Between the public and personal voices: discourses and meanings of quality teaching in higher education between 1992 - 1996

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This thesis is an analysis of the construction of, and contestation over, meanings about quality teaching in higher education in Australia, during the period 1992–1996. Using postmodern critical theory and critical discourse analysis, I examined documents from three separate, but interlinking sites. They are the national site, where during that period ‘quality teaching’ was brought into the public arena through the funding of a series of consultancies, programs, and publications; the institutional site, drawing on policy documents of one university within the ‘unified national system’; and a group of academics-as-teachers, who worked within that institution, and who came together regularly over a period of two years to discuss their ideas and practices of ‘quality teaching’.

My analysis interrogated the complex range of available discourses to look for links and connections, as well as conflicts and disconnections, of language and/or meaning within, and across the three sites, and to identify views about knowledge, learning, relationships, and teaching, which underpinned the ways that the people in the three sites constructed meanings about ‘quality teaching’. I have also been able to identify discursive use of power relationships to bring about changes in certain practices, and, ascribe specific meanings as dominant, and, in an attempt to achieve discursive closure, legitimate those meanings within/through the wider discursive constructions of ‘quality’ in higher education. This final aspect of my analysis has been enhanced by being able to reflect back on that period after a gap of three years.
At another level, because postmodern critical theory is acknowledge as under-specified, I have used my research as an opportunity to both apply and critique it.

Accepting the postmodern axiom of complexity, my research models a form of analysis which enables multiple intersecting and/or conflicting layers of meaning to be made visible. Through this process demonstrating the multiplicity of available meanings about quality teaching in higher education, the contradictions and conflicts within what is expected of academics-as-teachers, and the narrowness of dominant meanings.
Acknowledgments

Like any piece of work of this size and time involvement, this point of reflection has not been achieved without the support and strength of many other people.

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Chapter 1
Setting the scene

Introduction

During the late 1980s and first half of the 1990s 'quality teaching in higher education' was an arena of/for contestation over the definition of meanings of quality teaching in higher education in Australia. Definitions/constructions of meaning drew on discursive fields from both within education generally and higher education specifically, as well as discursive fields outside of education, particularly those of management. This is the context in which the materials which I analyse in this study were produced.

Within the wide reaching changes to Australian higher education initiated by the national government in the late 1980s (Dawkins, 1987; 1988), quality teaching was specifically nominated as being both important, and needing to be improved. From amongst those who claimed the right to define quality teaching there was a complex mix of views about what good teaching is, and how it ought to be encouraged, recognised and/or rewarded. Besides this, the increasing number and diversity of students who were moving into tertiary education raised new questions about tertiary education in terms of equity, justice, class, and gender. As a result of these changes and pressures there were multiple discourses within multiple discursive fields, which were called upon/impacted on the ways in which quality teaching in higher education was being shaped and understood. Each of these discourses carries with it a set of (often) unspoken value assumptions about knowledge, teaching and learning; about teachers and learners; and about what education could, or should, do for individuals and for society.

At that time, when prior definitions were being re-contested, there was potential to shape definitions of quality teaching in higher education to encompass social values of justice and equity; to challenge assumptions of the cultural neutrality of knowledge; to acknowledge the significance of personal values and expectations, and confront and reconceptualise views of teaching, learning and evaluation. It was also a time, in the shifts of centres of political, cultural, and economic power towards global capitalism and industrialism, in which there was potential for strengthening existing asymmetrical relations of power whilst, at the same time, concealing them.
During that time there were many Australian writers, such as Smyth (1991), Knight (1992; 1994), and Angus (1993), who argued that this centralising of power had already happened, to the extent where academics have been positioned as "relatively powerless" in response to "substantial intensification of teaching demands in academic work" (Knight, 1992, pp.35-36).

However in all of the materials being produced at that time about quality teaching there was little research specifically on how academics understood themselves as teachers and how they defined quality teaching. One exception is the work done at the University of Sydney which took the approach of reporting interviews with people who had been nominated to receive teaching awards (Dunkin, 1991; Dunkin & Precians, 1992). Another collection of interviews with academics who were designated as ‘good teachers’ was published under the sponsorship of the Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching (CAUT) (Ballantyne, Bain, & Packer, 1997). But the authors of those materials did not attempt to analyse those interview materials or to situate them within wider discourses. There has been no research which specifically examined the intersections of meanings between academics-as-teachers, their institutional setting, and the national context within the time-frame of this study. Or which focused on changes of meaning during a time of substantial change for the people, for an institution, and for higher education.

This dissertation is an analysis of the constructions, connections, and dis-connections of meanings about quality teaching in higher education in Australia, within and between three sites during the period 1992-1996. To identify those meanings, and the contestation between meanings, I have focused on the interpretations of a small group of academics-as-teachers as they have talked about their teaching and themselves as teachers; discourses in public documents from the institution in which they worked; and from a selection of documents from the national site, including some from the Federal Government and its agencies.

Working from a postmodern critical perspective, some of the basic assumptions of this research are that the term 'quality teaching' has multiple meanings, each carrying social and historically shaped views about the value and purposes of education; that definition and contestation do not go on at only one site, but are negotiated and re-constructed
within and between each site; and that every person, holding their own views about quality teaching, has the potential to participate in meaning-making through the politics of discourse and representation.

My thesis is that within the construction of meanings of quality teaching in higher education in Australia, during the period 1992 – 1996, there was a wide pool of meanings available. Many of those meanings were called on in different ways within and across the three sites, some meanings being given priority within each of the sites. The work here is to make visible the processes of discursive politicisation of quality teaching in higher education through identifying multiple meanings and how they were being used, the contradictions, and the continuities and/or discontinuities of meanings. From this identification and analysis I draw conclusions about meanings which have become dominant, and those which have been subsumed at the national and/or institutional sites. To achieve this I have juxtaposed and examined materials from the three sites in relation to their definitions of quality teaching and quality teachers; the kinds of characteristics and qualities desired of graduates; and some of the language and practices relating to how teaching in higher education could be improved.

A second focus of this study is a reflexive critique of the theoretical position which I am using. I draw strongly from 'postmodern critical theory' (Yeatman, 1990a&b; 1991a&b; 1993; 1994; 1996) as a platform for this research because it provides a perspective which allows me to recognise the cultural and historical development of discourses and the potential of multiple, irreducible differences within and between groups in a polyvocal society, whilst still holding to the possibility of emancipatory values of justice and equality through negotiated and provisional agreement. Yeatman acknowledges that these approaches are emergent and barely theorised, and so this study is situated as an inquiry into the extent to which her claims about the theory can be justified.

The time phase for this study is limited to 1992–1996 because, as part of the emergence of a strong push from the national government to ‘enhance the quality of higher education’ (Dawkins, 1988; Baldwin, 1991), 1992 marked the publication of Chubb’s report on “Achieving quality in higher education” and the initial establishment of CAUT. In March 1996 there was a national election and consequent change of government which quickly brought about a re-focusing of the direction of higher education.
In this introductory chapter, after briefly defining some of the key concepts and stating the research questions, I set the scene for this study within the social/historical context of processes of politicisation of ‘quality’ and ‘quality teaching’ in Australian higher education prior to and during 1992-1996; situate this study within that context; and give brief descriptions of the research process and the organisation of this dissertation.

**Key concepts and research questions**

The questions which have shaped my research are framed within my intent to examine the materials not only at the level of language, but as discursive artifacts which both draw meaning from prior social/historical contestations, and contribute to constructions of meaning. As such, I understand discourse as including all of the distinctive social practices, ways of saying, doing, valuing and believing, which shape meaning, and which are constituted through social and historical constructions (Gee, 1992; Gilbert, 1992a). I am also working from an understanding of discourses as being constructed out of, and saturated with, the power, as well as the values, of prior unequal contestations and conflicts (Foucault, 1972; Yeatman, 1994; Fairclough, 1995). This does not mean that I see discourses as stable or unchanging: although there may be a dominant discourse, there is rarely just one discourse. Within any society, or social institution, there can be many different and often contradictory and conflicting discourses and discursive fields which provide a pool of meanings which each person can read according to their own resources and needs (Kress, 1985). I therefore understand discourses and discursive fields as providing different ways of giving meaning to the world, which both position people, and offer them a range of modes of subjectivity (Weedon, 1987; Fairclough, 1989; Kenway, 1992; Pieterse, 1992).

From the perspective of ‘postmodern critical theory’ (Yeatman, 1990a) language and/or discourse are considered to be neither a mirror of reality, nor transparent or value-free. Rather ‘texts’ in the form of spoken and written language, as well as social and institutional practices, are assumed to be historical, cultural, and ideological artifacts which can be interpreted in terms of their implicit patterns (Barthes, 1972; Lather, 1990; Sparkes, 1991). Meaning, in this sense, is not confined to lexical or superficial meanings. Meaning cannot be determined without penetrating beyond the surfaces to search for underlying values, assumptions and ideological views of social organisation which have been part of the historical construction of meanings, and which still lie dormant within
them as contradictions and/or alternative interpretations (Codd, 1988; Yeatman, 1990b). In my search for those underlying values and ideologies which inform meanings, whilst recognising the inaccuracy of the labels and demarcations, I have chosen to work within the sociological tradition of identifying meanings as drawing from, contributing to, sociological/social understandings which have been named as modernist 'liberal', 'positivist', and 'critical' theories plus postmodernism (Fay, 1975; Horkheimer, 1982; Kroker, & Cook, 1986; Carr & Kemmis, 1996; Pieterse, 1992; Dickens & Fontana, 1994).

Like Yeatman (1990a; 1994), I see the politicisation of teaching in higher education in Australia in this decade as both an attempt to achieve discursive closure, and at the same time, as opening up spaces where the contradictions and conflicts within/between discourses provide opportunities for further challenges and re-definition of meanings. This research is an examination of the process of politicisation; and an attempt to elucidate the complexity of meanings associated with quality teaching in higher education. To achieve this I use critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; 1993; 1995) to examine materials from the three research sites. To demonstrate the potential for multiple and conflicting meanings, and the connections and omissions, I juxtapose the meanings within/between the discursive fields of quality teaching and quality teachers in higher education, beside/against the discursive fields of the desired characteristics of graduates, plus some of the discourses relating to how teaching in higher education could be improved.

My research questions in relation to this examination of the definition of quality teaching are:

What kinds of views about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching, inform the ways that people at each of the three sites talk about quality teaching in higher education in the period 1992 - 1996?

What are the substantive similarities and/or differences within, and between, these sites?

Are there significant omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relation to quality teaching in higher education? and, If so, what are they?

My question about the connections between discourses about quality teaching and those about the desired characteristics of graduates is:
What are the continuities/discontinuities between the ways that people at each of the three sites talked about quality teaching in higher education and discourses about the desired characteristics of graduates?

My question about the connections, intersections and omissions between discourses about quality teaching and those about improving teaching through the use of teacher-evaluation/appraisal and student evaluation is:

What are the continuities/discontinuities between definitions of quality teaching in higher education and the ways that people at each site talked about improving teaching in higher education through the use of teacher evaluations/appraisals and student evaluations.

In my final re-view, following the concluding chapter, I will draw information from the accumulated findings from the previous questions to consider changes in meanings about quality teaching in higher education since 1996, with a further question which is:

What changes have occurred in the construction of meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education', in the national and institutional sites, between the period of this study 1992 – 1996, and 1999?

In an environment where there was a polyphony of different claims and seemingly irresolvable differences of perspective, understandings and meanings, I have chosen to use postmodern critical theory as a theoretical construct, not as an act of faith but as a useful position from which to examine and critique the theory-in-practice. From a recognition of the historical/social construction of discourses and the inherent values, power conflicts and unresolved contradictions within discourses, Yeatman claimed that political activity has become pre-eminently a contest over meaning (1990b, p.155). In writing about critical postmodernism Yeatman talked about the 'politics of representation', the 'politics of knowledge', and the 'politics of discourse' (1990a&amp;b; 1994). Each of these 'politics' are argued as challenging modernist views of democratic representation occurring through processes of "univocal construction of reason and ... the idea of rational consensus" (Yeatman, 1994, p.x).
In order to examine and critique this theoretical position my research also addresses two questions in relation to the theory. They are:

*To what extent can postmodern critical theory function as a theoretical platform to investigate and illuminate the discursive relationships of people in different sites?*

*How do the concepts of politics of knowledge, discourse and/or representation, contribute to an understanding of positioning, subjectivity, democracy and/or power?*

Although these latter questions may be considered to be independent from the major focus of the study, I do not see them as separate or discrete, but rather as interconnected and linked through my methodological focus on language and meaning, discourse and discursive practices.

My question:

*What were the constraints and the opportunities for academics-as-teachers to participate in and influence the construction of meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education' in Australia in the period 1992 to 1996?*

will be considered along-side my theoretical critique, as an example/examination of the concept of praxis, of democratic theory-in-practice.

**The discursive context of the study**

In this section of the chapter I will briefly outline some of discourses and discursive fields which were part of the context of meanings of ‘quality’ which were available to, and part of, the construction of/contestation over ‘quality teaching in higher education’ prior to, and during the earlier stages of this study. This section has three sub-sections:- the first focuses on traditional notions of ‘quality’ and ‘education’; the second provides information about some of the ways in which the (then) Australian national government brought ‘quality higher education’ into the public arena, framing it as an issue of political interest, and therefore legitimate political intervention; and the third focuses on teaching in higher education, both the politicisation of teaching in higher education, and the status of teaching in higher education.
The historical context – meanings of quality in higher education

Some of the meanings of 'quality' or 'excellence' in education, and specifically in higher education, draw upon ideas which can be traced back to ideas from classical Greece, the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle, where Homer's qualities of 'manhood', 'valour' and 'nobility', and Socrates' ideals of 'moral and intellectual excellence', were considered to be states worth striving for as bringing true virtue, knowledge, and happiness to the human subject. Within this meaning were strong values of individual intellectualisation and competition (Gouldner, 1965; Bowen, 1978).

A different strand in the meanings of 'quality' and 'education', based upon the works of Bacon, is said to have developed during the seventeenth century. Bacon is attributed as being responsible for the philosophy of the scientific method which became the "doctrine of empiricism" (Bowen, 1978, p.35). Associated with this development was a change of emphasis from individual to institutional academic excellence, and from learning being associated with the development of active creative minds, to an emphasis on correct procedures (Bowen, 1978, p.36). Bowen argued that, because of changing social needs and structures, this latter intellectual era, which emphasised the value of quantifiable scientific scholasticism, is also coming to an end.

However strands of thought from both of these earlier constructions of meaning remain within current understandings of 'excellence' and 'quality'. These constructions can be identified within complementary/contradictory meanings, and sometimes binary divisions, of quality in higher education as a goal or a process; focusing on the individual or the institution; as being qualitative or quantitative; designed to provide for equality or an elite; as directed towards moral or empirical knowledge; of knowledge attained by intuition or logic; through active or passive learning.

Another line of thought which has contributed to definitions of quality in higher education is directed towards different interpretations about the purposes of education. According to Burgess (1978, p.7), within higher education there are two very different traditional views about the 'purpose of higher education' which co-exist in most institutions. One is that higher education should serve and respond to the needs of individuals and society, and the other, that higher education is an autonomous activity which has its own values and purposes which are much more closely aligned to 'truth'.
and 'knowledge' than social needs. Each of these two traditions has been further analysed as having a number of strands. In the ‘needs’ tradition, Goodlad (1976, p.82) pointed to “the intrinsic conflict between four major types of goals for higher education: manpower-planning goals; consumer goals; personal goals; and academic goals”.

Each of these “goals” is connected to social, political, economic, and/or intellectual needs of different individuals and/or groups. In writing about the ‘knowledge’ tradition, Burgess (1978), and Pelikan (1992), spoke in terms of four parallel, and in some ways conflicting, roles of higher education, being the preservation and maintenance of knowledge; the extension of what is known, and the creation of new knowledge; the dissemination of knowledge through teaching; and the continued questioning and critique of social and political practices.

Just as there are different ideas about the meaning of 'quality' and 'education', depending upon the perspectives of those who are doing the defining, so there are multiple interpretations and meanings about 'quality teaching in higher education'. The oldest definition of quality teaching and learning in universities, also based on the classical Greek view of scholarship, carries views of "a free and responsible community of scholars" where teachers and pupils are "engaged together in a common quest for learning" (Pelikan, 1992, p.58). However, over time, meanings of 'scholarship' have been added to, changed, and/or reinterpreted, in a number of different ways (Boyer, 1990). It is claimed by some writers in this decade that the ideals of 'teacher as mentor', and 'love of learning' remain (Pelikan, 1992; Candy, Crebert, & O'Leary, 1994). Along-side those ideas are views from the empirical scientific perspective of the 'teacher-as-expert' (Falk & Dow, 1971); from student-centred approaches to teaching (Knapper, 1990); and from teaching approaches which lead to deep rather than superficial learning (Ramsden, 1988; 1992).

The politicisation of discourses about quality in higher education

On Australia Day, January 26, 1990, the Hon. J. S. Dawkins, MP, (then) Minister for Employment, Education and Training, presented the National Australia Day Address, which was titled 'Can Australia become the Clever Country?' The thrust of his speech was that the successful future of the nation depended upon the talent, the skills, the intelligence, and the education of everyone. In this speech the language of his vision, his
'call to the nation,' presented education and educated people in economic terms as a 'resource for national development'. He said:

Following the recent explosion in education and training participation in Australia, this country is well positioned to develop and utilise a great bank of well educated and trained human resources.

For it is Australia's human resources, .... which will determine the shape in which we finish the nineties and indeed, enter the next century. (Dawkins, 1990a, p.i)

This speech was part of a series of Green Papers, White Papers, policies, commissioned reports, and documents which were brought down from the National Government and its bureaucratic arm, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). All of which, according to Neumann (1994), was symptomatic of an unprecedented and intense focus from the National government on issues of quality in higher education.

These materials had the effect of not only bringing quality in higher education into the public arena, but also of shaping the agenda of what that might mean within certain frames. For example, in a report on quality in higher education the Chair of the Higher Education Council (HEC), Chubb claimed that it was a debate over purposes which was "at the heart of the debate on quality in higher education" (1992b, p.6). He claimed that (1992b, p.6):

Discussions about the quality of higher education start from the premise that no single, workable 'definition' of quality is possible; that quality in education is not a definable concept in the way that, for example, quality in a paper bag might be, where a simple test of usefulness is objective and universal because almost all consumers will have the same need for the product.

In this statement, whilst acknowledging that within universities there were/are "a wide variety of views as to what is 'valuable' in the higher education process" (Chubb, 1992b, p.6), he opened up what becomes the premise of his argument for a definition of quality which has criteria of 'use' and 'need'. He went on to argue that generally "the best approach to quality is to look for characteristics of programs and of institutions which are valued by those whose needs the institution is seeking to meet" (Chubb, 1992b, p.6). In this argument Chubb also linked quality and need, as a matter of personal judgement,
saying that “the term 'quality' is inherently a value judgement, based on the needs and perspective of the person making the judgement” (Chubb, 1992b, p.9)

Again in this statement he both recognised that there is no single definition of 'quality', opening the way for potentially multiple and diverse meanings, and continued to tie quality in higher education to a market-place ideology as a commodity, and/or what the 'customer' defines.

In the same document Chubb’s language moved from 'customer' to 'stakeholder', arguing that there was/is a wide range of different individuals or groups who have a strong interest in the quality of higher education. He acknowledged that there has been "warm debate" about the concept of 'stakeholders' but claimed that the HEC believed that the term accurately described the relationship between all of the people who have "concomitant rights and obligations" towards ensuring that standards are maintained and improved. Therefore, according to Chubb, stakeholders included:

academic staff, students, administrators, employers, government, the community generally, professional associations, and the international research and scholarly community. All have legitimate perspectives on what constitutes a quality outcome from our universities. (1992b, p.9)

Throughout this section of the document Chubb conveyed an impression that all these voices have a right to be heard. But he was also careful to restrict the stakeholders' "legitimate interests" to "the outcome of the process" (p.9); to "quality assurance" (p.10); and to "developing the bases for judgement about quality in higher education" (p.10); not the educational process itself. He was also careful, whilst acknowledging the possibility of all of these different perspectives, to focus on similarities (p.9) and to situate all of those claims within "an overall purpose" which was national development (p.11). In this way, whilst arguing for an egalitarian perspective, Chubb subsumed individual or group claims within the over-arching needs and purposes of the nation.

In some ways this positioning of quality in higher education is similar to Dawkins' Australia Day address in its framing of education in competitive, commercial and economic language. But it is also different because whereas Dawkins was talking about the development of ‘well educated human resources’ – graduates as investments for
national development, Chubb was positioning the quality and usability of the 'product' - that is a university education - as the object of market forces and subject to consumer/stakeholder needs.

*Quality Assurance - Total Quality Management - Quality Audits*

Another discursive construction about achieving 'quality' in higher education which was given priority in materials emanating from national government sources during the late 1980s and early 1990s was directed towards the need to manage higher education effectively and efficiently, and, as part of/associated with that construction, the need of higher education to be more accountable. On this basis the need for organisational planning, auditing and reporting procedures within the higher education system, as well as within each university, were all argued as matters of necessity. This construction and focus led to the introduction and implementation of procedures such as Quality Assurance, Total Quality Management (TQM) and Quality Audits (Dawkins, 1987; 1988; Warren Piper, 1993a&b; Higher Education Management Review, 1995; Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE), 1995a&b).

Three brief examples of this process of discursive construction at/from the national level come from Dawkins, Baldwin, Chubb. In his policy documents Dawkins (1987;1988) referred to the leaders of universities as 'managers'. He criticised committee decision-making processes as 'cumbersome and unnecessarily protracted' (1987, p.50), and stated that there was a need for institutions to review management processes and to implement strategic planning, and performance monitoring. Using a different approach Baldwin argued that because the Government had given universities autonomy over their missions and management structures, plus wide discretion in the use of resources, the universities had a concomitant responsibility to be accountable. Chubb on the other hand, argued the necessity for quality assurance policies and practices in higher education on the basis of the changing economic and social contexts in which universities, as publicly funded organisations, need to be able to demonstrate that they are effective and efficient in providing value for money, and able to assure their stakeholders of their quality (1992b, pp.67&68).

To briefly elaborate on some of the ways in which these economic/management discourses were incorporated into meanings of quality in higher education and, within
that process, linked directly with 'quality teaching', I will draw on extracts from Baldwin's 1991 policy document; Chubb's report on the HEC investigation into achieving quality in higher education; and Warren Piper's material on Quality management in universities.

At the beginning of his policy statement Baldwin (1991) claimed that the main focus of the White Paper on higher education, published in 1988, had been to achieve major structural change in Australian higher education and argued that it was therefore appropriate for the Government to "identify new priorities" (p.1), including national and institutional accountability. At the same time he went on to situate quality teaching under the umbrella of quality management by saying:

given the scale of the structural reorganisation of the system, and the rapidity of growth, it is appropriate for the Government to implement measures specifically designed to provide a degree of quality assurance at both the institutional level and for the higher education system as a whole. ... It is also appropriate for the Government to provide incentives for institutions to increase the effectiveness with which they use their total operating (grant) and other resources and in particular, to enhance the quality of their teaching. (Baldwin, 1991, p.3)

In this way Baldwin positioned teaching as being in need of both 'increased effectiveness' and 'enhanced quality'. He also provided the frame in which these 'needed' improvements were appropriately understood as under the direction of the government and institutions.

The concept of 'quality assurance' was either a newly introduced, or re-defined, term in higher education discourses and, as such it needed explanation. It was defined by Chubb (1992b, p.68) as "a guarantee that required standards are being met", and by Warren Piper (1993a, p.7) as embodying "the planning, defining, encouraging, assessing and control of quality". Chubb's definition was much closer to the dictionary meaning of 'assurance' implying a more passive, less intrusive position of interested parties being assured, but without an examination of who is defining the 'required standards' and/or making the assurances. But by including all of the processes and procedures, Warren Piper's definition was both more inclusive, and more open to question, about the roles of different people.
It is not clear in Baldwin’s statement which of those meanings he was employing. However it was he who introduced the Government’s intention to establish a "national quality assurance structure, independent of Government, responsible for reporting and commenting on the adequacy of quality management arrangements at the institutional level" (Baldwin, 1991, pp.3-4). In this statement Baldwin also tied 'quality assurance' and 'quality management' together so that assurance was directed towards some guarantee that the management of institutions was ‘adequate’.

One approach to ‘quality management’ which received support at the national, and also the institutional levels (BUC, 1992a), was ‘Total Quality Management’ (TQM). TQM was claimed to be designed to address every aspect of the institution. A key element in TQM was the development of a strategic plan and the setting of goals which encompassed all aspects of university management. This planning process was claimed to offer a means of establishing a sense of purpose, definition of corporate commitment, common ends, certainty and unified effort within the institution (Warren Piper, 1993a&b). Within such strategic planning the 'mission statement', the 'value statement', the 'vision statement', and the 'goals' were designed to describe the purpose, aims, and future direction of the organisation. The objectives, targets and strategies within this planning being operational statements of how the aims would be carried out. As such they were "written in terms which make it evident when they have been achieved" (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.18). Through the application of these plans, targets, and criteria, the management of institutions was expected to be responsible for self-evaluating the effectiveness of all their policies and practices, including their use of resources, their curriculum, teaching, assessment and research (Chubb, 1992b; Baldwin, 1991).

Both Chubb and Warren Piper set out extensive lists of the areas or "provinces' needing quality assurance procedures" within each institution (Chubb, 1992b, p.71). I do not intend to address all of these, but focus here only on those which were most directly related to teaching and teachers, or, in TQM terms, "the management of educational programs" and "the management of staff" (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.21), because these most closely intersect with the focus of this research, quality teaching. I quote extensively from both of these areas, as they were defined by Warren Piper, to demonstrate the extent to which university management, within the construction of ‘quality assurance’, was being defined as/expected to be responsible for monitoring and
judging their programs and staff. Firstly, in relation to the management of educational programs, Warren Piper (1993a, p.21) stated that:

This province covers all of the things an institution does by way of offering an education to students. It includes the adoption and articulation of educational goals, policy concerning the standards of the qualifications offered, the design of programs and courses, the programs as realised, all aspects of teaching and supervision, the methods for setting and controlling standards of marking and related appeals procedures

And secondly, in relation to the management of staff Warren Piper (1993a, p.22) said:

To provide some structure in this province it is suggested that three conditions are necessary for the successful management of staff: the management of ability, opportunity and motivation. The ability of staff is managed through processes such as recruitment, selection, induction, staff development, counselling, performance appraisal and promotion. ... The management of motivation includes matters such as the conditions of employment, pay, incentive schemes, and flexibility.

Supporters of TQM argued that these processes enabled "control at the work face rather than in the hierarchy" (AV-CC, 1992, p.7) and that "all people are involved ... in respect of the work for which they are responsible" (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.31). They also claimed that the requirement that everybody in the organisation would be involved would lead to democratic processes and establish a sense of purpose, collective pride, and unified effort (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.19). Through these approaches, plus a view that everybody in an organisation must be using the same ‘map’, and using it consistently (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.39), TQM was argued as providing management with a structure which, at the same time, justified deep intervention into the operation of the institution, and established assumptions and an expectation that there was shared meaning.

There were clear expectations in the writings of Baldwin, Chubb and Warren Piper, that all institutions would implement TQM and ‘Quality Assurance’ processes. They claimed that these processes were aimed to assist universities to plan and implement their own management strategies. And that they were appropriate for applying in university contexts because universities were “not more complex than a large industrial or public
service organisation" and "there is no essential difference between the work of service
departments in universities and those in other organisations" (Warren Piper, 1993a,
p.98).

To emphasise that universities were expected to implement and operate under a TQM
strategic management view of higher education in the national 1995 Higher Education
Management Review it was stated that:

   It is the Review committee's view that a much broader approach to the performance
   of staff, both academic and general, needs to be adopted. This approach should seek
   to link the management of people and their performance with organisational
   planning and review.  

(1995, p.11)

These expectations, and the assumed direct link between such forms of institutional
management and 'quality teaching' were clearly demonstrated in the 1994 round of
Quality Assurance during which representatives of the Committee for Quality Assurance
visited every Australian university to examine materials relating to the management of
teaching (CQAHE, 1995 a&b).

However, against this national government focus on achieving quality through changes
in management and accountability procedures, there were counter-arguments, coming
from a wide range of perspectives, that academic and institutional autonomy and
democracy were being threatened. Writers such as Karmel (1990) and Teather (1990)
argued that changes in the management of universities would result in loss of autonomy
and collegiality in decision making. Teather predicted these changes would threaten both
quality and diversity as a result of a fundamental shift in the balance of power between
the government and universities (1990, p.112).

From a different position, the argument which Lindsay (1994) put forward was not
against the need for 'quality management', but against the ways it was being applied in
Australian higher education, saying

   a successful and acceptable approach to quality management must accommodate the
   complex, diverse and contested nature of quality in higher education, and include
   measurements and judgements in a form and mix that adequately reflect the
university's processes and culture. ... These procedures should operate in a climate of trust in which academics and other evaluators explain and justify the assumptions and perspectives they bring to the evaluation process. The procedures should be designed to take account of higher education's multiple and ambiguous goals and our limited knowledge of how specific teaching and research strategies lead to outcomes.  

(1994, p.3)

From yet another perspective there were concerns expressed about the potential shifting of power not only between the institutional - government levels as expressed by Teather, but also between individual academics - the institution. Watkins (1991, a&b; 1992; 1993) pointed to situations where management had used quality structures to increase their control, not just over the employees' skills and productivity, but also their knowledge, and their attitudes. He also criticised assumptions of 'best practice', and the 'portability' of management processes from overseas industry into Australian education.

Other writers expressing concerns about 'Quality Management' in higher education were McTaggart (1992), and Kemmis (1993), who argued that the national introduction of quality assurance discourses were an attempt to strengthen central control over higher education. Kemmis described 'quality assurance' as a "discourse of surveillance" (1993, p.10) which cannot improve quality in higher education (p.13), but could establish 'a regime of truth' which had the power to marginalise and stifle the views of the people "whose lives and work actually constitute the lifeworld of universities" (p.9). Kemmis stated:

there is now a contest of legitimacy between the rich and diverse variety of discourses of education and research which characterise the work of our universities on the one hand, and the homogenising discourse of disembodied 'quality' being imposed in and for the administration of the Australian higher education system.

(Kemmis, 1993, p.9)

Yet another interpretation of the introduction of TQM and Quality Assurance processes was that the meaning of quality changes from a 'characteristic trait' or 'attribute' of positive or negative value (McIntosh, 1964), to the name of particular processes, especially those related to forms of management and evaluation. As Barnett (1992) argued, 'quality' was being used as a metaphor for rival views of higher education, where
quality in education was being conflated with quantity by a focus on things which can be seen and counted. He also claimed that:

The debate over quality in higher education should be seen for what it is: a power struggle where the use of terms reflects a jockeying for position in the attempt to impose own definitions of higher education. (Barnett, 1992, p.4)

Within this linguistic, discursive context, the language games (Lyotard, 1984; Yeatman, 1994) surrounding quality in higher education can be seen as a contestation between those who were supporting the need to establish common goals and shared meanings, and the positions of those who were arguing for the need to maintain cultural, discursive diversity, and/or that higher education has an important social role to maintain a position of 'disinterested' commitment to uncertainty and unbelief and a tolerance of contradictions (Goodlad 1976).

The politicisation of teaching in higher education in the 1990s

Following the publication of the 1988 Dawkins' "White Paper", there was a stream of documents which were part of, and contributing to, the politicisation, and consequent contestation at the national level over/within the definition of quality teaching in higher education, what it might be; what its role in society should be; and who should define that role. This overt intervention of the national government into higher education in the 1990s was a trend which, according to Jamieson (1989) and McWilliam (1992a) was unprecedented.

Besides the re-construction of meanings of 'quality' in higher education, and the tying of 'quality teaching' with ideas of TQM within management structures, there was a range of other discursive fields which were brought into, and re-constructed through, the national government focus on 'improving' the quality of teaching in higher education. These fields included what was termed as 'the desired characteristics of graduates [documents relating to this are analysed in Chapter 5]; the definition of quality teaching in higher education [documents relating to this are analysed in Chapter 6]; and the need for both professional development and greater accountability of academics-as-teachers [documents relating to this are analysed in Chapter 9]. Because I look at each of these
discursive fields in some detail in my analysis chapters I will only briefly introduce them here.

The desired characteristics of graduates and what higher education should be achieving through undergraduate programs were being defined and redefined by a range of groups and professional organisations both inside and outside of higher education. A large number of reports were produced through liaison between representatives of government and industry (Finn, 1991; Business & Higher Education Round Table, 1992; Carmichael, 1992; Mayer, 1992a,b,c); from agencies associated with DEET (Chubb, 1992a,b; NBEET, 1992); and from specific professional organisations such as the Association of Professional Engineers and Scientists, Australia, and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (Bates, Lloyd, Martinelli, Stradling & Vines, 1992; RACGP, 1992). There was also a plethora of reports and commissioned studies from DEET, many of which focused on the recognition and valuing of quality teaching in higher education (Mullins & Cannon, 1992), or on ways to evaluate teaching more effectively (Ramsden, 1991; Paget, Baldwin, Hore & Kermond, 1992; Lally & Myhill, 1994).

The definition and practice of quality teaching in higher education also came under close scrutiny and contestation from people and organisations within higher education (Chubb, 1992a,b; Porter, Rizvi, Knight, Lingard, 1992). Both the Higher Education & Research Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA, 1992), and the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AV-CC, 1993) published recommendations for improving teaching in higher education. And academics, many of whom had been, or were, employed within professional development units, published journal articles and books on different approaches to professional development for academics (Moses, 1988; Porter & Brophy, 1988; Zuber Skerritt, 1992a,b), or on the impact of different teaching approaches on learning in higher education contexts (Ramsden, 1988; 1992; Candy, 1993).

At the same time changes, some of which were being argued directly under the rubric of improving the quality of teaching, were introduced into the industrial conditions of academics. These measures included:— (1) the 1991 industrial award which required that all institutions establish and implement professional development programs for academic staff; and (2) the linking, in 1992, of professional development with accountability through introducing compulsory staff appraisal. These measures were part of re-
definitions of the terms and conditions of all academics which also covered changes in wages, conditions of employment, as well as the re-definition of the criteria for promotion, including expected roles and responsibilities in relation to both teaching and research (JHE, 1989; 1990; 1991a&b). All of these issues were highly contested in the negotiation and re-negotiation between the union(s), the industrial arm of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AHEIA), and the government agencies of DEET. As a result of the 1991 and 1992 industrial changes, by 1994 most universities had in place some kind of academic appraisal schemes as well as professional development for academics (CQAHE, 1995a&b). Many institutions had also introduced processes to recognise and reward 'quality teaching' and/or some form of higher degree in teaching at university.

In this research I have analysed some of these documents and situated the construction of meanings within the wider pool of meanings about quality teaching in higher education which were available to people whether they were working within the national, institutional, or group sites.

_The status of teaching in higher education_

Another important discursive field which was brought into the construction of meanings about/within quality teaching in higher education during the period 1992 – 1996 was the status of teaching in higher education. In this construction, status was not seen as an absolute quality, but as a comparison of the role/work of teaching against/within the diverse and differently valued tasks which academics were expected to fulfil. The role of a teacher in higher education is unique for three inter-related reasons. First, in many instances academics are not necessarily qualified as teachers. Second, it is the only level of teaching where the teacher is expected to be on the cutting edge of the knowledge base in their discipline area, and it was because of this expertise in their 'discipline' that it has been assumed that they can 'teach' others, and teach well. Third, particularly in the last four decades, recognition of quality in the academic world, both nationally and internationally, has come through research and publication, very rarely through teaching.

In this context, teaching in higher education has not always been seen as having a high status. Research findings from Australia, as well as other parts of the world, showed that within universities, teaching as an academic responsibility has been held in much lower
esteem than discipline based research. Academics in Australia, and in countries such as Canada and U.S.A., have all indicated that for recognition and/or promotion research was given more importance than teaching (Knapper, 1990; Teather, 1990; Smith 1991; Duhs, 1992). A further indication of this priority has been in the employment practices of academics where graduate qualifications and/or research have been considered important, but teaching qualifications (except in Faculties of Education) have been rarely required.

This low status of teaching in comparison with research is, according to some writers, a relatively recent phenomenon. From a longer historical perspective, "during most of the 800 year history of the modern university" (Anderson, 1993a, p.17), and for the first 80 years of the life of Australian universities, all of their emphasis was placed on teaching and the preparation of students for their professions (Teather, 1990). It was during and after World War II that the research culture in Australian universities developed with the support of governments which "came to see universities as instruments for national purposes, indeed at that time as instruments for national survival" (Anderson, 1993a, p.17). The separation between research and teaching was further entrenched in Australian post-secondary education, in the 1970's, with the establishment of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs). In this 'binary system', although there was some overlap in undergraduate teaching, only universities were seen as responsible for offering higher degrees, and as being involved in research and research training (Sheldrake, & Nilsson, 1978).

The re-emergence of teaching as a priority, plus the association of 'quality teaching' with other diverse expectations was made clear in the Dawkins' White paper (1988), in which all Australian institutions of higher education, and by implication academics-as-teachers, were expected to be teaching programs which were responsive to the demands of perceived changing needs within the professions; carrying out research and contribute to the creation of new knowledge; participating in the dissemination of knowledge through scholarly activities; as well as producing graduates who had "certain skills, attributes and values - the 'civilised person'" (Chubb, 1992b, p.12). Within these varied expectations, and despite the wide range of roles which universities and academics were expected to fulfil, the significance of teaching was emphasised by Ministers for Employment, Education and Training, (Dawkins 1988; 1990a; Baldwin 1991; 1992a). Teaching was also emphasised in documents from government agencies such as Chubb
(1992a&b), and Candy, et. al., (1994); through the establishment of CAUT (Anderson, 1993a&b); and the provision of incentive funding through the National Priority (Reserve) Fund to encourage good teaching practices. In addition, teaching and learning was the specific focus of the second 'quality audit' by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 1994.

Statements, for example those from Chubb, the AV-CC and Anderson, uniformly advocated the importance and the need for improved status of teaching within universities. However issues of who was to be responsible for that enhancement of teaching and/or how it was to be done, were continuing themes which were advocated differently in the different documents.

Arguing for a renewed academic focus on teaching, Chubb stated:

Teaching is a central part of the responsibility of all academics, and must be seen as a 'legitimately and commensurably rewardable activity along with research, administration and other activities used variously in different universities'.

(1992b, p.35)

In this statement where Chubb acknowledged the many 'responsibilities' placed on "all academics", his use of "is", situated teaching as "central" in such a way that it makes it seem unchallengeable. But in using the phrase "must be" he suggests that it might not be so. Therefore Chubb's statement can be interpreted as the use of "must" to set up an argument that this is the way things ought to be and that academics and administrators should be thinking about teaching in this way. This position is supported by the AV-CC (1993, p.1) which made the statement:

The AVCC believes that the promotion of effective teaching should be a matter of the highest priority for each university and that each institution needs to develop a coherent set of policies and practices which demonstrate that the institution values above all else the education of its students and the contributions that academic staff make to the enhancement of student learning.

The AV-CC were arguing here, as did Chubb, for the high priority of teaching whilst at the same time giving the impression, through the use of words such as "promotion" and
"needs to develop" that not all universities had such a priority. Through this construction they were also able to suggest that changes in the status of teaching, and the improvement of teaching, were the responsibility of decision makers within institutions, rather than the academics.

Anderson (1993a) was much more explicit about the need to raise the status of teaching. He stated that "the last fifty years has been an aberrant period in the history of universities" in which "the teaching-research relationship has become hopelessly out of balance" (p.17). He then went on to claim that "CAUT is one contribution to restoring teaching and scholarship to the centre of what universities do" (1993a, p.18). Thus suggesting, differently to Chubb and AV-CC, that universities cannot be expected to bring about the change of relationship between teaching and research on their own, and that there was a need for an external impetus to make this change happen.

The situational context - the three sites

In this research I identify some of the multiple, different, and/or contesting discourses which were framing meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education' in Australia in the period 1992-1996. As I described in the previous section of this chapter, many of the changes to higher education during the period of this research, and six years prior to that, originated from outside universities. But it is through the experiences, actions, language and thoughts of people working within those organisations that those changes were interpreted and instituted. This means that any investigation of the impact of this politicised contestation and change in expectations/meanings of 'quality teaching' needed to be made at a number of levels. It is not sufficient to focus only on formal policy statements and the intended and un-intended messages which they conveyed about the future directions of higher education in general, and about quality teaching as part of those discourses. On the other hand, it is not sufficient to focus only on the views of academics-as-teachers. Because although teachers were experiencing changes in the expectations about teaching, it was within the context of their own, and others' meanings. Therefore, because I am assuming that teaching practices, and the way in which academics talked about their teaching, were influenced by their own personal histories and the contexts in which they were working, I have attempted to position what they said beside the discourses of the institution in which they worked, and the language and
practices in relation to quality teaching, which were available to them from the national site.

The data for my research are therefore drawn from three sites which are separate, but inter-related. Those three sites are:

- the national site, including documents from the National Government and its agencies
- one institution
- a ‘collaborative research group’ of academics-as-teachers (my term designed to focus specifically on the ‘teacher’ role of academics) who were employed at that institution, and who met regularly during 1993 – 1994.

As can be seen from these three sites, I am using the term ‘site’ in the sense of a location, and/or an environment, in which the relevant artifacts were produced, rather than in the geographic/historical sense of a specific place. This is the same interpretation of ‘site of meaning production’ used by Wexler (1982), Bernstein, (1986), and Kirk and Colquhoun, (1989).

This research is therefore located in three sites which initially appear as discrete. But over the four years of the study they were linked in a number of personal and/or institutional, as well as discursive, ways. For example, originally my intent was to only use documents from the national site emanating from the National Government. However in the process of analysis I realised that all of the available meanings were situated in an interconnecting network of people and texts which, in a number of ways, cut across such boundaries. For example both Paul Ramsden and Phil Candy published books and articles about teaching in higher education as academics, and also under commission by the government. Both writers visited the university during the course of this research and on each occasion they spoke at public forums which were attended by many of the people in management and professional development, as well as participants in the collaborative research group. Another example of links between the sites was through membership of professional organisations such as the AV-CC, HERDSA, and the unions, all of which were involved in negotiations and/or lobbying with the national government. Besides these personal links, there were organisations which publish materials relating to quality teaching in higher education which I know, from the work we did together in the 1993 CAUT group, [see Chapter 3 - The collaborative research
group') that some people in management, and all of the members of the collaborative group had read. Because of these links, a key focus of the study is the interaction between the sites and the construction of meanings within the complex interplay of national, institutional and personal discourses, discursive fields and meanings.

*The national site*

Because I recognise the power of official discourses to legitimate and frame the conceptual boundaries, fore-ground or over-shadow alternative meanings and/or attempt to fore-close contestation, my analysis of government-sponsored documents focuses on some of the materials on quality issues emanating from government ministers responsible for higher education, and from agencies such as the Higher Education Council and NBEET. These include: *Higher Education: Quality and diversity in the 1990s* (Baldwin, 1991); *Higher Education: Achieving Quality* (Chubb, 1992b); and *Developing lifelong learners through undergraduate education*, NBEET Commissioned Report No. 28, (Candy, Crebert, & O’Leary, 1994).

But because these were not the only discursive resources which were available from the national site, I also selected and analysed materials from HERDSA (1992), the AV-CC (1993), and the unions (Hardy 1992; 1993a&b; JHE, 1989; 1990; 1991a&b), as three very different national organisations from within universities. In addition I drew on material written by Ramsden, (1992; 1993) who, as a researcher and professional developer in Australian universities, had published widely about improving teaching in higher education, some of which had been sponsored through the national government.

*The institutional site*

The University of Ballarat is the institutional site of this study. The University of Ballarat is a small rural university which has a history that in some ways is similar to a number of other former Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) throughout Australia, but in other ways it is quite unique. Like other CAEs it was formed in the mid 1970’s to provide tertiary education at an under-graduate level, with few resources for research and/or post-graduate teaching. But unlike most of the other CAEs it was not amalgamated with other CAEs or universities during the government push of 1980s and early 1990s for large,
more efficient higher education institutions. And so it remained as a small, independent institution.

The number of students at the University of Ballarat has always been small in comparison with other Australian universities totalling approximately 4000 students in 1992 increasing to almost 4500 in 1996. The proportion of post-graduate students has been gradually increasing, being approximately 1-2% of enrolments in 1991, and up to approximately 10% by 1997 (BUC, 1992b; UB 1998a).

Because it is within this social and institutional context that I have situated my research study, I need to briefly outline the history of the institution. In 1976 the Ballarat College of Advanced Education (BCAE) was formed through the amalgamation of the Ballarat Institute of Advanced Education (formerly part of the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat) and the State College of Victoria at Ballarat (formerly Ballarat Teachers College). As a result of this amalgamation BCAE offered courses in Mining and Engineering, Applied Science, Business Studies, Humanities, Social Science, Librarianship, and Education. Over the next 14 years a number of other undergraduate degrees were added, including Visual and Performing Arts, Nursing, Computing, Psychology and Human Movement.

As a result of pressures for amalgamations and 'consolidation' of universities and CAEs which occurred from the time of the Green Paper (1987), from 1990 Ballarat CAE formed an affiliation with Melbourne University. Under this affiliation agreement the College was re-named Ballarat University College. The agreement required that two Council members from BUC attend Melbourne University Council, and the Melbourne University Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and one MU council member could be appointed to the BUC council. Other than this reciprocal membership, and the agreement that Melbourne University would promote and assist the teaching and supervision of postgraduate students, and encourage co-operative research between staff and students in the two institutions, BUC retained its autonomy as a "major provider of higher education in regional Victoria" (BUC, 1989). As examples of this 'independent' status, even before becoming a university, BUC continued to be represented as one of the 35 Australian higher education institutions in listings published by DEET (1993a&b). And, despite its small size, staffing remained fairly constant and most of the undergraduate courses were not subjected to any major upheavals.
In 1993 BUC applied for, and gained the status of a university. The inspection panel (Smith, 1993) commended the institution on its commitment to students and quality teaching, but expressed concern about the lack of a research culture of this new university, the University of Ballarat.

The public documents from this site, which I selected for my analysis, include Mission and Goal statements (1992; 1993; 1995); submissions to the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (1993; 1994); material relating to professional development (1993-1995); annual student Handbooks (1992-1995); documents relating to academic promotion (1993-1995); terms and conditions of employment of academic staff (1993); and documents relating to student feedback on teaching (1993 -1995).

The collaborative research group

The collaborative research group consisted of six academics, plus myself as participant/researcher. In 1993 these people were all part of a larger group of 24 academics from six disciplines who worked with me in a CAUT funded project to implement problem-based teaching and learning processes within the institution (Crebbin & the CAUT project team, 1994). At the end of that year I formed the smaller group from people who volunteered to continue to meet fortnightly through-out 1994. This group was selected to bring together as much diversity of ideas as possible. It comprised two academics from each of three different discipline areas - science, nursing and education; three males and three females; some with teaching qualifications, and others who had none; some tenured, others on contract; and ranging in experience and employment level from Level A to Level C. The discussions from the group were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then given back to the participants between each meeting so that they became part of the discussion for following meetings.

My work with/within the collaborative research group was deliberately political in two ways. First, I set out to investigate the professional subject positions available for academics-as-teachers within the institution and the National Unified System. I wanted to do this because, based on my readings of Kress (1985), Fairclough (1989; 1993; 1995) and Yeatman (1994), I believe that whilst there is a plurality of meanings, the power and impact of discourses can only be understood according to how they are read and
interpreted, within the construction of positioning and/or subjectivity. This process was not seen as a linear causation but as a complex mutual shaping, in which national and local contexts, the discourses, and individuals, interact. The impact of changing meanings of quality teaching in higher education from the national government, the institution, and from other sources, were therefore seen to be being played out in the ways that the academics-as-teachers understood and implement their teaching.

