Uni in that sort of area.

AG Yes, OK – so more technology for the classroom, that sort of thing?

L Yeah, like using the equipment. Like we’re going into technology based areas, and, you know, you had all the equipment at Uni but how many of them used all of it? How many of them used only half of it? You know what I mean – there’s got to be a push that everybody uses at least 80% of the equipment that you’ve got there.

AG Yeah …. What about in schools during your course? I know you had a bit of a difficult internship? Was that a good preparation for teaching in some ways – those pracs?

L Yeah, it was … because it meant that I had to – like that one at [name of school] was an eye opener, but yeah, it just meant that, like I was getting over head projectors, I was getting digital projectors, I was using cameras and everywhere I went people went ‘What are you doing?’, and I went -‘well this is what you do, don’t you?’ And those were the sort of thing where I sort of … I don’t know…

AG So you’re saying they were well behind you in terms of technology in use?

L Yeah – they were way behind… and even now … um … like I don’t have a problem using the latest and greatest implements but … you know, the resources are… I don’t know

AG Not up to scratch…

L No...

AG Oh…not used?

L No – there’s people still too scared of them.

AG OK, all right, that’s the end of the official interview Lauder – any last comments?

L No. I’ve enjoyed my time at the schools.

AG Excellent.

L I’ve enjoyed what I’ve been doing and while it’s going the way it’s going, I’m happy. As I said, I’m not going to climb the ladder though… I don’t know if that’s one of the downsides though to the retraining programs at uni either…
AG What – that you’re not ambitious to be head teachers or ...

L Yeah, and I notice that a lot of them have said the same... from the people that I used to communicate with was – we don’t want to become head teachers...

AG I think there’s a mixture – I think some people do... a couple have gone for them already but they haven’t necessarily got them so ...there’d be a mixture – but I think a lot of teachers don’t want to be head teachers actually ...you know what I mean... I think there’s a very...disproportionate number that have got that ambitious ...

L Yes all right...

AG I don’t know if you agree but ...that’s what I’ve seen. I think the school you are in now would be unusual in that it’s a ‘fast tracking way’ but I think if you think about the other schools you have been in, there are a lot of people who don’t want to be in the head teacher game.... ?

L Hmmm

AG I’m stopping the interview now – thanks.

3. Second interview with Ralph

Annette  I had some -- sort of follow-up questions
Ralph  yep
Annette  -- and you can discuss any of these -- in any that you would prefer to answer why are quick e-mail back, let me know --
Ralph  yeah
Annette  but -- um -- thinking about your three years of teaching, Ralph -- can you tell me any stories of success -- where you really feel like -- gee, I'm glad I'm a teacher or -- that was -- I really got through that -- it can be quite small stories
Ralph  -- yeah -- um -- I've -- I would say my biggest success is -- um -- I've been able to -- basically communicate with the kids -- um -- get to them on their level
Annette  yep
Ralph: um -- I think I was telling you when you were up here, I have very little discipline problem in my room.

Annette: yeah -- I saw that.

Ralph: and -- ah --

Annette: in fact, I've been -- ah -- I've been quoting you with that little boy that kept -- sort of had the ADD problem and you kept just quietly having him standing there -- and then he'd get back into it -- and you just did it so many times -- and it was just so patient --

Ralph: yeah

Annette: -- and yet so effective -- I've been quoting him.

Ralph: (laughing) -- um -- yeah -- that sort of thing, I think -- it's -- probably my biggest success is getting through to the kids that -- um -- would normally not get anywhere -- you know -- fall through the gaps type of kids --

Annette: yep

Ralph: --um -- I've got -- well, I actually lost all those classes and not long after you've left -- of taken on year 12 engineering.

Annette: oh, great -- that'd be fun.

Ralph: yeah -- oh well, I'm trained for it.

Annette: hmm.

Ralph: -- but -- um --

Annette: no, but I mean -- more intellectually challenging?

Ralph: oh -- well -- yeah -- its -- um -- it's a -- a whole new experience, having sponges.

Annette: yeah.

Ralph: -- just want more and more information -- and trying to keep the information up to them -- and -- yeah -- you set them a task and they sit there for two hours quietly and do it.

Annette: oh, that's fabulous, isn't it?

Ralph: -- quite a new experience -- --

Annette: ha ha --

Ralph: um -- but -- that would be my main success I think.
Annette can you think of a particular kid --- you don't have to give their name -- where you saw our bit of our -- you know -- light on in the head, or changed pattern of behaviour, or -- --

Ralph basically -- in my first year, I had a year 10 YOTS kid, you know um -- youth off the street

Annette yeah

Ralph --um -- because we have Father what's his name's farm up here --

Annette yeah

Ralph -- and they come to our school -- or they used to --

Annette yeah -- I know the ones you mean -

Ralph um -- yeah -- I had this year 10 guy and he -- he stood toe to toe with me the first couple of lessons and -- ah -- I told him to sit down or I'd sit in on his arse -- and after that -- ah -- we got on like a house on fire, and he got through to School certificate -- um -- unfortunately, he blew it with a week to go -- he got suspended just before his exam --

Annette -- but he still had his taste of success -- that he probably hadn't had before

Ralph yeah -- yeah -- ah --

Annette it's true -- -- you don't have to have a good ending -- I know, someone has just e-mailed me one where they said -- everything is being set up this boy to be a mechanic -- at the last minute, he let them down -- but the fact that he'd got to that far --

Ralph yeah

Annette -- was also a success --

Ralph yep -- no -- this kid -- this kid was -- um -- completely off the rails -- he used to only turn up to metalwork -- um -- and I worked at him and worked at him and got through to him -- and eventually, like, for probably the better half of year 10 -- I had originally in year nine -- sofa that part of year 10, he was turning up for all lessons and -- --

Annette isn't that a wonderful result?

Ralph -- and then -- ah --

Annette -- you do feel really --

Ralph -- went off the rails just before the exams
Annette why do you think you got through to him? What do you think was
different about you, that perhaps -- --?