Second, it was an attempt to find and define a space, within one tertiary education setting, to create an inquiring and critically reflective educational community where the group members felt that they could create and sustain their own meanings. I took this position partly in response to the processes of politicisation and discursive construction of quality teaching occurring at the national and institutional sites in which, as an academic, I was personally implicated. But also I was concerned about comments of some Australian writers such as Knight (1992), which position academics as relatively powerless, denying the potential of multiple subjective responses, and in the process, limiting the spaces for alternative interpretations. Thus making the discursive construction of quality teaching appear uncontestable.

To set up and conduct the collaborative research study I drew on ideas from reflective inquiry and practitioner research which acknowledge the need for teachers to re-search their own assumptions and values as well as their practices (Elbaz, 1987; Groundwater-Smith, 1991; McTaggart 1991a; Henderson, 1992; Schratz, 1993). These were important in helping me maintain an awareness that the subjectivity of each lecturer-as-teacher is a complex intertwining of emotion, cognition and lived-body experiences (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992) and as a reminder of the difficulty of bringing such tacit knowledge into language, and the danger of that then being subsumed by the researcher (Elbaz, 1990). I therefore took seriously what Lather (1991a) identified as a pedagogic responsibility to nurture the spaces and to see ambivalence and differences as richness of meaning, not obstacles, and also to see individuals as complex rather than singular, rational entities. In my analysis I was not looking for consensus or closure, but worked from an assumption that each academic-as-teacher was likely to hold multiple and contradictory, shifting and fragmented identities (Davies, 1992; Kenway, 1992).
My position as part of the context

I have worked as an academic in the institution I am studying for 18 years. My area of expertise is teaching and learning and, for at least the last 20 years, I have taken a professional as well as a personal and passionate interest in the ways in which education, at all levels, serves to empower and/or disempower both teachers and learners. In the first round of CAUT grants (1993) I received a grant which made it possible for me to bring together 24 academics and senior administrators, from six different disciplines, to introduce multidiscipline problem-based approaches to learning and teaching (Crebbin et.al., 1994). This process gave me opportunities to work with the academics and administrators who were interested in their teaching, it also positioned me as knowledgeable within the group.

My own views of teaching and learning, power and relationships, have strongly influenced, and been strongly influenced by this research process. I brought to the process a substantial knowledge of modernist social theories and a commitment to a critical perspective. But in order to do the kinds of analysis I describe here I needed to add further understandings of modern/postmodern theories of discourse, ideology and power. In particular I needed to develop understandings of how language and meanings are culturally, socially and historically situated so that oppositional and dominant discourses are symbiotically intertwined (Yeatman 1990a&b; 1991a&b; 1994); are value-laden and power-saturated, yet contested and contestable; and that what we know is always partial (in both senses of the word), multiple, interpretive, diverse, fragmented and contradictory (Freire, 1970; 1985; Foucault 1972; 1980; 1984; Britzman, 1991; Grenfell & Crebbin, 1992; Kenway, 1992; Crebbin, 1994a; 1995a-d; 1997).

The theoretical context of this study

Because this study aimed to identify the diversity of meanings in the discourses surrounding quality teaching in higher education in Australia in the period 1992-1996, the social views which inform those discourses, and how academics-as-teachers were participating in, and responding to, the politicising of those discourses, I needed to find a theoretical perspective within which I could examine the different discourses and discursive fields which were part of that politicisation of 'quality teaching'. As a person who is situated as an academic, and as someone who has attempted 'empowering'
research projects in the past, I also wanted to be able to open up questions about the potential for academics-as-teachers to take part in that politicisation process, to find spaces within the contestation. Therefore I needed to locate this research within a theory which would provide a basis from which I could engage the complexity of the phenomenon which I wanted to investigate; allow me to examine the values, interests, and assumptions which were shaping the discourses around quality teaching in higher education; and to search for the omissions and disruptions within/between the discourses which had achieved ascendancy and those which were being denied authority.

The body of literature from which this study draws meanings therefore includes materials from both postmodern and modern writers. And within each of those perspectives there is a wide variety of interpretations of knowledge, teaching, education, educational management and change. Perspectives which provide backgrounds from which different meanings are drawn include:- approaches to organisations and educational change; views of power and knowledge, language and discourse; theories of subjectivity, agency, and voice; and teachers' personal views and professional understandings of, and within, educational change (Foucault, 1980; Derrida, 1982; Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Lyotard, 1984; Giddens, 1985, 1991; Giroux, 1985; Nias, 1987a&b; 1992a&b; Owens, 1987; Elsworth, 1989; Davies, 1990; 1991; Minnich, 1990; Woods, 1990; Lather, 1991a&b; Popkewitz, 1991; Rudduck, 1991; Watkins, 1991a; 1992; Zeichner, 1991a; Apple, 1992; Kenway, 1992; Pusey, 1992). My purpose in employing these diverse theoretical perspectives, and in situating them together, is to provide a theoretical space for the deconstruction of texts, from which multiple meanings can be identified.

**Postmodern critical theory**

I selected postmodern critical theory as the most appropriate theoretical perspective for my study because, whilst moving beyond modernist adversary views of power it does not accept the relativity of ideals such as justice which some forms of postmodernism adopt (Yeatman, 1994). Postmodernism, by rejecting master narratives, totalising rational definitions and binary constructions of contestation, provides the potential to open up opportunities to hear the voices of previously silent groups and to create spaces for new definitions of subjectivity. But this is balanced against the equal potential for nihilism which hides or distorts the social, political and cultural practices which have forced those
silences and shaped those meanings. Postmodern critical theory is claimed by Yeatman (1994) to address this concern by drawing on critical views which argue that any educational reform is social reform and must be understood as a contestation between different groups who argue from different value systems and differing power positions within a particular social, historical, political and economic context.

Yeatman stated that postmodern critical theory "does not abandon the values of modern universalism and rationalism, but enters into a deconstructive relationship to them" (1994, p.vii). Thus social understandings are not made anew, but are partly dependent upon the values, priorities and cultural definitions of prior social contestations. In this way, postmodern critical theory acknowledges that whilst current structures have been shaped in particular ways as a result of past unequal conflicts, there are contradictions and conflicts between/within discourses which provide opportunities for future challenges and re-structuring.

In describing social relationships postmodern critical theory places a great deal of emphasis on discourse as a medium of power. By drawing on critical and feminist views of contestation, conflict and difference, this perspective opens up discursive practices to scrutiny, through an understanding of the ‘politics of knowledge, discourse and representation’. From this perspective, whilst people are understood as not being able to move outside discourses, it is through the recognition of their discursive positioning that individuals can act as agents for their own empowerment (Davies, 1991). Davies explained this by saying (1991, p.51) that:

Agency is never freedom from discursive constitution of self but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity.

In this way postmodern critical theory provides for an understanding of individual subjectivity as a potentially active response to attempts to achieve discursive closure [see Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of this theory].
In my research these ideas about individual agency and 'deconstructive relationships' are very important because I am working from the premise that each of the competing discourses about 'quality teaching' carries with it a set of (often) unspoken value assumptions about knowledge, teaching and learning; about teachers and learners; and about what education could, or should, do for individuals and for society. These assumptions, as part of the cultural capital of late twentieth century Australia, are substantially based on prior discursive constructions which, in some instances, can be traced back through Western history. From a critical postmodern perspective it is possible to see how these assumptions have developed symbiotically in relation to, and reaction against, each other. So, whilst seeing these 'positions' as far from discrete, in order to try to trace multiple meanings, I have followed the custom of using labels such as 'modernist', 'liberal', 'positivist', 'critical' and 'postmodern', whilst recognising the limitations of such labels.

The methodological context

This investigation involves the interrogation of the many, frequently contradictory, discourses associated with quality teaching within and between the national, institutional and personal sites. It is through discourses, as well as economic/power relationships that the sites are interconnected. And it is through politicising the discourses about quality teaching in higher education that the government has both sought to influence 'the stakeholders' of higher education, "academic staff, students, administrators, employers, governments, the community generally, professional associations and the international research and scholarly community" (Chubb, 1992b, p.9), and at the same time, opened up opportunities for contesting meanings. Within that social and temporal context, this study is a mapping of discursive connections, continuities and/or discontinuities within and between the three sites.

In my analysis of the different discourses, I identify some of the ways in which institutional and societal views about higher education were being constructed and, within this, how academics-as-teachers were being positioned and how they situated themselves. The analysis processes are used to try to provide multiple readings; to try to position the study within a recognition of embeddedness in past and present discourses and discursive practices; and to build up a synthesis of the inter-relationship of
individual, institutional and social positionings within the continual shifts and realignments of discourses (Lather, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

In outlining postmodern critical theory Yeatman did not specifically advocate any particular research methodology but frequently spoke about needing to enter into a deconstructive relationship with modernist ideas (1990a&b; 1994). In talking about ‘the politics of discourse’ she drew heavily on the work of Kress (1985) and his ideas of discursive multiplicity, and the concept of texts as sites of ideological contradiction, conflict, power and change (Yeatman, 1990b). She also used his ideas to argue the need to examine the positioning of the reader in relation to texts, and texts within their contexts (Yeatman, 1994). To carry out my analysis I therefore needed to find a process which would allow me to work with discourse not only as linguistic similarities and/or differences, but as a way of looking at language as one social system in interaction with other social systems of ideology and power, and to try to seek-out and identify some of the systematic ways of thinking and doing which were embedded in the meanings which were being re-constructed.

For this task I chose to use Fairclough's processes of critical discourse analysis because, like Yeatman, he is critical of the relativism of some postmodernisms and also acknowledged the contribution of Kress to his thinking. I agree with his arguments for the need for discourse analysis to do the work of ideological critique and to historicize data both according to the conditions in which it was generated, and as a part of discursive contestation and change (Fairclough, 1995, p.19). Fairclough stated that such ideological work is not to claim truth or falsity but in identifying the privileging of particular truth claims. He stated:

> an important emancipatory political objective is to minimize such effects and maximize the conditions for judgements of truth to be compared and evaluated on their merits. (1995, p.19)

To be able to do that kind of work in this study, language, words, and discourses are not considered as a neutral play of surfaces (Rorty, 1979; Yeatman, 1994; Fairclough, 1995). Meaning that meaning is not visible in the words but remains open for interpretation. For example words, like 'quality' and 'teaching' carry different meanings, and different words sometimes can be used to have the same meaning. My analysis therefore has been a
process of searching for dominant discourses, divergent meanings, ambiguities, contradictions, distortions, structured omissions, silences, and nonsense. Through this process I have tried to uncover the consistent and contradictory messages within, and between materials and/or sites.

Recognising that it was important to provide myself with insights into how discourses operate to persuade us and to shape our thinking about ourselves and others in powerful ways (Sparkes, 1991, p.113), an important task in my discourse analysis was to identify and critically examine the power and ideological processes which lie behind/within the texts. This does not mean that I have assumed that each document holds one single set of values, or a unified meaning. For example, because DEET and HEC frequently used 'democratic consultative processes' to collect the information on which they based their reports, I recognise that the resultant policy documents are factitious representations of the multitude of voices and pressure groups. But because they are also part of the processes of exercising political power, they are used to legitimate particular view-points (Codd, 1988).

Therefore in my analysis of the documents and officially sanctioned programs selected from the national and institutional sites, whilst I was searching for connections as well as discontinuity within and between the materials, I also focused on the production processes of those documents in order to trace their particular historical, political and social context (Codd, 1988; Fairclough, 1995). And in my data from the collaborative group I was particularly searching for how individuals negotiated within contradictions and the multiplicity of discourses to maintain elements of what they valued as quality teaching. I have then juxtaposed all of these constructions to show the points of intersection, the interaction, the differences, and conflicts/contradictions, within and between the discourses and discursive fields.

**A model to aid conceptualisation of multiple meanings**

Working from a recognition that there are multiple, competing meanings available, this research is based on assumptions that each person, writing, thinking, talking about, or being a teacher, has the possibility to read discursive constructions differently. But because meanings are understood as social artifacts, 'meaning-making' is not done in isolation from a social context which is itself multi-faceted and interconnected, bearing
shadows of former meanings and impregnated with relationships of power and contestation. Also because people are presented with many different ways of being defined, and of defining themselves, who they are and what they know is liable to be drawn on differently at different times and in different contexts. Which means that when we make choices, not only about the internal resources which we choose to draw on to interpret any situation, but also about the lens we use and the interpretations we make about the context, these lenses include all of the potential conflicting and contradictory meanings available from both within the person, and those which make up the context of the interpretation/re-interpretation.

To try to conceptualise the complex inter-relationships between individuals and their social contexts I developed a single dimensional representation of what I see as a multi-dimensional and multi-directional dynamic movement of meaning construction.

**Figure 1:** A representation of the inter-relationship between multiple forms and sources of power, multiple discourses and discursive fields, multiple forms of knowledge, and multiple interpretations.
In the model (see Figure 1) I sought for a way to describe the construction of meaning which acknowledges, rather than hides, the power, values and assumptions which have constructed it. Therefore I have tried to include the complex inter-action between multiple forms and sources of power, multiple discourses and discursive fields and multiple forms of knowledge, plus the potential for multiple interpretations of meaning.

Fairclough (1989) wrote about three levels of discourse and power, being the immediate social, the institutional, and that arising from society as a whole. I have chosen to represent the relationship as four spheres of influence and action because I wanted to acknowledge the impact of discourses at a personal level, and the potential for each individual's construction of meaning. I have represented these as operating as/at four spheres of influence and action, ranging from the most public to the most private, from a sphere of discursive meanings which is the most acknowledged and well represented in language as well as practices, to a sphere which is least acknowledged and not necessarily clearly articulated. The movement within/between these spheres and sources is not understood to be uni-directional. There are contradictions and conflicts within and between each. It is my argument that each of us lives within all of those spheres, all of the time, and that we construct our meanings from the ways in which we, as individuals, experience ourselves in relation to other spheres and sources of power, discourses, knowledges and meanings.

From a modernist perspective the political, legal and socially embedded discourses might be seen to be more legitimate and more powerful. But from a postmodern critical perspective, institutional and social discourses are only powerful to the extent which individuals take them on as their own, and the extent to which individuals modify or reject them. For example, in the discursive field of teaching there are discourses at the legal and political levels of society which define who and what a teacher is or ought to be, within any given society, at any particular time. There are other discourses which have arisen within the social, cultural, and historic experiences of that society. Besides these 'official' discourses there are the lived discourses of how a person's immediate social environment continues to maintain and explain itself in relation to teaching/teachers. Plus the personal experience of each individual as they are ascribed, or take on, different roles in relation to teachers. All of these discourses co-exist and are potentially sites for contestation and re-definition. From this pool of discourses each
person makes selections of meanings from which they define teaching, and themselves, in relation to teaching and/or teachers.

I therefore approached this study not as a form of finding 'truths', but as a dialogic textural production which is hesitant and partial, and in which the stories are multiple, interpretive, and elusive (Cherryholmes, 1988; Elbaz & Elbaz, 1988; Lather, 1990a; 1991a&b; Sparkes, 1991). I used a dialectical approach in which thought and action, the teacher's knowledge and values, the interaction of a person and their context, and the past and present, have been brought together in a re-working and re-constructing of stories produced through a meshing and re-writing of material into a "layered account" (Elbaz, 1990; Ronai, 1992). This dialectic is both similar to the liberal meaning as a context in which conflicting ideas are uncovered and examined, and different because there is no attempt at closure or consensus. The stories are a criss-crossing of public and private discursive events in the different sites, and over time. And the language does not necessarily conform to the de-personalization of traditional research but rather reflects the intense interaction and interactivity between the multiple discourses and the personal energy and passion of those involved (Lincoln, 1990; Kincheloe, 1991; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Davies, 1992).

I recognise the complexity of the synthesis I have attempted in this research. Even as I attempted to hold this interplay of discourses long enough to describe and interpret them; as I attempted to examine each separate but inter-related site; they were moving and interacting in dynamic ways through time. There were shifts of meaning, subjectivity and positioning. And what I did also created ripples on the pool of meanings and power. But like McWilliam (1992b), I was determined to "keep the 'juice' of the problem", to examine how discourses were being used and understood; to address this complexity and to achieve my aims of scrutinising the ways in which quality teaching in higher education was being 'written'; to analyse the ways in which the group of academics valued teaching and themselves as teachers; to examine how these ideas and practices interacted with each other; and, at the same time, try to ensure that there was benefit for the group members to enable them to make links between their personal experiences and the public discourses (McTaggart, 1991a&c).
Re-view

In this chapter I have worked to establish the historical, political, temporal, and theoretical frames in which this research is situated. By outlining some of the political context in and through which the name of 'quality teaching in higher education' was being politicised I have tried to establish the discursive space in which the meanings of quality teaching were being contested.

I have introduced the three interconnecting sites from which I have collected materials as exemplar of the discursive process in, and through which, meanings were being constituted and contested. Plus the theoretical constructs of postmodern critical theory and critical discourse analysis which I am using to examine those processes. The model representing sources of and interaction between multiple discourses and multiple discursive fields, multiple forms of power, multiple forms of knowledge, and multiple interpretations, which I presented provides a visual representation of/for the complexity of this analysis.

Over the years of this study I have considered, and set aside, many issues which have impinged upon the work of academics-as-teachers but were left outside the focus of this dissertation. These include questions about the purposes of higher education; the impact of increased number of students coming into higher education and the contingent arguments about diversity, standards, and equity; the change in the status of the institution in which this study is situated and the associated changes in demands and expectations within the institution; plus the pressure on universities to be more accountable, to implement 'quality management', and to take part in national 'quality audit' processes. As one participant in the collaborative research group described it, these are the changing background, whilst teaching and learning remain central.

Pre-view - the organisation of this dissertation

This dissertation is presented in three sections. In Section One I have begun by situating the study within a social/political context. This is followed by three chapters which outline theoretical and methodological issues. There are five chapters in Section Two, each one presenting analysis of different constructions of meanings in relation to quality teaching in higher education. The central three chapters in this section focus on tracing
meanings of quality teaching in higher education in each of the three sites. These are set between, and juxtaposed against, two chapters which contain interpretations from each of the three sites. In the first of these, the meanings of quality learnings are exemplified by discourses about the desired characteristics of graduates. Whilst in the final analysis chapter I examine constructions about how teaching in higher education could be improved. In Section Three, I relocate this research in two ways. First, in the Interlude where I present an extended extract of the participants of the collaborative research group talking about their experiences in the group, and their search for a definition of quality teaching. And second, in my concluding chapter, I bring all of the threads of this research together.

Section One: situating the study

In this chapter I have introduced the historical/social/temporal context of the politicisation of discourses surrounding quality teaching in higher education, and presented an argument that these discourses were/are open for contestation and multiple interpretations. These are key concepts for my thesis as I have situated this research within that politicisation of the meaning of 'quality teaching'.

Chapter Two is an outline of 'postmodern critical theory' (Yeatman, 1990a&b; 1991a&b; 1993; 1994; 1996) as the theoretical perspective which provides a platform in which I can talk about discourse as being constructed through the intersection of multiple, conflicting meanings and multiple sources of power. In this research I pay particular attention to what Yeatman named as ‘the politics of knowledge’; ‘the politics of discourse’; and ‘the politics of representation’. In this chapter I present an outline of critical postmodern theory without critique or analysis. This is done because, as I have already stated, it is my intention to use postmodern critical theory as a basis for this research, and then, in my final chapter, to critique it and the claims which Yeatman made about the theory.

In Chapter Three I set out methodological processes and issues. I detail specific issues in relation to the three sites in which I collected my data, plus describing the processes of data selection and analysis. In this latter area I present some of the problems I encountered and the decisions I made during the analysis processes. Finally in this chapter I discuss issues of validity and ethics in postmodern research.
Chapter Four provides a very brief description of three modern theoretical perspectives, plus a brief outline of postmodernism, and the assumptions about society on which these are based. The modern theoretical perspectives which I have selected for this purpose are 'positivism', 'liberalism' and 'critical' theories. These perspectives or social theories, are used in the sense of a set of ideas and practices which, whilst they frequently remain tacit, are common currency and "available in cultural reservoirs" (Rein & Schon, 1987, p.60) for people to draw on in the process of making and conveying meaning. Therefore, whilst they are described in this chapter as discrete and separate, in my analysis these perspectives are understood as related symbiotically as ideas from both modern and postmodern frames intersect and continue to change and be reinterpreted.

Section Two: tracing meanings

Chapter Five is the first of five analysis chapters. In each of these analysis chapters I examine extracts from the various artifacts to try to identify the views of knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching which inform the ways that people talked about quality teaching within the different discursive fields. In this chapter I draw material from each of the three sites which specifically described the desired characteristics of graduates. This is done to establish a context of meaning about the purposes and direction of quality teaching in higher education during the period 1992-1996.

In Chapter Six I examine discourses relating to quality teaching from the national site. I begin with three definitions, from Chubb, Ramsden and Candy. This is followed by a wider search for definitions of teaching in higher education. In this process, by examining material from AV-CC, HERDSA, Ramsden and Ramsden & Martin I identify a pool of meanings which bring together discourses of teaching and research, teaching as scholarship, and attributes of good teachers. All of these are examined for potential links of meaning within and across those discursive fields and/or cross-links with the discourses relating to graduates.

In Chapter Seven I analyse definitions and discourses about quality teaching from the institutional site. This analysis is directed towards both looking for new/alternative meanings and continuities/discontinuities between this material and the language and meanings of previously analysed materials about graduates and from the national site.
In Chapter Eight I analyse meanings about quality teaching from the collaborative research group. In this chapter I selected materials which introduced new meanings of teaching in higher education. These include meanings of teaching as contextual, as a relationship and as personal expression. Some of these meanings connect with previously analysed materials whilst some challenge and/or disrupt meanings from the institutional and national sites.

In the final analysis chapter, Chapter Nine, I examine extracts from artifacts relating to some of the areas which were being introduced within the discursive field of improving teaching, specifically staff evaluation/appraisal and student evaluations, from each of the three sites. Here I also juxtapose materials from each of the three sites against/beside the ideas from the previously analysed materials about graduates and quality teaching.

Section Three: connecting the threads to find new questions

The material from the five analysis chapters is both a synthesis and re-telling of the discursive constructions of meaning directed towards quality teaching in higher education in these three sites, in a particular historical period; as well as an opening up of spaces and opportunities to create new meanings, for myself as the researcher, and my colleagues who shared the experience with me. At one of the later meetings of the group we discussed their experience within the research process. This extract is presented as an Interlude before the final chapter.

In Chapter Ten I draw the threads of all of this work together. The contextual and theoretical frames which I have established in Chapter One are brought back into focus to situate my findings into those frames and connect this research to current meanings. This is not done as closure, but to identify discourses and/or meanings which have become dominant and others which have been over-shadowed; to raise questions about the possibility of shared meanings; and to identify omissions within discourses, and/or conflicts between discursive fields, as spaces where academic-as-teachers can continue to participate in the on-going contestation and construction of meanings of quality teaching in higher education. In this final chapter I also reflect on and critique postmodern critical theory as a theoretical platform to investigate discursive relationships.
Chapter 2
A theory to inform my analysis

In order to be able to carry out this research I needed a theoretical place to stand. A place which would enable me to examine discourses as sources of both power and meanings and a language which would bring together for me my readings of Bakhtin's ideas of language as historical, socio-ideological and oppositional (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1981); Gramsci's work on the impact of ideology and how meanings are shared (1971); postmodern notions of discourse, knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972; 1980; 1984; Derrida, 1982); Giddens's ideas about relationships between structure and agency; plus feminist arguments for difference, pluralism and complexity (Fraser, 1989; Fraser & Bartky 1992).

However, I was not prepared to accept some of the positions of relativity and/or nihilism which appear to underpin some approaches to postmodern theory. On this basis I chose to use 'postmodern critical theory' which, according to Yeatman (1994), holds to ideas of rights, justice and citizenship, but at the same time, enters into deconstructive relationships with modernist theories to examine what those terms mean.

As I set out in Chapter 1, whilst I chose postmodern critical theory as a place to stand for the purposes of this research, I am also using that position to critique the theory. My approach to critique here is not one of comparison, or of questioning the theory, from the basis of another perspective. Rather I intend to critique the theory on its own basis and within its own construction of meaning(s). To carry out those two processes, in this chapter I outline in some detail elements of postmodern critical theory which I believe will provide a theoretical basis for my analysis. My critique of the theory then occurs as part of the final chapter, where I consider the contribution which postmodern critical theory has made to my ability to analyse and deconstruct the complexity of the materials I am working with.

Following Yeatman's argument, in this chapter I situate 'postmodern critical theory' as both drawing on, and different from postmodernism and critical theory. I then describe in some detail features of postmodern critical theory which informs my analysis and provides the frame in which I talk about the intersections of, and conflicts between,
multiple meanings and multiple sources of power. In particular I place emphasis on Yeatman's views of the 'politics of discourse, knowledge and representation' as a conceptual structure and language which allows me to recognise cultural, historical, and political construction of discourses and the potential for multiple, conflicting meanings, as well as a description of the potential, and the constraints, for individuals and/or groups to contribute to constructions of meaning.

In the latter part of this chapter I give some examples of how postmodern critical theory has been applied in areas pertinent to this research. I conclude the chapter by briefly outlining the ideas from postmodern critical theory which inform specific elements of my research position.

**Postmodern critical theory**

The theoretical perspective which I outline here has been named variously as postmodern feminist theorizing, emancipatory postmodernism, and postmodern critical theory (Yeatman, 1994). And my decision to identify this research as 'postmodern' rather than 'poststructural' was based on Yeatman's naming. My description of the theory here is based substantially on the work of Anna Yeatman (1990a&b; 1991a&b; 1993; 1994; 1996) although I also draw on ideas from other critical and/or feminist writers such as Davies, Fraser, Kenway, Lather, and Pieterse.

Yeatman herself acknowledges the contribution to her thinking of many writers from different strands of feminism and postmodernism, as well as modern emancipatory theories, in the development of her understandings of how power operates within discourses to shape reality and meaning, to frame what is possible and what is not, and to set up boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Yeatman also acknowledges that postmodern critical theorising is "emergent" and "under-specified" (1994, p.26), and that, whilst it maintains a strong tradition of emancipatory discourse, the politics of postmodern critical theory is "barely theorised" (1994, p.122).

For Yeatman (1994, p.27), as well as other writers such as Bates (1997), and Hargreaves (1997), the postmodern condition is a reality in the ways in which education and society is now experienced. But Yeatman also acknowledges that, as a theory, it is "a contested
zone" because there are many differing forms of, and reactions to, postmodernism. Because she continues to hold to the emancipatory values of modernism, Yeatman positions herself amongst the less extreme postmodernists. Postmodernism, as described by Yeatman, is not the same as 'antimodernism' because it is still connected to modernism, but 'going beyond' (1994, p.vii). She argues that emancipatory postmodernism accepts the significance of the traditions it is built upon and "does not abandon the values of modern universalism and rationalism, but enters into a deconstructive relationship to them" (1994, p.vii). This description acknowledges that theories, like other social understandings, are not made anew, but are always partly dependent upon the values, priorities and cultural definitions of prior social contestations.

According to Yeatman (1994, p.13) what postmodern theorists have in common is a position which "contests and forswears the foundationalist presuppositions of modern and modernist discursive formations" and demonstrates a "refusal to accept the founding myth of modernity: (that is) the development of society in accordance with a universal and transcendent reason" (1994, p.9). In taking an emancipatory/political position she both accepts the postmodern argument that "we have to abandon universalistic, general theories" (1990a, p.291) and refutes the assumption that this must necessarily imply "anomic relativism" and/or arbitrariness (1990a, p.292). In this she is critical of Foucault who, whilst demonstrating the webs of discursive power, "permits dominant groups to maintain their privileges", "evading normative debate ... in relation to principles of equity, justice and democracy" (1990a, p.293).

Against such perspectives, Yeatman claims that it is through contesting foundationalism that positions of power as well as ideals of truth and justice become open to question. Such questioning, she argues

> represents a crisis of authority for the western knowing subject, posed by the refusal to stay silenced on the part of those whom this subject had cast as Other.

(1994, p.27)

Yeatman states that it is only when all discourses and discursive social practices are understood to be culturally and historically contingent that they are recognised as carrying within them conflicts and contradictions of previous, unequal, social
relationships. In this understanding it is acknowledged that meaning(s) have been constructed through contestation so that "even oppositional discourses are symbiotically entwined with dominant discourses" (1994, p.14).

It is the ability to show how the assumed 'monovocal', 'monological' structures of social organisation have legitimated tendencies towards binary and totalizing constructs in modernist discourse, and the concomitant exposing of "patriarchal possessive individualism" which Yeatman (1990a, p.289) sees as the empowering nexus between feminism and postmodernism. This is because, in the process of challenging a monocultural view where experts spoke for 'clients', and men for all people, the epistemological order of the world has been disrupted, and what was presented as a closed, seamless way of knowing and understanding has been opened for scrutiny and skepticism (1994, p.8). Contemporary postmodern feminist theorising, Yeatman argues, is therefore in a "symbiotic-oppositional relationship" (1994, p.15) in which epistemological orientations are understood by comparison with, and in relation to, modernist theories.

In making this connection between feminism and postmodernism, Yeatman is arguing from a similar position to Fraser (1989); Fraser & Nicholson, (1990) and Gore (1993), but positions herself against, or opposite to Farganis (1994, p.122), who sees postmodernism as a threat to feminist "truth claims". Yeatman acknowledges that there are many interpretations of feminism based upon liberal, radical, socialist, and critical views, some of which intersect with postmodern theories, whilst others cut across, or are radically opposed to them. However what they have in common, she argues, is a recognition that the phallocentricity of 'modernist' theories leaves out a great deal of understanding about the social world (Franzway, Court, & Connell, 1989; Yeatman, 1991a; 1994). Yeatman claims that it is through the connection of feminism and postmodernist views that it becomes possible to understand how 'difference' has been socially constructed, how dominant discourses have been shaped to include some and exclude others whilst claiming to be neutral, and in the process, to establish and specify the grounds for future contestation over how issues such as citizenship and rights are determined.

The connections between that position and emancipatory social movements are both clear and complex. They are clear because there are strong connections with the position of earlier emancipatory movements and with people who were defined through their
absence, defined as different, or as Other, in the context of 'modern' discourses. In this way postmodern perspectives are:

thoroughly dependent on the ontological investments of modern politics. These investments are those that concern the value of self-determination and its relationship to the self-determining properties of the citizen community.

(Yeatman, 1994, p.x)

Such investments are also connected to values such as rights and justice, not as transcendent criteria, but necessary as "regulative norms for the very dialogic possibilities of contestation, debate and negotiation" (p.3) to take place. It is in this respect that Yeatman's arguments for postmodernism are contrary to Habermas (1983; 1990) who argues that the relativism and/or eclecticim of postmodernism threatens critical ideas of morality and justice.

The connections are complex, because by contesting the legitimacy of a transcendent authority, critical postmodernism has a problem of devising criteria for judging the adequacy of claims. Whilst acknowledging the difficulty of this project, Yeatman argues that through a deconstructive relationship with the values of modernism and its interrogation of discursive constructions of the different versions of 'truths' which we have inherited, postmodernism opens up a political, contestory space for people "who contest them in the name of equality" (1994, p.ix). But because 'equality' itself is a contested concept in postmodernism, there is no attempt to totalise the different emancipatory struggles; no assumptions of a universal humanity; no utopian vision; and no sense of completion of the process of emancipation; simply an acknowledgment of continual contestability. On this point Yeatman (1994, p.2) wrote:

There being an irresolvably complex polyphony of voices and irresolvable difference between them, all that is possible is pragmatically oriented and provisional, negotiated agreements. Since a settlement is held to be a function of an historically specific communicative pragmatics, and to have the characteristics of negotiated and provisional agreement rather than rational consensus, the politics of any one particular settlement are legitimately open for acknowledgment, discussion and challenge.
This deconstructive relationship, Yeatman argues, both ties critical postmodernism to modern criteria of right and justice, and, at the same time, sets it apart. In this form of postmodernism there is not a rejection of modernist democratic values, it is "not the same as abandoning the political-ethical project of working out the conditions for a universal pragmatics of individualized agency" (1990a, p.291), but rather a questioning of faith in universality and the possibility of taking a position from which to speak with authority. She argues that when it is recognised that claims of consensus based on rational reasoned debate are dependent upon the "ideological fiction of a horizontally integrated community" (1994, p.30), and the "systematic exclusion of those who would dissent" (p.31), a different perspective of emancipatory politics becomes possible.

Yeatman is not alone in arguing for the potential for postmodernism as having the potential for "a new and qualitatively distinct stage of democratization" (1990a, p.290) where different forms of knowledge, ways of giving meaning to the world, and a range of modes of subjectivity are made possible (Kenway, 1992; Pieterse, 1992). Other postmodern feminist and/or postmodern critical writers present reconceptualisations of ideology and hegemony which move away from ideas of false consciousness to "an understanding of ideology as a medium through which consciousness and meaningfulness operate in every-day life" (Lather, 1990, p.325). And because in postmodern society people are presented with many different ways of being defined, and of defining themselves, such writers also reject modernist ideas of a unified knowing subject who has no position from which to challenge hegemonic pressures, in favour of a notion of subjectivity being provisional, multiple, fragmented, and contradictory (Britzman, 1991; Grenfell & Crebbin, 1992; Kenway, 1992; Martusewicz, 1992). Meaning that whilst individuals and/or groups are understood to experience discursive positionings as they are located within the complex, multiple, shifting and contradictory web of discourses and discursive power, they also have the potential for 'subjectivity' in the ways in which they actively read and interpret those positions in the light of conflicting meanings, and the ways that they take up their identities to construct and govern themselves (Davies, 1991; Kenway, 1990; 1992; Grenfell & Crebbin, 1992; Crebbin 1994a).

**Emancipatory politics within postmodern critical theory**

Yeatman (1994, p.ix) claims that:
postmodern politics is associated with the contestation of what is taken to be core assumptions or values within modern democratic/emancipatory politics.

She lists modernist assumptions of objective knowledge, meaning and truth; rational and reasoned consensus; the impartial, unitary identity of sovereign subjects; and unproblematic views of political community (1994, pp.i-x); as all open to contestation. As are modernist ideas which situate those assumptions outside questions of representation, history or social/cultural construction. Against this background of critique of modernisms, Yeatman (1990a&b; 1994) uses the concepts of 'the politics of knowledge', the 'politics of discourse', and the 'politics of difference and representation', to explain ways in which knowledges, differences and meanings have been constructed within, and through, the nexus between discourse and power. Whilst these 'politics' are described as separate entities, they are understood to be intertwining processes.

When I selected postmodern critical theory as the frame for this research it was these 'politics' which I considered most likely to be useful in finding ways to penetrate beyond language and discursive surfaces and to search for underlying values, assumptions and the power to shape meanings. I will briefly outline each of these 'politics' here, and in a later section of this chapter I will indicate the significance of these ideas in the context of this research.

The politics of knowledge

One of the core features of critical postmodernism, according to Yeatman, is 'the politics of knowledge' which she describes as the "critique of epistemological foundationalism" (1994, p.28). She argues that this foundationalism is based on assumptions that language and knowledge stand outside, and are free of the power regimes in which they were constructed. Thus positing language and knowledge as a conduit (1990b, p.162) or a mirror (1991a; 1994, p.28) which remains untainted by social conditions and therefore can be claimed to be 'objective' and universal. Like Foucault (1984) Yeatman is critical of the 'disciplined' (in both senses of the word) nature of knowledge and the "institutionalised intellectual practices" and rigorous "gatekeeping procedures" (1990a, p.285) which are exemplified within modernist perspectives of knowledge. These criticisms, she argues, cannot be accommodated by changes within current knowledge
organisations but require an abandonment of tradition, a change of the paradigm (Yeatman, 1990a).

For example, from a postmodern critical perspective, knowledges are considered to be culturally and historically situated, saturated with previous power contests. Knowledge is therefore political, contested, and irresolvably multiple (Foucault 1980; Kenway, 1992; Martusewicz, 1992), and "knowing subjects are positioned within the discursive traditions that have formed them" (Yeatman, 1994, p.9). This perspective of knowledge differs from a modernist pluralist view of knowledge as culturally relative in that it takes account of the contestation and power struggles which are integral to knowledge construction. It also differs in not giving higher status to particular forms of knowledge, usually 'scientific' (Yeatman, 1991a; 1996).

Challenging the kind of 'academic knowledge' taught in education systems of schools and higher education as just one kind of knowledge, critical postmodernists argue that there are multiple forms of knowledge, and ways of knowing, emanating from different gender, class, race, and cultural groups, which have been excluded, or marginalised from schooling (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Lewis, 1990; Minnich 1990).

Taking a view that there are many knowledges which arise from the different positionings of knowers in relation to social relationships of dominance and contestation (Yeatman, 1994, p.30), knowledge can no longer be thought of as just the prerogative of intellectuals and experts as authoritative speakers. The role of the theorists, Yeatman argues, is not to take part in the gatekeeping role of legitimising particular kinds of knowledge, but to continually contest the ways in which the nexus between power and knowledge continues to "maintain and reproduce domination within modern social science" (1994, p.28), without themselves taking a pejorative position.

*The politics of discourse*

Yeatman states that "discourse is the power to create reality by naming and giving meaning" (1990b, p.155). But because reality and meaning are historically and socially constructed, they are open to contestation, re-interpretation and re-constitution. On this basis she argues that under postmodern conditions, where politics has become a network of language games (1994, p.113), discourse is both the medium, and the site, for this
political contestation and construction (1994, p.25). Yeatman describes the politics of discourse as a contest between individuals, groups, and/or 'the state', to structure meanings which direct thought, action, and/or identity. She states:

Political activity itself becomes preeminently a politics of contest over meaning: it comprises the disputes, debates and struggle about how the identities of the participants should be named and thereby constituted, how their needs should be named and thereby constituted, how their relationships should be named and thereby constituted. (Yeatman, 1990b, p.155)

Therefore, whilst the contestants share the same ground that they are contesting, the contests over meaning (for example in this study - quality teaching in higher education) constitute a politics of discourse. The boundaries of inclusion, exclusion, and meaning, are both the context, and the stakes, of that contest.

Yeatman argues that whatever the 'results' of a particular contest, discourses and/or contestations can never entirely be closed, discursive reality cannot be determined by any one discursive system, for two reasons. First, discourses are co-situated and symbiotically relational (1994, p.14). And second, because reality and meaning do not exist apart from people, "discourses depend on active subjects for their realisation and these subjects are always positioned interdiscursively" (1990b, p.164). These two factors ensure that even within dominant discourses there are contradictory and conflicting shadows from previous discursive struggles, and that individuals have the potential to draw on a range of different meanings to intentionally mobilise tensions and contradictions and actively contest a particular discursive representation (1990b, p.164).

According to Yeatman 1990b, the playing out of the politics of discourse can bring to light forms of domination which are inscribed in policies, practices and procedures. And because people are situated interdiscursively, they can draw on resources which will ensure that when they speak within a particular discourse, contradictions and incompatibilities are introduced which both reflect that position, and which change the discourse. As such, Yeatman claims that to:

embrace ... the politics of discourse is an important contribution to the democratisation of our shared conditions of life. It is one which must lead those of
us making this embrace to refuse to share in the monological, monovocal, and monocentric constructions that non- and anti-democratic individuals, groups and parties currently practise and even promulgate. (Yeatman, 1990b, p.151).

*The politics of difference and representation*

According to Yeatman, the major "contribution of the politics of difference is to politicize the nature and identity of the political community" (1994, p.90) by challenging modernist assumptions of universal standards and/or representation, and views of consensus which depend upon the systematic exclusion of 'Others' (such as women, people of different race/language/nationality/religion) (Yeatman, 1991a). As such the politics of difference questions discursive boundaries between inclusion and exclusion. Like other postmodern feminist writers such as Belenky, et. al. (1986), Elsworth (1989), and Lather (1991a&b), Yeatman criticises the 'modernist critical' view of 'agency' which, by framing power within discourses of a 'dominant class' does not acknowledge many other differing power relationships. Instead these writers focus specifically on the differences between people, and on the ways in which difference is constructed to legitimately marginalise certain groups in society. This position is not an acceptance of pluralism which hides inequalities. Contesting modernist binaries, in postmodern critical terms, 'difference' is represented as a multiplicity of excluded Others who are positioned as different on the basis of characteristics including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age and class. All of whom, in 'modernist' social relationships, are people who have been/are defined as outside the dominant Eurocentric, phallocentric constructions of power.

Yeatman uses the term 'politics of representation' to identify the processes, the "representational praxis" (1994, p.x), through which reality and meaning are constituted, and in which "representations become understood as political practices which distribute unequal power and other goods" (1994, p.14). But contrary to modernist assumptions, she argues that these discursive representations, and the values of "meaning, truth, identity (and) right" (1994, p.x) are constantly open to contestation. This contestation, Yeatman argues, does not occur outside of these representations, but works within the discursive demarcations.
However, she explains, this makes contestation problematic in two different ways. First, because "this is a politics of representation which insists on the material effects of discursive power" (Yeatman, 1994, p.31). Questions of who speaks for whom and how they are represented, and the possibility of any person speaking on behalf of another, become problematic in a situation where each person is understood to be "discursively positioned within the conjunctural historical moment of contested narratives of who they are and where they are going" (Yeatman, 1994, pp.119-120). In this way the politics of voice and representation introduces unresolvable differences which challenges ideas that a group has a coherent identity which can be expressed in one voice (1994, p.82).

Second, for those who are subsumed as subordinate within a master narrative, contesting the discourses which constitute that representation "constitutes a complex positionality" (Yeatman, 1994, p.14), which requires something other than opposition or working against. According to Yeatman, to open up a discursive space which will go beyond just revision of monological and/or binary representations, requires contestations which acknowledge multiplicity, because "the multiplication of the grounds of difference permits difference as such to emerge" (1994, pp.14-15). Yeatman claims that when the 'politics of voice and representation' comes together with the 'politics of difference' there is potential to open spaces for contestation by people who have been discursively positioned as excluded Others. But, as she warns, because contestation does not provide an alternative space, but operates within "contradictions, heteroglossia, and historically contingent features" (1994, p.14), contestation does not necessarily change existing forms of discursive domination (1994, p.31).

Together these areas present a view of contestation which is on-going but much more complex, multi-directional and temporary, than modernist views of change. Because, whilst groups can come together to contest what they see as their positionings, shared meanings cannot be assumed and settlements are considered to be strategic and temporary. Yeatman therefore argues that 'the politics of difference, voice and representation' are not based on assumptions of reason or rationality, shared meaning or a universal subject, but arise out of, and are an embodiment of, a non-consensual politics through which subjects find "their own "voice" within whatever politics of representation is at hand" (1994, p.119).
The politics of discourse, difference and representation as discursive practices

The state

Yeatman (1990b) claims that the politics of discourse and representation could only have developed in a complex contemporary society, such as the one I am examining here, in which the government has taken a strong 'interventionist' role within society and, at the same time, where the boundaries of that society are increasingly permeable to local and international influences. Whilst the state might be considered both the site and the producer of discourses, of policies, and discursive practices which flow from those policies, the contested discursive field does not only involve 'the state' and 'interest groups' as contestants, it includes a plurality of claimants and lobbyists, as well as people within the bureaucracy. Added to this, with the immediacy of the media, 'the state', and 'the public' are not only influenced by on-going and changing discourses within the politics of the state, they are increasingly being influenced by discourses which cross national boundaries.

Yeatman (1990b; 1994) argues that in Australia, the activities of 'the state' have become increasingly complex and interventionist, with a number of interlinking causes and effects. The proliferation of lobbying, interest groups and movements making conflicting claims on the state, and on its power to distribute goods and services, has meant that is no longer possible to think of the public domain as a single social space. This has been exacerbated as the state has grown to encompass virtually every aspect of everyday life, involving it in an increasing range of relationships with different individuals and groups.

In this context of a multiplicity of pressures and irreducible differences, where it is no longer possible to maintain ideals of the state as the umpire, or as an adjudicator between opposites which can be reconciled within a single standard, there is continued movement towards 'statecentric' modes of political, economic, social and cultural management. This is described as processes in which government intervenes by bringing issues to public attention, problematising them, and at the same time appearing to control them through policies (1990b). All of these factors, has led to a tendency towards "executive modes of discretionary decision-making" (Yeatman, 1990b, p.44). However this tendency is constrained by the need for highly developed networks of information gathering and dissemination to ensure maximum effectiveness and continued
legitimation of government decisions. Yeatman describes this as a form of governance in which the state:

    tends to name all aspects of social life, to bring them out of customary morality and to subject them to some kind of rational and participatory calculus. It therefore invites as it legitimizes debate about what the problems are and how they should be responded to. (1994, p.101, italics in the original)

Through such processes the state has become "the central site of social, political, cultural and economic struggle" (1994, p.x) whilst boundaries between public and private have become blurred, and public agendas and the construction of policies and programs have become politicised.

Policy

In this postmodern environment of fragmentation and conflict, and a multiplication of interests and a multitude of voices and claims, the increased state intervention and proliferation of policies is, according to Yeatman, an attempt to regulate complexity and reduce uncertainty. She argues that policy making processes are used to conventionalise reality as a legitimate subject of state agency and intervention (1990b). But the very processes of attempting to define through policies, also draws those issues into the public arena, making them open for contestation and re-definition. In this regard Yeatman referred specifically to the White Paper on Higher Education as a "reflective, rational, deliberative and purposeful discursive intervention" (1990b, p.153) which, whilst positing higher education in "the domain of state management" (1990b, p.154), brought about extended contestation and debate over higher education.

Yeatman (1990b) argues therefore that despite policies being written in a genre designed to manage issues; to gloss over contested meanings; to make things appear self evident, and to maintain power by hiding it; policies are not answers to social problems. Instead they constitute the problem and establish an agenda, in ways which both represent, and reproduce the power of specific dominant discourses. This explains why challenges to dominant discursive meaning are not always successful. But because there is no discursive closure, and because policy texts are the site and the product of discursive
struggles, the contradictions and polyphony of voices remain latent until these tensions are once again challenged.

The relationship between individuals and the state

If politics involves the reduction of complexity by means of decisions and policies, the field of political activity comprises all those who seek to affect and to contest how the agendas of policy making get framed. (Yeatman, 1990b, p.155)

Yeatman argues that postmodern critical theory makes necessary a re-examination of modernist assumptions of relationships between individuals, groups and the state. The approach to citizenship and identity suggested by postmodern politics is necessarily based upon a heterogeneous public of different individuals and groups, rather than a homogeneous community. Within postmodern critical theory there is recognition of a number of ways in which people can take part in the contestation and re-construction of meanings. One is at a personal conscious level where individuals choose to read their subjectivity and/or meanings according to the immediate context and the meanings available to them [as I described in the politics of discourse]. Another is as part of a group or movement whose "activity is submerged within the commonsense of everyday life", and which operates in "peaceful coexistence in the form of different and plural ways of conducting everyday life" (Yeatman, 1994, p.114). A third way in which people are said to be able to take part in the construction of meaning is within a public space which has been opened up by a group, or by policy decisions, as an open contestation of dominant meanings. Yeatman states that this level of contestation, within the public forum, is often "primarily symbolic" (1994, p.115), as a process of making power visible and accountable. However it requires decision-makers to respond to, as well as 'neutralise' the contestation, making consultation and negotiation necessary.

In talking about how social movements participate in these processes, Yeatman claims that groups may form and work together in a non-consensualist politics of difference (1994, p.118), on the basis of pragmatic compromise, as a process of recognised affinity as a shared problem, not shared meanings. She also states that not only are such participants situated differently, but they "continually reinterpret the movement and its goals in relation to the changing character of their own personal histories" (1994, p.119).
In this context of multiplicity and differences, Yeatman argues strongly against the legitimacy of reason, or rationality, as a 'truth' to settle differences, saying:

should reason be claimed by adherents to modernist emancipatory traditions as the arbiter of political claims, it must be perceived as an arbitrary closure of debate, an exclusion of difference. (Yeatman, 1994, p.118)

Groups may reach a negotiated settlement, but that settlement is understood as pragmatic, provisional, temporary and fragile, subject to further contestation, and fraught with its own contradictions (1994).