Ralph oh -- I think part of it is I've got my own kids -- I've got two teenage boys
-- but then, I get the girls in the class as well -- I actually get full
involvement in D&T and I -- this year -- this year's the first time we've
had year 10 girls take metalwork

Annette oh -- that's great

Ralph yeah -- I've got girls in right through and I am looking like, I'll get a VET
student next year

Annette excellent ---okay, what about -- um -- the other side -- the bad side --
a bad story where you just can't --

Ralph ah -- well the first -- -- ah --

Annette -- doesn't have to be about kids -- it can be about any part of your
teaching

Ralph -- yeah -- the bad story's been the solar car --

Annette yeah -- I thought of that immediately

Ralph that completely crashed

Annette that you put hours of effort in and basically --

Ralph I put in -- ah -- 18 months of probably -- minimum 10 hours a week for
18 months into that

Annette I was so excited when I got those early e-mails, so I was very
disappointed on your behalf

Ralph yeah -- yeah --

Annette -- and you think that mainly fell over simply because the kids just
weren't prepared to make their commitment? Is that fair?

Ralph -- yeah --well, it was sort of two things -- one was -- I'd started it with the
year 10 kids in the background, and they were doing research for it and
that sort of stuff -- and I was using it a lot for their literacy -- ah -- part of
it -- yeah -- doing reports and research and that on it --

Annette yeah

Ralph -- and -- unfortunately, it got so much publicity in the area that they all
got jobs -- they all got apprenticeships at the end of year 10 --

Annette yeah, I remember about some of those
Ralph -- so I had to get other kids -- and -- they were the wrong kids -- they were only on it because they wanted the two weeks travelling down to South Australia
Annette oh -- okay --
Ralph ah -- so after six weeks -- I couldn't even get a team name out them
Annette so -- yeah, I remember that -- and they wouldn't make the -- they wouldn't put in the effort --?
Ralph no, no, no -- and not one of those kids is still at school
Annette isn't that sad?
Ralph they've all left
Annette yeah -- so they weren't there for the long haul even if they did show some enthusiasm
Ralph oh -- no -- no -- no -- they were all -- they all got apprenticeships and left and -- ah -- the five kids that I've now got left for year 12 were the five that would have actually got into it and had a go
Annette -- oh
Ralph yeah -- that would be the biggest one -- um -- ah -- another bad story -- well -- I took on the role of -- which is linked to another one further down -- I took on the role of year coordinator and I won't do that again
Annette -- and why is that? -- is just too much? -- or --
Ralph -- um -- no, not compared with what I'm used to -- just -- no support -- no backup
Annette oh, okay -- this from management or whatever?
Ralph yeah
Annette -- or from the head t-- -- who is supposed to give you back up? Is it deputy -- principal -- bit of a mix?
Ralph oh well -- basically, the whole executive team should be there somewhere --
Annette -- and they don't?
Ralph -- but -- um -- we had -- um -- like it's very -- it's a rough school this one
Annette yeah
Ralph -- and - ah --
Annette -- how long did you do that Ralph?
Ralph: I'm doing it currently -- this year -- I'm about to finish it.

Annette: oh, okay -- and you're not going to take it on again -- or not in a hurry?

Ralph: yeah

Annette: who did you have? You had year nines?

Ralph: yeah

Annette: hmm

Ralph: -- which started out -- pretty wild-- we had -- ah -- you know, we've got that RISC recording system?

Annette: yep

Ralph: the -- um -- not for long enough --

Annette: yeah

Ralph: (inaudible -- I think he was referring to input into system) -- by teachers and that -- we had two and a half page printout is each week -- of bad reports -- and then now down to 5 reports per week.

Annette: isn't that good?

Ralph: yeah

Annette: so you've---

Ralph: we've got -- we've got them pretty lined up

Annette: -- you've taken it down by about 70 or 80% presumably?

Ralph: -- ah -- it would be more than that actually

Annette: more than that -- I'm just guessing -- I'm just trying to see these pages

Ralph: -- we get -- we get five reports -- five to six reports, but that might be one kid --

Annette: -- oh -- okay --

Ralph: -- and three reports on the one issue

Annette: and how do you think you have turned that around a bit?

Ralph: -- um -- talking to them in plain language -- I -- like, we go to these meetings, which is why I won't do in the year adviser again -- we go to these meetings -- ah -- and it's full of tree huggers and -- 'don't hurt the flies' type people -- we go through all -- the official process -- -- I line a kid up in the corridor and have a word to him and he doesn't do it again.

Annette: okay -- ha ha -- it's very interesting.
Ralph yeah -- I was told -- nothing -- nothing to do with me -- --
Annette no -- no -- I mean the way you deal -- the way you deal with problems
Ralph yeah --
Annette the way some people deal with problems and the way other people
deal with problems --
Ralph yeah
Annette -- I've seen a lot of that -- it's kind of just go and do it
Ralph yeah
Annette -- deal with it -- not -- not -- ah -- sit around and discuss it for hours
Ralph no -- no -- Jesus - just driving me mad -- that's the problem -- there's just
too many committees involved with -- ah -- welfare type stuff -- um -- no
one's taken on the role of discipline
Annette yeah
Ralph ah -- it's all welfare
Annette yeah
Ralph and -- um -- these kids have got no boundaries
Annette yeah
Ralph -- they just keep getting pushed -- you know -- ah well -- you know -- I
had one kid the other day who's knocked another kid over the head with a
steel bar in class -- um -- the whole thing took a fraction of a second but --
ah -- he went up and -- like, he got suspended -- he was back eight days
later -- for hitting a kid over the head with a steel bar-- and originally he
was supposed to have -- um -- you know, what do you call it -- aggression
training, counselling -- and all this sort of stuff -- and an OH&S report
done on him before he comes in -- because I'm also the OH&S chairman
-- and -- ah -- none of it happened -- they just signed him back in -- and
next thing you turned up in my classroom with no warning -- so --
Annette that's very annoying, isn't it?
Ralph oh -- terrible
Annette okay -- the next question's a massive one, but you can -- I just want
our very brief, like, response to this one. What do you think your main
role is as a teacher? What's your primary purpose in life, being a teacher?
Ralph: I would say, in the role I'm in, -- from year nine on, I'd say preparation for work --

Annette: yeah

Ralph: um -- my main role is to get them a work ethic and enough knowledge to be able to go and actually get into work -- get their -- the whole attitude changed -- um -- I find that the kids I've had up to now -- as they're coming through -- have no concept of what work is -- um -- so I get them so that, like, they're not allowed to sit down in the classroom -- ah -- they've got to continuously work -- and I don't have any problems with them -- they work flat out all through the classes -- -- they do now -- they didn't when I got them

Annette: yeah

Ralph: um -- so that I try to get into their head -- um -- at work, you've got to do 100% all day

Annette: yeah

Ralph: -- and that's a foreign concept to them

Annette: yeah -- that's interesting --

Ralph: hmm

Annette: it's one of the things I noticed almost every visit

Ralph: yeah

Annette: I'm calling it -- I don't know how to write about it to tell the truth, but I'm calling it making of the classroom into a workplace -- because that's almost what it is --

Ralph: yeah

Annette: -- it's kind of -- it's about expectations and --

Ralph: -- yeah -- well, that's what I've done with year 11 and 12's -- ah -- I worked -- I run it as a workshop, not a school room -- um --

Annette: yeah

Ralph: we actually produce a vandal proof garbage bin holders for the school

Annette: yeah

Ralph: -- and -- each person gets their job and they have to work flat out and if it's stinking hot and they're sweating like a pig, basically -- the last bit's the real world --
Annette  hmm mm
Ralph  -- you've got to keep going -- I give them a five-minute break after two
hours -- because we do three-hour lessons -- I give them a five-minute
break after two hours -- the same as you would get at work -- and then,
back into it --
Annette  hmm
Ralph  -- and if they don't work flat out in that last hour -- the next week, they
don't get their break
Annette  yeah  (I'm speaking very quietly -- sounds harsh)
Ralph  they do their three hours without a break
Annette  okay -- very good -- okay -- we talked a little bit about responsibility -
- um -- for any professional learning, or improving your practice -- um --
what have you -- what highlights -- you haven't mentioned before, that
you have done -- in terms of any professional development -- or --
learning
Ralph  um -
Annette  you don't have to done lots --
Ralph  I think we've covered most of that
Annette  yeah, I think we have too --
Ralph  -- yeah -- about the only thing I've still got going is this -- um -- I've
already -- through RPL -- I've qualified for a diploma in mechanical
engineering
Annette  oh, excellent -- I don't think you told me that
Ralph  -- and am going to use that to upgrade my -- to revalidate my -- um -- VET
qualifications --
Annette  -- VET metals?
Ralph  it's a five-years thing
Annette  oh, excellent -- that's really good
Ralph  so -- I get that -- and just pay the fee and get enrolled and get my
certificate and --
Annette  oh, good -- that's excellent -- can you do that in the local TAFE?
Ralph  yeah
Annette  oh, great -- okay -- um -- we talked about positions of responsibility --
the year coordinator -- but, you didn't tell me, I don't think, that you were
the OH&S committee -- um -- chair --
Ralph  yeah --
Annette  -- and you're not the only one -- there's more of them out there --
Ralph  I've done that for about 18 months now
Annette  and, have you got any other positions of responsibility -- or -- areas
that you look after in the school?
Ralph  um -- no -- well -- I was going to be head teacher -- because our head
teacher's left --
Annette  oh, has he?
Ralph  yeah -- he's gone off -- his wife got a job down the coast -- so -- yeah --
his -- um -- done -- ah -- long service leave this term -- and then -- um --
Annette  so, who's been acting in the role?
Ralph  -- well -- it was going to be me -- and I knocked it back -- um -- because
we have a combined TAS Department here --
Annette  yeah
Ralph  -- and -- it's a war zone down the middle --
Annette  yeah -- I could see that
Ralph  -- between industrial arts and home ec --
Annette  yep
Ralph  -- and -- um -- the computers -- the computer teacher put her hand up
instead and -- she basically goes home in tears many nights a week
Annette  oh dear -- and what's happening next year?
Ralph  well -- um -- originally -- I've had -- like, my father died this year -- in the
last couple of months -- so --
Annette  -- oh -- I'm very sorry to hear that, Ralph
Ralph  yeah -- well, that's one of the reasons I didn't take it because I'm also
doing all these executors and Wills and all that sort of stuff
Ralph  -- I've got to be very careful with what we do -- so I'm concentrating on
that at the moment so -- I didn't take the head teacher's job on and it's --
ah -- supposed to be readvertised again at the end of this year -- just
internally -- but it doesn't look like it's going to be
Annette so you think the other person -- the computer person -- will keep on going?
Ralph yeah
Annette -- and you look like you missed out on a bit of angst? But you think you'll be at [name of town] -- --?
Ralph no -- like I say -- I don't think I want to do it in this school
Annette no -- I think it-- I think -- I could see that just visiting
Ralph I think I would go -- quite happily go into a fresh school -- or go into a school fresh -- where no one knows -- ah -- backgrounds, or anything like that -- and just go in as fresh -- because I -- with my age, they don't need to know my background
Annette no -- that's true
Ralph they know I've been here three years, and all that sort of stuff
Annette yeah
Ralph --um -- I would have had trouble here with some of the home ec teachers, who are of the thing that -- I haven't done the dues yet -- and -- ah --
Annette they're the hardest, aren't they --? (Laughing)
Ralph yeah (laughs)
Annette -- I don't know -- they're -- right across the board
Ralph that's -- that's the only department that I have a problem with too-- just from my experience -- I haven't got a -- an ATTP food person here -- but -- um -- we've had them coming through as prac students -- and I think there's a fair bit of jealousy there
Annette that's what I'm talking about -- I'm talking about -- the problems are from the other side -- not from the student's side, necessarily
Ralph -- and they're -- ah -- we had one guy that had run his own restaurant -- was quite wealthy and was doing teaching because -- like -- he was going to semi-retire -- ah -- that's how he was looking at it -- and -- that really ruffled some feathers
Annette I can imagine (laughs) I can imagine -- okay -- the next question you've sort of covered quite a lot -- the one about general comments -- and I've got a good picture of that but -- ah -- I want you to sort of put on your imaginative hat now -- do you think, now looking at this three years,
that teaching is very much what you imagined, or quite different -- or --
would you like to make a comment on that one?