Not only are groups considered to be heterogeneous, but individuals too, according to Yeatman, are positioned interdiscursively and have multiple, fragmented, and contradictory subjective positions available to them. Based on Kress's views (1985) of discursive overlapping, Yeatman (1990b, p.164) states:

For any member of a social group discursive multiplicity, contestation, and difference is both a description of their history and an account of their present social position at any given time. ... The discursive history of each individual therefore bears the traces of the discourses associated with the social places which that individual has occupied and experienced.

From this perspective neither individuals, nor groups, are expected to present a unified entity. In a context of multiple discourses, and multiple differences, there is no assumption of a collective, universal subject, identity can be flexible and contradictory. Yeatman claims that an understanding of identity needs to also be:

multiple, contradictory, and changing over time. Thus there is no reason for the political actors themselves to require their own discursive interventions to be the same over time or to be singular rather than multiple. In short the politics of discourse permits a dialogical and discursive relationship to one's own identity that is likely to permit the individual actor much more pragmatic space and flexibility as well as much greater acceptance of the diverse and multiple selves of other actors.

(Yeatman, 1990b, p.163)
All of which brings into question modernist ideas of universalism, rational and reasoned consensus (1994, p.viii). Yeatman claims that whilst there is much in common between Habermas and postmodern perspectives because they both "reject the monadic sovereign rational subject" (1994, p.2), there are also great differences in that Habermas maintains legitimacy for rational consensus as a standard of validity, whilst postmodernism does not (1994, p.2). She states that consensus can only occur when those who dissent are systematically excluded (1994, p.31). However, she claims, this does not mean that postmodern critical theory accepts any negotiated settlement, but "commits itself to certain standards of validity in respect of what conduces to an open, democratic politics of voice and representation" (Yeatman, 1994, p.2). Yeatman explains that because there is no external 'truth', "all that is possible is for differently positioned groups or individuals to come together and offer their different perspectives" (1994, p.87). In this context reciprocal rights to speak and be listened to within the dialogical process of decision making are assumed. Ideally this would mean that "if the contestants are willing to acknowledge the intrinsically dialogical nature of the contested concept they are likely to welcome the contribution of their opponents" (1990b, p.163). This dialogical approach works with, and invites conflict, whilst confrontation and differences are respected as sources of information rather than being submerged. As Yeatman points out, there are significant differences between this and 'modernist' consultative processes.

**Postmodern critical theory and the politics of discourse in higher education**

Talking about the politics of discourse, Yeatman specifically pointed to the White paper on Higher Education (1988), plus the preceding Green Paper (1987), as examples of the ways in which policy:

has thrust publicly funded higher-education institutions into the domain of state management and has thereby forced conscious consideration of and debate about the social purpose and functions of higher education. (Yeatman, 1990b, p.154)

Yeatman is critical of what she terms the "government erosion of professional authority and university autonomy" (1994, p.43). She is equally critical of the backward looking response of leaders in contemporary universities who have avoided opportunities for "genuine intellectually-oriented dialogue" (1994, p.43). Such avoidance, she claims, has created a "virtual vacuum within which the anti-academic requirements of governments
for information rather than knowledge can make themselves felt" (1994, p.44). Yeatman argues that this politicising of universities, based on demands that "public universities democratize themselves, in the sense of being more accountable to the community of tax-paying citizens which funds them" (1994, p.45), could also be understood positively as an opportunity for opening up spaces for contestation of "modern Western, patriarchal rationalism" (p.45).

**Postmodern critical theory and the role of intellectuals**

In examining the role/positioning of knowledge producers, Yeatman focuses specifically on people she refers to variously as 'subaltern intellectuals' (1994, p.xi; 33-34); 'postcolonial intellectuals' (p.30); 'postfoundationalist intellectuals' (p.36); and/or 'oppositional intellectuals' (p.36); and their relationships with, and accountability to, other groups. Within this argument Yeatman appears to be situating 'intellectuals' as people who necessarily take up an overt level of political involvement within the politics of discourse, knowledge and representation. As such she is clearly not including all academics, or all 'knowledge producers' in these categories of 'intellectuals', but only those who are positioned inter-discursively and/or who choose to involve themselves in the public level of 'the politics of representation' in open contestation of dominant meanings.

Yeatman claims that in rationalist terms intellectuals have been posited as having the authority of knowledge and objective 'reality' which enables them to know the real needs of people better than they do themselves (1994, p.29). This kind of authority is maintained by clear distinctions, training and credentials, between those who can legitimately claim membership, and those who cannot. However she says, there are some Others, for example women and blacks, who have been allowed to become 'intellectuals' provided they become assimilated as part of the group. These are the 'subaltern' intellectuals who are expected to hide any values or differences in order to remain in the group. If they refuse to be assimilated, in the view of those who define the boundaries, these 'postcolonial', 'postfoundational' and/or 'oppositional intellectuals' are "not proper scientists" (Yeatman, 1994, p.30).

Intellectuals who are labelled as 'non-scientists' can be distinguished because, according to Yeatman, whilst they are knowledge-producers to Others who are produced by
knowledge, as researchers they are also aware that they are positioned both within and across groups which expect allegiance, and as such, are subjected to contradictory demands of accountability (1994, p.36). They are part of, and are expected to communicate within, academic discourses, but also feel accountable to non-academic intellectuals and ‘non-intellectuals’ who may be part of any research process.

In talking about the politics of representation Yeatman positions such intellectuals as having two linked but somewhat conflicting roles. That is of confronting relationships of domination (1994) and opening up discursive spaces for others to voice their differences, without themselves becoming dominant. In order to be able to do this, Yeatman argues, oppositional intellectuals need to be positioned as part of, but not subsumed within, both/either groups, and able to communicate with and critique both discursive positions.

In particular, this means doing what is situationally appropriate in order to open up space for non-resolvable dialogues between those who are differently positioned in relation to this politics of representation. (1994, pp.37-38)

**The relationship between postmodern critical theory and this research**

As the researcher I have been aware of my own involvement in the politics of representation as being, and moving, within and between the three sites, and between the requirements of this academic discourse and the interests of the participants in the collaborative research group. By situating this research within the politicisation of quality teaching in higher education in Australia, at a particular time; as an examination of the process; and as an attempt to elucidate the complexity of meanings associated with quality teaching in higher education, I have tried to keep the discursive spaces open for different voices and alternative interpretations.

I have addressed issues of accountability to, and my relationship with, the collaborative research group in a number of different ways throughout this dissertation. In Chapter I, I briefly introduced myself as part of the context; in Chapter 3, I talk about my positioning in relation to the methodology I am using and my relationship with the collaborative research group; and in the Interlude, I present some of the discussion within the group about the research process.
Besides the theoretical position which acknowledges discourses as sources of power and meaning, Postmodern critical theory has provided me with a range of other important ways of thinking about my research within/into the politicisation of quality teaching in higher education during the period 1992-1996. Yeatman’s explanation of the complex relationships between the state and those who participate in the construction and contestation of meanings in the politics of discourse and representation enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of the on-going, provisional and contradictory nature of policy construction. This is significant in this research as I attempt to situate the meanings of the institution and the Government and its agencies, within the wider pools of meanings which are available.

Yeatman’s statement that policy operates to open up discursive spaces at the same time as attempting closure, and her explanations of how contestation is both within and over meanings are also important. These ideas, plus the notion that meanings are constructed as symbiotic and oppositional, remaining available within the discourse as resources which can be re-generated, have enabled me to more clearly identify the space and the purpose of this research.

The ideas of politics of discourse, knowledge, and representation provide me with a conceptual structure, and a language, to explain the discursive constructions and contestation I am analysing. And in particular, Yeatman’s description of the politics of representation has enhanced my awareness of how a politics of meaning is significant at the experiential, and everyday levels, as well as in the wider arena. These insights have enabled me to see both the potential for each person to contribute to the construction of meanings within their own situation, and the difficulty and fragility of contributing to change within the national and/or institutional sites.

Besides providing me with a discursive space in which I can tease out multiple, contesting meanings about quality teaching in higher education, these ideas have also enabled me to put into words the kinds of political position I found myself in, and made me aware of both the significance and the difficulty of my project. As a postmodern critical researcher I need to be able to critique my own political/discursive positions, as well as others. To do this I need to be sensitive to the significance of the subjectivity of both myself as a theorist, and my interlocutors; self-conscious about my own historical
positionings and the ways in which that informs my analytical concepts; and conscious of the positions which I take in relation to other participants in the research context to ensure that I do not foreclose the discursive spaces.

Re-view

In this chapter I have set out those aspects of Yeatman's postmodern critical theory which I considered to be the most useful in providing me with a theoretical structure for my research. I have deliberately chosen to describe, rather than critique the theory here because, in the process of conducting the research, my aim is to test the efficaciousness of the theory-in-practice and examine the ways in which 'the politics of knowledge, discourse and representation' contribute to an understanding of discursive positioning, subjectivity, democracy and/or power.

Pre-view

The next chapter, Chapter three, is a continuation of this first section where I situate the study. In it I describe in some detail the three sites in which I collected my data, and the critical discourse analysis processes I use. I also talk about issues of validity and ethics in postmodern research, some of the methodological issues and problems I encountered, and the decisions I made during the research.
Chapter 3
Methodologies: sites for collecting materials; processes of data selection and analysis; issues of validity and ethics

This research is an examination of contestations and the politics of discourse and representation, over and within, the meaning of quality teaching in higher education, in Australia, between 1992 and 1996. In this chapter I describe the three sites where I collected materials for this study, plus the data selection and analysis processes and issues of validity and ethics within this form of research. In conducting this research I have called on a range of methodologies. I used ideas from naturalistic research in the initial stages of collecting and selecting data, whilst the analytical work draws mainly on critical discourse analysis. There are three sections in this chapter. First I discuss the sites as contexts in which discursive artifacts have been constructed. Second, I describe the processes of data selection and discuss Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis which informs my analytical approach. In the third and final section in this chapter I present an overview of issues of validity and ethics in critical postmodern research.

By using postmodern critical theory and the politics of knowledge, discourse and representation, outlined in Chapter 2, as the central point from which to approach this research, I am consciously taking a political position. That is, I am working from an assumption that education, like other social organisations, is discursively constituted within particular historical, social, political and economic contexts. Within this I am assuming that whilst structures, practices and meanings associated with ‘quality teaching in higher education’ have been shaped in certain ways as a result of past unequal conflicts, the contradictions and conflicts between contesting meanings and values remain "like sedimentary layers" Yeatman, 1990b, p.164) to be "mobilised by readers who are discursively positioned to do this" (1990b, p.165), and providing opportunities for further challenges.

I am also assuming, as Yeatman argued, that if "discourse is the power to create reality by naming and giving it meaning" (1990b, p.155), then ‘the politics of discourse’ begins from a premise that language, as an element of discourse, is not a neutral conduit of meaning but is
the site for contestation over meaning. On the basis of that argument, any involvement from within the National Government, and/or a university to create policy about, or for, teaching in higher education can be understood as a discursive intervention into the meanings of teaching in higher education.

This research, as an investigation of the language from within each site, but also recognising the links and relationships between each of the sites, is a study of politics of discourse, of construction of meaning and contestation of/over/within meanings of quality teaching. And whilst this research focuses on a small group of academics working within one institution, during a limited time period, as such it provides a platform to examine the capacity of ‘the politics of discourse’ as a descriptive concept.

**The sites - collecting and selecting material**

The artifacts for this research were collected from three sites over a time span of four years. From those artifacts the extracts which I have selected to analyse represent only a small portion of what was and is available and which might well provide for very different readings from the one presented here.

In this section I describe each of the three sites, and the decisions guiding my data collection and selection. As I pointed out in Chapter 1 although the sites are described in this linear form as separate, they were closely linked. My descriptions of the sites are necessarily different because each has a different structure, history and public visibility. The first site is documents published and available at the national level. The second site is public documents from within what is now called the University of Ballarat, and the third site is material collected from the discussions of the collaborative research group comprising six academics, plus myself as participant-researcher, all of whom were employed within that institution during the period of the research. In outlining the first two sites my main emphasis is on describing my decision making processes as to what constituted appropriate material for my analysis. The collaborative research group, and the CAUT professional development group which preceded it, were set up by me for particular purposes. Because of this, my description of the group includes details about the values and assumptions which informed
the ways I went about establishing and working within the group as well as the data collection and selection processes.

Documents in the public domain from the national site

Originally this analysis was planned to be confined to documents emanating from National Government and its agencies, but as I began my analysis of that material and, at the same time, worked with the collaborative research group, I became aware that this was a limited view of the potential discourses which were in the public domain from the national site. So I then expanded this site to include documents from the National Government and its agencies; the AV-CC, HERDSA and the unions; plus some of the writing of Paul Ramsden. Ramsden has written extensively about teaching in higher education and visited the institution twice during the period of my research, the second time on government commissioned research (Ramsden & Martin, 1994a&b).

The National Government

The interest of the National Government in higher education in general, and the quality of teaching in particular, is evidenced in the number of policies and reports which were published during the five years 1987 – 1993, all of which were available as resources during the period of this study. These include documents from John Dawkins and Peter Baldwin who both held the portfolio of Minister for Employment, Education and Training between 1987 and 1993. For example:

For example:-

Dawkins, Hon J., 1987, Higher education, a policy discussion paper, (Green Paper);
Dawkins, Hon J., 1988, Higher education, a policy statement, (White Paper);
Dawkins, Hon, J., 1990a, Can Australia become the clever country? Australia Day Address, 26 January 1990;
Dawkins, Hon. J., 1990b, Quality of teaching an issue for all: an initial statement;
Baldwin, P., 1992, Government policy on higher education;
Baldwin, P., 1993, How the universities quality audit would work.
Besides these there was a steady flow of documents from within the different organisations and agencies established under the auspices of the National Government. For example:


Linke, R., 1991, (Chair), Performance indicators in higher education: Report of a trial evaluation study commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training;

Business & Higher Education Round Table Report, 1992, Educating for excellence,


Chubb. I., (Chair), 1992a, The quality of higher education: Discussion papers from the Higher Education Council, National Board of Employment, Education and Training;


Mayer Committee, 1992a, Employment-related key competencies for post-compulsory education and training: a discussion paper;

Mayer Committee, 1992b, Employment-related key competencies: a proposal for consultation;

Mayer Committee, 1992c, Putting general education to work: The Key Competencies Report;

DEET, 1993a, Participation in higher education, Higher Education Series, Report 21;

DEET, 1993b, National Report on Australia's higher education sector;

DEET, 1994, Diversity and performance of Australian Universities, Higher Education Series, Report No 22;


In addition there were commissioned reports such as:


NBEET, 1992, Skills required of graduates: One test of quality in Australian higher education, Commissioned report No. 20;
Warren Piper, D., 1993a, Quality management in universities, Vol 1;
Warren Piper, D., 1993b, Quality Management in universities, Appendix;
Candy, P., Crebert, G., & O'Leary, J., 1994, Developing lifelong learners through undergraduate education, NBEET Commissioned Report No. 28,
Lally, M., & Myhill, M., 1994, Teaching quality: the development of valid instruments of assessment.

From all of these government sponsored documents I have chosen to focus largely on two, these being Chubb, I, 1992b, *Higher Education: Achieving Quality*, and Candy, et. al., 1994, *Developing lifelong learners through undergraduate education*, with occasional references to some of the other materials. There are several reasons why these two documents appeared to be the most appropriate for my analysis. The materials on which these documents were based were put together from consultations with a wide range of sources. They both have specific statements about quality teaching as well as materials on most of the other topics I wanted to investigate. Besides this, Chubb's report was specifically commissioned to make the Government statement on "Quality". It was also commended as an 'excellent resource' by the (then) Chair of CAUT, Don Anderson at a meeting of people interested in CAUT, in Melbourne in July, 1993. Phil Candy, who was a professional developer in higher education and an executive member of HERDSA, visited the research institution and spoke to people about the lifelong learning commission. This included members of the collaborative research group.

In 1992 Prof. Chubb was the Chair of the Higher Education Council when that committee was requested by the Minister for advice on the quality of higher education and how HEC, as part of NBEET, was going to address that issue. After consultation with employers, professional associations, and academic and student unions, the Council decided to invite submissions from four groups within higher education. These were the National Union of Students; the Federated Australian University Staff Association and Union of Australian College Academics; the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations; and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (Chubb, 1992a, p.iii). These submissions were published in 1992a. The recommendations of the Council were published in 1992b.
Candy et. al. (1994) were commissioned by HEC to identify and describe "characteristics of undergraduate education which enable and encourage graduates" (p.iii) to continue learning. The project team examined in depth materials from 19 courses from 10 disciplines and 3 special programs from different universities and conducted interviews with course coordinators, staff, students and graduates from those courses. They spoke to employers, senior personnel in universities, and professional organisations and also called for formal submissions in the media. The work of the project was supported by a Steering Committee comprising representatives from HEC, DEET and the AV-CC.

Paul Ramsden

As another source of discourses to place beside the material from government sponsored reports and professional organisations I decided to also include some of the writings of Paul Ramsden because his work on teaching in higher education was being frequently cited in the CAUT group and by members of university management. He was also known through personal contacts with some of the people in senior management of the institution, as well as participants in the collaborative research group. Ramsden had published a number of books and articles both independently, and on commission for the Government. However the major source of material for my analysis here, Ramsden, P., 1993, Effective teaching in higher education, is difficult to locate politically because the paper comes from a National Teaching Workshop (1993) which was funded by DEET, and at which he was one of the keynote speakers.

HERDSA, the AV-CC and Unions

Besides the material which was being produced at the national site from political sources, there were a number of other organisations which, through various consultative processes, were producing material about quality teaching in higher education. Therefore, to try to capture some of the ideas from those sources, and to add to the range of potential discourses about quality teaching in higher education arising from the national site, I decided to include artifacts from three professional organisations from within higher education in my analysis. Those organisations were the Higher Education and Research Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AV-CC) and the
unions for academics. Initially this was the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations (FAUSA), the Federated Council of Academics (FCA), and the Union of Australian College Academics (UACA) but during the period of this research the professional organisations had a change of identity which was a reflection of the changes occurring in other structures of higher education. In 1993, FAUSA, FCA and UACA were amalgamated to form the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

HERDSA and the AV-CC both contributed to the process of defining qualities and attributes of effective teaching in higher education through the dissemination of their guidelines for quality teaching (HERDSA, 1992; AV-CC, 1993). There is no indication in either of the documents as to the identity of the author(s), or their connections with those organisations, but because they were published under the name of the organisation they can be read as statements from that organisation, carrying the discursive power associated with that name.

Some of these guidelines were very similar to teaching behaviours which have been identified as generic skills of good teachers in a great deal of the literature based on research in other areas of education of the time (Neumann, 1994). However the language of these two documents (HERDSA, 1992; AV-CC, 1993) make very different positions available to the reader. In the AV-CC document the language is very authoritative. Without citing any references, 'objective' statements were made that "effective teachers" act in specifically defined ways. Whereas the check-list of questions in the HERDSA material is claimed to be presented as being "non-threatening", non-evaluative and as "an opportunity to challenge yourself" (1992, p.1). That does not mean that the HERDSA material gives any less specific messages about what the authors believed constitutes good teaching, but the reader is invited to engage with the material in a different way and encouraged to feel that they, as 'good teachers', have interpretive powers. For example, in their introductory paragraphs the authors stated "not every question will be relevant in every situation, and even when they are relevant, they have to be interpreted in your particular context" (HERDSA, 1992, p.1).

The work of the professional unions is most relevant in my analysis of discourses relating to improving teaching. For this analysis I have drawn on materials, mainly from the union journals, which presented the unions' side of the argument.
Organising the analysis

For my analysis I found that it made more sense for the reader if I presented materials from all of these sources in the same order in each chapter in which they are analysed. This order was then established, based on source, with priority given to national government sponsored materials, and date of publication. So that any extracts from Chubb will be followed by Ramsden and then Candy et. al. with material from HERDSA, the AV-CC and the unions used as sources of alternative discursive constructions and/or meanings where they are appropriate.

I am aware that this ordering itself has constructed a reading and just as I have struggled with questions over which site should be presented first [see 'Stages of analysis'] I have been concerned that by beginning with statements from Chubb, or from one of the Ministers where appropriate, this could be construed as giving primacy to those voices. Particularly as these voices come with the discursive power and authority of their positions. But because I am arguing that the politicisation of issue of 'quality teaching in higher education' is not only an attempt for closure, but also provides spaces for contestation, I chose to begin with the voices of 'authority', recognising them as constructing the discursive frame in which contestations and meaning making were being played out within the period 1992 to 1996.

Public documents from the institution

The University of Ballarat was selected primarily because it is the institution I was working in at the time when I was working with the support of our CAUT grant and the subsequent development of the collaborative research group. But I also considered it to be appropriate for this research for five other, interconnected reasons. First, because it had been established primarily as a teaching institution under the terms of Colleges of Advanced Education [as I described in Chapter 1]. Second, the Goals and Mission statements of the College (1993a) at that time, presented teaching and learning as the prime focus of the institution. Third, in the report giving approval for the institution to become a university, it was areas related to course development and accreditation, "commitment to quality of teaching", (Smith 1993, p.21) and "commitment to students" (p.20) which were commended. The fourth reason is
that, in his speech in response to the announcement of University status, the then Director, Prof. John Sharpham, said that Ballarat would be foolish to attempt to do in a short time what the bigger, more established, urban universities had achieved over a long time, but that we could build on our strengths and aim to become the best teaching university. And finally, this attention to teaching was acknowledged in the second round of quality audits which focused on teaching and learning, and in which Ballarat achieved a much higher ranking than in the first which focused on institutional quality assurance policies and practices in teaching and learning; research and community service (CQAHE, 1995a; Powell, Illing & Healy, 1995, p.23). All of these factors point to teaching, and the quality of teaching, being a high priority in the institution, making this institution an appropriate site for research on quality teaching in higher education in Australia.

From within the university I collected public documents from management, administration, and professional development. I then selected from those materials a variety of statements about graduates, quality teaching, and improving teaching. The documents which I selected included:

Mission and goal statements - 1992; 1993; 1996;
Quality Audit documents (Else, 1993; 1994);
Extracts from the 1994 Quality Management Project;
Annual Handbooks 1992 - 1995;
Material from the Support Centre for Effective Learning and Teaching (SCELT) including the University Staff Development Program, 1995-7;
Academic promotion documents 1993 - 1995;
Material relating to the academic Staff Appraisal Scheme;
Documents relating to student feedback on teaching and subjects, 1993 - 1995;
Terms and conditions of employment of academic staff, 1992 - 1995.

These documents were written for different purposes and different audiences. Some of them were designed to be addressed to an audience outside of the University, some to management levels within the institution, whilst others were written for academics and/or students. And because these documents were produced by different people, for different audiences, and at different times, they do not necessarily have any uniformity of language or
meanings. However each of the documents, in its own way, had status and discursive power within the institution.

The collaborative research group

This component of the research was designed to serve what I hoped to be two complementary purposes. One was to provide examples of how this group of academics-as-teachers talked about quality teaching. The other, and at least equally important, was to find and define a space to create an inquiring and critically reflective educational community within the tertiary education setting. In the establishment, and the on-going processes of this group, I drew on ideas from critical and/or feminist research which I had accumulated and re-constructed for my own needs over preceding years of learning and teaching about change in education.

Ideas about educational change from research with teachers

In setting up the research group I drew on a range of research which provide different perspectives on educational change. These perspectives included critical reflection; teacher as researcher; participatory and/or collaborative research groups; and critical action research. Although different in their emphasis, all of these research ideas were grounded in an acknowledgment of the importance of teachers' personal construction of their professional understanding, and a recognition of the connection between a teacher's personal constructions, their teaching practices, and the social contexts in which they work. These approaches also all view educational change as an experience which takes time and commitment.

I now provide a brief outline of each of those ideas and then discuss the ways I drew them together in the collaborative research group.

Critical reflection

There is an enormous amount of written material advocating that teachers reflect on their work (Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Groundwater-Smith, 1991). However reflective approaches
were/are also much criticised on the grounds that it is easy for teachers to remain at the level of 'what works'. As Smyth states, "the defect of the reflective approach is that it is severely constrained and limited by what it ignores" (1987, p.159). What many forms of reflection ignore, what remains as un-questioned and silent, is a recognition of history, of time, of culture, and of how unspoken values and ideological assumptions have constructed, and continue to constrain, teachers and their work (Popkewitz, 1991; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). Based on critical views of ideology, critique and dialogical thought, it is therefore argued for a need for forms of reflective critique which, whilst acknowledging the need for practical reflection, gets beyond 'what works', to probe and question personal assumptions, to begin to unpack the discourses which frame and structure views about education, and to see the interconnectedness between individuals, education and society (Smyth, 1989; Zeichner 1991b&c; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Crebbin, 1992a-e; Griffiths & Tann 1992).

Teacher as researcher

Teacher-as-researcher, or 'enquiry-based teaching', is promoted by its advocates as a way for teachers to avoid the effects of habit, and to get behind their taken-for-grantedness of everyday practice, by researching their own practices and connecting their practitioners' tacit knowledge, practical decisions and actions, through self-critical purposeful examination of issues relating to their teaching (Groundwater-Smith, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991; Rudduck, 1991; Miller, 1992). To some extent this approach connects with some forms of reflection and may also include ideological critique through an examination of how teachers were/are positioned and how they position themselves and others. But for some writers enquiry-based teaching is more dynamic than reflection because it is seen as a more purposeful commitment to becoming insightful in learning about their work (Groundwater-Smith, 1991; Kincheloe, 1991). However this approach of teacher-as-researcher is criticised because of what are seen as inherent dangers of focusing on the technologies of teaching, and of personalising school reform efforts. It is of concern that teachers can be isolated from the social dynamics of the problems in education, whilst blame for the problems, and responsibility for their resolution is placed on teachers (Beyer, 1989). As an advocate for teacher research Rudduck argues that these problems can be overcome by developing "self-critical communities within which teachers can treat educational policies, practices and institutions as problematic" (1991, p.140, citing Carr, 1986).
Collaboration

Within both the 'teacher-as-researcher' and 'teacher reflection' approaches to educational change there is an acknowledgment that changing ideas and assumptions is very difficult for teachers working on their own. This is because of both the complexity of becoming aware of underlying assumptions, and the emotional stress of experiencing change. Therefore, whilst change is still understood as a necessary process of self-defining, self-questioning, and self-evaluation, collaboration in 'support groups', 'partnerships', or 'reference-groups' is recommended as a way to provide both support and challenge (Nias, 1987a; 1992b; Tripp, 1987; Rudduck, 1991; Baird, 1992).

Collaboration is defined as requiring a some-what stable, non-hierarchical, voluntary organisation in which peers share common goals of inquiry and learning together. Boitt (1992) distinguishes between situations of 'contrived collegiality' and 'collaborative cultures' and claims that administratively imposed strategies for 'development' or 'improvement' are not appropriate to achieve personal change which must come from within an environment which values and builds upon what teachers already know, encourages uncertainty and high risk, and values conflict, unpredictability and multiple interpretations.

Participatory and/or collaborative research groups

There is a long tradition in feminist practice of bringing women together in women-only groups for the purposes of mutual support, shared meaning making, and/or consciousness-raising (Weedon, 1987). Critical feminists have extended the potential of such groups to include participatory and/or collaborative research. Reinhartz (1992, p.181) described this approach to research as a process where the people being studied make decisions about the study format and data analysis, thus she claims, altering the role relations of people involved in the project. Important aspects of this form of research group were the multiple, sequential interviews or discussions, negotiation of interpretations with, rather than for, or of, participants, and the acceptance of differences, not as false-consciousness or resistance, but as creative potential to question everything, including the interpretations of the researcher(s) and powerful Others (Lather, 1986; 1991a; Reinhartz, 1992).
Critical action research

Action research can be a form of independent or collaborative reflective inquiry. However, beyond that description, there are many interpretations of what action research means and how it can be used (Gore, 1991; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Kemmis, 1991). Depending upon the discourses in which it has been described, it has been interpreted as a formula to be applied to staff development; as an innovation to be co-opted; or as politically aware praxis (McTaggart, 1991b). Emancipatory action research as described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988a) is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry in which teachers reflect upon and critique their work with the intent of understanding the implications of their practices, and their situations. This form of research therefore requires the understanding of the perspectives of others involved in, and affected by, the actions. To be defined as critical or emancipatory, the research must also enable participants to go beyond reflection on their actions, to empowering them to collaboratively understand and participate in the theoretical and political discourses which have framed themselves, their actions, their interpretations of those actions, and the social environment in which they work.

Notes of caution

None of these approaches to change are inherently empowering for the participants, or for others (Gore, 1991; Kemmis, 1991; Zeichner, 1991a; Griffiths & Tann, 1992; Pieterse, 1992). Whilst recognising that practitioner research and action research have the potential to create spaces to hear teachers' voices, and to involve teachers in political work, both Gore (1991) and Noffke (1991) warn of dangers that, in intellectualising the process, there are risks that participants' own interpretive categories will be displaced. There are also potential risks of a 'leader' undermining the development of democratic, collaborative, participatory research because whilst a leader might take a facilitating role in supporting the establishment of a group, and/or in helping to identify and problematise issues arising from participants' discussions, that person must be aware of the need to pass the responsibility for the work back to individuals and/or the group (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). In addition, Gore (1991) warns that even this kind of intervention could be interpreted as the 'intellectual' taking a major role in leading and functioning as the agent of Others' emancipation.
Establishing the group and collecting materials

The group of six academics-as-teachers, plus myself as participant/researcher, met fortnightly during 1993 and 1994. In the first year this was as part of a larger group, whilst in the second year it was only the seven of us. In each year, after the initial establishment phase for which I was responsible, the group was shaped and used by all of the participants as a form of collaborative research into our own teaching.

In the first year I was the leader of a team, funded from a CAUT grant, which brought together 24 academics and senior administrators from six different disciplines, who met in large and/or small multidiscipline teams, using problem-based learning to address their own identified issues and concerns (Crebbin et. al., 1994).

Towards the end of 1993 I invited all of the CAUT participants to work with me during 1994 in a collaborative research project in which we would continue meeting regularly to talk about particular concerns and issues in our own teaching. [see Appendix A for copy of the letter]. From those who expressed an interest in being involved I selected six people. The basis of this selection was my wish to have a group which was small enough to establish personal contact within the group, but large enough to achieve as much diversity of experiences and ideas as possible. The group comprised two academics from each of three different discipline areas - science, nursing and education; three males and three females; some with teaching qualifications, and others who had none; some tenured, others on contract; and ranging in experience and employment level from Level A to Level C.

The group members

The members of the collaborative research group, except me, are consistently named within the analysis by pseudonyms. The group members in the study are identified as:
Stephen and James from the School of Science;
Bridget and Jane from the School of Nursing;
Peter and Anne from the School of Education; plus
Wendy, as a participant/researcher, who is also from the School of Education.
Because the university is a relatively small community, most of the other identifying information about levels of employment, experience, and/or educational background, is provided in generalised form rather than individual accounts.

*Group processes*

In both the CAUT group and the collaborative research group, participants shared their ideas about teaching and learning, their understandings of what constitutes quality teaching, and what impact the multiple forces of institutional and government pressures and changes were having on those ideas. In the process we examined in some detail our own, and each other's ideas about students; current teaching practices; feelings about their teaching; reactions to the ways in which the institution evaluated and/or rewarded good teaching; and the extent to which the systems of promotion and appraisal were seen to act as incentives or disincentives to improving teaching. Over the two years participants were also provided with materials written by Ramsden (1988; 1992), Candy (1991), HERDSA (1992), AV-CC (1993), Ramsden & Martin, (1994) and myself (Crebbin, 1993). These readings were introduced in response to questions and issues which arose in the groups.

*Data collection*

The material used in Chapter 5 in relation to the desired characteristics of graduates came from recorded notes of a discussion in the large group early in 1993 when we were defining our goals and purposes (Crebbin et. al., 1994). All of the material from the fortnightly meetings was written down as both a record of the project, and as a form of communication with the participants between the meetings, which was then available for further discussion.

All of the other extracts which I analysed were selected from the regular fortnightly meetings of the small group during 1994. The 1994 group discussions were tape-recorded, transcribed by me, and returned to participants between each meeting. This provided the basis for further on-going discussion and analysis. In our discussions we drew on biographical material and placed that in the context of participants' examination of our own interpretations of good teaching; the social and institutional constraints which we identified;
and the impact of the multiple discursive constructions of quality teaching in higher education which were occurring at that time.

*My role*

As initiator and research writer, whilst trying to open up spaces for other academics to identify and work on their own concerns, I was continually aware that there were a number of inherent dangers in my situation. Not the least of the dangers was that participants in the collaborative research group could become objects rather than agents and what had been constructed in the name of empowerment and development for the participants could become intrusive, invasive and pressuring (Cherryholmes, 1988; Elsworth, 1989; Lather, 1990; 1991b). I tried to avoid these dangers by focusing on the multiple discourses and interpretations available within the group; by foregrounding ambiguity; by encouraging participants to determine the direction of the group; by collectively confronting and/or creating new meanings; by taking the role of participant-researcher who shares all of the data and the analysis with the participants; by being sensitive to the need to represent participants' voices; by using 'thick data' which remains open for further interpretation by both myself and members of the group (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Louden, 1991); by attempting to ensure that the outcomes of the group members' research was relevant and useful to them; and by interrogating my own use of authority within the group (Lather, 1990; Britzman, 1991; Erikson, 1995). I also examined the social relations of the research act and my multiple positions as the project facilitator, researcher, and PhD. student, with the group participants [see Interlude, pp. 305 - 316].

**Data selection and analysis**

**Multiple approaches to analysis**

As a postmodern researcher I approached this study assuming that the artifacts that I was working with are just a small part of a complex multi-dimensional web of interacting discourses. Because of this I have selected modes of analysis through which I can attempt to maintain, rather than diminish, that complexity. I have drawn on a range of qualitative research approaches to provide me with constructs I needed to interrogate the texts for
multiple readings, to position this research within a recognition of discursive embeddedness in past practices; and to build a synthesis of the inter-relationship of individual, institutional and national positionings within the continual shifts and realignments of the discourses about/within the definition of quality teaching (Lather, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

These approaches were selected for their potential to identify issues of power and positioning, and at the same time to open up spaces for difference and ambiguity (Crandall, 1990; Lather 1990; Yates, 1992). The idea of selecting a number of different approaches and putting them together in a combination which I see as appropriate for this particular analysis is not new or unique in qualitative research (Kincheloe, 1991; Lather, 1991a; Reinharz, 1992; Weiner, 1994; Rhedding-Jones, 1996).

Naturalistic research

To begin my analysis I drew on ideas from naturalistic qualitative research (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985; Crandall, 1990) to facilitate the selection and categorising of the data. This approach has been used in an attempt not to pre-construct the meanings of the research through the establishment of pre-defined categories for the data, but to investigate the data and draw meanings which are embedded within the material itself. Therefore this was done in an attempt to "grasp a sense of the meaning that others ascribe to their own lived worlds" (Kincheloe, 1991, p.147). As a way of mapping qualitatively different ways in which people experience and understand the world around them, naturalistic research shares some common ground with Yeatman's politics of discourse. Both acknowledge the embeddedness of meanings, assume the potential for different interpretations and meanings, and reject the appropriateness of an "appeal to some transcendental criterion" (Yeatman, 1990b, p.162), to resolve matters of interpretation. [The application and use of this approach is described later in this chapter under the heading of 'Stages of analysis - selecting and grouping the data', p.86]

Discourse analysis

It is not appropriate here to elaborate on the wide variety of approaches to discourse analysis which are now encompassed under a range of labels including:- social linguistics (Gee,
deconstruction (Weiner, 1994; Lather, 1990); narrative analysis, (Mishler, 1986; 1995; Roe, 1992); feminist content analysis (Reinharz, 1992); feminist poststructuralist analysis (Davies, 1990; 1991) and/or policy analysis (Rein & Schon, 1987; Codd, 1988; Throsmorton, 1991; Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992; Gilbert, 1992b). All of these have contributed to my understanding of discourse analysis and formed a background for this study, but were not considered appropriate for this analysis.

Working from an assumption of the potential for multiple discourses within each of the three sites being studied, I acknowledge that my analysis is just one amongst many potential readings of the material (Rabinowitz, 1992). Because documents and spoken language are both assumed to contain multiple meanings, contradictions and structured omissions (Codd, 1988) the aim of this analysis is not to provide an authoritative or 'correct' reading but to attempt to use the potential for multiple interpretations as a way to identify ideology in statements and documents, and to open up conflicts of interest within the social world which they claim to represent (Codd, 1988; Fairclough, 1989). And, whilst acknowledging that spoken and written language can be considered to be two very different genre which "make fundamentally different uses of the resources of the linguistic system" (Kress, 1985, p.44), in my analysis I emulate other researchers, particularly those who have been involved in interpretive analysis, who have applied the same processes to a variety of different written and spoken texts, adapting the process as they see appropriate (Kress, 1985; Fairclough, 1989; Reinharz, 1992).

Based on these assumptions, my analysis has been a process of looking for an accumulation of meanings through intersections, parallels and/or contradictions within and between texts. This approach has also been necessary because, as Fairclough (1989, p.85) states:

Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible. If one becomes aware that a particular aspect of commonsense is sustaining power inequalities at one's expense, it ceases to be common sense, and may cease to have the capacity to sustain power inequalities, i.e. to function ideologically. ... invisibility is achieved when ideologies are brought to discourse not as explicit elements of the text, but as background assumptions which on the one hand lead the text producer to 'textualize' the world in a particular way, and on the other hand lead the interpreter to interpret the
text in a particular way. Texts do not typically spout ideology. They so position the
interpreter through their cues that she brings ideologies to the interpretation of texts -
and reproduces them in the process. (original emphasis)

Accepting this premise, my analysis proceeded from assumptions that texts, spoken and
written, have been constructed to work within the bounds of 'commonsense' and to call up a
number of different versions of meaning whilst, at the same time holding covert ideological
meanings, and providing 'cues' as to the 'most appropriate' reading. These cues frequently
are provided in the ways that opposing meanings are discredited, or alternative meanings are
contained by giving them some limited credibility but then subsumed within the dominant
meaning. In this way, texts can be read as a process of trying to 'colonize' and 'naturalize'
meaning, without underlying assumptions becoming visible (Iannoccone, 1985; Kress, 1985;

Critical discourse analysis

As I stated in Chapters 1 and 2 the ideas of deconstruction of discursive meanings is an
important element in Yeatman's idea of postmodern critical theory. For this reason, and to
actually be able to do the kind of analysis I wanted to do, I needed to find an analytic tool
which would allow me to work with discourse not only as language but as a form of social
practice saturated with contesting ideologies and powers, and texts as artifacts of power
relationships and as examples of the politics of discourse and representation, set within
particular social, political, ideological and inter-textual contexts (Kress, 1985; Weedon,

So whilst I have some reservations about Fairclough's views of "relationships of causality
and determination", cause and effect, and of "power and hegemony" (1993, p.135) my main
tool for critical discourse analysis is based on his "three dimensional framework of analysis"
(1993, p.136). In describing this framework Fairclough (1993, p.136) states that:

each discursive event has three dimensions or facets: it is a spoken or written language
text, it is an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation
of text, and it is a piece of social practice. ... The connection between text and social
practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice: on one hand, processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of the social practice, and on the other hand the production process shapes (and leaves 'traces' in) the text, and the interpretative process operates upon 'cues' in the text. (original emphasis)

It is because of this recognition of the three different dimensions of discourse, and the interconnection between those different dimensions, that I found this analysis model useful. I needed a linguistic approach to look at the words which people have used, and the ways in which they used them. But, to understand the meaning-making processes, and the politics of discourse and representation, I also needed tools which would enable me to identify dialogical tensions which are available for multiple interpretations and to be able to unpack some of the underlying assumptions which were called upon to shape those interpretations. As well as Fairclough's model I have also drawn on some of Kress's ideas (1985), particularly those of positioning the reader and the use of metaphor. The connection between these two authors is quite close as Fairclough himself acknowledges his debt to Kress.

*A discursive event as language which is both produced and interpreted*

In his approach to linguistic analysis Fairclough (1989; 1995), like Kress (1985) and Halliday (1978), views language as a social semiotic and, as such, an expression of meanings and values which shapes how a particular topic can be expressed. Therefore, whilst the linguistic analysis is framed within questions about vocabulary and grammar, they are also about the use of words and metaphors which may be value based and contested (Fairclough, 1989, p. 110). One example is the use of pronouns such as 'we' and 'you', and categorical statements like 'should' and 'must', are used to position the reader in a certain relationship with the text and limit the possibility of alternative interpretations. Other examples are in the ways that sentences are constructed to identify or divert matters of agency by nominalizing particular meanings; by being presenting an object or issue as positive or negative; and/or through active or passive voice.

Based on the writing of Kress (1985), Fairclough (1989; 1995) argues that "both the production and the interpretation of texts are creative, constructive interpretative processes"
(Fairclough, 1989, p.81). Because of this, both authors claim that an examination of how the reader is positioned and instructed about who, what, and how to be, in relation to what is presented and the wider social context, is an important part of discursive analysis. For example, a group of linguistic strategies which have been identified as institutional impersonality, and/or individual invisibility, operate through the use of abstractions to hide any sources of authority and create a sense of objectivity which appears timeless, unchallengeable, and in which human agents are absent, yet speak with authority. Another strategy is the use of an empty syntactic subject position, which invites the reader to identify with, or to place themselves within, the meaning of the text (Kress, 1985; Fairclough 1995).

Because I am working with both written, public documents and material from verbal discussions, I have found that there are instances when these strategies for linguistic analysis do not apply. The kinds of language techniques which Kress identified as institutional impersonality and/or individual invisibility are rarely found in group discussion, although they do occur, for example, at times when a person uses the word 'one' as a pronoun. There is also a different relationship between the speakers in a group than that between a writer and a reader. So whilst there are still elements of positioning and attempts to naturalise the value assumptions of the speaker, in spoken text the use of "I" is more common, and in group situations "we" sometimes is a strategy to gain identification and shared meaning, but sometimes it can also mean 'we as a group'.

The use of metaphor operates on a different level, not as positioning the reader, and/or listener, but as an ideological process of 'naturalising' the social, by turning an issue which is problematic into something which is obvious by calling up other shared ways of thinking, to impose "a prior and systematically organised set of values" onto an object or group (Kress, 1985, p.69). As such, metaphors are seen as an important component for establishing 'commonsense' meanings in an area where meanings are being challenged or re-negotiated (Fairclough, 1995).

When discourse is understood as the site, as well as the outcome of contestation over meaning, interpretation also needs to include the discourses which are available for the interpreter to use. According to Fairclough (1989; 1995), ideological constructs, in the forms of stereotypes and 'common-sense' assumptions, constitute the frames and scripts which are
likely to be called upon during interpretation. But these presupposition are not qualities of
the text, because although there are linguistic and contextual cues situated in the text, they
are brought into meaning, in different combinations, during the process of interpretation.
Working from this view, critical discourse analysis takes the focus away from "seeing
meaning as a purely linguistic property of linguistic forms themselves" (Fairclough, 1989,
p.152) and places emphasis on interpretation as meaning-making.

In this context Fairclough (1993; 1995) argues that linguistic analyses do not make sense
unless they are set into a wider social context of the discursive practices from, and into,
which interpretations and meanings are situated, because "the richness of the ideological
elements which go into producing and interpreting a text may be sparsely represented in the
text" (Fairclough, 1995, p.74). This is a similar argument to that of Yeatman (1990, p. 163,
citing Threadgold, 1988) when she refers to the "text-context dialectic" in which the text is
"a metaphor for social structure and culture". This means that, in the process of analysis I
needed to be aware of two things, the first being absences in the texts, and the second being
the resources I was drawing on as an interpreter to identify those absences.

A discursive event as social practice

The third dimension of analysis in Fairclough's model, that of social practice, examines the
past and present power relationships which contribute to the shaping of the discourses, and
how, in the present, those discourses are "positioned in relation to struggles at the
situational, institutional and societal levels" (Fairclough, 1989, p.166). In this way he brings
into focus the historical nature of texts and discourses as being both situated in past
discourses and as being transformed in the present (Fairclough, 1993, p.137). This facet is
an important aspect in my analysis because I am examining the intersection and interaction
of discourses within and across three sites.

Another aspect of Fairclough's model which is important for me is that he assumes that
discourses are commonly combined and/or contesting rather than operating separately. In
this way, working from assumptions of both dominant inscription, and the potential of
multiple meanings, it is possible, within the second and third dimensions of analysis, to
search for what Fairclough (1993, p.137) calls "interdiscursivity" and "the normal
heterogeneity of texts" and, at the same time acknowledge the "discursive multiplicity which constitutes the identity of any one individual" (Yeatman, 1990, p.164-5).

**Critical discourse analysis - connections and critique**

This approach to interpretation as meaning making, with assumptions of multiple and contestable meanings and the need to challenge commonsense, is not dis-similar to some critical and/or feminist approaches to deconstruction where deconstruction is claimed to provide spaces to identify what is 'unsaid', what is missing in the texts. For example, Weiner (1994, p.101) argues that to deconstruct is to "analyse the operations of difference and the way meanings are made to work". Other critical/feminist writers claim that deconstruction can provide spaces to confront commonsense by using processes of reading 'against the grain' and to identify what is 'unsaid', what is missing in the text. These are argued as processes which do not proceed from random doubt but are an interrogation of competing forces, inconsistencies and ambiguity within the texts themselves (Cherryholmes, 1989; Davies & Harre, 1990; Minnich, 1990).

The strength of the critical discourse analysis frame, for me, is that it provides a way to examine materials, written and spoken texts, as language, with a linguistic view of form and meaning; as an understanding of people drawing on, interpreting and producing available discursive practices differently; and as social practices and contexts as acknowledged socio-historical discursive artifacts which constrain and shape interpretation and meanings.

However I do have reservations about Fairclough's critical model. Particularly as it was originally presented, under the same name, in 1989 when his analysis was presented as a very structured linear process consisting of three stages, "description", "interpretation" and "explanation" (Fairclough, 1989, p.26; 109) with several subsections in each stage, not as in the later material, as "text", "discourse practice" and "social practice" (Fairclough, 1993, p.136). In his later model he talks about "facets" (1993, p.136) rather than "stages" (Fairclough, 1989, p.26). These may seem like small adjustments, but the result is that the analysis process becomes potentially much more interactive rather than linear and therefore more appropriate for a view of discursive processes as complex and multidimensional. Another change is that, in describing his 1993 model, Fairclough states that "questions of
power and ideology may arise at each of the three levels" (1993, p.137) whereas in his previous model (1989) Fairclough said that it was only at the third stage, that of "explanation" where it is possible to identify "power and domination and the ideologies which are built into these assumptions, and which make ordinary discourse practice a site of social struggle" (1989, p.162). These differences may be real, or illusionary, or it may be that in the 1993 paper he is focusing on a 'discursive event' rather than on describing the analysis process.

A larger concern for me, in deciding to use critical discourse analysis as a tool for this research, is Fairclough's somewhat modernist use of ideas of ideology and hegemony. This is a concern because although I agree with him that "events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power" (1993, p. 135), from the postmodern critical perspective, whilst acknowledging the inequalities of power, I want to take a more Foucaultian view of power as diffused and partial rather than causal or determining (Gore, 1993; Yeatman, 1994).

Despite those concerns I decided to use critical discourse analysis. But I have chosen not to use it in a prescriptive, structured way, but rather to use the framework of three dimensions/facets, but with a much more dialectical approach in which language, thought, knowledge and values, the past and present, and interaction of people and the context, are brought together (Elbaz, 1990).

Four different social views

Following sociological traditions of separating different ideological perspectives, the four social 'theories' which I am using for my analysis are modernist ideas which are categorised as liberal, positivist and critical, plus postmodernism. Because these perspectives are presented in more detail in Chapter 4, I present them here very briefly, and therefore as broad-brush representations of each one in terms of knowledge, relationships, learning and teaching. The four social views are 'Liberal', 'Positivist', 'Critical' and 'Postmodern Critical' theories.
Liberal thought was/is based on ideals of individual freedom and equality in which knowledge, and cultivation of the intellect, are seen as very important parts of personal as well as social development. From the liberal perspective knowledge exists as an external truth which can be best arrived at through dialectic argument and logical reasoning. Learning and teaching are seen as processes of mutual growth through a love of learning and an active involvement in seeking for knowledge. This knowledge then enables people to take civic responsibility and provide moral leadership.

Positivist ideas were/are directed towards finding one-best-way to gain control over what is seen as the unpredictableness of the physical and social environment. In this perspective an hierarchical social structure is thought to function regardless of individuals, as a neutral and rational order. Knowledge is an objective truth, which can be attained through value-free empirical research. Based on these assumptions the role of the teacher is as an expert, or a skilled technician, who can pre-define, structure, direct and evaluate learning, whilst learning is an accumulation of standardised information.

Critical theory developed as a reaction against both liberal and positivist notions of knowledge and social organisation. From this perspective knowledge and relationships are seen as being shaped through on-going social inequality in which powerful groups seek to legitimate their views, which are inevitably biased and partial. In this perspective education is seen as a way to empower people to work together to challenge inequalities. On this basis the kinds of teaching and learning which are supported by critical theory are those which enable learners to question and critique social frameworks as well as develop problem-solving and practical skills which will contribute to the meanings of the individual and/or the group.

Whilst there are a wide range of interpretations of Postmodernism they are all based on assumptions that modernist theories are no longer adequate to describe or address current social problems. One of the tenets of postmodernism is that meta-narratives of knowledge and social organisations are no longer possible. In this perspective discourse is seen as the medium through which knowledge, power and meaning(s) are constituted and communicated. However knowledge and power are seen as multiple, partial, contextual and potentially diverse. Learning is understood to be an individual process of constructing
meaning(s) within a complex environment, whilst teaching, as a power relationship, has both the potential to enhance learning and be a dangerous imposition.

**Stages of analysis - selecting and grouping the data**

What I wanted to achieve in my analysis was to not only make comparisons between verbatim statements within each of the analysis chapters, but also, to extend my analysis to try to gain a sense of potential meanings which were embedded within the statements.

The first step in my analysis was to go through the material from each of the three different sites and to analyse it, using a naturalistic research approach, according to the priorities and emphasis within each site. As a result of this process I discovered two things. First, that whilst there were some common threads of language and ideas across all three sites there were very few areas of commonality. Second, that sometimes even when the same language was being used, it seemed to be being presented and argued from different value positions.

These findings brought me to the question of how I could best demonstrate and argue these similarities and differences. One solution which presented itself at that point was to analyse and describe each site separately and to wait until the concluding chapter(s) to draw out these findings. But I was not satisfied that such an approach would make it easy for the reader to maintain a perspective on the similarities and/or differences between the different sites, nor that the complexity of the meaning making processes, and the on-going discursive interaction within/between the sites, which I am attempting to research, would be adequately represented in that way.

I then decided, on the basis that the materials from the national and institutional sites were most alike, to use the headings which had evolved from the national material and try to 'fit' the analysis of the collaborative research group. I quickly found that to do this would be to distort and/or omit much of what the collaborative group said.

My next step then was to try to give the material from the collaborative group primacy and to "fit" the material from the other two sites into the headings from the group. Again this was quickly found to be inappropriate, not the least because such an approach seemed to
emphasis an adversarial position of "them and us" which distorted the inter-relationships of
the three sites.

My next approach was to conduct a wide search through all of the research material, and the
theoretical frames to find some appropriate way to put the material together without pre-
empting meaning by fore-grounding the very things which I was seeking to draw from the
material. That is, the different ideological and value positions which may have been called
upon to inform and construct the meanings within and across the different sites.

Finally, in discussion with one of the members of the research group (21.12.95), I developed
a multi-dimensional frame as a context in which I could juxta-pose my analysis of materials
from the three sites and the four social theories. Within those two analytic dimensions I
decided to use chapter headings of 'definitions of quality learnings - graduates', 'definitions
of quality teaching/teachers' and 'improving teaching' on one plane, and to use categories, or
guiding structures, of knowledge; learning; relationships; and teaching; on the other. These
latter four guiding structures were selected because they are areas which are most closely
connected to this thesis and they are elements where it is possible to identify significant
differences between the different social views which I am using in this analysis as potential
sources of meanings. These dimensions are represented in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions of quality learnings - characteristics of graduates (across the three sites)</th>
<th>Definitions of quality teaching and/or teachers (each of the three sites)</th>
<th>Improving teaching through processes of evaluation/appraisal (across the three sites)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>knowledge</td>
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<td>learning</td>
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<td>relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2: My analysis frame presented in two dimensions*
With the support of this framework I have used the concepts of knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching as lens to look for meanings within each analysis chapter, and as headings at the end of each of the analysis chapters to summarise some of the main threads of meaning.

Issues of validity and ethics in postmodern research

Validity

In carrying out interpretive discourse analysis I have accepted the view that adherence to any methodology "cannot guarantee the truth of research conclusions" (Louden, 1991, p.xv). Objectivity and validity are not claimed to come from methodological rigidity, but from locating the study within historical and political discourses and by being reflectively self-conscious of my own, and others' positionings within and across those discourses (Cherryholmes, 1988; Kincheloe, 1991; Eisner, 1992). I have also tried to achieve what Lather (1986) referred to as catalytic and face validity by sharing and recycling the data, and the emerging analysis, with the group members, providing them with opportunities to respond to the data, and analysis, and transform their own understandings and practices. At two stages of the analysis, after my first cut and construction, and in an almost-final-draft form, the analysed material was sent to each of the participants. This is seen to be part of the verification of this interpretation, it was also as a continuity of the inquiry, in which the group members shared in the process of locating their ideas within the contesting discourses (Lather, 1986). As McWilliam (1992a, p.36), states:

The researcher and the researched as co-theorists is the culmination of research in that, in emancipatory inquiry, the negotiation of meaning by way of reworking and reconstituting the stories produced out of research through analysis/actions which emerge out of the process, is the raison d'etre of the entire study. (original emphasis)

Postmodern research is not a quest for certainty. To do research in this context is to move into deconstructive inquiry which dis-allows claims of certainty and totality. It is telling stories which do not end in comprehended knowledge but that are always beginning, always becoming (Lather, 1991a, p.185). Because there is no text, person, or event which is free of preconceptions, research methods and interpretations are understood in this thesis to be
always shaped by the traditions and understandings from which they historically came. Acknowledging that "the question one poses is obviously conditioned by the concepts and beliefs one has, as well as by one's own particular interests and concerns" (Soffer, 1992, p.235).

Another challenge to traditional views of validity is the acceptance in postmodern research that meanings alter within historical time/place and that each interpretation, re-interpretation will be different from the original. However an interpretation is understood to continue to be 'valid' in the sense of being 'effective' while it continues to have meaning and to allow a group of people to understand something about themselves and their own questions (Soffer, 1992, p.240).

*Ethics - identity and power*

I have thought a great deal about the issue of anonymity for the individual participants, and for the institution, and have decided that whilst I could take a number of steps to protect the rights of the individuals, the need to quote from specific documents such as Mission Statements and historical records, makes it impossible to disguise the identity of the institution. Because of these concerns I decided that my analysis of material from the institution should be confined to documents which were publicly available.

In relation to the rights of the people who volunteered to participate in the research project I have been sensitive to the micro-politics within the institution. Some of the steps which I took to try to avoid their identification were to (i) enter into written agreement with each person that individual results will not be released without their specific authorisation and that they have the right to withdraw consent for part, or all, of their data at any time (ii) collect and store all information from the case-study under pseudonyms; and within the research project I have (iii) continued to negotiate with individuals, and the group, as to which parts of the data and interpretations can be made available.

Whilst carrying out this research I have been also aware that, from the postmodern perspective, where all research is understood as an enactment of power relations in which each researcher brings their own values and assumptions, and their own agenda (Popkewitz,
1991; Yeatman, 1994), I as the researcher, could no longer hold a privileged, spectator, position. As the researcher in qualitative, interpretive analysis I made many judgements which, from my position inside the web of discursive constructions about teaching and higher education, are "unavoidably subjective" (Kincheloe, 1991, pp. 119; 146). Particularly within the collaborative group I was very conscious of the paradoxical position of my role as facilitator and as the researcher/thesis writer where my voice is one of author/ity (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Gore, 1991; Noffke, 1991). In accepting the potential power of those positionings I recognised that I could not avoid the "masters' position", but endeavoured to minimise the impact of it through collaborative and political self-critique (McTaggart, (1991a & b) and collective self-reflection (Schartz, 1993) [see the Interlude as an example of this].

Re-view

As I have argued here, and in previous chapters, this research is situated within, and part of, the political construction of meanings about quality teaching in higher education. In this chapter I have described the sites in which my research is based, and the kinds of analytic processes I have used. But this has also been a story about the methodological questions which I have needed to address, and the decisions I made, as I moved through the process, with each decision bringing with it new opportunities and dilemmas. For this reason, as well as my own discursive positionings, my readings of the data are partial (in both senses) and contestable. For a researcher, this is both safe and problematic. It is safe because there is no expectation of being 'right', but it is problematic because, as the researcher I needed to constantly address issues of validity and ethics which expose the power relationships and the fragility of the undertaking.

Pre-view

I move now to Chapter 4 where I will outline four perspectives or social theories and the assumptions about society on which they are based. These three modernist theoretical perspectives, liberal, positivist and critical, plus postmodernism, are introduced here as a set of ideas which, whilst they frequently remain tacit, are part of the pool of meanings which are drawn on in the process of making, conveying, and structuring, meanings. Whilst these
social theories are described in chapter 4 as discrete and separate, in my analysis these perspectives are understood to be related symbiotically as they have been developed over time in relationship with each other, and which continue to intersect with, contest, change, and be reinterpreted within discursive contestation.
Chapter 4

Social meanings as theories: classifications as tools rather than structures

Because of the focus of this research, as an examination of current discourses to find multiple, contesting meanings of quality teaching in higher education, in this chapter I set out a brief description of some of significant basic assumptions of three modernist Western 'social theories':- liberal; positivist; and critical; as well as postmodernist theory. These 'theories' are presented here because, in accepting that language is not transparent, it is necessary to identify alternative sources of meanings which are available for people to draw on. Therefore 'social theories' are used in this research in the sense of ideas, values, meanings, and practices, which whilst they frequently remain tacit, are common currency and "available in cultural reservoirs" (Rein & Schon, 1987, p.60) to be drawn on in re-construction of meanings. These ideas, as they have been constructed over time, are also understood as carrying the discursive power of prior contestations. So, whilst they are described in this chapter as discrete and separate, in my analysis these perspectives are understood as symbiotically related as ideas from all perspectives intersect and continue to change and be reinterpreted.

There are many views about education, about knowledge, teaching and learning, social organisations and relationships, and about change in educational organisations. Each view is based upon different ideas/ideals about how society is, or should be. Each social perspective or social theory has, implicit or explicit, understandings of society, social organisations, human relationships and power, values of justice, right and truth, plus ideas about the place and value of education, and the origins and legitimacy of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1971; Giddens 1977). On this basis, although acknowledging that the lines between theories are not as clearly drawn as the naming and demarcation suggests, and that there are differences within theories, I am basing this thesis on an assumption that meanings connect with, draw from, and affirm, ideas within those different social perspectives. All of which I believe are part of contemporary social currency, thus informing meanings.

These outlines are not presented from the perspective of a 'theory' in the sense of formal, scientific knowledge, but as shared understandings of social organisation. To the extent
that these ideas have been integrated into the discourses and discursive practices within Australian society, they have potential to impact on the ways that politicians, employers, educational administrators, teachers and students, talk, think and act in relation to teaching in higher education.

Modernist theories

Whilst some of the ideas which underpin 'modern theories' draw on traditions which can be traced to early Greece, some writers argued that the development of modernity and 'modern' ways of thinking began at the time of the Enlightenment, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Bowen, 1978; Giddens, 1991). Modernity is characterised by these writers as a desire to liberate human beings from traditional constraints and to bring under control "features of the social and natural worlds that previously determined human activities" (Giddens 1991, p.211). Supporters of this view attribute Bacon with being responsible for the development of the philosophy of the scientific method which became the "doctrine of empiricism" (Bowen, 1978, p.35). The application of the 'scientific method' was seen as the way to control and order both nature and society, whilst rational understanding and reasoned argument were understood to be the way beyond the dogma of religion, tradition, and historical social organisation.

This does not mean that there was/is only one interpretation of modernity. There are a number of different interpretations which evolved in response to different social circumstances, at different times, in different societies throughout western history. I have chosen to focus on 'liberal', 'positivist' and 'critical' social theories because these ideas are frequently grouped in this way in social theory. Also, I believe these ideas most directly impinge on, and provide a context of meaning for, the discourses and discursive practices which are encompassed within this research.

Liberal thinking

Foundations of liberal thought

The meaning of the concepts freedom, equality, justice and knowledge in modern liberal thought continue to draw on traditions which date back to ancient Greece. Liberal thinkers hold individual freedom as their ideal. According to Giddens (1991, p.210) liberal political thinkers:
have sought to free individuals and the conditions of social life more generally from the constraints of pre-existing practices and prejudices. Liberty is to be achieved through the progressive emancipation of the individual, in conjunction with the liberal state, rather than through a projected process of revolutionary upheaval.

The meaning of 'freedom' in early Greece was restricted to adult males of a certain class, but, for Aristotle, the hallmarks of 'freedom' were the capacity to participate in government and in the development of knowledge, through a search for truth and meaning. He is quoted as saying "man is most truly free when able to cultivate his desire to know" (Taylor, 1960, p.14). The Greeks believed 'knowledge' as 'truth' existed as a reality external to any person, and that this supra-personal truth could be achieved through dialectic argument according to the impersonal rules of logic. In dialectic argument knowledge was uncovered through open critical examination of ideas until a consensus was achieved. It was both a competition and community, a contest of minds and a community of scholars, where intellectual innovation was a shared rather than an individual possession, and where status depended upon the quality of each person's contribution and the judgement of peers (Gouldner, 1965, p.110). However both Socrates and Plato were aware that the dialectic was susceptible to abuse "as an instrument of intellectual sadism and refined hostility" (Gouldner, 1965, p.116). Another source of new knowledge, according to Plato, was through 'metastrophé periagogé', where the person turns what they known around into an object of inquiry, the known is converted to the unknown by asking 'why' (Klein, 1960, p.32). This private, rather than public, source of knowledge has its current equivalent in some forms of reflection.

In early Greek tradition humans, and human activity, were thought to be necessarily arranged hierarchically. People were born into their social positions and had a duty to accept and perform that predetermined role (Anthony, 1977). Because it was not possible to achieve equality by nature, it was a necessary part of the political role to achieve justice through laws. For example, Aristotle argued that one of the functions of the state was to redress inevitable imbalances and create a certain kind of equality through processes of 'distributive' and 'corrective' justice (Gouldner, 1965, p.137). Therefore it was held that the best social environment was one which ensured some level of equality and justice whilst maintaining freedom for individual development.
Throughout history these ideals have remained constant, but the 'best' way to achieve them has undergone a number of re-interpretations and transformations as Western society went through social and religious upheaval, revolutions and wars, each of which brought challenges and changes in the regimes of church, aristocracy and the state (Taylor, 1960). One period of re-interpretation was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the same time as scientific rationality gained its ascendancy. Another was the eighteenth century, a period of revolution and unprecedented world exploration. Throughout those times 'liberal' writers argued from different perspectives about the best relationships between individuals, their social group, and the state, and, whilst coming to different conclusions about the balance between individual rights, 'the common good', and the role of the state, they all argued for equality, justice and freedom of choice (Commins & Linscott, 1947).

Modern liberal thinkers such as Hobbes, Rousseau, and Mill all argued for the need to improve life experiences, and had faith that it was possible to find the 'one-best-way'. They recognised and accepted that there were different perspectives on how universal values such as 'justice', 'freedom', and 'equality', might best be achieved, but continued to hold to the belief that knowledge could be ascertained as 'truth' through reasoned and rational debate, and that the discovery of these 'truths' would lead to social progress.

Writing in the middle of the seventeenth century, Hobbes argued that by nature humans were competitive, selfish, prideful and warlike, and therefore the only way that people could live in peace was "to confer all of their power and strength upon one man" (Hobbes, 1947, p.6). His solution to social problems was to create a 'commonwealth by institution', which would be agreed to by the majority. Because he recognised the power of different opinions to bring discord or war, Hobbes also argued that those who have sovereignty should:

be judge of what opinions and doctrines are averse, and what conducing to peace; ... what men are to be trusted withal, in speaking to multitudes of people; and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they are published.

(Hobbes, 1947, p.11)
Therefore freedom in Hobbes' terms was the 'liberty of subjects', to do things about which there were no legal restrictions and the freedom to act within the law, but not to question it.

Writing approximately 100 years later Rousseau claimed that social organisation, far from bringing equality and freedom, had brought inequality as an unavoidable consequence. He argued that governments, in the process of making laws to protect people and property, had become oppressive, and that history showed that those with power and wealth were corrupt, systematically undermining the rights of citizens by treating the complaints and appeals of the weak as seditious (Rousseau, 1947). His solution was that, because social living had become unavoidable, the only legitimate form of social organisation must be through 'social contract' in which all government must rest only on the consent of the governed.

In the nineteenth century John Stuart Mill also reacted to what he saw as the tyranny of political rulers. He argued that previously held faith in democracy had been misplaced and that "the tyranny of the majority" can be more formidable than despotism because "it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life" (Mill, 1947, p.139). Therefore he stated:

there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways. (Mill, 1947, p.139)

Mill argued for freedom of conscience, freedom of association, freedom of thought and action, "absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects" (1947, p.147). He rejected dogmatic proclamations of church and state and the ideas of writers like Hobbes who wanted to maintain 'truth' through censorship. He argued instead that wisdom could only come from being open to criticism, from operating from doubt rather than certainty, listening to all other opinions, and thus correcting and adjusting ideas through reasoned and rational thought.
In regard to education, Mill (1947, p.252) was critical of government intervention seeing increasing government involvement in public instrumentalities, including universities, as a 'great evil' which threatened all freedom. He stated:

>a general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government ... in proportion as it is effective and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. (Mill, 1947, p.248)

He also expressed great concern about the kinds of knowledge being taught saying that education had come to mean cramming from books and argued strongly for reinstatement of the Socratic dialectics. He said that until people are systematically trained to think and question there would be few great thinkers, and a low general average of intellect.

**Liberal views on education**

In the liberal perspective education has always held a very important place in the development of both individuals and the whole society. Whilst the capacity and desire to learn continue to be held in very high regard:

>The central idea of liberal education is therefore the idea of individualism and individual freedom. Its tradition is that of liberal revolt against state authority, religious dogma, and all the elements of the old regime. ... It is part of the tradition of the enlightenment and the age of reason. It is centrally concerned with the struggle of reason against ignorance, moral values against brute force, freedom against tyranny. (Taylor, 1960, p.10)

Unlike the narrower 'liberal studies' this idea of liberal education is not tied to specific subject matter but focuses on the ways in which study is conducted. According to Klein (1960) and Taylor (1960) the characteristics of liberal education are questioning, a genuine wonderment, and study being done for its own sake. That is the idea of learning as a creative experience which has liberating effects on the individual.
Whilst accepting the necessity in modern society for formal institutions of learning, Taylor (1960) and Klein (1960) were both critical of the way in which learning at all levels of education has become meaningless and boring; that knowledge has become 'fossilized'; and education is too much under the direction of political ends. They both argued that education should be for the nurturing of imagination, spontaneity, a creative spirit, and for the development of open and active minds. And, like Mill, they claimed that without such capabilities it is difficult to sustain either thinking individuals or a community of interested citizens.

**Higher education**

During the nineteenth century intellectual training and critical scholarship were strongly advocated as appropriate outcomes of higher education. Cardinal Newman, founder of the first university in Ireland in the nineteenth century, took Aristotle's idea of 'knowledge for its own sake, as desire to know' as a strong principle in his description of the purpose of a university. Newman wrote scathingly of a university education which filled minds and memories with information without "enlarging the mind" or "cultivation of the intellect" (1976, p.126-131). From this point of view one of the most important potential results of a university education has been believed to be a particular quality of mind which, according to Newman (cited in Pelikan, 1992, p.153):

"is an acquired faculty of judgment, of clear-sightedness, of sagacity, of wisdom, of philosophical reach of mind, and of intellectual self-possession and repose," acquired by "discipline and habit".

A slightly different version of that quality of mind, expressed at the inauguration of Australia's first university, the University of Sydney, eight years later was that undergraduates would:

we may reasonably hope, possess a well-cultivated and vigorous understanding; they will have formed the habit of thinking at once with modesty and independence; ... Above all, they will have attained the truest and most useful result of human knowledge, the consciousness and confession of their comparative ignorance.

(Woolley, cited in Candy, et. al, 1994, p.iv)
Within liberal thought, higher education has therefore been given wide ranging responsibilities. One of the earliest of these, according to Boyer (1990), was to prepare students as the next generation of civic and religious leadership. This was extended in the nineteenth century, to the development of the community, and "to contribute to building a nation". "The goal was not only to serve society, but reshape it". (Boyer, 1990, p.6, italics in the original).

Current liberal views on higher education

Thompson (1984) stated that in the second half of the twentieth century universities have four missions, teaching, research, service to the community, and criticism, all of which are closely interconnected. She argued that, from Mill and Newman the liberal tradition draws a 'tacit connection' between the development of knowledge, the attainment of knowledge, and the "just and moral use of that knowledge by educated men" (Thompson, 1984, p.229). In similar terms Allport (1960, p.57) stated that the goal of higher education:

is to inspect and to criticize, to improve and increase this cultural cumulation. Higher education seeks newer and better solutions to the physical, intellectual, and moral predicaments of mankind.

Barnett (1990, p.23), after an historical analysis, stated that higher education continues to embody an essentially liberal outlook. He argued that the idea of higher education has within it two recurring themes of inquiry into knowledge, truth and reason which remain strong within universities. That is "the liberal conceptions of knowledge as an end in itself, and of the value of individual persons" (1990, p.69) leading to a freeing of the mind and individual self-empowerment, plus dialogue and criticism leading to social development.

In relation to the first of these themes, there are a number of liberal writers who are critical of current teaching and learning approaches in higher education (Thompson, 1984). This criticism was expressed in relation to academics using lectures and exams to cover and summarise standard materials (Taylor, 1960). Whilst Barnett (1990, p.150) claimed that the kind of 'learning how to learn' which leads to intellectual development,
advocated by liberal views, is not supposed to be a cosy experience, but rather it is both demanding and unsettling.

In relation to the second theme, that of social development, both Thompson (1984) and Barnett (1990) argued that liberal thinkers see fostering the right and capacity to criticise and dissent to social and political practices as one of the most important roles of higher education. Thompson stated that the critical function of higher education is tied to both desires for academic freedom and the need for scholars to foster and exercise civic responsibility. On this basis she argued that the mission of criticism carries connotations of social and moral leadership in all areas including the uses to which research findings are put, as well as criticism of the state. To achieve this kind of critique she argued that the university should appear neutral or apolitical, "to protect the critical function of its members" (Thompson, 1984, p.79) and "to preserve its status as a haven for individual dissent" (Thompson, 1984, p.256).

**Positivism**

**Foundations of positivist thought**

There are a number of different strands of thought which have arisen from different historical, cultural, and economic, directions which now inform positivist ideas about education. In this brief outline I will concentrate on four of these strands:- the image of science; images of appropriate social structures; the impact of capitalist, economic thought; and psychology as a view of learning. Whilst these strands are different in some respects, they all share the same underlying assumptions. They value a logical and objective view of science, society, and the economy, and support a belief that the natural sciences and the social sciences can be equally well understood through value-free empirical research. And whilst faith in rationality can be traced as one of the central themes of western thought extending as far back as Plato, in modern positivism, rationality became 'scientific' and inductive, rather than deductive.

This image of science supports/is supported by a view that through research people can gain control of their environment, and by using the accepted criteria of the impartial, objective examination of an object, or a situation, measurement and observation, a universal truth can be attained. From this perspective it is assumed that values can be
separated from facts, and that such 'facts' and 'scientific' explanations are free from cultural, historical, or personal bias.

In the seventeenth-century enthusiasm for the new methodology of empiricism and the technology of scientific apparatus, the 'mind' was seen to be less important; indeed it was regarded by many as a hindrance, especially because it had the feature of 'imagination', which could interfere with the proper collection and systematization of data. (Bowen, 1978, p.36)

It follows then, according to this argument, that 'right' answers can be arrived at, and, because they are 'universal truths', they can be generalised as rules to any new situation. In applying the same argument to problems in educational administration Hoy & Miskel (1982, p.28) claimed that "the road to generalized knowledge can only lie in tough-minded scientific research, not in introspection and subjective experience".

A second strand of thought in positivism relates to what is considered to be the most appropriate structure of organisations. In this perspective an hierarchical structure is understood as both necessary and natural. Anthony (1977) claimed that the hierarchical view became dominant in Western thought in medieval times in the feudal system, and was then carried into other social organisations during the industrial revolution. Modern positivist organisational practices demonstrate a clear acceptance of power being the prerogative of leaders and/or administrators as the 'elites'. Power in this sense is defined as having the capacity to gain compliance of subordinates, and the ability to allocate and manipulate rewards and sanctions through coercion, remuneration or symbolic 'normative' processes (Hoy & Miskel, 1982, p.37; p.42).

These assumptions lead to a view of society in which the best way for the goals of social organisations to be achieved is within an impersonal, hierarchical structure which will facilitate control over the people, and what they do (Griffiths, 1985). This hierarchical structure is believed to function in highly rational, systematic and logical ways, regardless of the individuals within it. So whilst discussion and consultation may occur, the people at the top of the hierarchy, or 'the experts', will make decisions which are considered to be not only right, but neutral, apolitical, rational and therefore unbiased and value-free (Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Griffiths, 1985). Such decisions are assumed to be the most appropriate for the organisation. Owens claimed that in this view, organisational
members are treated as "primarily passive instruments, capable of performing work and accepting directions, but not initiating action or exerting influence in any significant way" (1987, p.32).

These ideas of appropriate social structures, authority, power, and control, mesh with positivist views that experts could, and should, define the 'truth', the one best way in which things are to be done, and that subordinates should then follow those instructions. 'Scientific Management', or 'Taylorism', which was developed in the first decade of this century is one example of this kind of thinking. Taylor advocated that there was one best way of doing work which is achieved by 'experts' defining scientifically, and in great detail, every component of a given task. This process was claimed to ensure more effective and efficient use of 'human resources' because workers would be made more productive. He claimed that it ensured that more work would be done because work was directed towards achieving the objectives of the management through standardised the work and by making it possible for workers to be more closely monitored (Taylor, 1947). Therefore whilst being defined as neutral, these processes placed the control of work practices, the knowledge, processes and evaluation, in the hands of management.

'Capitalist economic thought' is another strand in positivist ideas about social organisation (Harrold, 1982). This strand contributes a number of ideas which complement the other two. Capitalist economic priorities for social organisations, and for education, connect and intersect with both the scientific and hierarchical strands through ideas such as 'human capital' and through the continuing view within capitalism, that it is the responsibility of management to promote efficiency, to improve productivity and reduce costs (Wilenski, 1986). For example, Taylor's scientific management was directed towards ideals of effectiveness and efficiency by tying accountancy techniques to job analysis, and performance with pay. At the same time organisational goals of increased efficiency were not open to question. This kind of thinking connected ideas of labour to economic exchange, and as a commodity which could be articulated in terms of costs, cost-benefits and cost effectiveness (Owens, 1987).

The final strand of positivism I address here is psychology which has also drawn from and contributed to positivist understanding of social organisation and management. One aspect of the psychological contribution has come from the behaviourist ideas of Skinner whose focus was the study of ways in which observable behaviours could be controlled,
manipulated, and modified, through the application of different systems of positive and negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1965). Another contribution from psychology came from Locke's 'goal theory' which was based on a cognitive approach to motivation, specifically work motivation (Hoy & Miskel, 1982, p.162). From these ideas teaching by objectives, and management by objectives, developed. Both of these processes are based on assumptions that objectives can, and must, be clearly defined with expectations stated as observable outcomes which can then be monitored and evaluated as quantitative tangible results (Hoy & Miskel, 1982).

All of these strands, ideas and assumptions come together to frame a view of the world which is orderly and predictable, and were people know what to expect. They also enable people to feel that it is possible, through following specific procedures, to gain control over their social, as well as their natural, environment. In the context of social organisation these ideas, like liberal views, have gradually developed and changed in response to changing political, economic and cultural pressures. Weber's 'ideal bureaucratic organisation', introduced in the early 1890's, and characterised by a well defined hierarchy and close supervision, impersonal relationships, clear rules and rights of workers, division and specialisation of labour with clear plans and schedules to follow, was added to and changed by Taylorism (Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Owens, 1987). In the 1950's biological metaphors and assumptions of biological interdependence, roles, rules, harmony, order and discipline, were applied to organisational management in the development of 'systems theory', and 'social system theory' (Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Owens, 1987). In the 1970's, because of concerns that previous approaches to management and administration had not been as effective as expected, Human Resource Management was developed (Owens, 1987). Supporters of human resource management emphasised the deliberate use of the conscious thinking of individuals as a means of gaining their commitment. The most effective social organisation, in this view, is achieved through the socialisation of workers to the values and goals of the organisation, to the point that they personally identify with the organizational values and purposes as being closely congruent with their own (Owens, 1987; Cranston, 1993).

**Positivist views of educational change**

Because of beliefs that social change would flow from economic, scientific, and technological transformations, change, in positivist theories of social organisations, is
most often defined as a technological or administrative problem (Owens, 1987). A number of consequences follow from this approach. One is that all change comes from the top, from the 'experts' and decision makers down to 'passive' lower levels of the hierarchy (Ball, 1987). A second consequence is that all such economic and technical changes are assumed to be positive (Sarason, 1971). These two consequences lead to a third, which is that any resistance to, or conflict about, the desired change is viewed as evidence of a breakdown in the organisation, and of failure on the part of those in management to have sufficient control, or to make adequate preparation, to ensure that the planned change occurred smoothly (Owens, 1987).

In educational organisations these views have influenced a number of versions of planned, controlled change. One approach, named by Owens as the 'power-coercive strategy of change', is based on views that "rationality, reason, and human relations are all secondary to the ability to effect changes directly through the exercise of power" (Owens, 1987, p.214). He claimed that this has contributed to a view that change is most effectively brought about through legislation, government regulations, and economic sanctions. Another empirical-rational approach to educational change which has led to the development of pre-packaged systems of knowledge and ways to teach it, is known as 'research, development and diffusion' (R D & D). In this approach 'good ideas' are seen to be best based on research, so that they are expected to be unquestioningly appropriate to, and accepted by, educational environments.

However much research has shown that, particularly in the case of externally imposed processes, educational environments are very resistant to change (Fullan, 1982; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). which has led to the development of a number of alternative approaches to educational change. Some writers, such as Dalin (1978), suggested that maybe the problem might be a 'systems' problem such as inappropriate incentive structures, or inappropriate training services. Another approach, 'organizational self-renewal', which focuses on changing people's opinions, was developed around about the same time, and shares some of the same perspectives as human resources management. However these approaches to change continue to be based on a belief in rational, careful, planned, directed, change of a whole school or organisation, through a set of clear-cut and explicit objectives and goals (Owens, 1987, p.220).
Knowledge, teaching and learning

From the positivist perspective, the function of the education system is to develop the technical skills needed in the workforce, whilst the knowledge which is taught is considered unproblematic and neutral. Economic investment in education is seen in instrumental terms in which, at the societal level, education is an adjunct to business to improve national productivity, within nationally defined goals. At the individual level, it is seen as improving the students' potential for employment and/or productivity (Cunningham, Hack & Nystrand, 1977; Harrold, 1982).

In positivist terms an individual's concrete experiential knowledge is given low status because knowledge is assumed to be only achieved through empirical, logical, rational, scientific research which should be done by appropriately qualified people. This kind of knowledge, and the authority of such knowledge, is then claimed to be objective, value-free 'truth', which can only be challenged through similar empirical, verifiable, processes. Supporters of this view state that the meaning of the word knowledge is "justified true belief ...knowledge being connected with objectivity, truth and rationality" (Chambers, 1983, p.92).

This kind of knowledge is also assumed to be understood only within discrete, fundamental and irreducible disciplines which are each considered to have a recognisable and unique conceptual scheme and a distinctive body of knowledge into which all new, appropriately verified, knowledge is assumed to belong. Within education, at all levels, this value-free knowledge is also divided into components to fit into the time-tabled linear structuring of school knowledge which is divided into relatively discrete units which are ordered and sequenced. Through these processes knowledge becomes objectified, standardised and routinised into forms in which it is considered to be readily transferred, learned, and evaluated.

Within positivist views, learning is described as a change or modification in behaviour. Skinner's research with animals contributed strongly to the development of a theory of learning in which reinforcement, provided by another person, or observed within a learning context, led to behaviour modification (Skinner, 1965). His work also contributed to the previously mentioned teaching by objectives. Learning in these terms is therefore something which is planned and under the direction of another. Teachers are
given the responsibility of defining and evaluating the learning objective or outcomes, applying reinforcement for appropriate behaviour and providing rewards for achievement (Perrott, 1983; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kauchak, & Eggn, 1989). In their roles of managing, motivating and controlling students, teachers are also expected to apply professional, research based, knowledge of psychology, teacher effectiveness, and time-on-task analysis of learning effectiveness (Perrott, 1983; Kauchak, & Eggn, 1989).

**Higher education and the contribution of academics**

From a positivist perspective academics as researchers are seen as legitimate creators of new knowledge within their 'discipline'. Dissemination of research results is considered vital because this process allows replication, and also gives academics claim to some recognition as an 'expert' and credibility within the university community. As teachers their academic role is to pass on knowledge to others and to act as gate-keepers for the certification of new professionals. A further role, for at least some academics, is the expectation that they will take part in supporting business and governments through an involvement as 'experts' and policy advisers.

**Critical theory**

**Foundations of critical thought**

Like 'liberalism' and 'positivism', modern critical theory draws on traditions of thought which date back to ancient Greece. Concepts which are central to critical thought, such as equality, justice, social relationships, and participation, however, are interpreted differently. A significant contribution to 'critical thought', from the nineteenth century, was Marx's (1947) critique of 'liberal' assumptions that the state would protect and ensure equality. In critical theory existing inequalities are not expected to change through the evolution and development of society, but require active contestation. Critical theory also rejects the faith of positivism in the logical, scientific method as the best way to improve society (Marcuse, 1964). Instead critical writers see society as exploitative and oppressive to some groups and therefore focus on inequality, conflict, and the potential to disrupt existing social structures. As Horkheimer (1982), one of the leaders of the Frankfurt School where critical theory was initially developed, argued, the object of critical theory is to enable men (people) to be emancipated so that they can be producers of their own historical way of life.
To identify how this might be achieved they focus on the dialectical relationship between individuals and society. The individual, according to Horkheimer, is not the 'autonomous thinking - knowing subject' of liberalism who can attain absolute knowledge, but is one who is always inheriting a social history from within a social group being shaped by that group and its inequalities. Because of this, critical writers look towards contradictions and conflicts in society as providing opportunities for social resistance and change (Giroux, 1983); challenge rational explanations about the social order and offer different ways of explaining the social, the structural, and the individual (Giddens, 1979; 1985; 1991; Watkins, 1985a); maintain that social structures obscure the political and historical character of social organisation (Fay, 1977; Giroux, 1985; Smyth, 1987a; Popkewitz, 1991); argued the need for emancipation rather than control (Freire 1970; 1985; Giroux 1983; Watkins 1983); and to question a view of knowledge as being value-free 'truth', and 'facts' as reality (Bourdieu, 1971; Habermas, 1974; 1979; Apple, 1982; Bates, 1983).

Whilst accepting Marx's ideas of the need to struggle against social inequalities, some critical writers were critical of his focusing those struggles only within economic and labour relations, and his interpretation of historic inevitability (Marcuse, 1964; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). But their major critiques have been directed towards positivism and towards the social practices and the ideological view which has developed in Western society based on positivist assumptions. They saw the growth of 'scientific rationality' and its assumed value-neutral application in all spheres of life as threatening social and intellectual development (Horkheimer, 1974) and "the end of reason itself" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p.131).

Therefore one of the major tasks taken on by the Frankfurt School was the development of a theory which would overcome the 'crisis of reason'. In trying to do this they went back to Aristotle's ideas of 'praxis' and 'phronesis' where theory and practice in areas such as education and politics were, by their practical nature, always uncertain and incomplete; where a practical theory was based on a prudent understanding rather than rigorous predictable sciences; and where the character of an individual was 'cultivated' through such experiences. From that perspective these early critical theorists developed what they referred to as a:
dialectical framework by which to understand the mediations that link the institutions and activities of everyday life with the logic and commanding forces that shape the large social totality. (Giroux, 1983, p.9).

The use of 'dialectical' in this context is different from the liberal use of individual to individual. Horkheimer (1982) used 'dialectical' to mean a conscious opposition between people who adopt a critical approach against the present forms of economic and cultural organisation.

An important part of critical theory is based on an argument that recognition needs to be given to the ways in which values have been defined and confined, and how ideological domination operates within society. Habermas (1971) and Gramsci (1971) each applied the Marxist idea of 'ideological critique' as a way for individuals and social groups to investigate the extent to which existing communications are systematically distorted so that people are prevented from developing their own interests. Like Marx, these writers argued that the role of the state in this is far from neutral, that with the increased complexity of capitalism and large scale economic and commercial organisations, the state has become actively involved in economic development, and in maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of that development (Gramsci, 1971; Habermas, 1971; 1976; 1979).

Because knowledge and social relationships are seen as both a product of social definition, and a force in the shaping of future reality, critical writers argued instead for a theory which opens up ways of changing the existing social organisation through a commitment to ideals of community which will promote justice, fairness and an equal consideration of all groups, and which will allow people to come to understand what it means to be a person, and a citizen (Marcuse, 1964; Freire, 1970; 1985; Fay, 1977; Popkewitz, 1991).

**Power and agency**

For critical theorists such as Horkheimer & Adorno (1972), and Giroux (1983; 1985), the concepts of values and ideology are very important in explaining power. They argued that power is not only overtly coercive but is subtle and embedded within common-sense understandings of the social world. They claimed that dominant groups have been able to
use economic power and a 'technological rationale' to successfully establish their view of
the world as universal, so that others come to unconsciously and unquestioningly accept
that view. However some critical theorists argued that this form of ideological
domination is never complete. That there is always possibility for 'counter-hegemonic' activity because there are always contradictions and tensions which are revealed as
people interact (Papagiannis, Klees & Bickel, 1983); Giroux, 1985; Watkins 1985a). In
this perspective power is not seen as residing in one place, one person, or even in one
group, instead power is defined as part of human relationships involving "the use of
resources, of whatever kind, to secure outcomes" (Giddens, 1977, p.347).

This aspect of critical theory focuses on the on-going interactive relationship between
people and the structures of their social environment. Structures in this sense are not
necessarily visible, physical structures but are the rules and resources people use in
interaction (Giddens, 1977). Social reality is perceived as being in a state of constant
transformation and reproduction, yet maintained through rituals, symbols, and language
(Giddens, 1985; Watkins, 1985a). People, human agents, are assumed to be coming to
situation with values, ideologies and practices which may or may not be the same as the
structures of the organisation, or the other people in the group (Giroux, 1983; Watkins,
1985a). All people are considered to be capable of making decisions, and of making a
difference in the course of events (Giddens, 1985). But they are also assumed to be
influenced by hegemonic world views, of which they may have little awareness, but
which set limits on their behaviour and perceived options. So whilst a person is
knowledgeable and able to reflect on their experiences, they are also constrained and
'bounded' by the institutional context, or structures, and the unconscious patterns of
formal and informal rules and procedures within, as well as outside the organisation
(Giddens, 1979; 1985; Riley, 1985; Watkins, 1985a). However, through the
contradictions and conflicts between values, opportunities for agency and resistance
within hegemonic structures are always available (Freire, 1970; 1985; Bates, 1983;
Papagiannis et. al., 1983; Watkins, 1983). But because the trade-offs are frequently
between people or groups of unequal power and influence, the results will not necessarily
be equally successful for all individuals or groups (Giddens, 1985; Zeit, 1985).
Knowledge, teaching and learning

Critical theorists see education as having an essential role in contributing to the kind of society which they advocate because of its potential to enable people to learn how to be participating citizens (Freire 1970; 1985; Giroux, 1983). They claimed that historically education has been organised to maintain the advantage of the powerful (Bernstein, 1977). They also argued that by legitimating objective rational and logical ways of knowing; pre-determined systems of knowledge; competitive forms of learning and assessment, and the authoritarian structuring of education, a conception of knowledge has been perpetuated which is inflexible and external to the learner and their community. Amongst arguments which are put forward for changing education from what is seen as an hierarchical, authoritarian, conforming model of schooling, to an emancipatory, empowering model, are claims for the need for approaches which will lead to the development of active citizens, who can participate in achieving social justice (Watson, 1985; Fay, 1977).

Within this perspective a number of writers have presented different, but complementary, views on what emancipatory education might mean. For instance, Freire (1970; 1985) stated that people need to be able to free their intelligence and become creative and critical thinkers in order to be able to 'de-mythologize' and 'demystify' their social situations. This way of defining education does not depend on expert engineering of instruction, but in the creating of conditions which make it necessary for students to take an active share in building questions and in participating in means of resolving them. Freire (1970; 1985) recommended a range of experiences including inquiry, imagination, creative thinking, reflection, social interaction and communication, problem-posing and problem-solving which require students to be active learners. This approach is claimed to open up new possibilities for what constitutes legitimate knowledge; what the appropriate relationship between teacher and learner might be; and the need to develop approaches to learning and knowledge in which people's wants, needs and their different definitions of culture could become part of a negotiation of shared meanings (Bates, 1983).

According to Habermas (1972; 1974) all humans have an interest in acquiring technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge. 'Technical knowledge' in these terms is instrumental knowledge which will facilitate control over the natural environment;
practical knowledge informs meaningful communication, interpretive understanding and practical judgement; and emancipatory interests are the desire for the autonomy and freedom to be able to develop critical self-understanding, and to move from subjective meaning to knowledge of the social framework. In constructing this model of 'knowledge-constitutive interests' Habermas was not rejecting scientific knowledge but was demonstrating that it was only part of one kind of knowledge, that is technical. His argument was that in legitimating only scientific knowledge, education limits the development of self, and social understandings, and thus prevents the creation of a self-reflective community in which individual interests could be advanced (Habermas, 1972; 1974).

From a critical perspective, other important components of education are the approaches to teaching and learning. They advocate processes of teaching which will enhance reflective ideological critique of historical and social organisations through which taken-for-granted 'hegemonic' beliefs, attitudes, and values, can be identified (Giroux, 1983; 1985). The most appropriate kinds of learning from this perspective are said to include the development of skills necessary for a self-managed existence in society; respect for the language and traditions of one's own group (class); an understanding of how knowledge is produced; and the ability to analyse ideological structures (Gramsci, 1971; Fay, 1977; Bernstein, 1977; Giroux, 1985).

Educational change, teaching and teachers

Because educational institutions, as political constructions, are seen to be constrained by the same doctrines, interests and ideologies as other social structures critical writers such as Freire (1970), Giroux, (1986), Greenfield (1989), and Zeichner (1991a), argued that genuine educational reforms which challenge existing ideology require changes in the meanings and purposes people learn within society. But that needs the successful confrontation and dilution of the strong interests vested in present arrangements. On this basis writers such as Levin (1985), Watson (1985), Popkewitz (1991), recognised that without the acknowledgment that problems in education are frequently a reflection of a crisis in economic, social and/or political structures of society, educational change, whilst being an important factor, will not be sufficient on its own to bring about societal change. It must be part of a larger social change. Therefore they argued that educational
change has both the potential for social and political change and is constrained by it (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1987; Shapiro, 1988; Zeichner (1991a).

However other critical writers such as Watkins (1985a; 1992) claimed that potential for change occurs because of contradictions which arise through the ongoing inconsistencies in organisational life. These inconsistencies can enable people to penetrate and challenge existing structures with their underlying values and biases. According to Fay (1977), and Pennell & Alexander (1990), this cannot be done by anyone except the people involved. People must be involved in their own 'empowerment' because permanent change can only be achieved if those involved have taken part in defining the process of change and have 'ownership' of the new ways of working. These kinds of changes therefore require that the people involved become aware of the power of their own ideas, where they have come from; aware of their own needs, and able to develop their capacity to voice them (Fay, 1975; Elsworth, 1989; Greenfield, 1989).

For many years it has been recognised that teachers have been socialised into the culture of teaching, and have developed views about teaching, learning and knowledge, through a long 'apprenticeship of observation' during all of their years of schooling (Lortie, 1975; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Nias, 1985; 1987b); Clandinin 1986; Cole, 1990; Griffiths & Tann, 1992). In critical theory these attitudes and beliefs are understood for the most part to be implicit, unarticulated personal 'truths' which have been learned unconsciously as students, as part of common-sense; the hidden curriculum; and the language, symbols and practices which are part of daily school experience. With limited opportunities for other views to be presented, those beliefs are accepted unquestioningly, as the natural and right way for things to be done (Bullough, Gitlin & Goldstein, 1984; Giroux, 1985; McLaren, 1989).

Nias (1987b) stated that once a person develops their view of how things are done, this becomes a tool which helps that person to understand their social world. Like a filter it influences how that person sees and interprets any future situation. It also frames and constricts the judgments they make as both personal understandings and shared social knowledge. Fay (1977, p.213) argued that such unconscious beliefs are powerful because they are usually shared by a whole group. Therefore any change is limited by existing routines, expectations, and ways of thinking which support current patterns of behaviour. Alternatively ambitious or radical alternatives may not be considered because changing
habits of thought is often painful and difficult, whilst changing practices is likely to impose on teachers the burden of feeling incompetent. Therefore, from this perspective change is understood as not simply an acceptance of alternative ideas, but a personal and emotional experience. Any change, but especially a change of views which are central to the person's perceptions of their-self, such as a teacher's perception of themself in their professional role, are disturbing, painful and often take a long time to achieve (Nias, 1987a&b; 1992b; Elbaz, 1988; Elbaz & Elbaz, 1988; Rudduck, 1991).

Therefore, from this critical perspective, educational change is not simply a matter of changing policies, or of even providing 'well researched reasons' for implementing change. Change is considered much more difficult because cultural myths and taken-for-granted views repress teachers' subjective experiences of change, and the personal experience of learning new ways places the teacher's past, present and future in a dynamic tension (Britzman, 1991). Because ideas about teaching are embedded within the teachers' personal construction of who they are, change may be experienced as involving the entire personality in an examination and evaluation of habits, superstitions, and prejudices from the past.

**The dangers and the contributions of academics**

Critical writers have expressed both the need for, and concerns about, the role of 'intellectuals', or academics, in the process of attempting to empower other groups. Some critical writers see that intellectuals/academics have a role to open up opportunities for social change through examining the multiple ways in which power, culture and ideology, interact and intersect to limit alternative explanations and to foreground the taken-for-granted world-views which shape and constrict individuals within current social understandings (Fay, 1977; Popkewitz, 1991). Giroux (1986) argued the need for, and the obligation of, academics to be politically active. Basing his arguments on Gramsci's bi-modal view of the political involvement of all academics as either radical or conservative, Giroux presented four categories of intellectuals, that is - resisting, critical, accommodating and hegemonic, and argued that all intellectuals are politically aligned, but only the first and last are overtly active (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1987). In this Giroux acknowledged that to be a resisting intellectual places academics in the paradoxical position of challenging the dominant culture which their institutions play a fundamental
role in producing. He also pointed out that at university level in particular, this makes academics vulnerable to enormous pressures (Giroux, 1986).