Ralph  the actual teaching part is about what I expected --
Annette  yep
Ralph  um -- there's more politics involved than I thought
Annette  yep
Ralph  -- um -- the teaching cohort isn't what I thought it would be
Annette  -- and -- would you like to elaborate a little bit? Is that because people
aren't putting the effort in that you think they should? -- or -- ?
Ralph  oh -- yeah -- very --
Annette  -- or cynicism --? -- or a mixture?
Ralph  um -- my cousin, who was a teacher, all his life, used to say -- there's
three types of people -- men, women, and teachers
Annette  (laughing)
Ralph  I tend to agree with him
Annette  (still laughing) -- I'm not going to make any comment at all at this
stage
Ralph  (also laughing)
Annette  um -- finally -- well this fits in really nicely -- and I didn't even intend
it like that -- do you think you're very different from other teachers that
are at your career level -- or when you began -- and -- what are some of
your thoughts and experiences about that difference?

Ralph  yeah -- it's -- um -- I think it's more our perspective on -- ah -- life, I think
-- -- what happens outside school
Annette  yeah -- I had a principal tell me exactly that -- in very positive terms t
- and I -- um --
Ralph  -- because we've got -- um -- there's now two of us here -- ah -- one from
[university name]
Annette  yep
Ralph  -- which I think was -- ah -- still prac teaching when you were here
Annette  yeah -- I met him -- he was a lovely fellow
Ralph  yeah -- um -- well he's --
Annette  he was sitting in the desk just as you go in the door?
Ralph: Yeah -- yeah -- well, he's just been made a permanent woodwork teacher.
Annette: Oh, excellent -- he was hoping for that, because -- he had a chat to me in the break at some stage.
Ralph: Yep -- and we've got another one -- um -- who came out of uni halfway through the year -- another 'AT' -- ah -- he's an ex-plumber that's -- um -
Annette: He's not one of ours though, is he? Or is he? Ralph: No -- he's another from [University name].
Annette: Oh, okay.
Ralph: Um -- and that they're trying to get him on to permanent, but -- ah -- but I don't know how it will go -- but I put it in -- I -- I look like I may have a transfer to [Town name].
Annette: Oh -- okay -- I was -- that's my next step -- is -- you don't know what you're doing next year yet?
Ralph: Um -- I've moved my daughter from one school into the local grammar school -- she's hated the three years we've been here -- and she's just fallen in with a group of kids that -- um -- are her people and my son has also done the same thing -- he's met kids that are his people as well.
Annette: Oh-- that's excellent, isn't it?
Ralph: Yes, so it's the first time they've been happy in the three years we've been here -- so -- I'm not going to move them now -- so I withdrew from that.
Annette: Yeah -- oh well that's all -- keep me posted -- you have to send an email when you know what you're doing because I might --
Ralph: Yeah.
Annette: This is virtually the end -- but at the end -- where I've done a lot of writing up --
Ralph: Yep.
Annette: -- I'm thinking I might ring around again -- not really to data gather, but to get your opinion on some of the points I am making.
Ralph: Yeah -- yeah --
Annette: -- and you can do is tell me if I'm barking up the wrong tree for you -- because that's really important.
Ralph: Yeah -- given half a chance -- I'll be out of this school -- I think I'll stay in teaching.
Annette yeah -- well I think you've got an incredible amount to offer -- if I can offer that opinion

Ralph what's that -- sorry?

Annette I said, I think you've got an incredible amount to offer -- if I can offer that opinion

Ralph thank you

Annette ah -- well that's what I saw

Ralph the thing is that -- um -- I'm feeling like I'm handcuffed in this job

Annette yeah -- while I think once you get a place where you can sort of strike out on your own, you'll be a lot happier

Ralph yeah -- I have got a fair bit of autonomy in this place but -- at the same time -- no support when you do want to do something

Annette yeah -- I think that's very disappointing

Ralph -- and I've (inaudible -- some ideas presumably -- I think it sounds like 'engineering') -- and it's just been nuh -- nuh -- nuh -- the kids are screaming out for it, you know -- I can't get any more qualified for it and -- and -- ah -- I've got the place -- I've got the area to do it and everything -- they just won't let me do it

Annette yeah -- so disappointing

Ralph I don't know why

Annette okay -- that's been fantastic -- so we're finished now -- I can turn this off now.

4. Interview with Mary, another food technology teacher at Martha's school

AG Really what I am doing is just getting some general comments from you on how Martha's adapting to teaching in this particular school so just any comments you want to make at all ... positive, negative, whatever -- whatever strikes you about Martha... whether she is different or similar to you and other teachers -- or what she brings to it, so I suggest about 7 or 8 topics but you can suggest some topics too if you want ...so the first one is your
perceptions of how Martha's coped particularly when she began here when she was closer to a beginning teacher through to now so...

M Well she had her first 12 months somewhere else...

AG Yes, so it's a bit different ....

M It was quite good in that she, I think, learnt some of those mistakes that you make in the first year....

AG Yes, she said that ...

M ...and the first attempt and then you come to another school- fresh start, fresh head, fresh options...umm ... She's got a lot of personal characteristics which make her a very good person to work around teenagers and I think that's by far her biggest asset

AG She's very calm, isn't she?

M ... and she's not 'confrontationalist' ..... 

AG I noticed that really strongly.

M ...umm..... and that gets through to a lot of those rough nuts – particularly boys. She has a very good working relationship with the boys that we get in our subjects and so that part of it is really good.

AG She's made nothing of that herself but I observed it very strongly right through that double lesson.

M Yes...ummm... Perhaps the girls not quite so much....

AG Why do you think that is?

M No...that's .... I don't know. She did certainly have a lot of trouble with senior textiles / senior Communities last year and .. and one of the reasons I took them over was it wasn't working.....ummm...

AG Do you think that was – was that a girl's dominated class or...