Taking a different perspective, Popkewitz (1991) saw the privileging of the researcher, the intellectual/the academic, as the bearer of progress as very problematic. He argued that in helping people to help themselves intellectuals maintain their power positions. He argued that assumptions that intellectuals have some kind of 'universal knowledge' which can be applied to groups for their 'self-improvement', is to maintain intellectual authority and the power of the academic. Instead Popkewitz stated intellectuals need to be continually self-reflective about their position and the juxtaposition of history, social location and power relations they are engaged in.

**Postmodernism**

**Foundations of postmodernism**

Postmodernism is one of the more recent social theories to emerge and like modernism, has a variety of interpretations (Foucault, 1972; 1980; Bakhtin, 1981; Derrida, 1982; Baudrillard, 1983; 1990; Jameson, 1983; 1991; Lyotard, 1984; Giddens, 1991; Antonio & Keller, 1994). However one of the unifying threads in postmodernism, from whatever interpretation, is a belief that the changes in social life and economic order which have occurred in Western society in the latter part of this century, have brought about significant changes in the ways people experience the world.

Because of these changes, postmodern theorists argued, 'modern' social theories are no longer adequately able to describe or address the problems of individuals and/or social organisations. However within postmodernism there is a wide range of views of the extent to which those changes require a separation from, or replacement of, modernist theories. According to Antonio & Keller (1994, p.128) "extreme postmodernists" such as Baudrillard (1983; 1990), Lyotard (1984), and Kroker and Cook (1986), claimed that there is a such a rupture of views about social life and meaning that "modern tradition's core metatheoretical assumptions ... must be abandoned" (Antonio & Keller, 1994, p.128). From this perspective social theories become no more than conflicting narratives which may, or may not, be connected to existing realities. Another postmodern spectrum, represented in writing such as Jameson (1983; 1991), Said (1983; 1993), and Yeatman (1990a; 1994), does not support the complete rejection of modernist ideas. These writers
draw on modernist theory, whilst connecting to, and taking ideas of social fragmentation, partiality and complexity from, postmodernist thought.

**Ideas about language and discourse, power and knowledge**

Because of the complexity of current society, some postmodern theorists including Foucault (1972; 1980; 1984), Bakhtin (1981) and Derrida (1982), claimed that it is no longer possible to think in terms of meta-narratives such as truth, justice, power or knowledge which transcend issues of time, place, or social groups. Replacing such meta-narratives is a view of plurality and of contesting power and meanings which influence the social world through discourse. Based on that tenet a great deal of the work in postmodern theory focuses on language and/or discourse. For example, Bakhtin developed his concept of language as being formed out of, and changing through, a sense of opposition and struggle. Bakhtin (1981, p. 271-2), argued that:

language is stratified not only into dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonic), but also - and for us this is the essential point - into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth.

He did not see these oppositions as necessarily binary, but rather as leading to an understanding of language as fragile and inescapably historically and socially constructed.

Both Foucault (1972; 1980; 1984) and Derrida (1982) claimed that it is through language and discourse that meaning and reality are constructed, and through which people come to understand themselves and their place in the world. They argued that reality and meaning are constructed in language and institutionalised within social structures so that they permeate and subjugate through a multiplicity of messages, rules and procedures, about who and what can and cannot be voiced. Foucault used the term 'discourse' to mean language and practices, formed within the conjunction of power/knowledge, which constitute the ways that social institutions and cultural products are understood and valued. Power and knowledge are thus seen as shaping and
defining discourses which in turn constitute both the meaning of reality and the subject positions available to individuals. Foucault (1980, p.98) argued that:

Power must be analysed as something which circulates ... power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between the threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power.

In talking about social relationships Derrida (1982) argued that social power relationships cannot be understood any longer as simple adversarial relationships between class, or gender, in which patriarchal, phallogocentric, or eurocentric, conceptions of the world are seen to dominate. Instead Derrida, as well as Foucault, claimed that power is not fixed in one person or one place, that there is no longer (if there ever was) one unified value system which orders social life, but that power, like meaning, is relational and transitory. From this perspective postmodernism is understood as extending the debate of where power is located beyond modern positivist ideas of authority and elites, critical notions of class, and/or feminist claims of gendered power structures. Although that is not to argue that power has any less impact upon people. In fact it is understood as quite the reverse, because there is no way to avoid the impact of language and discourses which frame the ways that people come to understand the world, and shapes the ways they see themselves in the world. Power in this form then is both invisible and all pervading. According to Foucault (1980) we impose power on ourselves as we are positioned and learn to regulate ourselves as social beings.

Foucault (1972) also claimed that in the process of defining the world, much of the influences of power within discourses is concealed, along with its underlying values and assumptions. However although there may be a dominant discourse, there is never just one discourse. Discourses too are understood to operate as a complex matrix of symbolic 'reality' in which there is always both a range of sources and forms of power, plus a range of possibilities of interpretation and meaning. Because language and meaning are not fixed, 'difference' according to Derrida, 'opposition' according to Bakhtin, and 'power' according to Foucault, are always in transition, always fluid and changing. These postmodern writers argued that when all 'truths' and all discourses are understood to be only partial, there exists the potential for multiple, diverse and different, knowledges and ways of knowing. The contradictions within and between discourses, along with the
power embedded within discourses, means that discursive interaction can be understood as an on-going struggle between discourses to define meanings.

**Education, teaching and teachers**

In postmodernism, education and schools are considered to be discursive artifacts which have been constructed and re-structured within social, cultural, historic contexts. Kenway pointed out that in education, as in other social institutions, there are multiple discourses. She said:

Some of these are dominant, some subordinate, some peacefully co-existing, some struggling for ascendancy. Schools can be seen to consist of fragile settlements between and within discursive fields and such settlements can be recognised as always uncertain; always open to challenge and change through the struggle over meaning. (Kenway, 1992, p.4)

Thinking of educational sites in this way situates both curriculum knowledge and teaching as shaped by, and contributing to, particular forms of knowledge, power and meaning, but at the same time caught up in the contestation over those elements.

Teachers are also understood to be constituted within multiple interconnecting discourses of education; of what and who it is for; of knowledge, what it is, where it comes from, and who controls it; plus discourses and practices which define appropriate social behaviours, and appropriate relationships between teachers, learners and knowledge. At the same time the ways in which teachers, as professional people, construct themselves and their views about teaching, learning and knowledge, are also seen to be closely meshed within their other personal, biographical experiences as learners, as well as their moral and ethical ideals, their values about social relationships, and their perceptions of themselves (Ladson-Billings, 1990).

Because of this interconnecting web of values and assumptions teachers, and learners, are not thought of as homogeneous wholes, but as being multi-faceted and multi-dimensional people (Koerner, 1992; Millies 1992). This means that in each teaching context, teachers and learners are thought to use highly subjective ways to 'read' and 'write' their meanings and identities within different discourses. Depending upon their
values, beliefs and their views of themselves, teachers and learners are seen to be constantly choosing an identity and reflexively testing it in their interactions with others, and with the environment (Kenway, 1992; Woods, 1990).

The process of teaching is understood not as a linear, logical experience, but as a combination of folk wisdom, skill-knowledge, contextual knowledge, professional knowledge, educational theory, social and moral theories, and general philosophical outlooks, all of which intersect in a context which is inherently and perpetually fraught with dilemmas, and in which individuals, and the situations, are inevitably filled with internal tensions and contradictions. For example, Elsworth (1989), McWilliam (1992a), and Reid (1995), all recognised inherent power relationships between teachers and students which, despite their best intentions, situates their practices as oppressive in relation to their less powerful students.

Different perspectives of the complexity of the teaching context were raised by other postmodern writers such as Rorty (1979), and Gore (1993), who both pointed to 'dangers' of a system where teaching and learning are defined as a positive social environment. Rorty (1979) argued the need for processes of 'edification' as a way to open up discourses, and prevent the solidification, or 'freezing' of cultural meanings. And Gore's research (1993) to identify postmodern or emancipatory teaching practices led her to claim that there is no particular form of teaching which can be identified as appropriately matching the expectation of those theoretical positions, because, in her terms, whilst everything has potential, "everything is dangerous" and can operate as a 'regime of truth' (p.xv, italics in the original).

**The special circumstances of academics as teachers**

Bemoaning the low status of teaching within universities Britzman (1991, p.39) claimed that there is a "deeply held myth that one learns to teach solely by experience" and that "most teaching academics believe they have learned to teach on their own". Within this understanding, she argued, it is assumed that it is the self-referential authority of knowledge which is important. It is academics' relationship with, and access to, the 'authority of knowledge' which both Foucault (1980) and Lyotard (1984) focus on in writing about the politically defined roles of higher education. Both Foucault and Lyotard saw that the position of academics has changed from previous notions of either a
liberal 'educated citizen' or positivist 'knowledge experts'. But they came to very different conclusions about the meaning of those changes. Lyotard argued that because higher education is now considered a subsystem of the social/political system, the ends of higher education have become functional, pragmatic and subordinate to existing powers, and that teaching, the transmission of knowledge, will be replaced by computer data banks. In this scenario Lyotard predicts the 'death of the professor' and sees the role of lecturers as teaching competencies in 'performance-oriented skills', and training in procedures which enhance the production of new knowledge. In contrast Foucault's conclusion was that intellectuals have a position in which they can take part in the battle over the rules which define truth, and the political and economic role which is attached to truth. He argued that there is a very real political problem for intellectuals to address, not, he said, in criticising scientific ideology, but in "ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p.133).

**Re-view**

In this chapter I have presented a brief outline of four social theories which I will use as classification tools in my analysis. Because I am working from assumptions that discourses are constituted out of, and contain within in them, multiple, contesting meanings, and that these meanings are not necessarily visible, I needed to establish a frame which would enable me to locate and name those meanings. Therefore I have introduced these perspectives as tools to assist me as I try to find meanings by looking below the surface of how quality teaching in higher education, and changes in higher education were explained and justified; to try to find underlying assumptions, to recognise how discourses created spaces for some definitions of quality teaching whilst limiting opportunities for others; to examine how discourses about quality teaching in higher education in Australia between 1992 – 1996 were being interpreted and experienced; and to discover how participants understood themselves and positioned themselves as teachers.

My representation of the social theories here is necessarily linear and discrete because of the processes of writing. However in this chapter I have also tried to show how these perspectives have developed, been adapted and changed, in response to each other as well as political, economic, cultural and historic changes in the social environment. Recognising the symbiotic relationships and on-going contestation within and between
meanings, I did not expect to find them as separate and discrete in my analysis. Rather they are identified as potential sources of alternative meanings which co-incide and co-exist.

**Re-view of Section One**

In section One I have introduced the historical, social, and temporal context of this study of the politicisation of discourses surrounding quality teaching in higher education. I have also set out the theoretical and methodological approaches which have informed my analysis.

**Pre-view of Section Two**

This research is a response to the politicisation of the discourses surrounding 'quality teaching in higher education' in Australia, during 1992 - 1996. As such it is an examination of the ways in which quality teaching was being structured and the discursive resources which were being used in the processes of (re)shaping meanings. It is also positioned as a reflective critique of postmodern critical theory, and the politics of discourse and representation, as useful frames to examine current interactions between individuals, institutions and the state.

Holding in mind the warning that research questions and the values assumptions which underpin them are in-divisible, this is not a quest for certainty (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln 1990; Kincheloe, 1991; Lather, 1991b). Rather, because the politicisation of teaching in higher education is understood as a complex, multi-dimensional struggle between different discourses over the power to define meaning, this is a search for multiple and contradictory meanings rather than certainty and closure.

I begin by looking at definitions of graduates, from each of the three sites, as statements about the kinds of learnings which students were expected, or hoped, to experience.
## Section Two: Tracing meanings

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Chapter 5
Definitions of quality learnings – characteristics of graduates

The purpose of this research is to try to ascertain discursive links of, and contestations over, meaning as I attempt to ascertain the continuities, overlaps and/or discontinuities both within and between the discursive fields of learning, quality teaching, and improving teaching, within and across the three sites.

In this chapter I will analyse extracts from all three sites to demonstrate how people within each site were talking about the desirable characteristics of graduates. I use this material to show that, in relation to the kind of characteristics which were stated as desirable outcomes of higher education, there were strong commonalities of language, if not of meanings across the three sites. I will also demonstrate that for most of the characteristics and attributes it is possible to attach a variety of meanings, drawing differently on a range of different social theories. In this way I begin to demonstrate some of the contestations within/between meanings, the politics of discourse over meanings, and some of the politicisation of meaning.

Firstly I will analyse extracts from each site for specific statements about desirable graduate characteristics. I will then examine those statements for alternative views and/or meanings about the kinds of knowledge and learning which were advocated and the relationships between teachers, students and knowledge which were expected and/or assumed.

This chapter is directed by the questions:

*What were the assumptions about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching which underpinned the definitions of desired characteristics of graduates within the three sites?*

*What were the connections and/or discontinuities within and between those definitions?*

Statements about the kinds of skills and attributes which graduates might be expected to have are important in this thesis for three reasons. First, because this focus on graduates, although in some ways different at each site, was a stated desired outcome which was common across the three sites of this research. Second, because this was one of the
understandings of the purpose of higher education towards which, in the words of Anwyl (1992, p.11), an "unprecedented number of government reports at the national level, designed to reform education" were being directed. And finally, because I am assuming that it is through their learning experiences that students were going to be given opportunities to develop the kinds of skills, competencies and/or attributes which were being described.

My purpose in including this chapter is not to take a positivist view that the only valued learnings are those which are visible outcomes which can be defined and accounted, or to take a cause-effect position that these were the kinds of learnings which were said to be important, therefore definitions of quality teaching should reflect that same set of meanings. Rather it is to present the language and potential meanings being directed towards qualities and characteristics of graduates as a discursive field which can be assumed to have some links or overlaps with the discursive field of quality teaching in higher education. It is part of the purpose of this research to try to identify where those links or overlaps are, and/or the extent to which, in the larger pool of potential meanings which I will identify, they operate as separate and/or dis-connected.

In my initial analysis I worked through a step-by-step process in relation to the three dimensions of discourse as described by Fairclough (1993). That is language as *text*; the positionings of the reader, the use of metaphor, and ideological constructs as *discourse practices*; plus *social practices* including power relationships which were contributing to the shaping of meanings surrounding those discourses about graduates. The analyses in this chapter, and those which follow, move more flexibly through the processes, taking the notion that the processes and categories are interconnected and overlapping rather than discrete.

**The kinds of abilities, skills and attitudes which graduates might be expected to have attained**

**Discourses from the national site**

Amongst the documents from the national site which I analysed, the two which had the most specific and/or elaborated statements about the kinds of abilities, skills and attitudes which graduates might be expected to have developed, were Chubb’s report
from the Higher Education Council (1992a&b) and the report from Candy et. al. on Lifelong learning (1994).

I am also using Chubb's statement here because in putting together the material for this report he consulted with staff and students within universities as well as people in other organisations. Which potentially makes it representative of a range of opinions at the national level. In addition I found that Chubb's definition (1992b) included a range of intellectual and/or ethical dimensions which were less explicit in some of the other documents which I examined such as:- Finn (1991), Business and Higher Education Round Table (1992), Carmichael (1992; 1993), Dawkins (1992), Mayer (1992a,b&c), NBEET (1992), NTB (1992), and Marginson (1993a).

The book on lifelong learning by Candy et. al. (1994) was also the result of work done on behalf of a government commission. The focus in this publication was directed to developing a "profile of the qualities and attributes that are possessed by the effective lifelong learner" (Candy et. al., 1994, p.43). In this context 'lifelong learning' was framed as the need for graduates to be prepared to continue learning throughout life. As with discourses about competencies, lifelong learning was part of the intersection of discursive constructions which were being carried out, being advocated in, and influenced by, statements such as those from Baldwin (1991), and the Business & Higher Education Round Table (1992).

*The report from the Higher Education Council - Chubb (1992)*

Chubb claimed that in his consultations there was a commonly agreed definition of the desirable characteristics of all graduates. He stated that "employers, professional bodies, students and staff of the universities"

broadly agreed that if higher education is to enable graduates to operate effectively in a range of activities over a period of time ... then it must develop the characteristics that support learning throughout life. ... The groups consulted were at one with this issue - while discipline skills and technical proficiency were seen as important, and more so in some areas and for some purposes that others - the so-called higher level generic skills were seen as critically important, and sometimes lacking.  

(Chubb, 1992b, p.20)
Therefore whilst acknowledging the need for "the acquisition of a body of knowledge" (1992b, p.22) related to the specific discipline which the student was studying, Chubb argued that "if universities are to add value, they must take responsibility for the specific development and refinement of these skills" (1992b, p.20). He also stated that these:

skills, personal attributes, and values which should be acquired by all graduates regardless of their discipline ... should represent the central achievements of higher education as a process. (Chubb, 1992b, p.20)

Chubb then went on to define those attributes and skills as including:

such qualities as critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem-solving, logical and independent thought, effective communication and related skills in identifying, accessing and managing information; personal attributes such as intellectual rigour, creativity and imagination; and values such as ethical practice, integrity and tolerance. (1992b, p.22)

The learning of these skills, he claimed, should occur within the "acquisition of a body of knowledge" which should "act as a vehicle" for the attainment of those skills (p.22).

Collectively the "qualities" which Chubb identified draw from and connect with all four of the social/theoretical perspectives which I identified in Chapters 2 and 4. Some of the qualities such as ‘problem-solving’ and ‘logical thought’, plus the skills of "effective communication" and ‘identifying and assessing information’ appear in liberalism as part of the liberal dialectic approach; in the language of positivism as necessarily part of scientific development of knowledge; in critical theory as a way for people to learn to have agency in their lives; and in some forms of feminism and/or postmodernism as enabling people to contest some of their discursive positionings (Boud & Feletti, 1991; Bawden, 1991; Drinan, 1991; Margetson, 1991; Mousley, 1992; Boud, 1993; Crebbin, 1994d).

Separately, some of the qualities such as "managing information" and "acquisition of a body of knowledge", are most closely aligned with positivist views of knowledge and learning. Whilst others, for example the intellectual qualities of "curiosity", "critical
thinking", "independent thought", "creativity and imagination" and the "personal values such as ethical practice, integrity and tolerance", seem to place more emphasis on liberal and/or critical assumptions of appropriate learnings and human relationships.

The kind of knowledge and/or learning which was explicitly stated, as the "body of knowledge", fits with positivist, scientific views of knowledge as segmented, within discrete boundaries, and as able to be added to through empirical research. By naming the graduate "qualities" as skills and attributes, Chubb (1992b, p.22) seems to have been also aligning these kinds of knowledge within positivist frames, this time behavioural psychology and/or Taylorist notions of specifically defined behaviours. But there is scope for interpreting those qualities, within other social meanings as ways of knowing.

Read at this level of analysis, this definition of the desired characteristics of graduates is open to be interpreted by academics-as-teachers as supporting whichever value position they wish to argue from. But it does not necessarily support all approaches to teaching and learning. Based on assumptions that not only what, but how students are taught has an impact on their learning [see Chapters 6-8], it could be argued, that for students to develop those qualities they need experiences which will provide them with opportunities to be problem-solvers, to develop skills in dealing with information and communicating, and to be placed in learning environments where curiosity, creativity, critical and independent thinking and ethical practices were valued and/or enhanced. Within this latter argument, teaching/learning processes which emphasis the development of 'a body of knowledge', at the expense of 'thinking skills', are not supported.

Chubb stated that these "skills" were "the central achievements of higher education" and that it was "universities" which have the responsibility to "add value". But it was only by implication that teaching/teachers are connected. This linguistic process of institutional impersonality can be seen as operating here on two levels. One way is that by citing "broad agreement" he was able to both speak with authority and absent himself from authoring the statement. The second is through placing the responsibility for the outcomes on abstract and impersonal "universities" and/or "a body of knowledge" he was able to leave teachers out of the process. This latter process can also be read in a number of different ways. One is that he was not suggesting that
teachers should take on such responsibilities. But that interpretation is refuted in the process of situating the acquisition of a body of knowledge as the context for the development of the named qualities. Another interpretation is that academics-as-teachers could not take responsibility for this on their own, that they needed to be under the direction of "universities".

Applying the third dimension of Fairclough's model, namely social practice, to locate these statements within past power relationships and on-going discursive contestations, makes it possible to connect Chubb's statements about qualities of graduates with other discourses of that time about the purposes of higher education. At the level of text-context analysis, it is possible to see that by stating that these graduate attributes were "sometimes lacking" (1992b, p.20), Chubb connected his statements with the message that universities, and perhaps by implication teachers, needed to improve their 'quality'. At the same time he linked the desired skills and attributes of graduates with requirements of employers, because it was employers who were attributed as making that judgement (Chubb, 1992b, pp.22-25). The connection which he was making between higher education and employment was also made clear when he argued for the need for graduates to develop professional skills which they could apply immediately in their employment. For example, an "ability to work with minimum supervision, and to apply learning to practical situations" (p.22). This latter statement introduced a workplace metaphor to the meanings of learning and, in so-doing, potentially transferred the meaning of previously mentioned "qualities" such as "problem-solving", "independent thought" and "ethical practice" from academic learning, and situated them within the context of requirements of the workplace.

As I mentioned in Chapter 3 there was a large number of government reports from the national site, all arguing connections between economic reform and education and/or teaching; a perceived need to draw education closer to the needs of the workplace; and/because of the need to make the Australian economy more competitive. One of the major areas of focus in these discourses was on the definition and/or development of skills and/or competencies. Although each of these groups and reports had different perspectives, and had slightly different definitions of what they meant by these terms (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 1993; Marginson, 1993a&b), there was a strong message through the multiplicity of reports, that the quality of education at all levels would be
improved by the incorporation of some kinds of competencies and/or skills which graduates can take into their work-place environments.

However the idea of a specifically defined set of graduate qualities, attributes and/or competencies was neither new, nor uncontested. Collins (1993) and Bowden and Masters (1993) both linked the origin of competencies back to behaviourist psychology and positivist ideas about 'experts' defining appropriate behaviours, and learning being defined as the ability to demonstrate those behaviours. Some criticism at the time was directed not so much to the idea of generic skills and/or competencies, which were acknowledged as having the potential to broaden education (Preston & Walker, 1993), but against the ways in which they were being brought together in the Government documents with ideas of accountability, uniformity, and standardisation (Sobski, 1992; Sweet, 1992; Collins, 1993; Preston & Walker, 1993). In that discursive context, competencies were perceived as being re-introduced, disregarding the nature of knowledge and the relationship between context, knowledge and skills (Porter et. al, 1992); as potentially restricting, rather than broadening the curriculum; as lending themselves too readily to behaviourist interpretations of learning (ACE, 1992; Collins, 1993; Preston & Walker, 1993); and/or as potentially de-skilling teaching by taking responsibility and decision making away from teachers and making them accountable to the needs of industry (Jackson, 1993).

Another area of contestation which was washed-over and/or subsumed within the competencies, attributes and skills, was 'problem solving'. The meanings of problem-solving or problem-based learning has been debated and contested over many years. Problem-based learning is a term which has been applied through a spectrum of different levels of directed and/or shared control with associated different views of knowledge from 'problems' which are tightly defined and controlled by the teacher which are little different from transmission teaching, to 'problems' which are defined, monitored and evaluated by learners (Boud & Feletti, 1991; Bawden, 1991; Drinan, 1991; Margetson, 1991; 1995; Mousley, 1992; Boud, 1993; Crebbin, 1994b-f).

Therefore at this level of analysis it is possible to read Chubb's statements about the desired qualities of graduates as a pastiche of constructs and values which contain multiple meanings, and the potential for multiple interpretations, but which has been constructed to try to justify and sustain certain power relationships of who defined,
what definitions, who made judgements, and who might be posited as responsible for improving and/or ensuring 'quality'. Within these power relationships the absent teacher seems to be designated as responsible for a great deal, and, at the same time, as being expected to respond appropriately to the expectations of others, including the university and/or employers.

*Lifelong learning - Candy et. al. 1994*

A second, related area of focus, alongside competencies and skills, was 'lifelong learning', or the need for graduates to be prepared to continue learning throughout life. Again, like competencies, this is not a new idea. As 'life-long learning' and/or 'love of learning' this desired attribute has a long tradition within discourses about university students, graduates and staff (Pelikan, 1992). This idea is frequently attributed to liberal conceptions of knowledge as an end in itself, Aristotle's views about 'a desire to know' (Taylor, 1960), and/or liberal beliefs in learning and knowledge as the path to freedom and enlightenment for individuals as well as society (Newman, 1976; Barnett, 1990). However in most of the government supported publications such as Baldwin (1991) and Chubb (1992b), as well as the Business & Higher Education Round Table (1992) the meanings and use of 'lifelong learning' was directed towards the future needs of employers for employees who can accommodate, adapt and respond to "a constantly changing professional and intellectual environment" (Chubb, 1992b, p.23).

Candy et. al. were commissioned by NBEET to produce their study on lifelong learning. They stated that one major part of their study was to try to develop a "profile of the qualities and attributes that are possessed by the effective lifelong learner" (1994, p.43). As a result of their research they 'suggested' a range of qualities that a "lifelong learner would exhibit ... to some degree" (p.43). These were:

- An inquiring mind
  - a love of learning;
  - a sense of curiosity and question asking;
  - a critical spirit;
  - a comprehension-monitoring and self-evaluation;
- Helicopter vision
  - a sense of the interconnectedness of fields;
- an understanding of how knowledge is created in at least one field of study;
- a breadth of vision;

Information literacy
- knowledge of major current resources in at least one field of study; ...
- ability to locate, evaluate, manage and use information in a range of contexts;
- ability to retrieve information using a variety of media; ...
- critical evaluation of information;

A sense of personal agency
- a positive concept of oneself as capable and autonomous;
- self-organisation skills (time management, goal-setting etc);

A repertoire of learning skills
- knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses and preferred learning style;
- range of strategies for learning in whatever context one finds oneself: and
- an understanding of the differences between surface and deep level learning.

(Candy et. al. 1994, pp.43-44)

In terms of knowledge and/or learning, some of the qualities which Candy et. al. identified, such as "curiosity" and the ability to work with information, were similar in language and meaning to those identified by Chubb (1992b). However there were some additions and differences. A "critical spirit" might be interpreted as meaning the same as Chubb's "critical thinking", or it could be taken from a more liberal or critical perspective to mean an ability to critique their social/political environment. In the middle part of the statement, through repetition and association, the ideas of "critical" and "evaluation" were connected to the evaluation of information, which is equally open to interpretation as connecting to and/or supporting any or all of the four social/theoretical perspectives as meaning processes within empirical research; logical reasoning; social critique and/ or discursive contestation.

One element introduced by Candy et. al., was that of "understanding how knowledge is created". These kinds of understanding are valued in scientific terms as knowing and appreciating the empirical, research method by which new knowledge is developed. In liberal terms it can be seen as part of the social/political role of an 'educated person' taking part in dialectic. In critical terms it can mean having the capacity to challenge knowledge on the basis of the assumptions and values on which it is based and/or as postmodern deconstruction of discourses. All of these interpretations are valid within the
context of the characteristics which were being described and have been/are sustained within understandings of the purposes of universities as places where knowledge is created and critiqued. However they were different from Chubb's argument that students need knowledge which is "close to the leading edge" (1992b, p.23) because of the rapid pace of discovery of knowledge, and the need for graduates to be able to adapt to change. Candy et. al.'s statement potentially opened up opportunities for students to participate in the construction of knowledge, whereas Chubb seems to be positioning graduates as responding to changing knowledge and/or changing requirements of employers.

Whilst leaving out aspects of ethical behaviour mentioned by Chubb, Candy et. al. included a range of personal attributes under the headings of "a sense of personal agency" and "a repertoire of learning skills", as well as the capacities to 'monitor' and 'self-evaluate'. All of these connect with meanings of active and/or self-directed learning. These constructions, whilst they may have originated from, and still have links to, liberal and/or critical views of individual development and agency, have themselves become socially contested. They have been co-opted into other meanings, including human resource management, where self-determining-one's-own-direction is being translated into self-policing within the directions set by employers (Gee & Lankshear, 1995). A trace of this latter meaning shows through in Candy et.al.'s point about 'self-organising skills' where the listed attributes seem to be more closely linked with ideas of efficiency and effectiveness than with critical ideas of 'agency'.

In both Candy et. al.'s statement, through the emphasis on lifelong learning, and Chubb's skills and competencies, knowledge seems to be valued, not as a discrete entity, but as the context for the development of specific attributes. Which might be interpreted as taking knowledge away from a positivist notion of knowledge as a valuable commodity which exists within particular empirically based disciplines (Foucault 1972; Bates, 1983; Papagiannis et. al., 1983). This impression is enhanced by the arguments for the valuing of self-knowledges as well as a much more postmodern view of knowledge as interconnected. In addition the use of the metaphor of "helicopter vision" provides an understanding of students both developing a broad, rather than narrow understanding of knowledge, and of being on-top-of, in a powerful position in relation to knowledge. Such statements also all potentially extend the range of knowledges beyond 'academic-as-expert' to acknowledging and including a wider range of knowledges which can be/are valued within higher education. However this can equally be interpreted as attempts by
the academy (or elsewhere) to capture forms of knowledge, particularly knowledges of the self, which have been outside the educational domain, and to 'naturalise' them within education knowledge discourses.

Like Chubb, although some of these characteristics can be read from any, or all of the social/theoretical perspectives, the messages for teaching and teachers in Candy et. al. were that specific teaching and learning approaches were expected to provide opportunities for students to develop into that autonomous, self-knowing and self-monitoring learner. In fact, in outlining their ideas about appropriate teaching approaches [see Chapter 6] Candy et. al. were quite explicit about the need for teachers to relinquish control and for learners to take "more and more responsibility" (1994, p.128). The authors acknowledge that this requires specific kinds of relationships between teachers and students and were critical of people who wanted to hold to 'traditional' hierarchical relationships of teacher-in-control, teacher-as-authority, in which students were positioned as unable to take control, or as needing firm direction. Those 'traditional' views of teaching were set by Candy et. al. as a negative to more liberal views of individual freedoms and responsibilities; teaching/learning as a dialectical relationship; and/or critical discourses of equality, shared-decision-making and student-as-agent. All of which seemed to underpin their arguments for students as self-directed learners (1994, pp.128-134). However, in this framing there seemed to be no recognition that such teaching/learning approaches have developed out of, and sustain, different learning theories and different value assumptions about knowledge, teachers and/or learners.

Discourses from within the institution

Amongst the materials which I analysed from the institutional site, the documents which had the most specific and/or elaborated statements about the kinds of abilities, skills and attitudes which graduates might be expected to have developed, were in the Mission and Goal statements (BUC, 1992c & 1993a; UB, 1995a).

Mission and goal statements

Although less extensive or explicit, the language and ideas about the kinds of desired qualities of graduates from the University of Ballarat (and its antecedents) were, in many
ways, similar to those promoted by Chubb and/or Candy et. al.. In both the 1992 and 1993 Mission and Goal statements, one of the stated goals was to develop:

graduates who are self-directed learners, inter-disciplinary team members, problem solvers and effective communicators, possessing discipline-specific competencies. (BUC, 1992c & 1993a)

In 1995 there were some modifications to the Mission statement which changed from an emphasis on the "learning of students and staff in the acquisition, application and creation of knowledge as a lifelong process" (BUC, 1993a) to an emphasis on enabling:

students to develop the lifelong capacity for intellectual enquiry and creatively fulfilling vocational aspirations; (UB, 1995a)

with the goal being to:

provide a stimulating and supportive educational environment that develops graduates who are self-directed learners, multi-disciplinary team members, problem solvers and effective communicators, who are competent in their disciplines.

The understanding of knowledge and learning which is conveyed in these statements is traditional in the sense that it is linked to disciplines. However, through the terms ‘inter-discipline’ and ‘multidiscipline’, and the language of ‘competencies’, ‘lifelong learning’ and capacities to fulfilled ‘vocational aspirations’, there are strong messages that the kinds of knowledges and learnings which were supported within the institution go beyond traditional discipline knowledge.

The most obvious difference between these goal statements and those of Chubb and Candy et. al. is the focus on "inter-disciplinary team members" (1992c & 1993a) or "multi-disciplinary team members" (1995). This can be interpreted as linking with Candy et. al.'s ideas of "the interconnectedness of fields" and "breadth of vision". But it also suggests the need for knowledge of, as well as experience, and/or the ability to work in environments which deliberately cross and blur discipline boundaries. There is potential here to read this as a breaking down of the strongly positivist view of knowledge and
learning being confined within disciplinary boundaries, and/or of people working across those boundaries, although they were still being designated as coming from and belonging to, 'disciplines'.

Those phrases also add a different dimension, that of being able to function as a "team member". Perhaps because both Chubb and Candy et. al. directed their attention to qualities of individuals, they over-looked this capacity of co-operation and collaboration. Or perhaps these capacities were seen by people at the institutional site as important, whereas they were perceived to be less important, in the surveys conducted by Chubb and Candy et. al..

The kinds of relationships suggested by a "stimulating and supportive .. environment" were challenging and/or exciting and helping. Connected through the language of 'team members', which might be interpreted as involving staff and/or students, there is a strong message of people working together to 'support' learning. This idea suggests non-positivist, non-hierarchical, personal kinds of relationships where learners 'develop' rather than having to respond to directions.

Like the materials from Chubb the messages for teachers and teaching are only drawn by implication from the language of 'self-direction', and 'problem solvers', and the statement that the environment is/should be 'stimulating and supportive'. Such messages are open to interpretation as either giving little direction to teachers, or, like Candy et. al., as supporting the need for specific teaching approaches.

The change of emphasis between the 1993 and 1995 Mission statements, whilst maintaining the concept of "lifelong" learning, can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, the removal of staff from this Mission statement suggests, either that staff were already assumed to have those qualities, or that students were the main emphasis and teachers' learning was secondary. Second, in the earlier statement both students and staff were assumed to need to continue to 'acquire, apply and create knowledge'. In the latter statement that meaning of learning seems to shift in focus from acquisition or application, to what was referred to by Chubb as higher-order thinking processes of "intellectual enquiry" and 'creativity'. Third, in the earlier statement the purposes of that "lifelong process" were left open to interpretation, whereas in the 1995 goal it was quite explicitly tied to "fulfilling vocational aspirations". Taking the second and third points
Quality teaching as contextual

Teaching as an interaction, a relationship, a feeling

As has already been indicated, there were frequent instances when participants talked about good teaching as being an interaction, during the process of teaching. This was sometimes described as a ‘feeling’ between the teacher and their students, in the context of which students reacted to the teacher and the teacher was expected to respond to students. Bridget was one of the participants for whom these ‘feelings’ seemed to be an important part of how she described her teaching. The following are two extracts for two different meetings.

Bridget I deliberately try to do it differently every time ... and it is a conscious effort to do it, and I am constantly bouncing off what-ever they say to me, and I pick up on a different theme each time.  (March 24, line 655ff)

Bridget Sometimes I say things to students and I can see this blank look on their faces, .. and then I will find some other way of saying it. And that's what its about.  (May 24, line 645 ff)

In each of these extracts Bridget talked about teaching as an interaction, of responding to cues from the student group during the process of the teaching. She also drew on ideas of teachers needing to be able to be flexible; to be able to change their approach during the teaching; of having a range of different teaching approaches and/or different ways of explaining concepts when students seem to be having difficulties; and/or reacting to what is of interest to students.

These comments have connections with Ramsden's ideas of being able to explain clearly, as well as Chubb's ideas of positive interaction between teachers and students, and relating teaching to what students already know. But the way the ideas are interpreted here by Bridget appeared to be suggesting a more spontaneous and "dynamic" inter-action than suggested by the other statements. Because within her expectation of dynamic interaction between teacher and students, she interpreted good teaching as being contextual and problematic, constantly unpredictable and changing,
dependent upon the needs, interests and capabilities of the students, and also on the capacities of the teacher to respond quickly to unpredicted and/or unforeseen events.

These ideas of teaching as being both relational and contextual, where teaching and learning are dependent upon the interaction between teacher and students, opens up views of teaching as interactive, contextual, variable, changing and therefore problematic. Such a view provides a different perspective to the more objective, depersonalised ideas projected in some of the other materials from the other sites. The meanings which were being developed here seem to have close links with, and draw from liberal ideas about learning as a dialectic, plus liberal/humanist and/or critical ideas about human relationships.

Learning/teaching as a relationship of expectations

Another aspect of the dynamic relationship of teachers and students interacting and responding to each other during the teaching/learning process, which group members also talked about, was the impact of their own expectations, and the expectations of other members of the community. They understood these expectations as being part of the context and implicit within the teacher-student relationships. This aspect is indicated in the following extract which is taken from one of our meetings in October in which participants talked about different expectations being held by different people, and the potential for clashes of expectations between the community, teachers, and/or students.

Peter That raises another question in my mind because if we are going to talk about being a good teacher we have to see that in the context of who we are working with. Some would say that at the tertiary level, when you are dealing with adults ranging from average to very intelligent, you can expect them all to draw knowledge from you even if you haven't got the communication skills.

Anne But that's based on the supposition that you have a learner who wants to learn. And however we want to interpret the term learner, we know that in any particular class we have some so-called learners who have no desire what-so-ever to learn, no matter what techniques or how good we were, or how much we knew. We are not going to engage them.

(October 6, line 197 ff)
In this statement Peter was presenting what he understood as the expectation of the wider community. A view that in higher education all students can be expected to learn, despite their teachers if necessary. Anne was not disagreeing with that assumption, but introduced the idea of "desire... to learn". Her statement might be interpreted as a process of blaming students. Or it could be interpreted as a pragmatic statement based on her own experience, plus research findings of the 1993 CAUT group which showed that, of 500 first year students from 6 different courses at BUC, 27% said they read only when necessary; 32% only wrote when necessary; and less than half had a clear idea of the professional direction they were taking in the courses which they had enrolled in (Brandenburg, 1993). So, assuming that Anne's statement has some basis in reality, what she was arguing here was that students' motives in relation to learning, are an equal part of the interaction.

Again in this extract, the image of teaching which was presented suggested complexity because, by connecting students' expectations and motivations as a very important part of the dynamic, it becomes context bound and relational. Ramsden indicated some of this construction of meaning in his writing about student choice and motivation when he talked about students choosing to take a surface approach to learning. But he did so in support of his argument that this was a problem which was 'encouraged' by stress on competition and/or the kinds of teaching approaches which were being used (Ramsden, 1992, p.101-102). Thus placing the responsibility for students' choice of approach on the teacher. Ramsden did not seem to see it as a choice which students might make in response to their own expectations, motives and/or priorities. Whereas what Peter and Anne seemed to be suggesting was that teaching/learning is an intersection of expectations and assumptions about what is expected and what is necessary. Anne was also arguing that each person in the relationship makes choices.

This means that what was being presented here was not a kind of one-way relationship of teacher as role-model as suggested by HERDSA and the AV-CC, or even one of respect, whether it is teachers for students (Ramsden and AV-CC), or mutual (HERDSA). Rather Anne and Peter were suggesting that teaching/learning relationships are dependent upon students actively choosing to learn. Meaning that effective teaching is dependent upon the intersection of needs, interests, and capacities of both teacher and students. Which adds another dimension to ideas of teaching being
problematic, and because of the students’ opportunity for choice, challenges notions of teaching and learning being unquestionably linked.

Meanings from both of the previous extracts, the potential impact of students’ ideas and motives, and/or the relationship between teachers and students in different contexts, draw on and suggest views of teaching and learning which are non-positivist. From this perspective assumptions of teaching as a uni-directional relationship, and/or expectations that teaching/learning can be explicitly planned for, tightly structured, or universally applied, cannot be supported. Which sets it, like the early extracts in this chapter, in direct conflict with the management discourses about quality teaching which were infused into some of the national and institutional materials cited in Chapters 6 & 7.

The institutional context

Now I want to focus on ways in which the participants talked about the impact on their teaching of working within the institution. In particular I will use extracts from the group discussions to elaborate on their experiences of ways in which their ideas about good teaching and learning were in conflict with expectations, assumptions and/or practices, of other levels of the institutional structure.

It is a self-evident to say that these academics-as-teachers were working/teaching within the context of the university. But it is less obvious, and much less talked about, that the values and assumptions of that context are part of the everyday experience of the people who work there.

The following extract is a small section of a long discussion held during the September mid-semester break, in which we each talked about the kinds of innovations we were introducing into our teaching, the problems which had been encountered, and the rewards experienced in teaching well, as we each defined it. Here James is discussing some of the problems he encountered when trying to introduce changes to his teaching approaches.

James People operate the best (they can) within the constraints that they have. The constraints that we have mean that we can only present and deliver lectures in a certain way. If we had a change of understanding at a higher level I
think that we could do a lot better job. .... It annoys me that when you go to
talk to people about rooms, that people think that all you need to teach is a
blackboard, a piece of chalk and a room. That's all you need. ... My
argument is that the style I am teaching doesn't fit into that particular room.
But we have no mechanism here for saying 'I want to try and teach this way,
I need these facilities'. ....

.... I have no input into that mechanism and therefore really what happens is
that the students get the best quality that I can give them with all of the
constraints that are imposed upon me. The problem I have, is that the
student might criticise me by saying 'why don't we have any slides'? I have
no mechanism for saying 'well we can't have any slides because we have a
room that has no blinds on it'. Or I can't have group work because I am in a
tiered theatre.

(September 20, line 546 ff)

From this extract James could be interpreted as simply setting up a dichotomy of 'them'
and 'us', in which the people in administration who have decision making power over
timetable and room allocations are not listening, or not responding, to requests from
academics for particular kinds of teaching environments. Such an interpretation would
suggest that a break down in the lines of communication had occurred and that some
mechanism needed to be set up to ensure that the kinds of problems mentioned here
were alleviated. On one level that interpretation may be correct. But it is also not
complete.

An alternative interpretation is that James was not just talking about a lack of
communication mechanisms, but about a fundamentally different understanding of what
is meant by 'teaching'. He was arguing that the physical structures and timetabling
organisation actually imposed a particular discourse about learning and knowledge upon
him, and his students, whether he subscribed to it, or not. From James' perspective, to
improve the situation required those responsible for timetabling decisions to have a
"change of understanding". This would involve at least a change from thinking that
teaching and learning are something which can happen anywhere, in any kind of
environment, and that learning can be portioned out in discrete parcels called 'hours', to
an understanding that there are different and equally legitimate ways of thinking about
and arranging teaching/learning experiences. If not an awareness that for some
academics-as-teachers the existing timetabling practices were antithetic to their views of good teaching and learning.

That this difficulty in communication happened is an example of what can occur when people are operating from different discourses, but using the same words. This could mean, for example, in a discussion between James, or any of the other participants, and people responsible for timetabling, that whilst it might seem that they are talking to each other and listening to what has been said, it is possible that, because the assumptions which shape each person’s meaning(s) can be so different, each person is potentially hearing and understanding something completely different.

The latter part of James' comments also raised the issue of students' lack of knowledge about the kinds of choices available to academics-as-teachers; the constraints which are imposed; and the potential impact which that might have on student-evaluation of their teachers. [This area is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 9, Improving teaching].

Another interpretation of James' statements is that he was expressing what in liberal terms might be considered a lack of autonomy, and/or in critical terms a 'lack of agency', to be able to determine the most effective teaching/learning approaches for the content he was preparing to teach. Alternatively, again in critical terms, James' statements can be interpreted as an act of agency because he is clearly able to identify area within the institution where there are conflicting values and assumptions about quality teaching.

Bridget also talked about constraints, but her statements project a different perspective.

Bridget  That was something that I felt very strongly about, that you can create a good teaching environment, or you can produce good learning, or you can become a good teacher, in spite of all the constraints if you really want to and you are resourceful enough. It probably comes from within. .... We grumble about our environment and some of the constraints that we have.

Wendy  But its not to the point that you feel that you can't take the initiative?

Bridget  Oh no. .... No I have never felt constrained by a teaching environment.

(October 20, line 71 ff)
Bridget's argument here was that it is inner 'resources', not merely skills, which enable teachers to able to 'create a good teaching environment' and/or 'become a good teacher'. These attributes which she nominated as 'resources', could be interpreted in many ways, as initiative, as I did within the context of that discussion; as the confidence and/or creativity to respond positively to a challenge; and/or as a capacity based on personal theories, beliefs and/or values.

In expressing these opinions Bridget, perhaps unlike James, was expressing a feeling that she had a sense of autonomy and could overcome environmental constraints. It is also clear in this statement that her sense of autonomy, on this issue, is neither enhanced or diminished by the institutional context. From a critical perspective of agency, one interpretation could be that Bridget was agentic because she did not feel impeded by the institutional constraints. An alternative interpretation would be that she was not agentic, because she 'chose' to work within the constraints, rather than confront them.

Both of these extracts open up challenges to positivist ideas of 'value-free' relationships, and/or assumptions that the values of individuals are not relevant in an institutional environment, and/or that the values and expectations of all employees will be the same as those defined by management.

The focus in these extract on the personal seems to draw on and connect with liberal/humanist ideas of the significance of the individual person, and/or critical views of agency, and/or feminist-postmodern support for recognition of the personal, including emotions and feelings. The idea that it is people's values which influence/determine the way they are in the world, and the ways they respond to the world, are probably based most strongly on liberal ideas of individual autonomy and/or critical theories of ideology. Although that critical view did not seem to be carried through to critique because, whilst some of the group were critical of organisational structures and/or values, and concerned about students' interests and motivations, there is little in these statements which indicates critique of the educational processes themselves.

In looking back over the collection of extracts which I have presented so-far in this chapter, clearly these statements were more personal than those from the other two sites. Whilst there were some links with the discourses at/within the other sites I have analysed, there were other, different meanings being introduced by the ways these
academics-as-teachers spoke about themselves and their experiences. These were meanings in which quality teaching in higher education was understood as complex, problematic and transient, as well as contextual and personal. They were personal in four different, inter-connected ways: as academics-as-teachers speaking from their own experiences; as relationships between teachers and their students; as a feeling, which was interpreted as emotionality and/or as a personal awareness; and also in the ways that participants talked about personal values and assumptions, and teaching approaches base on those values. However good teaching in the terms of these statements is not only about the teacher. It was also contextual and relational, because the teacher is working within, and constantly responding to, a context saturated by the values, assumptions and expectations of other people.

The material in this chapter so far has opened up potentially different meanings of quality teaching in higher education. I will now explore two of these further under themes of the teacher-as-a-person who holds, and whose teaching practices are informed by, particular views, philosophies, values and assumptions, and how, on the basis of such values and assumptions, change is experienced. Within the context of those two themes another, different issue which impacted on the participants’ definitions of quality teaching will be introduced, that is the issue of power within relationships at different levels of the institution. Some of these themes have already been hinted at, but not specifically analysed in the previous extracts, and will now be further developed.

**Quality teaching as personal**

As was shown in the first extract in this chapter, the ways that the participants in the collaborative research group spoke about quality teaching presented a view that it is not possible to talk about quality teaching without reference to the teacher. This is different from both Chubb, and Ramsden and Martin who, in their definitions separated teaching and teachers.

In this section I will use extracts from the group meetings in which issues of personal philosophy and personal beliefs are discussed. These extracts are used to elaborate further on ways in which the participants maintained that perspective of a close link between the academic-as-a-teacher, their teaching approaches, and/or their experiences as teachers.
Teaching as based on a philosophy

A topic for discussion during a meeting near the end of Semester 1 was differences between teachers, their ideas and practices. Peter and Anne, both from Education, talked about some of the people they worked with as holding different views and how they felt that this had pushed them to teach in ways which did not fit with their 'philosophy'.

Peter  I feel that I have had to 'take-the-line' and do things in a way that a lot of it has been prescribed on me. Both in terms of philosophical position, values, and because of seniority, and because of a team situation .. I've had to go along with doing things in particular ways and working within philosophical value approaches that hasn't really been me. As I've matured and become more confident in what I believe in, I've felt that very frustrating. .... in terms of the department or the school you are working in, the colleagues you work with, and the people who have power are a big influencing force. For me anyway.

Anne  Oh yes. I agree with you completely. ... if you think of the attitudes of some people towards what they think teaching is ... While you might have the freedom philosophically to follow what you think is correct educational philosophy for you, its very hard to shake an attitude which is all pervading within a particular course.  

(May 4, line 63 ff)

Like the previously analysed extract from James, these statements could be interpreted as simply complaints and/or self-justifications for wanting to do things differently, for not fitting in to the 'prescribed line'. And from positivist management perspective Peter and Anne could be criticised for not accepting the values of 'the people who have power' (Gee & Lankshear, 1995).

But, taken as a statement about conflicting values, again as in James' statement about timetables, ideas about the working milieu and of different, usually unarticulated, values and assumptions are being argued as being significant. Not only as a difference of understanding, and/or something which needed to be taken account of, but which had a powerful impact on courses, as well as on themselves.
It seems that for both Peter and Anne, the ability to identify these differences and to articulate them did not improve the situation. Instead it led to increased frustration as they became aware that their ideas were being overwhelmed either by particular people 'who have power', or by attitudes which 'pervade' the courses in which they were teaching. This does not mean that they were arguing, at this point, for any one particular philosophical perspective. What they seemed to be claiming was a need to feel that what they believed in was not subsumed by pervading attitudes. These ideas are somewhat similar to those expressed by James and Bridget, both in terms of their awareness of the context in which they were working, and in the expression of a need to be able to act according to their own values and ideas. But the significance of their 'philosophies', and the meaning which was being developed through this discussion, was that for Peter and Anne, their values and understandings not only informed their teaching practices but, at least in part, defined the person-who-is-the-teacher.

Through their recognition of the different philosophical and value positions which inform the actions and perceptions of their colleagues; the different levels of 'taken-for-grantedness' at which those 'philosophies' were being supported; and the differing power which people had within the teaching community; both Anne and Peter raised questions about what autonomy and/or academic freedom might mean. For example, in the statement made by the AV-CC about the importance for academics-as-teachers to 'hold scholarly values', it is unclear as to who defined the meaning of 'scholarly values', and/or what it might mean if people in the organisation had different values.

In this extract the views that Peter and Anne were expressing seemed to be drawing on liberal meanings of the value of individual autonomy, and/or critical meanings of agency and empowerment, which recognise the significance of personal values and the shaping/conflict of personal values within an institutional context, and/or feminist ideas which support the need for individuals to be able to develop their 'voice'. Particularly in relation to the concept of 'voice', Peter's comments about recognising differences, having 'confidence' but still being 'frustrated', are meanings which are recognized by critical postmodern feminists (Elsworth, 1989; Fraser, 1989).

The view of teaching which was being presented by Anne and Peter in this extract, as being experienced as part of/operating within a contestation over the meanings which underpin and inform the ways people work, also seems to draw on a critical postmodern
perspectives which are not evident in materials from either of the other two sites. It is also different from, and potentially in conflict with, some of the constructions of meaning which were evident in those documents. In particular, this extract raised questions about shared meanings, if that means that, as critical and/or feminist writers argue, it comes at the cost of subsuming and/or silencing the meanings of those who do not agree (Yeatman, 1994). As such, what Peter and Anne were talking about in this extract, and the emphasis they were placing on personal beliefs, builds on and/or is another part of challenges to some of the previously analysed assumptions of common ends and unified effort which underpin much of the language of Quality Management (Warren Piper, 1993a).

Taken together with James’ comments about timetables, these two extracts also raise questions about power. About where, in an institution like a university, power is perceived to be situated. And about how it is exercised and becomes manifest. From a positivist perspective, power lies in the hands of senior administrators, and there was some acknowledgement of this view of power in Peter’s statements. But James was presenting a view, somewhat like critical and/or postmodern understandings, that it was in institutional structures such as rooms and timetables, as well as administrative staff who made organisational decisions (Giddens, 1985; 1991). But equally, the participants in this extract, as in some of the previous extracts, were talking about the power of ideas and their experiences of contestation over/within the discursive construction of meaning of quality teaching as an on-going, ‘pervading’ milieu. A construction of meaning about power which is recognised in some postmodern understandings (Yeatman. 1990a; 1994).

The significance of these understandings is that it both demonstrates the contestation of meanings about/within the definition of quality teaching in higher education, and introduces an aspect of that contestation, that is the personal beliefs, philosophies, understandings, and/or values, of the academics-as-teachers, which is absent from the other materials.

*Personal beliefs and how they translate into teaching*

To further elaborate on the importance given by the participants to personal beliefs and values as both/either informing their teaching approaches and/or as part of the person-
who-is-the-teacher I will now introduce and analyse two extracts from Stephen and one from Bridget.

I am using the term personal beliefs here in the same way as I did in the model (Figure 1, Chapter 1), as a sphere of influence, action, and meanings. In this section I am focusing mainly on beliefs which under-pin the ways that each person plans and presents their teaching encounters. Personal beliefs are understood to be based on, but not necessarily the same as, a philosophical position because, whilst a philosophy is a socially shared set of meanings, personal beliefs can be described as a set of ideas gleaned from experiences. This does not mean that participants’ personal values are different from ‘public theories’, or philosophies, because they all draw from, and contribute to, the same pool of meanings. In fact, as shown in the following extracts, some of the characteristics about good teachers and good teaching identified by the participants, such as communication, relating information to what students already know, active learning, and challenging students, were the same as those nominated by Chubb, Ramsden, the AV-CC and HERDSA from the national site, and in institutional documents (BUC, 1993a; 1994a; UB, 1995a; Else, 1993; SCLET, 1995).

Participants’ personal beliefs about teaching and learning are not presented here as complete or without contradictions but as changed and changing. Sometimes people in the group spoke about their personal theories overtly as Stephen does in the next two extracts. At other times, as in the extract from Bridget, ideas were suggested through the ways we talked about what we had done, what we wanted to achieve, and what we believed were important aspects of teaching, or of students’ learning.

The first of this set of extracts was taken from the second group meeting when members of the group were talking about their personal beliefs and were making connections between those beliefs and their own learning experiences.

Wendy  You mentioned the hands-on approach. Do you think that idea of the way people learn has been carried into your teaching?

Stephen  Very definitely. ... I believe that there is a lot of value in direct hands on experience where possible because then the person feels that it is part of their everyday world and it is significant, worth looking at and interesting. So I have always been able to anchor things back to reality in the real
world. That is important. ... I think I also learned very early the value of communication, being a good communicator and explaining things. Which is perhaps why I am not a research biologist but an educator.

(March 24, line 84 ff)

Here positive experiences for Stephen as a learner had been translated by him into a 'personal theory' about what constitutes effective teaching. He is expressing his own view of how 'making things relevant', "direct hands-on experience" and/or "reality" in "their everyday world" were very important parts of his own, and his students' learning. These aspects are also mentioned in different ways as effective teaching/learning approaches in many of the national (AV-CC; Chubb; Candy; HERDSA; Ramsden), and institutional documents (Else; 1994; SCILT, 1995). But, as part of his personal experiences of effective learning, they had significance for Stephen. This may have been because he had no teaching qualifications, although participants such as Peter and Anne who had teaching qualifications, also explained their beliefs, their teaching approaches, and their understandings of quality teaching, in relation to their learning experiences.

The importance of personal beliefs for the teacher-as-a-person in informing the ways in which a teacher teaches (Nias, 1984; 1986; 1987b; Rudduck, 1991), and the idea of learning about teaching through personal experience as an apprenticeship-by-observation (Lortie, 1975) have been recognised in other educational levels for a long time. It is not possible to try to ascertain why these ideas have had much less impact in higher education, except to hypothesise that it may be related to the fact that until the 1990s teaching qualifications were not required for most academics and/or that little research has been done in the area.

In the latter part of the extract Stephen shifted the focus from "direct hands-on experience" to "communication". But in speaking about communication and how important it was to him to feel that he was able to explain things well, Stephen's interpretation of communication is potentially different to Chubb and/or Ramsden. Because for Stephen, communication was not a skill, it was part of how he defined himself. To the point of possibly influencing his career choice. These notions of working from personal beliefs, and the teacher-as-a-person, draws from/contributes to meanings which can be traced to liberal understandings of a whole person, and/or of individual autonomy, and/or critical, and/or postmodern perspectives of values saturation.
In the next extract, from the same meeting, Stephen elaborated more on what he meant by getting students involved. As part of that, he again used concepts of communication and student involvement to talk about his efforts to develop interactions in which the students were participants.

Stephen My idea of teaching is definitely participatory. I really don't enjoy teaching the first several weeks of teaching first year students because they sit there like dummies. They want to blot things up and they don't want to interact with the thing directly. They come in and they write and they write. I edge them towards participation. I put scenarios to them. I make suggestions. I prompt them a little bit. I get them to develop that way. So yes. Communication and involvement are two important themes for me. (March 24, line 103 ff)

What Stephen said here continues his own, and the group’s, meaning of teaching as an interaction, which was also evident in his discussion with Peter in an extract cited at the beginning of this chapter. The idea of interaction/communication was used by Stephen in two ways in this extract. In the first part of his statement he was referring to students’ expectation of being communicated to, whereas, through the idea of involvement, he seemed to be suggesting that he preferred to communicate with his students. Thus shifting the focus from a meaning which carries connotations of hierarchical forms of communication, and a non-involved, passive learning approach by students, to a form of communication which carries meanings of interaction and/or exchange. This, could be interpreted as having the same meanings as Chubb’s characteristic of ‘active and positive interaction between the teacher and students (1992b, p.35), and similar to HERDSA’s idea of ‘climate of mutual respect and open communication’ (1992, p.2), and/or the institutional concept of collaboration (Else, 1994, Vol.1, p.6).

Besides the different ideas about communication, in both of these extracts, there are also strong ideas about developing students from dependent learners to students being participants in their own learning. And also that the most effective way to learn was not through ‘blotting things up’ and/or by ‘writing’, but rather through ‘involvement’. This understanding is possibly similar to the notion of ‘active involvement’ suggested by Ramsden at the national site, and Else in the institutional site. Although possibly closer
to Ramsden’s idea of ‘student responsibility’, rather than Else’s ‘opportunity’ for involvement.

Stephen's frustration with students who define themselves as passive learners was very evident. And he justified that frustration because that approach to learning did not fit with his ideas about how learning is best achieved. Thus presenting again the importance of ‘ideas’. In this instance that included his own as well as the students' expectations of themselves and their role in learning. This idea of students' expectations is similar to that which was argued by Anne in a previous extract, whilst the impact of different, conflicting ideas has been previously raised in different ways in extracts from Peter, Anne and James.

However here Stephen was not talking about a passive acceptance of the approach with which, according to him, the students began their studies. Rather Stephen was describing how he challenged/changed the students’ approach. And whilst the concept of active learning was mentioned frequently in materials from both the national (Ramsden 1993; Candy et. al., 1994), and institutional sites (BUC, 1992c; 1993a; UB, 1995a; Else, 1993; 1994), here Stephen introduced another, different aspect of the meaning of quality teaching. Because for Stephen it was important that as a teacher he took on the responsibility to teach students different, more active approaches to their studies. That is, to teach students to be what he believed to be more effective learners. In this way it is similar to Bridget’s approach which she described in a previous extract about teaching/learning through simulations. Which is a more active intervention than the institutional perspective of ‘providing opportunities’ (Else, 1993); and/or of using ‘appropriate teaching methods’, as suggested by Ramsden, and Candy et. al., from the national site.

In each of the extracts in this section on personal beliefs, the emphasis has been on the significance of each person's beliefs and values and how they translate into teaching. Those beliefs are described as informing all of the ways the teachers plan and teach, as well as being part of the ways they interact with their students and the people they work with. Connected with ideas from previous extracts, such as James' idea of the need for emotional involvement; Bridget's notion of 'inner resources'; plus Peter and Steven's ideas of 'sensing'; this perspective of the person-who-is-the-teacher was evidently very important in the participants' construction of meaning of quality teaching in higher
education. This construction could be interpreted as being in opposition to Chubb’s focus on characteristics of teaching, and also different from Ramsden & Martin who, whilst they state that they were focusing on teachers, describe a set of behaviours. What the participants of the group were identifying was much less visible than characteristics or behaviours, because they were dealing with teaching as a personal expression of experiences and beliefs.

If, as is evidenced in these extracts from the participants, quality teaching in higher education is based on personal experiences, beliefs, inner resources, sensitivities, and emotional involvement, and/or is an expression of the person-who-is-the-teacher, some of the implications of such a definition are that:

- there cannot be one clearly stated and shared meaning
- teachers need to be convinced that there is a need for them to change their approaches
- changing people’s ideas is difficult [see the next section of this chapter on Teachers experiencing change]

Which raises a number of problems, particularly for people who might have interests of creating a ‘unified system’ and/or being able to make comparisons of teachers across disciplines and/or institutions because it takes the definition of quality teaching away from uniformity and out of the control of management/administration. It also potentially changes the approach to professional development as an add-on, or skills based process. And it opens up questions about the extent to which people can be expected to change.

These latter two issues are addressed in the final section of this chapter in which I firstly examine some of aspects of the personal experience of changes in teaching, specifically focusing on changes which were self-initiated. I then briefly look at the kind of attitudes and context which participants identified as appropriate/necessary for teachers to continue to change.

**Experiencing change**

In the first and second extracts in this chapter, change has already been indicated as an aspect of definitions of quality teaching within the group discussions. The issue of change, personal change, institutional change and/or system change, were topics which
re-occurred in a number of different guises. Which was probably not surprising in light of the reality that whilst we were quite deliberately working on change in our teaching, we were also working in an institution which was going through major changes, in a system which was going through major changes. The group members' responses to change experiences varied over time as we felt the impact sometimes from national pressures such as the changes in funding arrangements and/or increased student numbers, and sometimes from institutional pressures such as the changing status of the institution.

*Teachers experiencing change*

What I am addressing here is the personal experience of changing teaching approaches as part of, and contributing to, changes in personal theories about learning and knowledge. The significance of personal beliefs/philosophy was one aspect of how the participants described their experience of change. And it seemed that the ways in which quality teaching was defined by the teacher as part of themselves, their values and beliefs; their person-to-person interactions with students; their 'sensing' of students' responses; their feelings/emotions about themselves as teachers, all influenced their experience of change. Because, from this perspective, to the extent that teaching is an expression of the person-who-is-the-teacher and a combination of their beliefs and values and their own personal experiences as a learner, then changing their approaches to teaching is not just a re-alignment of skills but is very much an experience of personal change. And changes in teaching approaches are not experienced simply as additional methods, but as a personal disruption of meanings.

This is demonstrated in the following two extracts from Jane. In the first of these extracts the theme of experiencing change and change as a personal experience is introduced. Jane also spoke about her ideas about teaching and learning having come from her prior experiences. The following discussion developed after I mentioned a change in her teaching approach which Jane had told us about during the previous meeting.

Wendy  Jane was talking about (this) last time. The difference between telling the students what to do, and letting them start from experiencing what to do.
Jane I think that for me personally that shift was reasonably momentous. Because if you think about our profession. We are a very hierarchical, dogmatic type of profession and even the teaching that we endured as students, and later even our own diploma course, was very much that didactic teaching, and I haven't seen anything much different to that in any of my learning life. (March 24, line 365 ff)

Again, as in Stephen's comments about his teaching approach, the issue of 'teaching as we have been taught' is presented as a strong influence in shaping the way that academics teach. Jane had learned as an apprentice-observer about didactic teaching and about "telling people what to do". Both of these models she had equated with 'how things are done' and 'how to get things done effectively'. In this extract she puts together 'hierarchical' and 'dogmatic' to not only describe the teaching approach which she 'endured', but also her profession, and as such, as part of herself. Therefore the change in her teaching approach which she had described in the previous meeting as allowing students to 'learning by doing' and as 'messy and unpredictable', was for her 'momentous'. Not only because it was a new approach in her teaching. But also, as she was saying in the extract, a change for her 'personally'.

A little later in the same discussion Jane again drew on the idea of her personal history as an influence in how she, as a nurse-educator, had experienced, and interpreted, firstly the move from teaching in hospitals to teaching in a tertiary institution, and then changes in her ideas about effective teaching and learning. This extract is just one example of how, throughout the course of collaborative research group there were times when Jane struggled with the clashes between her historically based personal theory about the need to control, and her desire to use more interactive teaching approaches which she believed encourages students to develop as independent learners.

In describing her experiences as a struggle, and as a process, Jane was indicating that she was aware that the kinds of 'personal shift' she was describing takes time and commitment. She, like other members of the group, was very aware that the kind of changes which they were experiencing did not happen all at once. They knew from personal experience that the development of new ideas and different values, as well as breaking old habits and developing new skills, and then developing confidence and trust in those different approaches, required a long and often difficult transition.
Jane We have all of us got our historical development that we have brought with us into this new system. I am very aware that I like control. I like to know that things are going the way I think they should be going. I know I am very much a control person and that is obviously to do with my past and the way that I have progressed through my life. So I guess that we have all got things like that we bring with us. (March 24, line 523 ff)

Here Jane describes herself as a 'control person' and, like Stephen when he spoke of himself as a 'communicator', it is about a belief system which is so strong it has become 'who I am as a person'. Therefore changes which she made in her teaching either fitted in with her existing persona and confirmed that identity, or they disrupted those views. Not just at a superficial level, but as a deeply felt experience. Which made it difficult for her to change because change was not only experienced as a breaking away from what has previously been accepted as 'normal' and 'right'. But changing as a person. So it took quite a lot of courage, and trust, for her to decide to try the fairly messy and unpredictable process of allowing students to work things out for themselves.

Dealing with issues about control in the teaching-learning relationship was very much part of Jane's change in personal theory. As Jane spoke about her history as a learner in formal education settings and about her professional experiences she showed that, for her, the 'power of position' and 'being in control' were more than a learning-teaching style, they were a very strong part of her life. The hierarchical understandings of her profession, and 'didactic' teaching are ideas which fit within, and draw meaning from both positivist and liberal meanings of appropriate teacher-student relationships. Whereas what she was moving towards has meaning which connect with different strands of liberal and/or critical ideas of independence/autonomy.

Like Stephen, Peter, and Anne, Jane's ideas about good teaching had been held for a long time, as part of who-they-are-as-a-person. For Jane this meant that they were therefore difficult and sometimes painful to change. These ideas draw on/combine liberal and critical ideas of beliefs and values being significant for each individual; critical ideas of people being able to confront and change values which have influenced them; postmodern ideas about the impact of autobiography; and postmodern and/or
critical ideas of the power of discourses (ideas) to influence how people see the world and themselves in the world.

The participants were aware of conflicting values and ideas within themselves. This perspective of subjectivity being experienced as contestations within/between/over meaning and as conflicting and changing meanings of self, with associated feelings and emotions, is an understanding which is very different from liberal assumptions of a unified logical person and/or postivist assumptions of people as rational and clear in their goals. Rather it draws from/contributes to meanings which fit within critical/feminist/postmodern understandings. Although even there the focus is on differences between people, and how that impacts on voice and representation, rather than on contestation within people.

This understanding of experiencing change as personal, potentially provides a different dimension to the link between quality teaching and professional development which was made within both the national and institutional sites. For example, materials from both the national and institutional sites referred to the need for academics-as-teachers to be involved in professional development (Baldwin; Chubb; HERDSA; AV-CC; Ramsden 1993; BUC 1993a; Else), and/or to take a scholarly approach to their teaching (HERDSA; AV-C; Ramsden 1992; 1993; Ramsden and Martin). [see also Improving teaching]. However, in all of that material teachers changing their teaching was presented as unproblematic. But if changing teaching requires/contributes to changes in personal meaning, then any kind of professional development requires extended time and a context in which multiple, fragmented and contradictory meanings are supported.

A context for change

Accepting challenges is one aspect of change which was acknowledged at the national level. Chubb (1992b, p. 34) stated that the rapid increase in student numbers, and the concomitant diversity of students, should be seen as a challenge to institutions and the government. What Chubb omitted to say, and perhaps from the group's point of view the most important, was the challenge to teachers.

This kind of 'challenge' was understood by the participants as part of the changing context of their work which they were addressing. As Anne said:
Anne We were saying quite explicitly – these are some of the problems we are facing, ... Then it was like, so therefore given this, what do we do to improve, make-better, continue on? (October 20, line 99 ff)

This context of change was, for the participants, one of the reasons why they were all changing their teaching approaches during the two year period on which this research was based. And although most of the processes which the participants were introducing into their teaching were not new in higher education, they were innovations for these teachers. As such they seemed to require a level of courage, risk-taking and/or creativity which seemed to be omitted from most of the materials I analysed about quality teaching and/or teachers, and/or materials about professional development, at both the national or institutional levels. Possible exceptions are in the university Professional Development plan (SELT, 1995, p.5) which referred to the ability to "solve problems and think creatively", and Ramsden & Martin who mentioned "innovation" as part of their definition of good teachers (1994, p.3).

These discourses however are not entirely absent from national and/or institutional materials. The attributes are in all of the materials about the desirable characteristics of graduates as people who have "creativity and imagination" (Chubb 1992b, p.22); a sense of personal agency (Candy et. al., 1994, p.44); creatively fulfilling vocational aspirations (University of Ballarat, 1995a); and the "generic skills of problem solving" (Crebbin et. al., 1994, p.56). They are also attributed by Ramsden as being amongst the kinds of things which "an effective head of a university department might do to encourage high quality teaching" (1993, p.43). Describing research findings on effective school principals, he said that they modelled risk-taking, they tried to be innovative, and showed that they were prepared to do things differently, even if it sometimes meant making mistakes.

It is not appropriate for me to speculate here on why such characteristics are defined as appropriate for graduates and/or heads of departments, but omitted in almost all of the materials about teachers. However I did note that in that material too, there is no recognition of the need for a willingness to deal with conflicting values and ideas within themselves, which might arise from these processes. And whilst it could be read that the material from the AV-CC and HERDSA which refer to academics-as-teachers being
‘models’ for their students, does indicate that academic-as-teachers should have all of the characteristics defined as desirable and/or necessary in graduates, there is no clear indication in those materials, without reference to other documents, that attributes such as risk-taking, innovation and/or learning by/through making mistakes, are part of what teachers should be modelling.

The participants in the group were, at least to some extent, aware of that omission. In the concluding part of our long September meeting, after participants had talked about their teaching innovations, I asked a question about the kinds of environments which they felt they needed to be able to continue to improve their teaching. In the next extract, which was a discussion between Peter and Bridget, Bridget made a connection between her experiences as an academic and expectations of graduates.

Peter  The institution should be preparing a general concept map of guidelines for teaching and learning that we can draw on, but then implement in a way that is meaningful for us. ...

Bridget  It is interesting what Peter is saying about what we would like. We would like autonomy in our own teaching but we have to have it within some principles or guidelines. Isn't this exactly what we are trying to do for our students, collectively. We are trying to give them principles and guidelines, but we are trying to give them the autonomy or the flexibility to go outside those guidelines.... What we are saying basically, philosophically is, we would like for ourselves what we are trying to give to our students.

(September 20, line 2101ff)

The first part of what Peter said might be seen as supporting ideas from quality management of the need for management to establish a map for everybody in the organisation to use (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.39). But his second phrase moved away from an expectation that everybody should have the same, shared meaning to a perspective of individual agency. This could be interpreted as a blending of two different social perspectives using positivist and/or liberal ideas about the need for organisation and/or common goals, together with liberal and/or critical ideas about individuals. Alternately, it could be understood as an interpretation of liberal ideals of freedom within structure. Although at the end of his statement he specifically extended his meaning to talk about ways which were ‘meaningful for us’.
In the first part of Bridget’s statement she seemed to be agreeing with the need for academics-as-teachers to feel that they have the sense of autonomy and/or agency to develop their own teaching. And in the second part, her connection between the kind of environment which she would like, and what she sees "we are trying to give our students", draws the discourses of teaching and graduates close together so that, in their juxtaposition, different kinds of expectations can emerge. She also points to the potential disruption between discourses about graduates as self-directed, autonomous, critical thinkers, and expectations that academics-as-teachers can be expected to, in her terms, stay within guidelines. This potential disruption and/or contradiction in which teachers might be seen as teaching students to attain something which they do not have themselves, has strong implications for the development of both quality teaching, and graduate competencies. One of the implications is that teachers may not perceive that they are in a position to model the characteristics. Another implication is that academics-as-teachers may not feel that they have the ‘autonomy or the flexibility’ to work within their own personal beliefs of quality teaching, or to take risks and/or experiment with changes.

Re-view

As a way of drawing together some of the main threads from this chapter and to suggest some answers to my guiding questions:

*What kinds of views about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching inform the ways that people in the collaborative research group talked about quality teaching in higher education in Australia in 1993-1994?*

What were the substantive differences between this site and the national and institutional sites?

*What were the continuities/discontinuities between these and discourses about the desired characteristics of graduates?*

*Are there significant omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relations to quality teaching in higher education? and, If so, what are they?*

I now briefly summarise the most significant points and major threads of meaning. To do the latter I continue to use the dimensions of knowledge; learning; relationships; and
teaching, as guiding structures to situate meanings within the analytic frames which I outlined in Chapter 3 (Figure 2). This is followed by a review of some of the 'continuities/discontinuities between these discourses and the desired characteristics of graduates'; and 'omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relation to quality teaching'.

The group members talked about teaching as being a way of thinking, and a personal expression of themselves and their values, ideas, personal theories and/or philosophies, based on personal experiences, but needing to be flexible enough to respond dynamically within different interactions and contexts. They talked about teachers as people who were exploring, searching for something, taking risks, being innovative/creative. In some ways these ideas connected with discourses of teacher-as-researcher and views that knowledge is not fixed. But from the perspective of the participants, these were characteristics of the person-who-is-the-teacher, rather than skills or approaches which can be applied. Thinking about teaching/teachers as dynamic, relational and emotional, as well as values-saturated and contextual, added a dimension of quality teaching in higher education which is complex, multidimensional and problematic, in comparison with a tendency in some of the other definitions to construe teaching as unproblematic and/or functional as visible characteristics or attributes.

Knowledge and learning

The knowledges and learnings which were evident in this chapter were most similar to those advocated as necessary/appropriate for graduates such as lifelong learning, self-directed, responsible and independent learners who love learning (Anne, Bridget, and Stephen), who understand knowledge in different ways (James and Jane), and who are able to research and reflect (Jane and Bridget). The teaching/learning approaches the participants described also had strong links to the kinds of knowledges and learnings which were advocated in other materials including experiential, problem-based learning (Candy et.al.; Ramsden; SCiLT).

There is also a sense that the participants thought about knowledge as developing rather than complete, for themselves, as well as their students. This is part of, and links with, their ideas of on-going research, of a need for a commitment to learning, and also to their awareness of change. In addition to those ideas of knowledge and learning, some of the participants talked about learning and knowledge as involving emotions (James). In
referring to the development of these kinds of knowledge and learnings, they all talked about the process as being confronting and demanding for themselves, and their students.

The participants also spoke about students as having ideas of their own, their own motives (Anne), and/or expectations of themselves and their teachers (Stephen). They described that as part of, and impacting on the teaching and learning; and of students needing to be pushed and/or encouraged to change, or go beyond, their expectations (Anne, Stephen)

Relationships and teaching

In this chapter teaching was presented as a personal relationship, a dynamic interaction between teachers and learners. Because of this, the group presented teaching and learning as variable, changing, and contextual, in relation to/responding to, expectations and assumptions from the community, the institution and students. This relationship was seen as happening, not simply at the level of people being situated together, but as processes in which there was potential for conflict and contestation between meanings and values, in a context which was value saturated.

Teacher-as-a-person

Within this value-saturated context teaching was seen as both a personal expression and a personal experience. The ways people teach and the experiences which shape, and are shaped by those perspectives, were seen as being an expression of the teacher-as-a-person. That person is understood as having a set of values, assumptions and expectations, based on their personal experiences, which formed their way of thinking, personal theories and/or philosophies. So that teaching approaches and/or teaching styles are perceived, not as skills or strategies, but as an expression of personally held beliefs. Or as part of themselves as a person. The impact of those beliefs was also explored in terms of participants working within/between conflicting values and/or the experiences of changes in teaching as personal change and as an emotional and difficult process.

These perspectives highlight gaps within the other sites where there were assumptions of shared meanings and goals, and/or in materials like Ramsden who acknowledged the importance of teachers, but rarely talked about teachers as people. This omission not
only hides the experiences and interpretations of individuals, but potentially frames them as interchangeable parts of a system or institution.

_Continuities/discontinuities between these discourses and the desired characteristics of graduates_

The materials here intersect with the discourses about graduates in two different ways. As I have already pointed out there are clear links in relation to the kinds of knowledge which, in different ways, the participants were trying to facilitate. The second link came through Bridget's statement about the institutional environment and qualities which had been defined as important in graduates, arguing that they were also important for teachers. Thus introducing questions about whether the desired qualities of graduates could be expected to be developed if the context of teaching did not enable/encourage academics-as-teachers to have the same characteristics and/or attitudes.

_Omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relation to quality teaching_

In their attempts to define quality teaching the participants/group did not come out with a clear statement, or a list of qualities and/or attributes. Instead their statements suggested multiplicity, complexity, contextuality, transience and beliefs.

Although the group members recognised and acknowledged the significance of their relationships with their students, like the materials from each of the other sites, there was very little about the inherent power relationships between teachers and students. Like materials from both of the other sites, most of the ways that participants talked about interacting with their students suggested some kind of equality. Except perhaps in those extracts where Peter, Anne and Stephen, were talking about pushing/challenging students to change their ideas about learning and/or themselves as learners

_Pre-view_

Having done all of this analysis on the definition of quality teaching in higher education, Stephen's metaphors about good teaching being "scattered shards" and/or "a constellation of ideas" (October 20, line 641 ff) seem to be apt descriptions of the disparate and un-
connectedness of many of the expectations of what quality teaching in higher education means.

In the next chapter I move on to examine one component of the discourses about the need to improve teaching in higher education. Of the many different approaches which have been put forward about how this improvement might be achieved, I will look only at teacher evaluation/appraisal as an example of policy and practice, and as another site in and through which meanings about quality teaching were being contested and constructed.
Chapter 9

Definitions of quality teaching - Improving teaching

Like the discourses about teaching and teachers, there were many different, interconnecting contestations over/within which improving teaching was being constructed. Each of these different constructs opens up some opportunities for interpretation whilst restricting or obscuring others. Some of the discursive fields which were being encompassed within the construction of meaning of improvement of teaching in higher education during 1992 – 1996, included:

- criteria for recognising good teaching:
  - graduate evaluations
  - graduate employment
  - performance indicators

- who was to recognise good teaching:
  - self - peers - students
  - management - the institution
  - DEET - quality audits
  - ways of rewarding good teaching/teachers:
    - promotion
    - monitory and/or acknowledgment

- ways to improve teaching in higher education:
  - the introduction of CAUT
  - self evaluation
  - peer appraisal
  - management support and appraisal

- ways of evaluating teaching:
  - self evaluation
  - peer appraisal
  - student evaluations
  - management appraisal
  - graduate outcomes
  - performance indicators
- changing terms and conditions of employment for academics including the introduction of:
  - mandatory student evaluations
  - some form of peer/management appraisals

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address all of those discursive fields and, as can be seen from the list, there are several points where discourses were cross-linked and became self-referencing. I have chosen to focus on two areas, that of teacher evaluations/appraisals and student evaluations, for two reasons. One is that self and/or peer evaluations and/or management appraisals, and student evaluations were being blended into many of the then current discourses about how good teaching in higher education could be recognised, and/or how it could be improved. And secondly, they are discursive fields which were highly contested at the national level over the years of 1989 to 1993, and continued as a significant issue in enterprise bargaining agreements within institutions.

In this chapter, like Chapter 5, I will again draw together materials from each of the three sites to try to develop an understanding of the construction of meanings of/about improving teaching which were being supported; the ways in which the meanings of ‘quality teaching’ and ‘improving teaching’ were interlinked and overlapping; and of similarities and/or differences.

My guiding questions for this section of analysis are:

What kinds of views about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching, informed the ways that people at each of the three sites talked about improving teaching in higher education through the use of teacher evaluations/appraisals and student evaluations?

What are the substantive similarities and/or differences within and/or between the three sites?

What are the continuities/discontinuities between these views and definitions of quality teaching in higher education?

Are there significant omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relations to quality teaching in higher education? and, If so, what are they?

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first short section is a brief introductory analysis of material from the 1991 National Government policy document which
addresses both teacher appraisal and student evaluations. The second section is an analysis of materials from each of the three sites on evaluation/appraisal of teaching. And the third section, again using extracts from the three sites, is on student evaluations. Within each of those three sections I examine the extracts for views about the kinds of processes which were advocated, the views of learning, knowledge and teaching, the allocation of responsibilities, and the relationships between teachers, students, and management which were defined and/or expected.

Evaluating teaching

The linking of discourses about quality teaching, improvement, and evaluation of teaching, is not new in Australian higher education. According to Chubb, the Murray Report (1957) and studies done since then by the AV-CC (1963; 1968) and Bourke (1986) (all cited in Chubb, 1992b, p.8), all argued the need for universities to develop processes for 'systematic evaluation' of their activities, naming teaching specifically. In this decade the linking of evaluation with quality has also received considerable attention, and again, evaluation/appraisal has been presented by many writers at the national level as a way of enhancing the quality of teaching in Australian higher education (Chubb, 1992b; Baldwin, 1991; Ramsden, 1990).

Even though the following extracts from a policy statement from the then Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, were published a few months before the time frame of this research, it is introduced here because I believe that it was significant in giving priority to some discursive constructions of meaning about/within the evaluation of teaching in higher education.

A statement from the Minister - Baldwin (1991)

In October 1991 the (then) Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, Hon. Peter Baldwin, tabled his policy statement titled "Higher education: quality and diversity in the 1990's".

In his 1991 policy statement Baldwin stated:
As self-governing bodies, institutions have the major responsibility for ensuring that the teaching process, their research efforts and their graduates are of high quality. They achieve this through a variety of mechanism, including accreditation processes, staff appraisal and development practices, (and) program evaluation.  

(Baldwin, 1991, p.29)

This statement has the effect of placing responsibility (but not all responsibility) for 'staff appraisal and development' on the institution; of linked quality with staff appraisal; and potentially positing teacher appraisal and development as parallel, if not synonymous.

In his statements Baldwin posited "ensuring" quality of "the teaching process" as something which needs monitoring by a range of mechanisms including "accreditation processes, staff appraisal" and "program evaluation". Thus indicating the need for close scrutiny before, during and after. He also placed this kind of scrutiny as outside the domain of academics-as-teachers and into the hands of the abstract and depersonalised "institution".

The use of present tense in Baldwin's statement suggests that the "mechanisms" he listed are ones which institutions already applied, or should do. He also seems to be suggesting that "staff appraisal and development practices" were/are unquestionably linked. Thus making what appears to be a logical progression where staff, having been 'appraised', will then take on the "development" which has been identified. Without recognising the overwhelming empirical evidence that these processes should be kept distinct (Ramsden & Dodds, 1989); that there might be potentially different people and different power relationships involved; and/or that for development to occur, teachers "need to be shown how to meet the need" (Moses, 1988, p.173).

Under the topic of management, Baldwin elaborated his view that monitoring quality did not need to be under the control of academics-as-teachers. When referring to performance indicators, he pointed to data collection about teaching quality:

based on surveyed perceptions of students, alongside measures such as student progress rate, program completion rate and mean completion time as part of a profile of both quantitative and qualitative indicators.  (Baldwin, 1991, p.32)
In this statement Baldwin linked student evaluations with "teaching quality" and gave them, as he did when naming students-as-stakeholders, a visible place in the judgement of quality. At the same time, by talking about that process in the context of management, and placing it "alongside" the 'objective' data about "student progress", "program completion" and "mean completion", the "perceptions of students" becomes another piece of data which management might legitimately be expected to collect. And by suggesting that "rate" and "time" are appropriate "indicators", the concept of "teaching quality" becomes potentially attached to discourses of efficiency, rather than individual or teaching differences and/or student needs.

One of the strongest value positions which seems to be projected through Baldwin's statements is a very top-down, objective, logical, management oriented view of education, and how educational change is achieved. Within that interpretation there is room to understand the 'top' to be either the government and/or the institution. Against that interpretation, the introduction of 'students' perceptions' and 'students as stakeholders' can be interpreted as a kind of bottom-up perspective, a counter-balance to uni-directional lines of power and control. However what seems to be absent within both of these is the academic-as-teacher; an understanding that these processes might be complex and multidimensional; and/or that academics-as-teachers may already evaluate their own teaching and want/need to have some part in the defining of what they mean by quality teaching.

The Government proposals for ways to improve the quality of teaching in higher education, as they were put forward by Baldwin and others, did not go uncontested. A number of Australian authors reacted to both the processes being suggested, and the views of teaching on which they were assumed to be based. Three examples of those contesting arguments were that:

(i) the state was attempting to increase its surveillance over the work of universities, and of academics as individuals and/or as a group, and shift control and power of teaching into the hands of administration (Lublin, 1990; Smyth, 1991; Knight, 1992)

(ii) the proposed kinds of accountability, based on discourses of efficiency and outcomes, and assumptions of standardisation and 'one best way', are overlaying teaching with economic, rather than educational discourses (Knight, 1992).
(iii) whilst the government's approach seems to suggest that quantity is an indicator of quality, because teaching is complex, the definition and evaluation of quality teaching should encompass that complexity (Duhs, 1992, p.99).

I now move to conduct a closer scrutiny of materials from the three sites to try to ascertain the constructions and meanings which surrounded the proposed introduction of staff appraisal.

**Evaluating teaching - self-evaluation and/or staff appraisal**

**Voices from the national public arena**

I begin with a more detailed analysis of material from Ramsden (1993), HERDSA (1992), the AV-CC (1993), and the academic Unions. In the previous two chapters [Chapter 5 & 6] where I examined materials from the national level, Chubb (1992b) was one of my major sources. However because he placed emphasis on professional development and student-evaluations, and makes little reference to teacher evaluation - teacher appraisal, I begin this section of analysis with material from Ramsden.

*Effective teaching in higher education - Ramsden (1993)*

Ramsden took a very different perspective from that of Baldwin in arguing that teachers' self-evaluation is an important part of improving teaching. He stated:

> I think we have to recognise first of all that effective teaching is self-evaluating teaching. As I have said, good teachers constantly reflect on what has helped their students to learn, and what has hindered their learning, and put the results of their reflection into practice. Whatever we use to try to improve the quality in higher education we must not do anything which discourages people from trying to criticise their own performance openly and candidly. (1993, p.44)

Ramsden conveys a message that 'constant reflection', 'resulting in changed practices', is a characteristic of all "good teachers". Because of the primacy which Ramsden gives 'self-evaluation', including the phrase "first of all", his statement appears to situate self-evaluation as separate from, and possibly superior to, other forms of evaluation. He also
makes a very direct link between 'self-evaluation', "effective teaching" and 'continued improvement'. In this statement that link is explicitly tied through 'teacher reflection' to students' success in learning. Put in the context of the sixth of his "key principles" (1993, p.41) [see Chapter 6] of "listening and learning from students", direct person-to-person student-feedback could be considered as part of that reflective process.

His final sentence presents a warning about the introduction of evaluation and/or appraisal processes which could inhibit, rather than encourage, improvement in teaching. In this sentence, with the connection between 'discouragement' with "anything", and self-evaluation with 'open' and 'candid' critique, Ramsden came down strongly on the side of self-evaluation and self-directed improvement. He is thus giving a warning against the imposition of accountability measures which would diminish decisions of academics-as-teachers over their own teaching. He was also presenting a warning that externally imposed evaluations may have the potential to restrict self-evaluation and the openness of teachers to talk about their problems.

The language of the whole statement, "we", (3 times) "have to" and "must not", projects imperatives into his argument which, added to his generalisations about "good teachers", makes his argument appear very convincing. This could be because he was aware of, and in spite of, the strong support from the government for other forms of teacher evaluation and appraisal. This position in opposition to externally directed appraisal was re-iterated when he talked about "death by a thousand performance indicators" (1993, p.44). He said:

It is one thing to develop quite sophisticated measures of teaching performance; it is quite another to help teachers to believe in improvement and to become responsible for acting in ways that will enhance teaching quality. (Ramsden, 1993, p.44)

Again in this part of his speech Ramsden seemed to be arguing that for quality teaching, teachers must be able to 'believe' that they can "become responsible" for improving their own teaching through self-evaluation, and take responsibility for decisions which they make.

In his argument he is deliberately setting "quite sophisticated measures" against 'helping teachers believe', with the latter being posited as the more appropriate way to "enhance
teaching quality". Through this juxtaposition he is explicitly arguing that the use of "sophisticated" externally mandated reviews, questionnaires; and/or checklists, can cut across and conflict with teachers' own self-evaluation and intrinsic motivation towards improvement. That is a view which was also supported by Moses (1988), and Lonsdale (1990).

The meanings in Ramsden's argument draws from, and contribute to, liberal values of individual responsibility and personal improvement; humanist ideas about the importance of care and concern for students' needs; and/or critical educational theory about reflection and teacher's personal agency. In the first statement he hints at, and warns against the positivist hierarchical model of managing educational improvement and change which seemed to flow through Baldwin's arguments. In the second quotation he is more open in his rejection of "measures of teaching performance" as exemplars of externally, supposedly objectively developed, and/or hierarchically controlled, measurements of good teaching, through which "we pretend that the existence of the data implies that we have solved the problems" (Ramsden, 1993, p.44).

In the final stages of his speech, Ramsden also argued against the idea of 'stakeholders' being the people who had the right/capacity to define quality teaching in higher education. A view which was advocated by both Baldwin (1991) and Chubb (1992b). Ramsden stated that meanings of quality teaching "cannot be derived from a competition between stakeholders' interests" (p.45) because, in his terms, such a process 'degrades' educational improvement into a power struggle. Instead he offered a different understanding of quality as being "about values". He stated that:

we also need to have a value-driven view of the nature of good teaching in higher education. We need to be clear about what is educationally valuable. This clarity about the nature of quality arises out of educational expertise and moral commitment. (Ramsden, 1993, p.44)

Here Ramsden's use of "values", "value-driven", "educationally valuable", and "moral commitment" draw directly from, and blend liberal/humanist and critical perspectives which confront positivist notions of quality as something which can be objectively defined and/or measured, or which could be derived through competition between stakeholders. This is an argument which was supported by other Australian writers such
as Donaghy (1993) and Andresen (1992) who claimed that good teaching is a deeply value-laden concept and/or that what is important about quality teaching are the moral, political, ethical, and social factors, at least as much as, if not more than, technical ones.

There are potential discursive links between Ramsden’s arguments here about quality teaching arising from “moral commitment”, and the statements from HERDSA (1992, p.2) and the AV-CC’s (1993, p.1) ideas of teaching as ‘ethical practice’. In all of these materials it can be interpreted that it is the teacher-as-a-person, who having ethics and moral commitment, is significant in defining quality. From such an interpretation it could also be construed that it is the teacher, and their ethics, morals and values, who can best make judgements and/or set standards.

However, in this extract it is not clear whether Ramsden was only confining his argument to teachers, or whether others might also claim "educational expertise and moral commitment". This latter interpretation once again opens up the possibility for people other than teachers to claim the right to define ‘what is valuable’, and/or what the “nature of quality” might be. Another interpretation, which could also suggest that teachers may not be the only ones who can define “good teaching”, is made possible through his use of the words "clear" and "clarity". Those words can be interpreted as meaning that people with educational expertise have one shared definition of "quality" and/or what is "educationally valuable". Such an interpretation does not acknowledge that the concept "educationally valuable" is a construction which is open to contestation, based on vastly different interpretations depending upon which ‘values’ are given priority.

*Challenging conceptions of teaching: Some prompts for good practice - HERDSA (1992)*

The message that teachers need to be involved in monitoring and/or evaluating their own teaching was also evident in the HERDSA prompts for good practice. HERDSA claimed that their prompts were designed to be used by teachers "individually or as a group" (1992, p.1) and were predicated on ideals of academics-as-teachers, working individually, and/or collaboratively, to improve their teaching. Under the heading of 'Developing professionally' they asked:

How do you go about developing skills and expertise as a teacher?
What strategies do you employ to reflect upon your teaching practices and identify areas for development? (HERDSA, 1992, p.4)

In this extract the language of "you" and "your" positions the teacher as individually responsible for improving the quality of "their" teaching. Because the prompt questions begin with "how" and "what strategies" they also suggest that it is taken for granted that all academics-as-teachers do self-evaluate their teaching; that they use more than one 'strategy' in order to do so; and that "developing skills" is an expectation of any academic who is interested in the quality of their teaching. These assumptions leave little room for arguing a different view. Whilst the repetition of the word 'develop' presents an evolving metaphor of unproblematic growth.

Also, under the same heading (p.4), HERDSA asked:

What opportunities do you make to discuss aspects of learning and teaching with colleagues?

What opportunities do you make to receive feedback on your teaching from colleagues?

These prompts move the message from individual responsibility and 'development of expertise', to collaborating with peers as "colleagues". But again the responsibility of making these kinds of "opportunities" is placed as "your" responsibility. The language of "opportunities" also suggests an environment of mutual respect and non-competition, where people are open to providing and receiving critique and support.

Like Ramsden's statements, these prompts draw upon liberal perspectives of teachers being responsible for their own professional development, plus liberal/humanist ideas of collaborative learning. And again, in this instance, those perspectives seem to be blended with ideas of shared meanings, and/or potentially value-free, unproblematic, assumptions about the definition and development of quality teaching and learning.

*Guidelines for effective university teaching* - AV-CC (1993)

As shown in Chapter 5, in the section on 'Teaching as scholarship' the AV-CC, like Ramsden and HERDSA, took a position that self-evaluation is an integral part of good
teaching. As part of the section on "Subject management" (AV-CC, 1993, pp.3-4), they stated that effective teachers:

review regularly the content and focus of a subject, make revisions as required, and reflect critically upon their own teaching using feedback from a variety of sources.

Processes of self-evaluation are presented here as something which are done "regularly" by all 'effective teachers' in order to make "revisions". 'Critical reflection on teaching' is situated between/along-side, reviews of the "content" and the "subject", and "feedback from a variety of sources". In this process of blending sources of information and areas for "review", there is also a mixing of quite different time-frames. The academic requirements of course accreditation and of providing students with unit outlines occur at the beginning of a unit; the processes of reviewing and revising content generally operates over cycles which may take years; whilst getting feedback, particularly formal feedback from "a variety of sources", is done during and/or at the end of a teaching/learning period. But reflection is considered to be an on-going process during, within, and between, the teaching/learning processes (Beyer, 1989; Koerner, 1992). This suggests that whilst the AV-CC seem to be valuing self-reflection and self-evaluation, the teacher's personal ideas can be also be seen as being put into the context of other kinds of evaluations.

This statement can be read from three different value perspectives, each of which provides different understandings and/or potential meanings. There are threads of positivist views in the pragmatic, linear way in which these processes of review are described, and in the language and context of the statement where self-evaluation is presented as part of "subject management". Against this interpretation, the potential for academics-as-teachers to see themselves as having control over their own teaching suggests liberal values of autonomy and self-direction. And for some readers, the use of the term "reflect critically" might indicate shadows from critical theory and scope for critique.

In another section of the AV-CC document, within the second of the three major components titled "Departmental encouragement of effective teaching", the AV-CC (1993, p.5) stated:
Heads of Department encourage effective teaching by fostering a departmental climate and conventions in which ... university teachers are committed to reflecting on and monitoring how their teaching enhances student learning; staff are open to giving and receiving feedback from their peers, and are committed to the department's goal of excellence in teaching and working collaboratively. In particular, effective Heads ... review regularly with individual staff their contribution to teaching and learning in the department and the assistance they may need in developing their understanding.

Somewhat like the HERDSA document, the language here of 'commitment', 'open' "giving and receiving", "peers", and "working collaboratively", presents a view of academics sharing, and of working and learning together. However by placing the emphasis in this statement on the responsibilities of 'Heads of Department', and by the use of the language of "departmental climate and conventions", the emphasis is taken away from individual teachers, instead positioning teachers as a willing and "committed" member of a team, all working towards "the department's goal" rather than their own.