M Oh, it was only a female class and it just didn't work quite as well ...ummm ... I think a lot of girls are very genuine and serious and conscientious, and Martha comes across as being a bit flippant, casual and she doesn't – and I think I've only got one criticism and that is that she doesn't have that umm...ability to work the top kids well – now that goes right into her senior classes. Her theory isn't strong ...um.. and I personally believe it goes right right back in that I don't think her English.... and I would go so much as the fact that she hasn't done years 11 and 12 where the emphasis is very strongly
on the written language where you have to actually write a lot of essays and do a lot of long response tasks.

Yeah... and I ... I would hate her to pigeon hole herself for that but certainly at the moment, I mean she might have to take a senior class through and I'm very sceptical - like I really don’t think she’s got the language skills and the back up of having had that seniors ... and I think there's a hole right back not just.....um ... you know I don’t think teacher training would have patched up that hole.

AG It’s interesting and these are very interesting comments as it is something I am finding that they are far more interested at the kids at the lower end and rather reluctant, as you say, to take on that sort of highly academic...side...

M You know if they’ve all come ... if they haven’t done that senior part ... then they don’t really have a concept of what it’s about and .um .. like she took on the CAFs group last year ....

AG What’s the CAFs group?

M Community and Family Studies...

AG Oh yeah...um ... sorry – she told me about that.....

M umm ... and she took them on last year and just didn’t understand the depth that is required in the senior course ... probably took it more like you would treat a junior year...

AG Mmmm...

M ....so she just didn’t have any concepts about where to go with it and the kids fed into that – they’re very smart kids – they’re perceptive.... and they became very .. in some ways aggressive ... ummm ... in that in some ways they felt that she was lacking and they didn’t ... you know they were on the attack.

AG Yeah...

M So consequently we said to her, look, we really think you need you need to have another 12 months doing that course so that now that you’ve sort of got some content we need to develop ... umm ... you know, how you’d go about it and what you do because you have to be active and you have to do the higher order thinking with senior classes and I don’t think she’s got those on board. I think she’s fine at the junior classes where it’s OK guys – here’s
something I want you to do and you know, it’s straight fact or I’m giving you information whereas in the senior classes with the higher order of learning that’s necessary....

AG ... evaluating and analysing and that sort of thing...?

M Exactly – she hasn’t got that on board yet.

AG Do you think that’s partly also because it’s not her subject area or do you think she’d be like that in Food technology as well?

M I think it would be in all subjects.

AG Yes, OK - I thought that was what you were saying – I was just checking that.

M Um....It goes with Hospitality as well which is her subject...umm ... and having spoken with some of the kids, the kids will readily say – ‘oh she’s great with the prac but she’s not real good with the theory’.

AG OK....umm... They’re very perceptive comments, very helpful. Thanks Mary. Our next topic is planning and implementing teaching and learning.

AG I notice your head teacher is extremely efficient so that would sort of set the tone I’m imagining......

M Yeah.... And ... um....

AG I’m not saying you’re not ... I’m just ....

M No...Because I am .... I mean I am...

AG ... cause I’ve had dealings with [head teacher] .... And I’m sure you are.....

M Yeah, and I’m like that too and I think that’s probably helped a little in that she’s sort of been able to come across and say Mary what have you got on ... and I’ll just grab – I’ve got folders on every topic and so she’ll come and just peruse mine – anything she likes she’ll take and I’m... and that to me is good in that she’s quite happy to ask ....

AG Well it seems like a very supportive little unit you’ve got here. It makes it extremely interesting for me because many of the teachers – I’m looking
mainly at rural schools – so many of them are very isolated so it’s very nice to see one who’s in a more supportive environment than some of the others

M Well I just figure over time that Martha will get her skills up ... I’m very concerned – I think she’s got to be lead into it gradually and this is what we’re trying to do with her is not to push her through too quickly and like next year there’s a possibility she might have to take 2 year 12 classes ... well I’m not sure that she’s ready for that...

AG That would be a huge struggle if she does...?

M Yeah, whereas you know she’s got all the skills – she’s very good on the junior years and as far as teaching and learning, I mean the first thing is to engage the students and she does that – she does it in a ‘non-confrontatious’ way and the kids are on board with her ...

AG ...and that’s great. OK, our next topic is managing classrooms – discipline – that sort of thing..

M Very good. Very good. She is ... ummm ... she gets kids on side a lot of the times and then when push comes to shove she’ll say right .. and she’ll move them on. She works very well with some of the more difficult kids.

AG I noticed she was ... um ... ignoring a bit of silly behaviour which actually died down. She wasn’t actually really ignoring it - she was sort of letting it go and then focusing on the task which I thought was rather nice actually as the kids just kind of snapped right out of it and nothing was said... it was almost like she hadn’t seen it but I think she had because she kept moving ...

M ... and I think probably what she does do is work with those kids so that the better kids can sometimes not get ... you know you’re so concentrating on the poorer kids that you don’t develop those top kids as well as she could ... ummm .. you know that’s something that she’ll have to get on board too... and make sure she stretches them ...

AG ... hmm ...

M ...yeah ...and often with a top group like that all it takes is a ‘cheers - that was another great lesson girls’ and it can be said at that because they have intrinsic self satisfaction and for her just to recognise them is often sufficient for them to just keep on task.
AG OK. The next one's an interesting one because I saw an interesting example of this when she went and got that camera from IT... Communicating and working with students and staff, particularly staff because we've talked about students a little.

M Oh - great - yeah she's got into the staff very comfortably. She'll go up to any staff member and ... yeah ... she does the right thing by people and she's easy going so accommodating that part of her personality.

AG She was joking around that the IT people were going to growl at her so she said I'm here for my growling before... she sort of ...prevented it before it happened in a really nice way and he just laughed ...

M ..yes.......

AG ..he just laughed - he was probably ready to get cranky but he couldn't because she disarmed him..

M Yeah... hmm .. and she does that ... she does that very well. I mean there is confrontation that does exist but I think that's.....

AG ...it wouldn't be normal if there wasn't...