Interspersed within this statement there are a number of different messages about the purposes of evaluation and who is responsible. In terms of purpose, through the repetition of "committed", there is movement between 'enhancing student learning' and 'department goals'. Responsibility for "monitoring" moves from the teacher, to 'collaborating' with "peers", to a "review" with the 'Head of Department'. These discursive links and movements suggest an interpretation which is closer to appraisal than to self-directed monitoring and evaluation.

Ramsden and Dodds (1989) argued that self-evaluation and appraisal by others are distinctly different processes, with different power relationships and potentially different results. They said that evaluation for development is "about teaching", as a process which is "created and directed by its participants", whilst "appraisal is about management" (1989, p.2, italics in the original) and carries a danger of being interpreted as punitive and/or externally driven.

In the context of the discursive movements in the extract from the AV-CC, the links and movement between appraisal for development and/or evaluation for management and/or punitive control becomes blurred. By positing Heads of Departments as the appropriate
people to conduct 'regular reviews' with individual teachers, this extract can be looked at as trying to create a bridge between voluntary and compulsory reviews; from personal goals set by academics, to performance evaluated against some-one else's criteria; and from decisions and choices made by teachers amongst peers, to judgements being made by/for management.

Through a process of reading backwards, linking the first phrase with the last sentence, it becomes clearer that the AV-CC positions "Heads" as responsible for all of these processes. In placing that perspective alongside a recognition that it is the depersonalised "department" whose "goal" and definition of "excellence in teaching" remain unproblematic and unexaminable, it becomes open to interpretation about how much control individual teachers might have in defining and/or monitoring their own teaching. From this interpretation it could be read that the AV-CC were supporting views, similar to those expressed by Baldwin, which are strongly orientated towards positivist top-down hierarchical management approach where line-of-command evaluation and/or appraisal are assumed as necessary; where it is the "department's" goals rather than the teacher's which are important; and/or a view that quality teaching can be easily and universally defined and recognised.

*The unions*

Before analysing some of the material from union documents I will introduce this section with a brief background of some of the contestations over/within the evaluating/appraising teaching which occurred prior to the time-frame of this analysis, and in which the unions were involved.

It was in 1989 that employer representatives (both DEET and the AV-CC) began pushing for the introduction of compulsory, routine evaluation/appraisals requiring staff to meet performance criteria which could be used for both diagnosis and improvement.

The unions' preferred position was that there should be no appraisal which combines both purposes (JHE, 1990). The unions argued that the purposes of appraisal for development, were significantly different to those of assessing people's ability to do their job, and/or to be attached to the gaining of pay increments. Their argument was supported by Ramsden and Dodds (1989), and also by two reports commissioned by
DEET (Ramsden, 1990; Lally & Myhill, 1994) all of whom warned against using the same approach for both staff appraisal and staff development. These authors argued that staff appraisal would not necessarily lead to staff development, and/or that such a conflation leads to dissatisfaction and decreased, rather than improved, performance.

These differences of perspective became one of the discursive battle grounds over which the definition of staff appraisal was contested. Negotiations over the restructuring of all industrial awards, which included issues of evaluation/appraisal, involved the unions representing academic staff (until 1993 - FAUSA; UACA; and ATU, which were amalgamated in 1993 to form NTEU); representatives of DEET; plus the industrial arm of AV-CC, the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association. The level of contestation during 1990 over this, and other matters, was indicated in the "unprecedented level of industrial unrest" (McCulloch, 1990, p.2). An award restructuring decision was finally achieved in July, 1991, still with some issues unresolved (JHE, 1991a). Some of the changes in the award included the requirement that each institution would develop a Staff Development Plan, and would also introduce a "trial scheme of staff appraisal for development purposes" (JHE, 1991a, p.9).

The contestation continued through 1991 and into 1992 before compulsory staff appraisal "for development purposes only" (Hardy, 1992, p.4; bold in the original) was to be introduced, on a trial basis for 12 months (semester 2, 1992 and semester 1, 1993). Under the agreement academics were to be given a choice of appraisers and "no Appraisal for Development Purposes can take place without proper training of appraisers" (Hardy, 1993, p.9). The trial was reported to have failed (Maslin, 1994, pp.1-2), or to need considerable changing (Schofield, 1995, p.9).

It is within this context of contestation that I now present a brief analysis of some of the union arguments about teacher evaluation from within the time frame of this study.

In the Victorian state journal of the NTEU (NEXUS, 1994, p.4), it was stated that:

The Awards and agreements which have been put into place are designed to ensure that staff are given every encouragement to enhance their job performance, and develop skills appropriate to a changing climate. They also provide protection against capricious management, and enable staff to identify the real problems.
associated with outcomes which are below par - be that lack of resources, lack of training, lack of role clarity.

In the first sentence of this extract the language of "skills" is linked with "encouragement" and 'enhancing job performance'. This conjunction conveys a view of teaching as a kind of technical, pragmatic behaviour, and teachers as needing external support to improve "their job performance". Counter-balanced with that idea, the second sentence suggests that teachers might need protection "against management" which is labeled as "capricious", but also presents a view that the "Awards and agreements" have the power to "provide protection" for staff. The final phrase re-affirms the pragmatic perspective of teaching by talking about "real problems" as being "associated with outcomes". Where the "problems" are defined as problems of organisation, "resources", and/or "training", not of potential multiple/alternative definitions and/or complexities of teaching. So that, even though it is "staff" who were defined as being 'given encouragement, 'enhancing their job', and/or 'identifying problems', they are also positioned as dependent upon others for that encouragement, and for the resolving of 'problems'.

This combination of messages indicates that, although the unions initially strongly contested the blending of development and assessment as being incompatible, in this extract they were not arguing about whether management imposed and/or administered staff appraisal was appropriate, necessary, and/or would lead to good teaching. Taken from this perspective it could be interpreted that the arguments over which approach might be the most effective kind of teacher evaluation had been subsumed and the union’s main focus was on the processes of implementation, rather than purposes and/or principles. At the level of values analysis, such an interpretation could be seen as an indication that the position of the union was not very different from the perspective of the government and the AV-CC. Because, rather than recognising the potential impact of differing power relationships, and/or supporting the need for teachers' autonomy and/or personal definitions, their statement subsumes such issues. A similar message, that management has the right, and/or the need, to appraise staff "performance", and/or require staff to "develop skills", was conveyed in the national union journal (McCarr, 1994, p.19) where it was stated that "it is no doubt correct that an employer can require the acquisition of different or new skills".
From this perspective the most dominant value assumptions about teaching and teachers which underpin the union arguments are, like those of Baldwin, and some of the arguments of the AV-CC, those which are aligned with/contribute to positivist views of hierarchical organisational structures and power relationships, and the rights/responsibilities of management to determine, define and assess, what is valued/valuable. Blended with these meanings, the statement about "capricious management" suggests that the unions were drawing on critical and/or liberal views of the dangers of organisational structures. However there is no indication of liberal/humanist meanings which would support individual development and/or autonomy, nor critical ideas of personal agency. On this basis the unions’ position can be interpreted as being informed by, and reasserting, some of the same values as the employers.

Re-view of materials on evaluating teaching from the national site

In this material from the national level there were two different lines of argument. Ramsden and HERDSA were claiming that improvement of teaching comes when teachers are the ones who evaluate their own teaching, with the support of extra information from students and/or colleagues. Whilst Baldwin, the AV-CC and the Unions were positing appraisal in the hands of different levels of management, the Heads of Schools, the institution, and/or the stakeholders.

Besides the very different positionings of power, responsibility and decision making in those two perspectives, there are different notions about definitions of quality teaching. The first perspective is open to the teacher’s own definition of quality teaching, but the latter seems to be based on assumptions that there is one shared meaning of quality teaching which is agreed and can be acted on.

Discourses from within the institution on evaluating teaching

The "Academics Staff Appraisal Scheme" was introduced into the institution in 1993 (Else, 1993, Vol. 1, p.11) and was claimed to foster a "reflective self-appraisal by staff and provides an opportunity to focus on the development of teaching". The Appraisal form (Else, 1993, Vol 2, p.69 - 74) contained four sections. The first was designated to be filled in by the academic prior to meeting with their appraiser; the second and third
sections on future "objectives" and "action" was to be filled in by the applicant and appraiser together "during the interview"; and the fourth, "follow-up action", "will be completed by the relevant person after the appraisal".

There were significant shifts of focus between the four sections, particularly in who was being addressed and the forms of address. The language of the first and third sections was addressed to the academic as "you" - "this form is intended to assist you"; "the questions are designed to help you"; "what areas of your performance do you and your appraiser agree should be developed?". But the second section addressed people as "staff" and was presented in an instructional tone. The final section gave no indication who might be the 'relevant person' who was to do the 'following-up', or for what purposes that material might be used.

These linguistic shifts meant that academics-as-teachers were positioned differently, and were expected to interact differently, in different parts of the document. The questions addressed to the academic asked for a detailed account of their responsibilities, objectives, achievements, successes and problems, their "potential for improvement", and "development plans" (p.71). On one level, and operating from a positivist frame, these questions might be seen to be quite logical and straight-forward, and/or requirements for information could be interpreted as a necessary and justifiable expectation for accountability. But from a critical, and/or critical postmodern perspective the questions can be seen to be confining academics to a logical, objective, linear, non-problematic, predictable frame about their role of teaching. And whilst it could be argued, from a positivist, or liberal perspective, that each academic was being given the right to participate in their own appraisal and define what they see as their own strengths and/or weaknesses, from a more critical perspective, there is little scope to inset issues of ethics, values and/or complexities. In this way, some academics-as-teachers might see that major questions of what they consider to constitute quality teaching have been foreclosed.

Like the language and assumptions in Baldwin's 1991 statement, these appraisal documents create/contribute to links between appraisal and development, and between these two and improving teaching. And, like the AV-CC and the unions, there is no indication that the intervention of management in this 'self-evaluation' process is in any way open to question. Therefore on this issue of evaluating/appraising teaching, the most
dominant view of relationships which is supported by the extracts from the academic Staff Appraisal form, as well as by/within the process, is a positivist perspective in which hierarchical management of organisations is assumed as both appropriate and necessary. This view is supported by 'objective' assumptions about the process, and about teaching, which subsume the power relationships and/or the potential for differing value positions. An example of the construction of unequal power-relations within the appraisal process, is that, although staff were assured that the material is "confidential" and that the appraisal form would "not be held by the Head of School with other documentation of the appraisal interview", there was no indication on the document about what that "other" material might contain; who might have access to it; or for what purposes. This aspect of record keeping and overseeing, which is also an integral part of the concept of appraiser, opens up questions about the purposes of the appraisal, and for whose benefit it was being done.

That construction of meaning was set within/beside the claim that the appraisal process was introduced to foster "reflective self-appraisal"; the naming of the process as self-appraisal; and the language addressing the academic as "you". All of which draw on liberal and/or critical understandings of autonomy and self-direction. This juxtaposition may have been done because the authors did not recognise the different interpretations and/or meanings and/or as a deliberate attempt to overlay different meanings into the self-evaluation discourse.

The timing of the introduction of this process meshed with the union's 1992 statement about the introduction of a 'compulsory staff appraisal' on a trial basis. Although there was no suggestion in the material that this was to be a trial. However the material published by Personnel three years later, in January 1996, indicated that "staff appraisal or staff assessment procedures" were still being developed as part of the enterprise bargaining agreement (Walker, 1996, p.1).

Within that latter agreement as it was being negotiated, "staff development and appraisal" were linked with "efficiencies and productivity improvements". In that agreement it was stated that "the parties agree that it is the responsibility of supervisors of academic staff to manage the performance and career aspirations of academic staff", and that, as part of that 'management', the "supervisor" was to 'ensure' that the "needs of
individual staff" are "consistent with the University's Vision, Mission and Goals" (UB, 1995, p.9).

There appears to be two shifts between this document and the previous (1993) appraisal form. The first was the insertion of economic and/or management language of "efficiencies and productivity", where Heads of Schools and/or appraiser have become "supervisors", and appraisal has become 'management of performance'. The second shift is that, through the insertion of "University's Vision, Mission and Goals" the definition of quality has become what the institution aspires to, or defines itself as, and the academic's "performance" and "needs" are 'assessed' against that definition.

One interpretation of these shifts is that they are part of the playing out of Quality Management ideas about shared meaning. Or, like Knight (1992), it can be interpreted as part of the deliberate transference of control of teaching from teachers to management. Alternatively, as part of the politics of discourse, these shifts can be interpreted as a process of conflation of meanings of teacher evaluation, appraisal and assessment, so that self-evaluation have become overlaid by meanings of management appraisal.

Because it remains open to interpretation which of the University missions, principles and/or values, the teacher and/or their supervisors might choose to direct themselves to [see Chapter 7], there is still scope for a range of understandings about quality teaching. However what seems to be missing in this material is any indication that teaching is based on personal values which, as Peter and Anne spoke about [Chapter 8], may or may not be shared, even in teaching teams. So whilst the institution Staff Appraisal Scheme might encourage academics to be more overt about their teaching during their appraisal process, the success of the scheme seems to rely on assumptions that academics and supervisors have the same values and the same interpretation and priority of institutional Missions and Goals.

**The voices of the academics-as-teachers on the topic of teacher evaluation**

All of the participants in the collaborative research group regularly self-evaluated and reviewed their own teaching. And the research group itself could be understood as a kind of on-going peer/self review process in which participants talked about their successes and concerns. However, in the group discussions the ideas of self, peer, or management
appraisal were not singled out as specific subjects which were addressed directly. One possible reason why the group members did not raise self and/or peer evaluation as a special topic that they wanted to talk about is that they all accepted self-appraisal and their participation in the group as given. Another reason, for which there was some evidence in the transcripts, is that, although the institution was said to have introduced mandatory staff-appraisal in 1993 (Else, 1993), the processes had not been implemented in all discipline areas at the time of my data collection (1994).

Whilst the issues of self, peer, or management appraisal were not specific topics, they were mentioned and/or considered in the context of discussions on other topics such as "judging good teaching", "rewards for good teaching", and "promotion criteria". The extracts from the group discussions which are presented here do not take the same approach as suggested in the materials from the national and/or institutional sites. That is, that the mandatory introduction of self, or external, appraisal was unproblematic. Instead they raise some of the problems which they perceived as associated with evaluation/appraisal. They also make connections between self-appraisal and intrinsic rewards which is a thread of meaning which may have been implied in other materials, but not stated explicitly.

In the first extract James argued support for self-reflection as a process of enhancing teaching. But he also suggested that it is not unproblematic.

James: Although I am, to some extent, a believer in self reflection and that approach, if it is the only form of evaluation, there is a danger of where you judge yourself against everyone else. (May 4, line 357 ff.)

James made a direct connection here between "self reflection", "evaluation" and "judging". He also introduced the concept of evaluation as a kind of comparison "against everyone else" rather than against some kind of established criteria. This statement draws threads of meaning between/from evaluation within positivist and/or liberal discourse of competition, plus humanist and/or critical ideals of personal development and/or agency. Liberal/humanist ideals of autonomy appear to be split between autonomy to define oneself, and autonomy to compete and/or compare personal performance with others. With his insertion of the word "danger" the comment could also variously be interpreted as diminishing the value of some kinds of "self reflection"; of questioning the right
and/or capacity of individual academics to establish their own criteria; and/or arguing for the use of multiple, rather than single processes of appraisal.

Against that perspective, in another discussion later in the year, Stephen identified potential problems associated with involving other people, and raised questions about who should evaluate and/or appraise.

Stephen But it has to be evaluation by a person who is competent to interpret what is going on. Not an amateur who has no idea. (Oct. 6, line 55 ff.)

Taken on its own, Stephen's comment here could be interpreted as fitting into the same discourse used by the unions and encapsulated in the institutional Enterprise Agreement. That is, that people doing the appraisal need training in the processes of evaluation.

Alternatively by situating this statement in its context, that is as part of discussions about alternative teaching approaches, this statement can be interpreted as meaning that having the 'capacity to interpret what is going on' means someone who has an understanding about the value and/or difficulties of different kinds of teaching approaches. The perspective suggested by Stephen brings forward shadows of meaning, supported by writers such as Duhs (1992), and Andresen (1992), that teaching is complex and multidimensional, requiring interpretation, rather than something which can be evaluated objectively. In these terms a person who is "competent to interpret" is arguably knowledgeable in teaching and learning, and/or shares similar views and assumptions about quality teaching and learning, not only one who is trained in the processes of evaluation. As such Stephen's statement draws on and contributes to critical and/or postmodern assumptions which recognise the impact of beliefs and/or teaching as complex.

The final extract which I have selected to present in this section of my analysis is a statement from Jane which demonstrates that an annual "performance appraisal" was something which she took for granted.

Jane When you talk about reward from the job that is something totally different. And that's evaluated on an annual basis ... For me personally, when I do my performance appraisal, and I get my intrinsic rewards, or intrinsic
punishments, what ever it happens to be. And I shift my focus depending on what happens then. (September 20, line 815 ff)

An annual appraisal was something which Jane did because she saw benefit from it, not because it was mandated. What Jane was talking about here connects with Ramsden's ideas of self-evaluation as part of teaching-as-scholarship in which she was taking a self-critical attitude and setting her own standards. What Jane said also has links with Ramsden's warnings about the danger of any process which threatens teachers' capacity to feel responsible for their own teaching improvement.

This personal approach to 'appraisal' is supported in Jane's language of "me personally" "I do my" appraisal and "my intrinsic" rewards and/or punishments. All of this conveys a very strong message that this appraisal process is based on self-evaluation and 'personal' satisfaction and/or challenges. Her final sentence also tells the story that she, as the teller "I", is very much in control of the decisions which come out of that process. Here the processes of "appraisal" are set within meanings of personal development and rewards, rather than the language and meaning of the institution's enterprise agreement of "assessment", 'efficiency', and "productivity". It is also different from the competition and/or comparison discourses suggested in James' comment, because whilst Jane uses the management language of performance appraisal, she is focusing very much on her own "intrinsic" valuing, positive or negative, of what she has achieved.

In comparison with the assumptions which seem to inform the constructions of meaning about evaluating teaching at the national and institutional sites, the values and meanings which Jane seems to be drawing on in this extract are much more strongly liberal and/or critical. There is strong emphasis on the personal, both as being autonomous and as an emotional, feeling, being.

From each these three extracts from the group, it is clear that they were not against the idea of evaluation/appraisal of teaching. But particularly the first two, whilst arguing from different perspectives, had reservations about approaches which were constructed within restricted/restrictive frames which did not accommodate alternatives.
Re-view of constructions of teacher-evaluation/appraisal

Before looking at other material which supports the idea of improving/evaluating teaching through the use of student evaluations, I will now briefly summarise the most significant points and major threads of meaning which have been introduced so far in relation to evaluation/appraisal of teaching. To do the latter I continue to use the dimensions of knowledge; learning; relationships; and teaching, as guiding structures to situate meanings. This is followed by a review of some of the 'continuities/discontinuities between these discourses and the definitions of quality teaching in higher education'.

Some of the connections between quality teaching and teacher appraisal, at the national and institutional levels, seem to be based on assumptions that, because research has shown that 'good teachers' regularly self-evaluate and/or use peer-appraisal, if these processes are applied to all academics, that would automatically lead to improved teaching. Even despite warnings that such conflation of the meanings and processes of review could have the opposite effect.

Looked at from the perspective of the politics of discourse and/or meaning, another interpretation of what was happening is that the language, but not the values, of self-evaluation and peer-review which had been developed within critical and/or feminist practices of action research, collaborative research and self-peer-reflection and critique, were being 'normalised' within positivist accountability frames. And/or that what is/was a self-directed, bottom-up process had been 'captured' and turned upside down.

Potential problems and/or rewards of using any of the processes were only discussed within the collaborative research group. The idea that any/all of the processes are problematic suggests the need for multiple, rather than single evaluation processes. This latter position was advocated in different ways by Baldwin, HERDSA, AV-CC and the unions. Alternatively, that same problematic perspective could be interpreted as warning that all processes need to be used with caution.

Knowledge and learning

On one level it could be interpreted that the discourses about teacher evaluation/appraisal are completely separate from the discourses about knowledge and learning which were
examined in the previous four chapters. But links between teaching, enhancing teaching, and the question of whose knowledge is valued within the advocated processes, provides a space to see that, at least in some instances (Baldwin; AV-CC; the unions; the institution), teachers' knowledge is set beside/against the knowledge and perspectives of Others (supervisors; Head of Schools; institutions; and/or stakeholders). There is also a possibility that in this construction the professional teaching knowledge of academics-as-teacher can be legitimately overlaid by, or subsumed into, meanings of institutional goals (UB, 1995) and/or departments (AV-CC).

*Relationships and teaching*

The need for, and the value of, teachers having personal responsibility to define and reflect on their own teaching was argued by Ramsden as a reason why appraisals by others would not contribute to improved teaching. This position was supported by meanings of teaching as complex, multidimensional and/or as a personal expression (Ramsden; the research group). These arguments call on, and are justified through, a critical perspective similar to that argued by Smyth (1991), and Knight (1992), that the imposition of compulsory appraisal by others, particularly by superiors and/or institutional representatives, under the auspices of management and/or enterprise bargaining, would be to change the purposes of appraisal; diminish academics-as-teachers' power and control over their teaching; and/or their emotional investment in it.

Against/alongside that position, were meanings which supported hierarchical relations and of teaching as being able to be evaluated by others. Particularly in some of the national and institutional materials there were strong meanings advocating appraisal by/for management, which potentially fore-close questions about the rights and responsibilities of academics-as-teachers. Implicit in these discourses were assumptions of shared meanings of teaching. However, even though there seemed to be assumptions of a shared definition in the institutional materials, and in the standardised scheme being established, it was open to some interpretation, and possibly also influenced by the relationships between supervisor and academic, as to how much control the appraisee might have over the process.
Continuities/discontinuities between these views and definitions of quality teaching in higher education

Like the materials defining quality teaching [Chapters 6–8], in the extracts about evaluating/appraising teachers there were many different, competing views about what constitutes quality teaching. Each of the positions argued here about teacher evaluation/appraisal potentially links with, and supports, one or more of those views. Ideas that quality teaching is unproblematic and value-free seem to connect with notions of accountability in which teacher appraisal is understood to be best organised and monitored by different levels of management. Whilst views that teaching is problematic, contextual and/or moral and ethical, link with/support arguments for self-evaluations. However, the lines are not so clearly drawn as that, because within the latter perspective there was also an acknowledgment that self-evaluation on its own might not bring about improvement.

Some of the meanings which were part of the discourses about quality teaching which appear to have been overshadowed here are concepts of teaching-as-scholarship (HERDSA; Ramsden; the institution); teacher-as-researcher; and/or the notion of professional development through on-going collaboration with peers (HERDSA; Ramsden).

I now move on to look at the discourses being drawn on, and constructed around the purposes and use of student evaluation.

Evaluating teaching - student evaluation

The idea of using student feedback to modify teaching approaches is also not new to teachers in higher education, or in other education sectors. In discourses about quality teaching in Australian higher education, before and during this research period, the use of student evaluation of their learning experiences was supported, for different reasons, by Baldwin (1991), Chubb (1992b), Ramsden (1990; 1993); HERDSA (1992); and the AV-CC (1993).
Within the national site there was both support for, and criticism of, the idea of using standardised questionnaires for the purpose of student evaluations of teaching. In this section I briefly analyse material from Chubb, Ramsden, HERDSA and the AV-CC which will illustrate the major threads of discursive construction about/within student evaluations which was being developed at the national level in the research period, 1992–1996.

The report from the Higher Education Council - Chubb (1992)

In the introductory sections of his document Chubb (1992b, p.9) argued that as stakeholders, students (amongst others) have "legitimate perspectives on what constitutes a quality outcome from our universities" and as such, have rights and obligations to participate in improving the standards.

Unlike the paucity of material on staff appraisal, in his section on "The quality of teaching" Chubb allocated two pages to "means of involving student and employer views" (p.38). In introducing that section he stated that there was:

universal support during the consultation process and from submissions for effective, reliable use of student assessment of teaching. Doubtless this reflects the increasing importance given to student feedback as one means of monitoring performance in universities across Australia. (Chubb, 1992b, p.38)

Here Chubb was talking about "student feedback" as a form of "assessment of teaching". Through his use of "universal", "doubtless", and "importance", he suggests that the idea of student assessment and feedback on teaching is unquestionably seen as a valuable way to improve teaching. The term "monitoring performance" seems to fall into line with arguments for the need for teachers to be more accountable and also connects with statements throughout that document that students, as stakeholders, should have their views heard. But this statement is also open to be interpreted as Chubb saying that student assessments must be "reliable" to be "effective, and that "student feedback" on its own, "as one means", is insufficient.

In his final statements on this issue of student involvement in judging teaching, Chubb offered only reserved support for the use of this form of information. He stated "student
evaluations undoubtedly have their limitations" (Chubb, 1992b, p.39), and listed reliability; the kinds of questions; and the uses made of the results; all as potential factors which could limit the value of such processes. These reservations, although not necessarily for the same reasons, have been supported in other research in Australia (Moses, 1988) and overseas (Husband & Fosh, 1993); plus other research which found that students' views of good teaching are complex and are based on a wide range of inter-related aspects of their learning experiences (Marsh, 1987; Entwistle & Tait, 1990; Ramsden 1990).

In setting out a number of provisos, such as "that students are aware of and understand what it is they are assessing" (Chubb, 1992b, p.39), for the validity of this kind of evaluation, it becomes clearer what Chubb means by "right questions". He stated that "student questionnaires are one important source of feedback" "if", for example, "teachers were allowed to design questions specific to their teaching objectives and the course they are teaching" (p.39). The "if", and the provisos in these statements, shifts Chubb's support away from any idea of standardised questionnaires and/or the possibility of quantitative comparisons either within, or between, institutions, to much more teacher-designed questions and purposes, and a more "judicious use of the results" (p.39). In this part of his statement Chubb seems to be taking a position which is similar to the arguments of Ramsden and Dodds (1989) in relation to evaluating teaching, that questions are more effective when they are defined by the teacher.

The value assumptions which Chubb called on in the first extract can be interpreted as a blending of liberal and/or critical ideas of consultation and democracy together with more positivist ideas of 'monitoring performance'. This blending also functions in his movement between 'student feedback' and 'student assessment of teaching'. But in the latter part of his statement there seems to be more liberal/humanist values of autonomy and intrinsic rewards, and/or critical perspectives of agency, which are indicated in suggestions that improvement is best achieved by teachers responding directly to their students, and using their own questions. This values perspective is strengthened by his insertion of 'provisos' which opens up the possibility that student evaluation is not unproblematic.
In 1989 Ramsden was involved in trialing a Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) with final year undergraduate students in 50 Australian institutions "as part of a trial of performance indicators" for DEET (Ramsden, 1991; 1990). These questionnaires were designed to provide "as economically as possible, quantitative data which permit ordinal ranking of AOU's (academic organisational units) in different institutions, within comparable subject areas, in terms of perceived quality" (Ramsden, 1990, p.1). In that instance the questionnaires were directed at the level of the course and were being tested as a way to try to compare teaching within disciplines, and between institutions.

But during the research period (1992 – 1996), in talking about the strong support for, and faith in, student questionnaires to assess teaching, Ramsden expressed strong reservations about some of the ways in which student questionnaires were being perceived. He said:

student rating questionnaires are seen to fulfil an irresistibly attractive combination of purposes. They have become the heaven-sent gadget that will improve teaching performance. Importantly they are perceived to be a talisman that will guard against accusations that universities are not accountable; they provide the outside world with evidence that we are doing something about teaching. (Ramsden, 1992, p.230)

In referring to the questionnaires as "heaven-sent" 'gadgets' and "talisman" he presents a cynical view of the "combination of purposes" for which "student rating questionnaires" were being used. His tone also suggests that the "accusations" and demands from the "outside world" for "performance", "accountability" and "evidence", are not necessarily the most important criteria for teachers in higher education to be addressing. And through the use the language in describing student ratings as something which is 'irresistible', "attractive", "heaven-sent", and 'magical' he opens up a space to see that they are none of these things. As such, that which is magical, the "talisman", beyond human values, can be interpreted as a site which is open for conflicting values, purposes, meanings and responsibility, power, and control.

That does not mean that Ramsden was against the idea of student evaluations. One of the "key principles of effective teaching" which he spoke about in his speech at the National
Teaching Workshop (1993, p.41-42) [see Chapter 6] is "listening to and learning from students" which he argued on the grounds, of "trying to find out from students about how you can improve your own teaching". Like Chubb, the message here is about academics using student feedback for improving "your own teaching". Such a valuing and purpose of student evaluation separates this process/understanding away from discursive constructions, under the same name, which are used for comparison with/between institutions, or accountability to management and/or "outside" individuals or groups.

Read from this perspective, and connected back to his warnings that the use of 'sophisticated measures' does not necessarily lead to improvement [cited in the previous section of analysis of material from the national site, in this chapter], what Ramsden appears to be challenging/arguing against, is not student evaluations, but the 'combination of purposes' in which students' needs, and/or teachers' professional development, are potentially being subsumed, or made subordinate to other purposes.

The values perspective in this extract is complex because, whilst Ramsden was using language such as 'ratings', and 'accountable', which draw on positivist meanings, he was developing a sense of these as negative, rather than positive. And so, the position and the values that he was arguing from/for can only be understood in opposition.

**Challenging conceptions of teaching: some prompts for good practice – HERDSA (1992)**

As I showed in my analysis of the material about self-peer evaluations, HERDA situated the purpose and value of evaluation in the domain of the teacher as the one who has the capacity to "make changes" (HERDSA, 1992, p.4). They also talked about evaluating teaching as involving the collection of information "from a range of sources by a range of methods and using that information to make changes" (1992, p.3). These two messages, plus the expectation that students' views will be sought and acted upon, are strongly stated in the "prompts" in that section of the document. HERDSA said:

Since the quality of student learning is related to the way students learn, information from students on their learning processes can be an important component of evaluation.

What forms of information about your teaching and your subject do you collect on a regular basis?
How do you change your approaches to teaching and/or your design of your subjects in the light of the information obtained? (HERDSA, 1992, pp.3-4)

Through the repeated use (5 times) of "your" in the two prompts cited here, HERDSA can be interpreted as placing the focus on the academic-as-teacher as the person who is responsible for collecting the information, making decisions, and acting on it. "Quality" teaching in this context is related to "student learning"; "the way students learn"; and more specifically, adapting teaching in response to "information from students". This construction gives direction not only to the people and purposes for collection information, but also the timing.

The question of "what forms of information" are collected "on a regular basis", can be interpreted as an indirect instruction that academics-as-teachers are expected to regularly use multiple forms of data collection to get information from students. Which could mean a questionnaire at the end of a course or unit for use in future planning. Equally, because they are talking about 'students' learning' it could be interpreted, like Ramsden's (1993) statement, that academics-as-teachers need to get feedback from students by 'listening and learning' in an on-going and person-to-person relationship with students. In either interpretation it is the teacher and students ideas which are valued, without intervention of management.

In their focus on 'responding to students' needs' HERDSA made no reference to any standardised approach. There is no indication in this material of using student evaluations for comparisons between teachers, or to be used as indicators of effectiveness or efficiency. So, whilst supporting the argument about the need to involve students in the evaluation of teaching, their emphasis was on the collection of information specifically for the use of the individual teacher with specific students. In this construction, the position which HERDSA takes in this extract draws strongly on, and contributes to, liberal and/or critical ideas of autonomy and/or agency, as well as liberal/humanist ideas about the most appropriate relationships between academics-as-teachers and their students.
It could be inferred from the AV-CC material analysed in the previous section on teacher-evaluation, that in their 'regular reviews' teachers would include student feedback as one of their "variety of sources" (1993, p.4), but it is not explicitly stated. The only time when information from students is explicitly designated as important is in the section on "Departmental encouragement of effective teaching" (pp.4-5) where they state that it is the responsibility of Heads of Departments to establish "procedures for seeking regular feedback from students on all matters affecting them in their studies" (AV-CC, 1993, p.5).

Because this is the only explicit mention of student evaluations, perhaps it could also be interpreted that the AV-CC gave student evaluations, and/or the need for student feedback in relation to teaching, a fairly low priority. In situating it amongst the responsibilities of Heads of Departments, it potentially takes the responsibility for, and the control over, those processes out of the hands of academics-as-teachers. Linked with the ideas of the "department's goal" [cited in the extract analysed in the previous section in this chapter] it could be interpreted that student feedback was being framed within that expectation and/or those goals. Which is a very different positioning and purpose from those supported by HERDSA and Ramsden.

Re-view of materials on student evaluation from the national site

Despite a variety of language and/or justifications, there seems to be considerable support, in all of these documents, for the idea that student evaluations should be used in evaluating teaching. However, beyond that general level, there was a range of different perspectives of the purposes for student evaluation, as well as ways in which it might best be carried out. Some of the materials (Chubb; Ramsden; HERDSA) supported teacher directed student-evaluations, whilst others presented arguments for institutional, and/or national data collection (Baldwin), or procedures organised and directed by Departments (AV-CC).

There were also differences in the extent to which the writers saw the different forms of student evaluations as a valid/reliable source of information. HERDSA was the least critical, presenting teacher-directed student evaluations as unproblematic. But both
Chubb and Ramsden there were suggestions that some, if not all, student evaluations needed to be used with caution. Ramsden was strong in his criticism of standardised questionnaires and the faith being placed in them to improve teaching. Whilst Chubb stated that student evaluations should not be the only form of evaluation used, and pointed to a range of limitations of all student-evaluations.

**Discourses from within the institution on students evaluating teaching**

In 1992 the use of one specific student feedback form was introduced into the institution. The form, and the software to analyse and administer it, was purchased from the University of Technology, Sydney. It was made mandatory for all academic staff who were applying for promotion or accelerated advancement. In that year it was reported in a union journal, the afv 'Bulletin', that "BUC, not-withstanding a concentrated and consistent opposition by the local staff association, requires mandatory "student reporting of teaching" for the purposes of promotion" (Ridley, 1992, p.3). This form, it was argued, was "fundamentally flawed" and "only presents an illusion of objectivity and accuracy" (Ridley, 1992, p.3).

Despite the criticisms and the mandated use, in advocating the use of the material the management levels of the institution spoke of it being "made available" (Else, 1993, Vol 1, p.11) and being offered to staff for their use. The first paragraph of the 1993 instructions for collecting student evaluations stated:

> The College is able to offer the standard student 'feedback' system in 1993. The system offered is the same as last year although extra questions may be individually selected and added to the standard form. .... Staff members should be aware that in the near future the College is likely to adopt a standard Student Feedback system perhaps similar to the one to be used this year and preparation should be made for such an eventuality.  
> (BUC, 1993b, p.1)

In the first two sentences of this extract, the language begins by talking about 'offering', and "being able to offer" which suggests an opportunity rather than command. However the last sentence tells academics that they "should be aware" and 'should make preparations' for the use of a "standard" form.
The adoption of a standardised form, which was referred to in the above extract, came into effect during 1994. At the same time it was written into the institutional promotion policy for 1993 and 1994, that applicants at all levels must demonstrate a high standard of teaching using the institutional standard feedback format to collect student evaluations (BUC, 1993c; UB, 1994a). This form, administered through the Personnel Office, continued to be used with only minor alterations during the research period.

Most of the 15 compulsory questions on the form (BUC, 1993d; UB, 1994b) asked students to provide feedback about clear objectives; good planning, and good communication. For example:

1. Made clear the objectives for each session
2. Was able to explain concepts clearly
3. Seemed well prepared for each session
4. Taught the subject in a way which helped me understand it
5. Tried to make the subject interesting
6. Demonstrated the relevance of the subject to the whole course ...
9. Made clear the criteria used to assess student work ...
12. The unit covered what the unit description said it would
13. Assessment tasks set and/or exams were related to unit goals.

It can be argued that these questions try to sample a wide range of the kinds of things which have been stated in the literature as being important in identifying good teaching. They connect with the definitions of Chubb (1992b), particularly relating to organisation and structure, as well as some of the material coming from teacher education such as Cole and Chan (1987).

But there is also an argument that these questions represent a very narrow and limiting perspective of good teaching and leave out aspects of quality teaching which were identified in other institutional, as well as national, materials. For example, there seems to be little connection between these questions and ideas about deep learning (Ramsden, 1992; Else, 1994); problem-based learning (BUC, 1992c; 1993a; Chubb, 1992b; Candy et. al., 1994); and/or a variety of teaching strategies (Else, 1994). All of which were stated as valued learnings within the university [Chapter 5 and 7].
Like all student feedback processes, the institutional form was based on assumptions that students will recognise the behaviour as defined, that they have criteria to judge that behaviour, and will provide their feedback with due consideration. It also posits the criteria for good teaching as being contained within observable, short-term behaviours. Whilst the standardisation of the feedback forms conveyed a message across the institution that there was/is one clear unproblematic way to define good teaching which is either agreed on by all, or if not, then there is an acceptance that this is the best definition for the institution.

This view links with some of the assumptions of shared meanings and/or value-free knowledge which underpin some of the ideas in the institutional documents about quality teaching, such as shared values and principles, whilst contrasting with the language of varied teaching strategies and responding to students’ needs.

Interpreted from this perspective the questions valorise planning and didactic communication as more important than the teaching/learning processes; the quality of the relationship between student(s) and teacher; and/or the values, interests and expectations of the teachers and/or students. They also suggest that the questions were/are the same as the teaching/learning priorities of students.

As much as the questionnaire, the stated purposes and procedures which were put into place to administer the student questionnaires contributed to the construction of particular meanings about/within the discourses of student evaluation of teaching within the institution. These procedures included distribution and collection, and the timing and scoring, of feedback materials. On the Student Questionnaire it was stated clearly that the answers would be used to "monitor teaching standards in the College"; that they were to be "processed outside the School"; and that the questionnaires would not be returned to the lecturer until "after the examination period", regardless of when the evaluation was carried out (BUC, 1993d; UB, 1994b).

The procedure for the use of these forms was stated very specifically. Academics were required to organise with Personnel to get copies of the forms and, after completion, have them returned to that office by a student. Personnel then took the student responses, entered them on the computer, and calculated mean scores for each of the questions. A print-out of these 'results' along with a statement of what kinds of scores should have
been achieved, went to the teacher, along with the student responses, after the students had completed all of their assessable tasks.

This organisation and timing means that teachers could not use these processes to respond to students' needs during the teaching period. Whilst the organisational processes separate control of the questions and the responses from teachers, and potentially put it into the hands of administration.

The scoring process used on the form asked the students to choose from a series of numbers which are associated with opinion comments such as "strongly agree (5), agree (4), ... strongly disagree (1), not applicable (0)". But in the data analysis process used in the Personnel Office, these figures were treated as cardinal numbers to average and compare scores. It is group 'scores' rather than individual responses which were treated as important, because the averaged scores were used for comparisons between teachers, within and across disciplines and year levels.

Some of the interpretations derived from this statistical process are that quality teaching can not only be identified, but is the same for all teachers in all contexts; can be quantified and counted; that group 'scores' are more important than individual students' different opinions; and/or that differences between students are irrelevant. Another contesting interpretation of the statistical process is that it is a form of numerical fudging, argued on the basis that the numbers are ordinal rankings, and therefore do not represent actual numerical values and should not be manipulated in that way.

Against such criticisms, it was claimed by one of the developers of this form (McKenzie, 1992) that these were appropriate practices and that, because the fixed questions are the same for all staff:

the ratings from these can be used (with some proviso) to compare individuals' ratings with university averages, and with averages for participating classes of the same size or type or from the same discipline area.

This argument presented by McKenzie (1992) that teacher's "ratings" can be used to compare teachers against "university averages" and across and/or within disciplines, is similar to that used in materials supporting institutional staff appraisal processes. That is
the argument that, as part of being accountable, teachers must expect to be compared in this way. But from an alternative perspective the processes of averaging, as well as the questions, can be seen to be confining academics to a limited and specific frame about their role of teaching. That is a logical, non-problematic, predictable frame which potentially discriminates against teachers who want to introduce alternative approaches into their teaching.

The process of group comparisons, whether they are classes or institutions, seems to be based on an idea that all student groups are alike in two ways, both within the subject area from year to year, and across/between disciplines and year levels. This assumption does not acknowledge differences between year levels, or between compulsory subjects compared with electives. The assumptions of sameness are potentially compounded by the previously mentioned end-on nature of the evaluations which are not designed to facilitate change to students' needs during the teaching program.

There is also a message, in this statement, and the ways in which the students were expected to answer the questions about a particular "lecturer", that teaching is an 'individual' activity, rather than co-operation, collaboration and team work. This seems to contradict the emphasis on those attributes and working processes in the missions and goals, and the principles and values, of the institution.

The procedural steps which were put into place for the administration of the student feedback forms were argued as a way of protecting students' anonymity. But, like the institutional processes of teacher appraisal [analysed in the earlier part of this chapter], they can also convey messages to teachers that evaluation was being taken out of their hands, and that evaluation could legitimately be used for comparisons and/or purposes other than teachers learning about their own teaching. From this perspective the practices of administration of student evaluations, as much as the questions, convey a message that this type of evaluation is about management rather than improving teaching.

Against the view that teachers could feel confined and/or discriminated against if they want to teach differently, staff in Personnel pointed to the option of including up to nine additional questions from their pool of questions (personal communication between myself and one of the people from that office, August, 1994). But that can also be interpreted as a view that the standardised set of questions were more important than
teacher's questions; that there is only one set of values informing good teaching; and/or that teachers' own questions are not valid. This latter view stands in direct conflict to the arguments of Chubb and Ramsden about the best approach to student evaluations.

There is nothing in this procedure which would prevent teachers using their own questions in a separate questionnaire along-side, or at a different time to, this standard set of questions. But because the institutional questionnaire was designated as the one which was required for promotion and/or tenure applications [see Chapter 7], it is the standardised process which is the one which is valued within the institution.

The values which come most strongly out of the organisation and procedures in which student evaluation has been established within the institution are those which support quality teaching as being observable, unidimensional, and free from values and/or personal, or contextual influences. In this way teaching is posited as an entity which management has the right to not only evaluate, but to take responsibility for, and take control over, evaluation. Set beside the ideas which were espoused as being important/valuable in other materials from the institution, there seems to be conflicts/contradictions between this position and claims of valuing collaborative and cross-discipline approaches; a variety of teaching strategies (Else, 1994); and/or acknowledging the importance of the individual (student and/or teacher) in the learning process (BUC, 1992c; 1993a).

The voices of the academics-as-teachers on the topic of student evaluation

Unlike the lack of specific focus on teacher evaluations, the participants had a long and sometimes emotional discussion during September in which they teased out some of the problems they had experienced in using student evaluations, their own, as well as the institutional ones. Within this following extract, whilst continuing to talk about student feedback, the discussion touched on, and moved around within, a number of different themes. Instead of breaking up this discussion into segments I have chosen to present a long section of their discussion and then analyse parts of it in relation to different discourses. For ease of identification in my analysis I have [inserted segment numbers in italics].

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[Segment 1]

Bridget  We have looked at them (the student evaluation forms). We haven't used them.

Wendy  So what do you use?

Bridget  We prefer to use our own....

James  I used to use my own, which I designed. About 60 questions which looked at teaching methodology, perhaps philosophy, practical work, assignments, and so on. Then I was told by the promotions committee that that wasn't the 'right' form. I had to use the form that the University has set up. When I applied it, I actually found that that form was incorrect. It is nothing like as good as the instrument that I had, but if I used the one I had I would be criticised for it. Of course the biggest problem about the student evaluation of teaching is that it has some inherent biases which people tend not to want to think about...

[Segment 2]

Stephen  We are asking students to comment on something which they are not qualified to comment, not knowledgeable enough to comment about. .... All they see is this person works us hard - this person is easy on us - or I like this subject or I don't like this subject. They have no idea of the agenda behind the teaching, the greater missions involved. ....

Bridget  I think most of the comments that you get can be very contradictory. You can get both ends of the scale. As far as the run-of-the-mill comments, the responses we get - one will cancel out the other basically all of the way through.

[Segment 3]

James  The interesting fact is that using any instrument like that, and then taking it to a third person, or a group of third persons, is totally inappropriate. Because if the report was going to be any value, then you would set up a particular teaching structure, you would deliver that and get some feedback from students on how that went..... The students make comments back that James pushes us, he demands that we need to know things. I think that is great. However the third person, when reading that statement, sees it as a negative. I see it as a positive because it is doing exactly what I want it to do for particular students. So people then turn around and
criticise me of my approach to teaching. But they are miles away from the room. They do not know what it is that I am trying to do.

Stephen So this encourages the safe, the plodding approach. You certainly wouldn't try anything challenging that might make the students potentially uncomfortable.

[segment 4]

Peter .... I want to react to this idea that students aren't capable. I think that we must be careful not to underestimate students' ability. I think that they have an uncanny way of getting to the heart of what we as lecturers do. Their biases might be there, they may come with set preconceptions, but they are still able to tell whether a teacher is working hard and is using the ultimate in teaching/learning strategies to achieve learning, and they are still able to tell whether a lecturer knows about their material.

(September 20, line 336 ff.)

Segment 1 Although mandatory use of the standard student feedback form was first introduced in 1992, it is clear from this discussion that not all of the participants were using them. This may have been because they were not planning to apply for promotion or accelerated progress, or because the school(s) in which they were teaching did not insist on that form of student evaluation. In this extract there are two examples of people who had developed their own student evaluation forms. From Bridget's comments it seems that in nursing they were continuing (in 1994) to use their own form. But in science, from James' statement, it seems that the teachers were moving between their own questions and the standardised form.

Throughout the extract the participants were not resistant to the idea of gathering and using student feedback, and showed that they were accustomed to using their own student evaluation forms. What they were reacting to, in this segment, was the kind of questions on the standard form. James' negative comparison between "the 'right' form" with the one which he had devised for himself could be interpreted as a kind of 'sour-grapes' and/or resistance to administrative mandates. But put into the context of suggestions that students need to be asked the 'right questions', and/or that teachers need to be "allowed to design questions specific to their teaching objectives and the course they are teaching" (Chubb, 1992b, p.39; Ramsden), James' statement can also be
interpreted as a legitimate concern that the kinds of questions on the form were not appropriate for him to use in relation to his teaching.

Segment 2 In a different way Stephen's reservations about the students' 'knowledge about', understanding of, and ability to "comment on", some of the expectations and the goals, the "agenda", "the greater missions", of their teachers are, challenging the kinds of questions which students might be able to respond to. Stephen spoke about this concern in relation to his own teaching approaches where he was specifically teaching to develop generic competencies and skills, to which some of his students react negatively and 'complained bitterly' against (line 615), because they do not see those capacities as 'relevant to the discipline' (line 613).

As suggested by James' comment in segment 3, this could be interpreted by people who are not familiar with the situation as a criticism of Stephen's teaching. But the conflict highlighted by Stephen was about people coming together in a learning/teaching environment with very different expectations of themselves and that environment. It is also a statement that simply telling students the purposes of particular learning activities, or of assessment tasks, is not sufficient to convince them of their value. As such, these comments highlight a problem for both teachers-as-academics, and supporters for the validity of standardised questionnaires, which could intensify as more and more academics and institutions follow the advice of Chubb (1992b) and Candy et. al. (1994) to teach for generic skills and life-long learning as well as content knowledge and discipline skills.

Adding to the problematic nature of student evaluations, Bridget's remarks about getting comment from "both ends of the scale" was made in the context of concerns about how teachers might respond to their students' evaluations. One interpretation might be that her statement reflected basic flaws in the questionnaire which she was using. But such an interpretation does not take into account, or acknowledge, students' individually different interpretations of the same experience. For example, Husband & Fosh (1993) found that there is a great deal of un-preventable bias which influences students' ratings. They pointed to factors such as gender, capacity, and interest, as all making significant differences in the ways students respond. Bridget, like Stephen, also identified students' purposes and commitments as significant in how they responded to the evaluation questions.
By indicating a difficulty in knowing how to respond to feedback which is equally positive and negative, Bridget's comment raised issues relating to expectations that academics-as-teachers will make changes to their teaching based on the feedback they receive from students (HERDSA, 1992). Bridget's observation about the spread of responses from students "both ends of the scale" also pointed to potential problems of interpretation of the numerical means which were part of the institutional standardised form. From her comment, 'scores' which are close to the centre of the range could be made up of wide ranging responses and therefore fail to give an accurate, or valid picture of students' perceptions.