M ....ummm....but I don't think that's her behaviour that's causing that but it is causing a slight irritation at times.

AG But that's not in our staffroom ... or in the staffroom here ... ?

M Yeah...yes .. there is a problem there but....

AG Might be a personality clash or something...?

M Yeah, but to sort it out - somebody has to ... well to sort it out somebody has to accept that she has a problem and that's not happening ..... that's not happening...I mean, with Martha ... I was.....at one stage I was reading her reports cause [head teacher] wasn't here and I was doing her reports and I turned around to her and she said – what do you think? – and I said they're disgusting – and we both laughed. Then I said, right, let's start and so you know – I could say that to her. She knew, you know, that we had a long way to go and we sat there and we worked through them and she was really good ... she said ... oh look I ......I..

AG .... Was that because she didn't know how to do them? ....

M ...yeah...yeah, she didn't .. and [head teacher] probably didn't have the time to do them so we sat there and ... and did some together and I think that
helped – it’s still a weakness…. cause…..and that’s once again going back to that basic literacy which I don’t think she’s got on board.

AG What about ..um…communicating with students? You mentioned she gets on well with them...

M Yes ..yeah…no problems ..um.. and she doesn’t rub them up the wrong way and ..yeah…so they come on side pretty well ..

AG That’s good...

M That’s …yeah… definitely one of her strengths

AG Oh great. Yeah, OK – ahh ….it was almost, when I was watching her, like she was the supervisor in a workshop I felt, you know the way she was running it.

M Yeah (quick and strong agreement) yeah

AG ..which was quite nice …because it was an expectation … I think it was an expectation the kids would just do the right thing and I think she was just sort of running round and they were ..

M …yeah..and I think if you treat children that way then most times they will come to the party and will do it, and I think that shows.

AG ….and I think she notes very well the ones that don’t – she pointed out a boy in assembly for example, a little Year 7 boy who she said .. I think she said little bit of a pain…

M Look there are a few of them in that year 7 group that are certainly going to cause us a lot of trouble ..

AG Yeah.. she’d already spotted this one – you could almost tell by the way he was sitting on the chair really.

M Yeah .. you sure can.

AG Ok, we talked a little bit about reporting but my next topic is monitoring and assessing student learning and that’s just a very generic, wide…however you would like to interpret it …how does Martha go at keeping on track with monitoring and assessing..

M ummm.. I think she’s pretty good. She marks efficiently .. perhaps again what she needs to do is mark more thoroughly with more comments – she marks quickly and umm as the students get older, they need more feedback ..

AG …so once again it might be back to that whole literacy …
M (whispering) yes..I think so...
AG ...slash expectations at senior levels issue..
M Yeah...and it's fine in junior years, you know, they can get by with just little bits of feedback and probably more verbal feedback but as they get on you really do need to start giving them more written feedback so that they understand more thoroughly ...
AG ... and monitoring? She keeps good records and that sort of stuff?
M Yeah, yeah - she seems .. she's on the computer and she does all her mark / her work straight to the computer so yes, that part of it's...she gets on there and does that fairly well and yeah she's pretty good about putting stuff in the mark book ..
AG Excellent. OK. Now the next one's kind of a tough one. It's a real personal opinion one. Martha's approach to and beliefs about the profession or about becoming a teacher - how do see that in terms of perhaps other teachers you've worked with or in her own terms or comparing with you or whatever?
M Ummm...I think basically...ummm...yeah.. yeah ..she's ...I know she's got confidence in herself and ...ummm... what she does, particularly with food tech - in that area .. She's probably a little bit over-confident in textiles and doesn't understand the full gamut of that -- umm -- and she tends to put that a bit too simplistically which --- um --- needs to be worked through so—her own - umm - I think --- sometimes... I don’t know, I've got to be careful because she is ... I see her as my friend as well but you know... Yeah... I think she's got to ... umm... I think she thinks her background's better than it is and it ----it ---- to me, there are lots of areas that .. that are lacking and she tends to brush over some of them and I think it's those deeper ones that she will have trouble with --- I means she recognises that she can't do reports properly and that, you know, she's tizzy and stuff like that and.. um --- I don’t think she recognises that she doesn't have a background. She sees that, you know, working and making clothes is a good background in textiles. Oh my word. There's.... I mean, that's only a small fraction of what textiles encompasses, so I feel as if she has .. she doesn't understand the gamut of the subject.
AG Do you think her approach is very different to other teachers you’ve seen starting or quite similar or ---?

M Ahhh---

AG ---or what are some of the points that ---

M Yeah, well probably what I see her as being a lot --- almost over confident --- um—and I won’t stop that because I think teaching -- kids will pull you down faster than anything so if you start over confident at least you’ll come back to being confident whereas if you start on a lower level then the kids will drag you down --- *(laughing)*

AG ---better than the ‘sobbers’ --- *(laughing)*

M ---so -- and I’m hoping that gradually I can show her what’s required in more depth without breaking the spirit that she’s got cause I think she’s got a very fine character that will make for an excellent teacher but she’s ----I think she’s got a long way to go but I --- and I don’t think she realises how far she’s got to go.

AG OK – umm – the very last question --

M But hang on -

AG Oh sorry!

M -- she is only 2 years out ---

AG Oh, I know this ---

M So ---- you know ---- I think being an older person the kids kind of – um – oh well you’ve been around a fair bit so therefore ---- and I think that helps them enormously ---

AG OK, the last question, --- that you can talk about anything after this if you want to, -- is the teacher preparation and background that the participant brings to the school --- you’ve talked about that a little – I don’t know if you know much about her course or whatever or her background – but you ---I think you made a very perceptive comment about the dressmaking or the textiles side of it in that I think Martha has done a lot of different things whereas typically our graduates have gone a long way in one profession so they tend to be a bit narrower and perhaps a bit deeper --

M Mmm –

AG -- whereas I think Martha’s --- how do you see that?
M Yeah – very superficial in a large area which is fine in junior areas – that’s why she’s effective in the junior course and why she’s great – she’s got a bit of computer skills which is great for what she’s doing now with Year 7 technology. She’s got a little bit of sewing which is great for what she’s doing with year 9 – umm --- her food area’s stronger because I think the hospitality – but the written part’s not there yet – um --- so I think she’s sort of a jack of all trades but hasn’t mastered any of them. I think because then you’ve got time to develop them and this is why I don’t – really I hope she doesn’t have to go into too many senior classes – if she can work on one area at a time. I mean ideally, for her to take just hospitality through because it’s her strength to take just that through for next year would be great because that way, you know, she can develop the depth that’s necessary and then perhaps another year take on the CAFS group and take them through and develop – – I mean we don’t all of a sudden just magically get it --- um, you know, CAFS is the new course and it took me a couple of years to get but I mean it was a basic old course – um – and for her to turn around and understand all those concepts --- whew – it’s impossible, you know –

AG Any other comments you would like to make? – about Martha – or in general?

M Well I think a lot of it – the fact that she’s succeeding is a credit more to her personality than anything else I think –

AG --- and her very positive sort of approach ...?

M yeah, yeah --- yes – and she’s very easy to get along with which I think helps in a small staff like .... yeah – I think she’s settled in really well.

AG Thank you for the interview.

5. **Interview with Steve’s principal**

Annette Here we go now. I'm speaking to the Principal of [name of school]

Annette What sort of advantages and disadvantages do you see with this pathway into teaching?
firstly I would say that when you go off to uni everybody forgets your UAI and when you leave Uni everyone forgets what uni you went to -- -- --

-- that's a good point --

once somebody starts on day one and they walk into a classroom and they start to build that reputation -- that aura and -- not only do they build that reputation and define themselves in terms of their personality and persona etc -- that information goes home so -- --

yes
goes home to the dinner table you know and um sometimes young teachers don't understand that the so once that is happening then -- then -- your eyes light up and you think heavens above, I’ve got a good one here but regardless of how good they are there is still that there is still that aspect that you have to shape them and that and you have to deal with certain aspects of how they work and you know I look at some of the teachers that I’ve got and um look at one of ... I’ve got someone who worked in the army and the air force training apprentices and they bring that military background and that does not always translate well into a school --

I think ....

well you know -- and I’ve been around for long enough -- so what I am saying is that it is not rocket science but you know that it is true -- there must be that kind of relationship. But to come back to the ATTP TAS students -- -- if I can talk about the two that I’ve had, one hospitality, and one IT. The thing that I was so pleased with -- and it was quite obvious is that they bought an industry credibility to the classroom --

yes

and whether they knew it or not the kids knew it and -- and -- and my other cook who came from an industry and educational background -- they bring to the place our
credibility, and when we look at who is the most popular teacher in year 12 – the favourite teacher is from these people.

Annette

interesting -- interestingly some principals resent that -- I've had a principal who had an interview with me who deeply resented that -- -- he said -- he's got two in his school -- he said food and primary industries is going over the top -- they had to have more classes and he did not see this as an asset -- because it had skewed his enrolment lines --

Annette

-- well no, I think it's because he thinks the guy -- umm -- while one of them in particular -- is pulling a bit of aswifty and has got the kids there through ---- I don't know -- he's got suspicions about it.

Principal

well empire building -- between -- --

Annette

yes, exactly I think you have hit the nail on the head

Principal

on the other side, and this is at its most simplistic, they do bring that wonderful industry culture but will they struggle because they haven't thought about school culture -- -- there is no doubt in my mind that those young ones who come in to our schools that -- -- at 22 and sometimes younger -- -- and start learning from the base up -- they develop some important skills as well --

Annette

yes

Principal

-- and often those skills are the skills of delivering education in bulk

Annette

yes

Principal

-- you know like -- when a chef pulls out his knife and says "do you want to see my 12 inch dick?" Because a dick is one of the best brands of steel in a knife -- that's the sort of joke you would accept in a kitchen you know, and in the marketplace, and it is not the worst thing in the world but sometimes there is a risk factor with that and that is what the young teachers -- that start early is they learn the risk factors of schools -- --
schools are very intimate places -- especially in the classroom
so if you have got 30 people around you and you are teaching
them -- and when I say intimate -- I mean intimate across-the-
board -- -- emotionally intimate -- -- physically intimate -- --
you know -- you're sharing a small space -- and in terms of
people's feelings and how they feel that day -- you know --
they become part of the class dynamic

-- and all of course - talking of adolescents -- that's all-
heightened --

-- that's all heightened -- and how would you be in school
today that was half Lebanese and half is Australian

absolutely -- not my students -- I'm very concerned watching
this horrible story unfold (referring to clash between Lebanese
and Australians in Cronulla)

I don't think people realise how serious it is

oh it's incredibly serious -- incredibly -- because loads of my
students are in those schools

Yeah -- yeah -- and you know I think two or three weeks of
what we are seeing it would take 20 or 30 years to remove

-- sad isn't it? So it is not -- I think the way that it's come to a
head that's new but I think there's a lot of it grumbling out in
that area -- --

I believe that those who have a genuine reason for shifting
into teaching -- whether they feel they're going to enjoy life
more -- you know --

yeah --

-- and really in the case of Steve -- he looked forward to the
school holidays with his family -- he looked forward to the
sport and a variety of things that he did -- he looked forward
to that control he had in the classroom and being less -- not so
much accountable -- but less governed by someone one step
above him and he looked at the control that he could have in
his life -- and in the other case, [teacher name], you know, she was in the situation as a single mother in Australia -- that bringing up a child -- that she couldn't work that particular life -- so she was committed to making that change successful. They weren't escaping lives that they were failing in. They may have been escaping lives that weren't working for them -- they were escaping lives that -- you know -- they didn't enjoy but neither of them were failing where they were -- because I think those that are failing where they are maybe at risk in any sort of situation.

Annette OK -- well that's a fabulous answer thanks -- you have missed the trap that many others have had where they have said they are quite against this sort of training and they really don't think there's enough depth in it. That's a fair criticism, however the person in their school is an exception to it and that's been said by others interestingly -- --

Principal you see that whole issue of depth of training -- is it a real degree or not -- you see I come back to my first premise as that once they are in their school, you know, then -- then we look at how they operate and -- quite frankly, I look back at my training and I feel that my training failed me in as much as -- mind you, it failed nearly all of us, -- yeah -- I don't think the theoretical underpinning was there at all -- -- what got me there was just a natural instinct to develop skills --

Annette Okay, we'd better move on -- managing the classroom -- do you think this background helps with managing -- you know managing -- has there been a lot of trouble with getting on top of class room management with accelerated people -- and particularly Steve in this case?

Principal ... well I'll talk about both of them -- they are both excellent classroom managers -- -- look, my underpinning desire -- -- when someone sees what do you look for a teacher -- I say fire in the belly -- if there is a passion there for what you teach and
if there is a passion there are well what you try to impart, you
know you are nine tenths of the way there and I say to people
the first thing that comes out of your mouth is just so
important and the way you present yourself and getting off to
that early start and then having a sense of -- --u mm -- having
a sense of enjoyment. Now, it can vary so much from subject
to subject and from person to person and when Steve comes
into a room and you know I watch him too -- and he certainly
brings -- the computer network and philosophy comes in with
it -- and the computer network has to be built properly from
the ground up -- and it is not there to be played with -- is there
to do a job and -- and -- and when it is doing its function well
there's a real beauty and it and a real functionality to it and
that becomes the colour of the teaching that he brings -- you
know -- so you build things from the bottom up and you teach
those skills-- you know -- to navigate etc etc etc -- -- -- and
then from there the kids will sense -- -- kids have sense -- --
you know -- -- this is ridgy-didge -- -- this is not made up stuff
-- and if you are not prepared in a lesson and you walk in and
you try and fudge it -- they'll work you out in 20 seconds --
-- of course they do --

Principal
so I think that that's -- that's important and then that translates
into classroom management

Annette
I think some of it is attitudinal too but I haven't quite put my
finger on that -- they haven't quite got that combative attitude
that some, particularly younger teachers may have as a start-
up -- you know "I will rule you" -- there is they do rule them,
they just don't have that kind of "bring it on" type attitude.

Principal
I think that is one of the things we -- not necessarily get wrong
-- but when you talk to one of those first year outs, it is
classroom control -- what they are frightened of, they're
frightened of being a teacher in a situation which they can
remember being students tearing a teacher apart -- or a casual apart --

Annette yes -- or a student teacher --

Principal they can remember the mayhem in the classroom -- and the irony is, change my shoes -- layout in the teacher's shoes, and they don't want it

Annette no

Principal but they're conscious of the fact that what they can do in the intimacy of that classroom is be cruel so the focus on the control -- how do I control -- how do I punish the worst kids and that -- you know -- and of course most of us believe you need those skills and processes and mechanisms in place -- but your best ally is generate some interest -- you generate some interest in what you are saying -- good morning boys and girls -- what do you think about this stuff etc -- it's a question of -- and it is a curriculum question that -- isn't it -- to what extent do you impart a skill or the ability to do a task --

Annette yes

Principal we tend to baby kids because -- they've learnt to punish parents with their -- with their psychological -- well -- with their outlets in society, you know --

Annette yes

Principal ... and they go back into the home and they know that mum and dad worry about that and mum and dad have to think this is a different world that my kids are growing up in and they sort of use that sort of blackmail so -- but once they come through that 25 -- 26 -- 28 -- 30 year age bracket then
they've had -- then they move out of that adolescent milieu
and then they move into the real world -- --

Annette I think that is a very well expressed an interesting point
thanks, because I hadn't really -- -- but it's obvious now
you've said it -- -- but I hadn't really thought about that age
thing in that way because I've got a wide range of ages Okay
I've only got a couple of quick questions so I'd better go
through those -- communicating with students and staff -- do
accelerated people mix in well sort of thing?

Principal yeah -- I would say Steve is not the best mixer in the staff --
occasionally I have to say to him make sure you are at the
morning tea you know and he'll say I've got some work to do
but I say no -- this is part of school culture you know -- you
can't come in -- you have to embrace that -- you know -- well I
think it's important -- you know -- I think some of those all
cultures and traditions sustain us --

Annette absolutely

Principal and only sustain us because they translate into collegiality and
that you know -- --I think it's also partly that he is a shy man --
that's why I think in some ways he is still developing -- you
know

Annette you don't think it's kind of -- I worried about this -- I haven't
really found to be true -- you don't think that different pathway
into teaching is slightly inhibiting or not really

Principal I think initially there is but I think will dissipate

Annette yes I do too

Principal I think teachers have a wonderful collegiality -- you can be
halfway across this planet and you sit down and have a drink
and all of a sudden you are talking to a teacher and you just
watch -- you just watch the shields come off -- people will so
often -- you know just become frank and enjoy the candour
and share in that joy of teaching children with the ups and
downs that go with that
Annette: yes, yes absolutely -- -- the approaches to and thinking about the profession and the whole reason for becoming a teacher -- do you think it's very different from other teachers or there are features that you have noted.

Principal: while I think the feature is that he has come from a teaching background.

Annette: he mentioned that -- but that didn't scare him off -- I think he was quite intrigued even if he didn't perhaps quite recognise at that time -- -- as a principal you are getting this product -- do you think that product is adequately prepared or have you got any positives or negatives about the beginning teacher and particular that you have got from that pathway into teaching.

Principal: no no I think they come out a quality product 12 months or two years ahead of what you would expect from a normal first-year out teacher.

Annette: Have you found they have a sort of jumpstart? -- what about disadvantages?

Principal: the disadvantages shedding the old coat and putting on the new shirt.

Annette: and you think that's about the kids or their colleagues.

Principal: -- all of that -- the school they are going to -- and to what extent that school encourages that -- it's about how hard it is to leave what they had behind -- I also think their remuneration is an issue the fact that they can get a new car and take their family on holiday is part of the transition -- I wonder if someone came from a higher salary to a low salary and did it -- -- I wonder how they would look at it for altruistic reasons -- I don't know anybody who has done that. Now I have people waiting...

Annette: Thank you very much -- fantastic interview.
Bridging two worlds: from industry to school