Segment 3 In this segment James' comment picked up some of the threads from Stephen's statement [in the second segment] that students may not necessarily understand the purposes and goals which inform the teacher. James also extended that meaning to talk about both 'students' and 'other people' who have access to the institutional feedback forms.

In pointing out that when students feel that they have been forced to study in a way that they don't agree with, or have been "challenged", 'pushed', or made to feel "uncomfortable", they might very well give negative responses, James was also questioning the idea that good teaching/learning is always a comfortable experience. This concern was supported in Stephen's response. He also raised problematic aspects about the impact of student feedback on teaching.

The idea that standardised forms can be used by "a third person, or a group of third persons", is clearly a view which James in particular found frustrating. From his statements it might be interpreted that James simply wanted to disregard negative feedback from students. But Chubb (1992b) also acknowledged the need for student evaluations to be placed in a context, and that students know the aims of subjects and courses. Although, as suggested by Stephen in segment 2, just knowing about the aims and objectives may not be enough.

The second sentence in James' statement reflects back on, and gives a slightly different perspective of, the idea of using students' feedback to develop and change. Here, in his language of "you would set up", and "you would", teach and 'get feedback', he was
putting forward a counter-argument to the structured questions and the summative nature, as well as the external control, of the standard institutional form.

At another level, in pointing out that what one person 'sees as a negative', another 'sees as a positive', and that 'they do not know what I am trying to do', James was indicating an awareness that teaching/learning approaches are based on and informed by different assumptions about appropriate roles, relationships and knowledges. What James was talking about, as he was in relation to the issue about timetabling practices [in Chapter 8], are differences in people's perspectives, definitions and values, and therefore potential differences in understandings of good teaching and learning between himself and "the third person".

**Segment 4** Peter's 'reaction' to Stephen's challenge about students being qualified to comment on teaching introduced yet another point of view. But Peter's comment can also be interpreted as both acknowledging that students have biases and preconceptions, and defending the idea that student feedback is valuable. Even though he, like Chubb, seemed to be setting some limits about the kinds of things which students have 'ability' to respond to.

Within the many different issues, concerns and discourses woven together in this extract there seems to be two themes which re-occurred in a number of ways. One is the potential impact of different kinds of assumptions underpinning the different messages conveyed to/from students and staff in relation to the kinds of teaching approaches which were valued within the institution. The second were questions about who has the right/responsibility to define what is valued. Both themes raised questions about the purposes of the standardised student-evaluations and the meaning(s) of quality teaching within the institution.

The cynicism and/or frustration expressed in the participants' comments about some of the problematic issues in relation to student evaluations, particularly the standardised processes being introduced into the institution, pointed to some of the on-going contestations over/within student evaluations. But whilst that may have been the field on which the battle was being fought, some of the participants' comments suggested that there seemed to have been much more at stake than that. In the same meeting Peter said:
Peter: We shouldn't just assume that the institution is just using the instrument in terms of promotion. I believe that it could be that the institution is using it in terms of social control, to keep us on our toes. It is not necessarily geared to really finding out, in the ultimate sense whether you are good.

(September 20, line 490 ff.)

In this extract Peter’s reference to “social control” pointed to the de-personalised “institution” as having motives to use “the instrument” of student evaluations as a mechanism of surveillance and/or directives which constructed limitations on/about their teaching. This latter perspective is elaborated in the final sentence when he seemed to be suggesting that ‘being a good teacher’ might not be as important to the ‘institution’ as conforming.

In positing the evaluation process as a form of ‘institutional control’, Peter’s statement takes a position which is somewhat similar to the discussion, in the previous extract, which highlighted contradictions and conflict of expectations which teachers-as-academics felt themselves to be working within. Peter was suggesting that there were contradictions between the language about, and the purposes for, introducing standardised student evaluations. Whilst Stephen and James pointed to contradictions/contestation within and between messages about what kinds of teaching were valued within the institution. For example, in the context of claims made in other materials from within the institution about supporting varied and innovative approaches, if student feedback was perceived by academics-as-teachers as encouraging ‘safe’, rather than "challenging" and/or creative approaches, such approaches to student evaluations can be seen to have influence beyond the particular practice of student evaluations.

This is a danger which was also acknowledged by Ramsden (1993) who warned that, like students, teachers may focus on the assessment and not the learning. According to this perspective, in a context where a high value is placed on student-evaluations, there is a danger that teachers might choose to teach to the feedback criteria, to teach 'safely', rather than challenge students or try different approaches.

Across the two extracts cited here from the group participants, there are strong messages which draw meaning from liberal ideas about the need for professional autonomy and the dangers of too rigid structural control. However, the extent to which that autonomy was
extended to students, as well as academics-as-teachers, varied greatly between the participants. And, whilst there was recognition of bias and differences of perspective, there were only limited suggestions of the use of critical notions of agency because, although the participants were reacting against institutional, standardised student evaluations, they were not talking about actions which they might have taken in response to them.

**Re-view of constructions on student-evaluations**

Before reviewing the major threads of meaning about both teacher and student evaluations I will draw together the main constructions of the value of student evaluations, using the dimensions of knowledge; learning; relationships; and teaching, as guiding structures to situate meanings within the analytic frames which I outlined in Chapter 3 (Figure 2). This is followed by a review of some of the continuities/discontinuities between these discourses and definitions of quality teaching in higher education.

The different kinds of processes advocated in the discourses of student-evaluations and/or student-feedback link with different views of teacher accountability. In the material from Baldwin, and the institution, student-evaluations were presented as a way for administration/management to monitor teaching. Against that view Chubb, Ramsden, HERDSA and the collaborative research group supported student-evaluations as part of the teacher's own evaluation and development processes.

*Knowledge and learning*

In this section, all of the materials supported, although with some reservations, the idea that students are knowledgeable about teachers and that their opinions can make an important contribution to improving teaching. What was being contested is who should be the knowledgeable person(s) who defines the questions to be asked, and who has access to the students' answers.

And, like the teacher-evaluation/appraisal processes, the question of whose knowledge is valued within the advocated processes provides a space to see, at least in some instances (Baldwin; the AV-CC; and the institution), that teacher's knowledge and purposes are set
beside/against the knowledge, the need to know, and the expectations of others (the government; the institution; Head of Schools; the people who produce the standardised questionnaires).

The people who supported teachers controlling the processes suggested at least some level of acknowledgment of teaching, and the evaluation of teaching, as contextual, relational and problematic (Chubb; Ramsden; the research group). Against this position, those who advocate monitoring, standardisation and/or comparisons between teachers or institutions, seem to be working from assumptions that knowledge about, and evaluation of, teaching is objective, unbiased and unproblematic.

Teaching and relationships

There seem to be two very different sets of assumptions about relationships between teachers and students, and relationships between teachers and the institution. Some of the people who advocated the teacher-controlled process (HERDSA; Ramsden; and the research group in previously analysed materials) suggested that student-feedback is an important part of on-going interaction and change in teaching. On the other hand, those who advocated ‘other-controlled student-evaluations’ supported an anonymous end-on process which posited change as happening between, rather than during teaching programs and, as such, placed students as peripheral to the actual change process. Those who supported ‘teacher-controlled student-evaluations’ present this as a form of teacher decision making and responsibility (Chubb; Ramsden; HERDSA; the research group) in contrast to the notions of student-evaluation as Other-directed where control is placed in the hands of administration and/or management (Baldwin; AV-CC; the institution).

But here too the dichotomy was not complete. Because in the Other-directed processes, whilst management, at some level, might decide what questions were to be asked; who had access to the answers; and for what purposes, it was still the teachers who were expected to take responsibility to improve their teaching, in response to students’ perceptions.
Continuities/discontinuities between these views and definitions of quality teaching in higher education

Within the discourses of quality teaching there was a strand which advocated teaching-as-scholarship. This view included ideas of teacher reflection (HERDSA; Ramsden) and teacher responsibility for developing and applying new understandings (HERDSA; AVCC; Ramsden). There was another perspective, introduced by the collaborative research group, that teaching was a personal expression of values, ideas, theories and/or philosophies.

Either/both of these views of quality teaching might explain why academics-as-teachers who have used their own student-evaluations interpret the standardised, Other-directed, student-evaluation processes, being brought into the university under the name of improving teaching, as inhibiting, irrelevant, and/or counter-productive. Those views, plus the ideas that quality teaching is relational and contextual (Ramsden; the research group), also suggest that the more student/peer evaluation processes focus on things which can be seen and counted, and/or are standardised and used for comparisons, the less relevant they are likely to be to the values and/or needs of individual academics to improve their teaching.

Review of improving teaching through teacher-evaluation/appraisal and student-evaluation

In this last section I will review some of the major threads of meaning which were being brought together, during the period 1992–1996, in the construction of discourses about improving teaching in higher education through the implementation of teacher, and student evaluations. This is done as a way of suggesting some answers to my guiding questions:

What kinds of views about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching, informed the ways that people at each of the three sites talked about improving teaching in higher education through the use of teacher evaluations/appraisals and student evaluations?

What are the substantive similarities and/or differences within and/or between the three sites?
What are the continuities/discontinuities between these views and definitions of quality teaching in higher education?

Are there significant omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relations to quality teaching in higher education? and, If so, what are they?

I continue to use the dimensions of knowledge; learning; relationships; and teaching, as guiding structures to situate meanings within the analytic frames which I outlined in Chapter 3 (Figure 2). This is followed by a review of some of the 'continuities/discontinuities between these discourses and definitions of quality teaching in higher education'.

This section of my analysis has revealed some of the discursive contestations which were influencing the ways that improving teaching was being contested and constructed. In all the materials I used in this chapter there was support for the use of combinations of self and student evaluation/appraisal. There was much less agreement about how this information should be collected, who should collect it, or the purposes for which it might be used. It is at this point where the lines-of-contestation in the politics of discourse over definitions of quality teaching seem to have been most clearly drawn, and where particular kinds of assumptions about teaching were becoming most quickly materialised into artefacts and practices.

Knowledge and learning

In the material about both teacher-evaluation/appraisal and student evaluations there were questions about whose knowledge is valued, who needs to know, and for what purposes. In each of these areas there were conflicting ideas between people who supported teacher-directed processes and purposes, and those who supported Other-directed processes. Within the first group there were some (Chubb; the research group), but not all (Ramsden; HERDSA), who saw the processes and/or the links between the processes and improved teaching as potentially problematic. Whilst amongst those who supported Other-directed processes of evaluation (Baldwin; AV-CC; the institution) there was a tendency towards assumptions of shared meanings and an unproblematic link between management directed processes; teachers being informed of a need to improve; and improved teaching. And whilst supporting the need for, and the right of,
management directed appraisal, the unions also strongly contested the over-lapping of appraisal for development with appraisal for management decision making.

A view of knowledge, and a perspective of the role of universities, which seems to have been over-shadowed in the language of accountability and stakeholders, are ideals of universities being places where all forms of knowledge and/or values can be debated and discussed without fear of political, or management, intervention (Klein, 1960; Taylor, 1960).

Teaching and relationships

The constructs of social relationships which each of these different interpretations of the processes and purposes of teacher evaluation/appraisal and student evaluations call on situate rights and responsibilities, decision making, and control of these processes, differently. Those who supported teacher-controlled evaluations presented those processes as forms of teacher decision making and responsibility and/or teaching as scholarship (Chubb; Ramsden; HERDSA; the research group). These views stand in contrast to the notions of Other-directed evaluation/appraisal where control of the processes was contained within administration and/or management structured (Baldwin; AV-CC; the unions; the institution). The position which was taken on this dimension then generally flowed through and informed ideas about who determined who has rights and responsibilities for defining the questions which would be asked; who would carry out evaluations; and/or who should have access to the results and why.

Those who support standardisation (Baldwin; the unions; the institution) talked about the need for teachers to be accountable, effective and efficient, and posited quality teaching as that which is responsive to the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Based on these views, they argued that the system, the institutions, and teachers, need to be effectively managed. This language, the economic metaphors, and the values which inform that position, draw their meanings from positivist views of a kind of linear, orderly progression between planning and outcomes; the need for hierarchical management and competition; of evaluation leading to advancement; and a scientific/expert research and development perspectives of educational change.
People arguing from the opposite position, that is the need for teacher-directed processes (Chubb; Ramsden; HERDSA; the research group - although with some reservations), also agree that teachers need to be effective and accountable, but argued that they are best achieved through teacher controlled processes. These people seemed to draw meanings for their arguments from different combinations of liberal/humanist ideas of autonomy and intrinsic rewards; liberal/critical ideas of people's different opinions and biases; critical views of education being a value laden endeavour; and/or postmodern ideas of complexity.

*Similarities and/or differences within and/or between the three sites*

In the area of teacher-evaluation/appraisal, whilst people in all of the sites acknowledged the value of one or other of these processes, there were different interpretations within each site and cross-links between sites. Ramsden and HERDSA supported teacher-evaluation. Baldwin and the unions (whilst contesting outcomes) seemed to be the strongest supporters of management appraisal. The AV-CC and the institution advocated some level of Other-directed intervention, but were also open to be read as allowing for some degree of teacher-control. Whilst within the group, James and Stephen suggested problems within either approach.

In relation to student-evaluations the lines of contestation were perhaps a little clearer. I found that it was Baldwin and the institution which most strongly supported management intervention in defining the questions and structuring who has access to the results. Whilst Chubb, Ramsden, HERDSA, and members of the research group, supported teacher control, although for different reasons.

However, within these discursive battles there were also similarities. All of the materials, from all sites, demonstrated interest in improving teaching, and both sides were arguing some elements of fairness for students and teachers. The difference seems to have been between fairness as treating everybody the same, compared with fairness as accommodating and/or encouraging difference.
Continuities/discontinuities between these views and definitions of quality teaching in higher education

In the language, metaphors and value assumptions of accountability which came through the arguments of those who support Other-directed processes of teacher-appraisal and/or student-evaluations, there seems to be assumptions that teaching and learning are not significantly different from any other business (Baldwin; the unions). What seems to have been over-shadowed in this perspective is the language of education as a learning environment which is different from commerce; the complexity and problematics associated with quality teaching and learning including accommodation for differences in teacher's and student's interests and motivations; and/or a view of the university as a place of political and/or social contestation over values. An implication of such a over-shadowing is that definitions of quality teaching were being constrained within, and directed towards, an unproblematic linear definition rather than a problematic, contextual, relational, values-saturated one.

The two conflicting positions I have outlined here, call on different social constructs and suggests different views of quality teaching. One, which seems to underpin the arguments for Other-directed evaluations/appraisals, appears to be based on assumptions that the criteria of quality teaching are known and agreed on, unproblematic and value free, and that anyone with a will to do so can be a good teacher (Chubb; Ramsden; Candy et. al.; HERDSA; AV-CC; the institution). The perspective of teaching as scholarship (HERDSA; AV-CC; Ramsden; the institution) and/or people who understand teaching as problematic, complex, relational and/or personal (the research group), seem to be most closely linked to the arguments for teacher-directed evaluations.

However there is not a direct parallel in these connections. As can be seen in the previous sections of this review, and in the previous paragraph, people do not always argue from the same perspective or take the same position in different contexts. For example, Chubb's definition of good teaching is unproblematic, but he recognised the potential for biases in student evaluations; AV-CC argued for teachers to take a responsible, professional, scholarly approach to their teaching, but they frame that within the goals and expectations of the particular Department; and the institution argued for a variety of teaching strategies and teaching-as-scholarship, but introduced student evaluations processes in ways that emphasise standardisation.
I also found a lack of congruity between the desired characteristics of graduates, the kinds of teaching processes which were being advocated to achieve those characteristics, and the kinds of evaluation processes and/or questions which were advocated in the name of improving teaching. This was particularly evident in the student-evaluation processes and questions which were being introduced in the institution. Because the questions did not seem to address any of the learning experiences or qualities which were stated as being important (Missions and Goals and/or Quality Audits). And the standardised processes seem to take control and responsibility away from teachers, in a context where students were said to be developing as self-directed (Mission and Goals) and responsible learners (Mission and Goals, Principles and values). This contradiction between meanings links with Bridget's statement [at the end of Chapter 8] that academics-as-teachers wanted the same flexibility and autonomy which was being advocated for graduates.

In these constructions of discourses about teacher-evaluation/appraisal and student-evaluation, the power relationships between management and academics-as-teachers were much more overt than in the previously analysed definition of quality teaching and/or statements about graduates. In this chapter the arguments supporting Other-directed evaluation/appraisal systems have the capacity to set limits on teacher autonomy by positing it within/against arguments for accountability to different stakeholders and/or levels of management. However those constructions were not uncontested. In talking about teacher-evaluations Ramsden quite explicitly challenged the ideas of management and/or stakeholders defining quality teaching. Ramsden and the unions raised concerns about expectations that there was an automatic link between evaluation/appraisal and development. And members of the research group, questioned assumptions that for those who already used the processes of self and/or student evaluations, there would be no difference between those which were developed and controlled by individual teachers, and Other-directed evaluations.

**Pre-view of Section Three**

Having now completed all of the different components of my analysis I move on to the Third and final section which includes two parts. The first is the ‘Interlude’, which has two parts. The first is a brief example of my reflections on my position in the research
group as an insider/outsider. The second part is an extended extract from one of the later meetings of the collaborative research group where they reflected on their experiences and again attempted to define quality teaching.

In the final chapter of this thesis I bring together all of the discursive threads of meaning of quality teaching in higher education which I have analysed, and place them into a wider context of other meanings of ‘quality’ which were being applied to higher education at the time of this research. It is here that I also take an historical perspective to briefly identify changes in the construction of meanings which have occurred over the past three years. Finally I reflect on, and critique, the contribution of postmodern critical theory, as the basis for this research.
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Interlude: The collaborative research group

Before drawing the threads together to try to establish some ideas of current positions and future directions in the areas of both quality teaching discourses, and in the potential contributions of critical postmodernism as a theoretical position from which to analyse 'politics of discourse', I want to pause to reflect on the collaborative research group. In this reflection I have chosen to focus on just two elements. One is my multiple positionings in relation to the group, and the other is the participant's experiences, and perceptions, of the impact of their participation in the group on themselves, and their understandings about quality teaching.

My position as an insider/outsider

The positionings which I assumed in this research were a complex alignment of being both an insider and an outsider at the same time. As Trinh Minh-ha (cited in Yeatman, 1994, p.18-19) stated:-

The moment the insider steps out from the inside she's no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting that inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not-quite an insider and not-quite and outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate other or same who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming "I am like you" while persisting in her difference and that of reminding "I am different" while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at.

I am an insider by virtue of being an academic within the University and subject to the same discourses and discursive practices from the government and institution as all of the other members of group. But/and, at the same time, I was an outsider because of my position as leader of the 1993 CAUT project; because of being the person who set up the group for the purposes of this study; and because of the requirements of the academic discourse in which I am engaged, that is the writing of a PhD. According to Yeatman (1994, p.34) a PhD is premised on rational assumptions of the process of theoretical
construction through empirical processes of evidence, argument and counter-argument. Which meant that I had a different investment, in relation to the content and direction of the group discussions, than the other participants.

Specifically, as leader of the CAUT project I was initially positioned as the person whose vision had brought the participants together. And in that position I deliberately wrote the application as a political document in which I consciously used the language of generic competencies and lifelong learning in policy documents of the time to justify the kinds of teaching/learning environments which I wanted to model. In that relationship I was aware of the conflicts between/within the discursive constructs and needed to constantly hold in mind the differences, as well as the similarities, between meanings.

Also, as leader, I had positioned myself as a change agent and as such I was aware of relationships of power which could potentially flow from that position. To try to avoid what I saw as the greatest dangers of that position I drew from my previous experiences researching intersections between educational policy and teacher change in other settings. As such I was conscious that neither force, nor 'good ideas', cause teachers to change their ideas, or their approaches to teaching. Rather what was needed was a context for discussing of ideas, trialing different approaches, taking risks and making mistakes. Because of this priority within my positionings, although, of necessity I was the one who co-ordinated and organised meetings, and initially the person who provided extra information as issues arose, I was also continually aware of the need for the group to develop a shared vision and to concentrate on issues which were paramount to their concerns.

Because of my multiple positionings, and my different investment, my feelings about the group were often ambivalent as indicated in the following extract from my journal.

May 2

I am struggling with the balance between control and self-direction. Stephen wants me to take more of a 'leadership role', and I guess from his perspective that fits into what he is expecting. But if I do that, am I going to be addressing the interests-needs of the other participants and/or restricting the value of the group? And more
importantly am I going to be diminishing their feelings of being in control of their own development?

I guess there is no simple balance here but a range within the spectrum where I need to be able to move as the dynamics of the group change.

June 5

The last two meetings have been interesting in terms of my entry May 2. It seems that even when I do try to get some direction, in this case an overview of where we have been and the issues we have covered, the discussion moves off in different directions, depending on what is happening for people.

The impact of the research process

The way(s) that all of these positionings, relationships, investments and feelings evolved in the group are, I believe, best portrayed in the following extracts from one of our meetings in October. It, like so many other parts of our discussion, moved across, around and within the topics we were addressing. One of the topics was this research as a formal process and the ways I was gathering, analysing and interpreting the data. At the same time, we focused on participants' experiences of the process, the group dynamics and their learnings. A third topic, intersecting and overarching these, was the issue of participants' changing definitions of quality teaching.

The participants speak for themselves

Anne Isn't it amazing how much of it comes back to good teaching - good learning. Then I looked at this (first draft of analysis) and thought 'so much of what we have been saying seems to be grounded in ... trying to work out the complexities of good teaching and/or good learning'. Does one follow the other? Is one contingent on the other? So we have actually spent so much of our time talking about that without, I would suggest, coming to any conclusion. ... When I was going through I thought 'to say good teaching produces good learning is too narrow', There are far too many
complexities because of the other things that we have discussed. From constraints of what the classroom is like, to coming from the top.

Stephen  My impression was that there was a great deal of negativity coming out in our statements. It sounds to me that we paint ourselves, overall, as victims who are at the whims of lots of forces outside of our controls, students who don't care, students who resist, administrators who have their own agenda, other staff who don't have our aims, teaching situations that don't fit us, the background that doesn't suit us to understand how the university works, there were so many negatives that were coming out time, and time, and time again. I am just wondering whether we are being too negative overall and whether we are thriving on complaining rather than doing something about it.

Wendy  Two things there - one is that this might be a place where we let off steam

Stephen  It is I guess, it certainly is.

Wendy  Certainly the frustrations of coping with the changes were a regular theme. But also there are themes of people taking up opportunities, in spite of, or because of, the frustrations.

Bridget  That was something that I felt very strongly about, that you can create a good teaching environment, or you can produce good learning, or you can become a good teacher in spite of all the constraints if you really want to and you are resourceful enough. It probably comes from within. ... What I think is that good learning takes place when a good teaching environment is created. That may or may not need the presence of the teacher. We send students away to research things and learn things, but I think the environment has a big impact on the learning and how much learning takes place. ... Even though we have had our grumbles about - it would be nice to have a white board in every place and all of the other things, I still think that some learning can take place provided we are creative enough to find strategies to use in order to be able to reach the students. In reading all of that and Stephen saying about the negativity bit, I don't feel that I have ever felt that constrained by other factors.

Stephen  Perhaps it's just reading the collection of all of the little grabs from all over the place over such a long time and seeing how much we felt oppressed by small things. I am just hoping that what we have done already has been
cathartic and that we could move on to something that is a little bit more uplifting and productive and positive.

Anne I thought we actually had, my perception was that we had. That we were saying quite explicitly - these are some of the problems that we are facing, these are perhaps the types of students we are getting. It was more like statements of reality or fact, whatever that is. Then, it was like, so therefore given this, what do we do to improve, make-better, continue on?

Stephen And there are certainly statements in there where we say about particular circumstances where something has worked very well, or we are pleased and making progress. I am just concerned about the overall balance, I suppose. I am still finding the balance is wrong.

Bridget I could say that I feel constrained within the institution, there are no two ways about that. But I don’t feel constrained in teaching. And I wondered if we are not confusing the two a little bit too much. I think all of us have expressed our grievances, dissatisfaction about some areas of the establishment within which we all work, but does that necessarily come into teaching. I am not so sure that it does always come into teaching.

Stephen Any committed people would make a large effort to ensure that whatever it was didn’t have a major influence on their students or their teaching. You act as a counter-balance to those things and shield the students from that so that you make their experience uniformly good.

Anne I think that’s what I mean. You are faced with a difficulty, and you whinge and whine about it and think this is awful. But you immediately say ‘O.K. what do I do about it, now?’ (October 20, lines 19 to 142)

Stephen It seems to me as though we manage to be remarkably vigorous and positive despite the difficulties. Perhaps it’s self-selection. I don’t know, a lot of people didn’t choose to get involved in this program. Perhaps the ones who do have different characteristics.

Wendy There was some level of selection as far as this group was concerned because I wanted to have a particular size, equal numbers from three different disciplines, a range of experience levels, a range of tenured and un-tenured, so all of that came into the selection process. But I think that as
a group of people - that this group represents a proportion of people in higher education.

Stephen  But it's only taken from a limited pool of people who would want to do it. That sub-set may not be representative of all staff at the university. That is actually related to something else that I was going to bring up at one stage that - is it possible that by being selective in the chunks that we put together into these precise that there might be some bias introduced by that procedure? So if we have got a selection of people based on who is willing and who isn't willing, plus your personal choice, then only certain bits are taken out of them and put into orders that you feel are significant, there seems as though there is a great deal of scope for this to be bent in, I am not suggesting that you are doing this but, bent in any direction that you would wish to prove anything that you would like.

Bridget  You have heard people say that all research is subjective.

Stephen  Yes but they don't say that objectively.

General laughter

Wendy  I agree with you entirely and one of the things that I need to actually write about is my position in the process because in my position I am influencing you, right the way through last year and this year. And the other thing is - yes I am presenting a group of very select people if you like, to find out about people who are really interested in being 'good teachers' in higher education, about how they are being impacted on by what is going on at the institutional and the national level.

Stephen  So it is a conscious choice rather than being stuck with people who want to do this.

Wendy  Yes, because I think that by looking at people who are consciously making choices about wanting to be good teachers within this environment, I can say more about the impact of the external environment on people who want to be good teachers, than I could if I had a random selection.

Stephen  Right. ..... 

Bridget  We could all think about why are we all here. Why did we say yes we are going to be part of this study.

Wendy  Because you are nice people

Bridget  No I don't think that we were people-pleasing in any way. From my point of view I wasn't.
Stephen So I could say to James see you in CAUT (court). I think that to speak personally it is cathartic to some extent. I used that word before. People don't like listening to your miseries and your worries and yet you often have a lot of things on your chest that you know aren't right and you really want to talk about with people. I find that getting things off my chest regularly like this is good. But it also offers me a spectrum, a sampling of all kinds of other ideas that people have, ways that they have approached things; good ideas that they have had; things that they have tried and haven't worked; things they have tried that have worked but could be improved; all this kind of thing. It's a goldmine of opportunities and spurs to a great range of thoughts that I would never have had unless I had come here. So it's expanded my thinking and appreciation and given me some good ideas.

Bridget One could almost say that you have been motivated to learn more about what good teaching is all about.

Stephen Yes, you could say that. Because Wendy will tell you, in the very early sessions that pre-ceded this, I said 'I am not really into this, I just come along but I don't feel a part of it, I don't feel that I get anything out of it. I would really be happier if I just snuck away from it and didn't get any further involved'. At the time it seemed like an imposition on my time, I'd grudgingly give up the time and come over and sit there, feel that I had to participate but not really want to do it. But, maybe it's what you put in the coffee, I don't know.

Bridget That's how students are though

Stephen My way of thinking has turned around and I now value this

Bridget So whatever Wendy has done, or whatever the group has done, has got your motivation level up, which is basically what we talk about when we talk about students when they come along and they are not motivated.

Stephen Yes, and I think that there is some self-interest in that. I have realised that there is something in it for me, and also I can relate to it personally, it overlapped substantially with my own experience. I don't know what your thoughts are but until I came along to this I thought that a lot of problems were discipline specific and that really what people in education and nursing could say would be only of the very vaguest interest to me. I hope that doesn't sound arrogant, but I really thought that different disciples were quite separate in the way they are taught and what their problems were.
Wendy: That was one of the very real issues that I wanted to address in the first CAUT, that as a teacher we share more in common than we do our differences. ... I know that a couple of you have wanted me to get more organised, all of the way through, or part of the way through.

Anne: Organised in what way.

Wendy: Say 'this week we are going to talk about -', and keep people on the topic.

Stephen: Something like 'we keep rambling around in circles and don't get anywhere'.

Anne: But I don't think we do

Stephen: You are right

Anne: We don't. The conversation goes that way because it is generated along those lines. It's not going round in circles and if it's interpreted that way it's obviously that those ideas are uppermost in our minds at that time and so they will come through in what we say.

Wendy: That's been a conflict for me because I have said right from the beginning that I wanted it to be my research project but I also wanted it to be something that you would feel was worth you putting in your own time. So there was always this conflict for me of - do I direct the traffic because this is my piece of research? or do I allow you to talk about the issues that are paramount for you this week?

Stephen: How has that turned out then? Do you find us rambling a long distance away from what you really want.

Wendy: Well you see I have gone and put it all here together now so that I have actually sorted out

Bridget: some themes

Stephen: So are you going to use a lot of it, or only a portion of it's valuable, or have you found new areas that contribute that you hadn't considered before?

Wendy: Lots of new stuff. And that's the value of this kind of research because, up until last week, I hadn't actually decided how to put it together at all. I had never actually tried to put a structure on it. So then I had to work out how to put it together. It was difficult to make that change. This is called an ethnographic or a phenomenological approach. You actually let the phenomenon happen and then you try and work out the issues and the themes.
Stephen A serendipitous approach to some extent. Because you might find some little gems in there, quite by accident, that you hadn't thought of. An added perspective.

Wendy And this is very true, that people have said things, and issues have come up in a very natural way, that I wouldn't have necessarily looked at.

Anne And that may not have occurred if you had constantly directed the agenda. Because that would have restricted us.

Stephen Actually the group dynamics of this are more like a coffee afternoon than an official meeting and perhaps that helps it to flow along in that way. We just talk about whatever interests us and what’s in the news. It’s a good relaxed atmosphere and I feel that when I am talking with you I am talking amongst friends.

Wendy Now I could interpret this material in about 50 different ways, I could look at this 'Images of students' and say 'right I just want to focus on that', then to verify what you have said I could go and interview students. Or I could choose to use different sections of the data. There are many different representations that could come out of this. So how I choose to represent the data in my PhD might be very different from how I would choose to represent the data at a different time. There is plenty of material here that I could write a whole range of different things.

Stephen I could imagine a chapter coming out of each of those headings.

Wendy Yes, and that's basically how I have conceptualised it now. So each selection of data is one potential story. It's not the story. Because you could each take this data and tell a different story.

Anne Well even the way that we have perceived some of the problems that we have discussed - you found it predominantly negative and I found that no, we were taking the negativity and turning it around. And that's only a perception, from both of us.

Stephen Yes it is. And that multiplied many times over. Perhaps you should give us your PhD to read later.

Wendy You will all get drafts of chapters and things because that's again part of the verification. Because there are so many different interpretations I have to check with you that my interpretation is at least close to what you meant at the time that you were telling it. These days it is totally inappropriate for a researcher in my position to take this data away and say 'I know the
ultimate truth about all of this, and I am not going to let you come back and
tell me that my interpretation is right or wrong'. It is very important now
that you actually take the material back to people and you don't make any
recommendations, or you don't make any summations, unless it's actually
agreed to by the people who have given the material.

Stephen   I imagine we could flesh out any given area quite a bit too. Reflecting on
the comments that are there in a row, selected from different meetings, if
we looked at those all together and mused over them, we could definitely
flesh it out. I felt myself getting ideas as I was reading through it.

Anne      ... there must come a point, from your perspective where you say I can't go
any further. I am going with this interpretation. And I think that is as it
should be too because it is your work ultimately.

Wendy     I have got the pen in my hand.

Stephen   But also you are a professional and your opinion is important.

Anne      And you are also immersing yourself in the literature of that particular area
so you really do have, I consider, the right to say 'this is the final, not the
final word, but this is the version which will close it at this moment'.

Stephen   We don't have your informed perspective.

Wendy     Well I hope that by the time I have finished that you do have. Peter chose to
read the proposal, early on, so he knows that general perspective as much as
I did at that time.

Anne      I guess it's changed a bit since you wrote it.

Wendy     It's changing all of the time. If you look back, some of the things that you
have said at various stages probably have changed too over the time.

Stephen   When we get around to final comments on this you might find that we are
dis-owning earlier statements.

Wendy     Yes. But one of the things that I am trying to do is to show that we are not
this logical person who always thinks the same way. That at some stages we
say one thing and that on another day we have said something else.

Stephen   It's a little bit like a city or a forest, it appears solid and stable, but really
you are seeing it at just a flash in time, a slice through it. It's continually
changing but you aren't aware of it. ... It sounds like everyone's conception
of good teaching consists of scattered shards throughout a whole lot of
different parts of the brain.

Anne      And it can change from day to day.
Stephen  A constellation of ideas that change, rather than one central core.
Wendy  I think that that is true because the way that you teach different groups varies, even on a particular day. Somebody talked about getting to the middle of a lecture and discovering that it’s not working. What do you do? What is good teaching in that circumstance. ....
Peter  One of the interesting things in my reflections on the last time, you know when we talked about ‘what is good teaching’, I felt in the earlier discussions my impression was that we had a clearer view then of what good teaching was. Last time we were uncertain of what it really was. It has been a growth experience in that sense.
Wendy  You mean we have grown to uncertainty?
Bridget  Into information overload
Peter  There was a much more problematic stance that we were all taking last time. I didn’t think that we were taking as much early on.
Stephen  It means that we have thought it through and taken other people’s opinions more.
Peter  Unconsciously or consciously picking up on what people have been saying and learning from it I believe.
Stephen  But in an unsatisfying way to some extent, in that we haven’t resolved very much.
Bridget  But does it matter
Stephen  Well I would like to think that I had got a little bit close to conceptualising what good teaching is. I would like to have some kind of a clearer model in my mind that I can work from.
Wendy  By the same token, there were hints in here of people being frustrated by colleagues who were so sure they knew that they don’t question.
Stephen  But that could be uninformed choice.
Wendy  You’re informed and you are still confused.
Stephen  I can’t see any benefit in not coming to grips with it.
Wendy  So what does it mean?
Stephen  Well while we have got half a million ideas all jostling around in our head and quite a number of them self-contradictory, we have to do something to try and sharpen the focus. I don’t know. It’s complex and it has to be a flexible type of thing, it has to be malleable and we will never get it down to a set of five principles but I would feel a lot more satisfied if I could
confine the possibilities a bit more than I have at the moment. That's just saying something about my mental state I suppose. I am still so up in-the-air about the whole thing .... Perhaps the rest of you have condensed it and have a firmer idea of what it is than I do at the moment.

Anne  No, not at all. I would say the same as you, but I don't find that a worry.
Bridget  No.
Anne  I find that just continually growing, changing.
Stephen  Perhaps it's an addiction to the just-so approach. It's nice to have things conveniently, tightly defined, neat and orderly and tidy. I can remember something you said some time ago about being obsessed with having things resolved.
Wendy  Did I say that?
Stephen  Well, you didn't in so many words, but it was earlier on when we were talking about the conversation wandering all over the place. I wanted a definite end-point of something solid at the conclusion.
Anne  You were looking for a therefore
Stephen  I guess that is just a reflection of my own personality, driving forces, and background. ...
Peter  It's an interesting phenomenon for me, of the process, of the development, that initially when you asked the question and I was trying to deal with it, in the form of looking for principles and almost assuming that they could be found. That for me was one level of understanding the question. In this later one I believe I understand the question differently now. It's a more sophisticated, higher order understanding of the question itself. I think that's good learning. The question to me has taken on a different kind of look. That's not going to stop me teaching, and it's not going to stop me saying 'at this point this is the best way for me to teach'. But I have a different stance with respect to that now.
Stephen  And a broader and more flexible approach to what's suitable in certain circumstances I guess.
Wendy  I liked the comment that you made Peter that it was always something out over the horizon. Because then it becomes a search rather than an end-point.
Bridget  It's almost like a process. ... It's something that's intangible.
Stephen  And yet we all think that we know what we mean.
Chapter 10
Threads and connections

This dissertation is an analysis of the constructions, connections, and dis-connections of meanings about quality teaching in higher education in Australia, within and between three sites during the period 1992-1996. To identify those meanings, and the contestation between meanings, I have focused on the interpretations of a small group of academics-as-teachers as they have talked about their teaching and themselves as teachers; discourses in public documents from the institution in which they worked; and from a selection of documents from the national site, including some from the Federal Government and its agencies.

Working from a postmodern critical perspective, some of the basic assumptions of this research are that the term 'quality teaching' has multiple meanings, each carrying social and historically shaped views about the value and purposes of education; that definition and contestation do not go on at only one site, but are negotiated and re-constructed within and between each site; and that every person, holding their own views about quality teaching, has the potential to participate in meaning-making through the politics of discourse and representation.

Based on an understanding of discourse as both the process, and grounds, of contestations between multiple and contradictory meanings, this dissertation is an attempt to represent some of the dynamic interactions in the construction and contestation of meanings, within and between the three sites, over the period 1992-1996.

It is probably inescapable that the Government in its policy statements has presented a view of language and meaning as monovocal and transparent (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1987; Yeatman, 1990b). This dissertation contests that view of meanings and, by demonstrating the potential for multiple contesting meanings (Kenway, 1992; Yeatman, 1990b; 1994), I am confronting ideas of single and/or shared meanings. Working from a postmodern critical platform I am arguing that language and practices are neither monovocal, nor free from the social, cultural, historic, and power contexts in which they have been formed. This means there is rarely just one meaning, or one interpretation. So, rather than assuming that meaning is singular or transparent, I understand meanings as
social constructions which exist in a "symbiotic-oppositional relationship" (Yeatman, 1994, p.15), and as such, are saturated by values, assumptions, expectations, power, conflicts and contradictions from all of the previous, and on-going, contestations.

Because I have been concentrating on how language and practices were being negotiated, and trying to determine some of the ways in which social resources were being mobilised, I have used critical discourse analysis as a way to deconstruct and identify value assumptions which underpin and inform those meanings. To be able to conceptualise and name those resources I have relied on four social theories, being modern liberal, positivist, and critical theory, plus postmodernism. Those perspectives have been used as a way to look for multiple interpretations and traces of meanings of/about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching. Meanings which, according to postmodern critical theory (Yeatman 1990a&b; 1991 a&b; 1993; 1994), remain within the language in a symbiotic/contestatory relationship with meanings which emerge as dominant at a given time. This has not been done to allocate and/or situate meanings, but as an attempt to identify potentially multiple, alternative meanings which remain within the discourses to be mobilised in future contestations.

In my examination of discourses which frame 'quality teaching in higher education' I have analysed materials about the desired characteristics of graduates; the definition of quality teaching; the relationship between teaching and research; plus ideas about quality teachers, and views about how teaching can been improved through appraisal/evaluation. All of these discourses and discursive fields have been put together to demonstrate the very large pool of meanings which were available for people to draw on. The final analysis chapter [Chapter 9] also demonstrates, through an analysis of mandated practices, which of those meanings were being brought into dominance at the national and institutional sites.

This final chapter has three parts. In the first part I summarise the threads of all of my analysis as a response to the key questions which have guided my research. These are:

What kinds of views about knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching, inform the ways that people at each of the three sites talk about quality teaching in higher education in the period 1992-1996?
What are the substantive similarities and/or differences within, and between, these sites?

Are there significant omissions and/or disruptions in meanings in relation to quality teaching in higher education? And, if so, what are they?

To do this I continue to use the dimensions of knowledge; learning; relationships; and teaching, as guiding structures to situate meanings within the analytic frames which I outlined in Chapter 3 (Figure 2).

I then situate this analysis within a wider social/historical/discursive context in two ways. First, I reflect on the complexity of the meanings which I have identified and the potential challenge for people working from assumptions of shared meanings. This is done for two inter-connected reasons. Firstly, to re-connect my findings with the wider public arena of multiple forms and sources of power and meanings [figure 1, Chapter 1]. And secondly because, in that wider area, parallel to the politicisation of 'quality teaching in higher education' other measures such as Total Quality Management and Quality Audits [cited in Chapter 1], were being introduced into Australian higher education under claims of enhanced quality and/or increased effectiveness, shared meanings and/or democratic processes. The second re-contextualising is done by reflecting-back from the vantage point of three years on, to try to identify some of the constructions of meaning of quality teaching in Australian higher education which have persisted and/or become dominant, and any new/different meanings which have been introduced.

The question which I am addressing here is:

What changes have occurred in the construction of meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education', in the national and institutional sites, between the period of this study 1992-1996, and 1999?

In the third part of this chapter, I reflect on postmodern critical theory as a theoretical position from/in which to carry out this research. In order to examine and critique this theoretical position as a theoretical platform I address two questions in relation to the theory. They are:
To what extent can postmodern critical theory function as a theoretical platform to investigate and illuminate the discursive relationships of people in different sites?

How do the concepts of politics of knowledge, discourse and/or representation, contribute to an understanding of power, positioning, subjectivity, and/or democracy?

What were the constraints and the opportunities for academics-as-teachers to participate in and influence the construction of meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education' in Australia in the period 1992 to 1996?

Definitions of quality teaching/teachers in higher education

In this section I bring together the discourses I have identified from my analysis of materials from the three sites relating to 'graduates', 'quality teaching' and 'improving teaching', to identify the pool of meanings which were available within and across those discursive fields; the links and connections between sites and between discourses and discursive fields; and the omissions, dis-connections, and contestations which provide spaces for further constructions of meanings.

In the statements from the national and institutional sites I found a consistent series of messages that knowledge, teaching and learning are unproblematic, and that the criteria for quality teaching are agreed on and are easy to identify. This came through many of the statements about good teaching cited in Chapters 6 and 7 and was particularly evident in the extracts in Chapter 9 in relation to evaluating and improving teaching. However I also found a number of statements, in the national and group extracts that knowledge, teaching and learning are problematic, influenced by values and/or context, and as open to critique [Chapters 6 & 8]. By juxtaposing some of this wide array of different meanings which were available, I have been able to show that, contrary to modernist assumptions that one definition can embrace all, or say all, about a given topic, there is no one definition which encompasses all of the expectations in relation to quality teaching in higher education. I also found that there are substantial gaps, contradictions and contestations within and between the materials from the three sites.

I now summarise my main findings under the headings of knowledge, learning, relationships and teaching.
Knowledge

There were many different kinds of knowledges and ways of knowing presented in the materials. There were also a variety of purposes of/for knowledge. The kinds, and ways of thinking about, knowledge which were mentioned as appropriate/necessary for academics-as-teachers included:

- ‘discipline knowledge’, ‘content knowledge’ and/or ‘a body of knowledge’
- ‘knowledge as a commodity’ which can be organised, communicated and assessed;
- ‘professional knowledge’ as meaning variously teacher’s knowledge and/or knowledge of/from another profession. The kinds of teacher’s knowledge which were specifically mentioned included principles and theories of teaching and learning as well as a variety of teaching strategies and assessment methods to enable their students to achieve certain kinds of learnings, skill development and/or attitudes,
- ‘knowledge from research’, and an expectations that academics would be contributing to new knowledge and/or up to date with recent developments
- ‘knowledge in order to be able to carry out research’, both within their own discipline/knowledge area, and in/about teaching
- ‘practical knowledge’ including how to use and apply technology for teaching/learning
- certain kinds of values and ethics

The kinds of knowledge which were defined as appropriate/necessary for students included:

- ‘discipline/content knowledge’
- ‘professional knowledge’
- ‘practical knowledge’
- ‘generic competencies’
- certain kinds of values and ethics
- knowledge of how to learn

The purpose of all of these kinds of knowledge for academics-as-teachers was primarily to enhance the knowledge, attributes and skills of students, although there were also indications, from the national site, of the expectation of knowledge development through
research as being valued. In contrast there were a range of purposes which students were defined as needing knowledge for. These included:

- personal development as lifelong learners, which included elements of a love of learning, further study, and being able to be a self-directed independent learner
- employability
- the benefit of the community/society

All of these different kinds of knowledges seem to have been treated as add-on expectations. And the varying purposes were presented as unquestionably inter-linked. There seemed to be little recognition that these are different kinds of knowledges which come from different kinds of experiences, that there may be conflicts or contradictions between different kinds of knowledge (Yeatman, 1996) and/or that academics might not have all of these different kinds of expertise.

In the extracts on evaluation/appraisal another perspective of knowledge and knowing was introduced. This was the idea that students, and others including institutional management, were to be considered as knowledgeable about teachers and teaching.

The main contestations/contradictions which occurred in all of these constructions were in perspectives which represented knowledge as either problematic or unproblematic, and ideas which indicated that knowledge was either linked with values and ethics, or assumed to be value free.

Learning

Like knowledge, learning was presented as both problematic and unproblematic. There were examples of each of these dimensions from each of the three sites, although the group tended to focus mainly on the problematic; the institutional materials mainly presented learning as unproblematic; and the materials from the national site presented a mixture of both.

Those who referred to learning as problematic, also tended to see it as complex and contextual, and talked about learning as being/needng to be: experiential; as needing to challenge and/or be confronting and demanding; as involving emotions; and/or as related to students’ own ideas and expectations. Those who considered learning to be
unproblematic also tended to see it as linear, suggesting the possibility of direct links between teaching strategy and learning outcomes; and/or between clear objectives and learning. But that does not mean that this latter group suggested learning as unidimensional, because these materials also referred to the need for a range of teaching strategies to achieve different learnings. A different strand of the idea that learning is unproblematic, presented the idea of students learning by observation, and/or the notion that it was not necessary to teach competencies directly.

Another cluster of ideas about learning which frequently appeared in the materials across all of the sites was about students. This cluster appears to have at least three very different components. One component of this cluster talked about students as self-directed, active learners, and students as being responsible, or at least learning to be responsible, lifelong learners. Another component focused on students’ needs in a way that positioned teachers as being responsible to accommodate students needing care and support, and students as having different needs, and/or different learning styles. A different version of students’ needs in relation to learning was presented in the ideas about students needing to be challenged, and/or to be provided with feedback that would enable them to improve.

But the split between these differing perspectives of/about students did not necessarily correlate with the problematic/unproblematic perspectives about learning. Nor were they necessarily consistent amongst the materials from any of the three sites.

*Relationships*

There were many different kinds and forms of relationships presented throughout the materials, although some of these were implied rather than specifically stated. The two most significant relationship themes focused on that between the teacher and their students, and between the teacher and their colleagues and the institution.

The kinds of relationships between teachers and their students which were supported generally suggested either one of support and care, and/or of equality. Both of these perspectives occurred in materials from each site. Although each of these perspectives was defined differently within and across the three sites, and sometimes within the same materials. Some examples of these kinds of relationships included the teacher as:
- a role model
- a caring person who developed a person-to-person relationship
- a person who respected students and listened to their ideas
- challenging and pushing students
- providing an environment in which students developed autonomy, responsibility, independence and personal agency

Relationships between teachers and students were also described as dynamic processed which had the potential for conflicts of values/expectations. But none of these addressed the teacher’s position as a gate-keeper with the responsibility to assess students’ work, and/or the implicit power within that relationship.

The relationships between the teacher and their colleagues were in most instances presented as equal, sharing, and/or collaborative, within and/or across disciplines. Within this context the teacher was presented as a person who was autonomous and a responsible decision maker. However the relationship between the teacher and their institution was consistently hierarchical with other people, Heads of School, administration, or un-named ‘supervisors or managers’ making decisions. The anomaly and/or conflict between this positioning of teachers, and that which was nominated as important for students, was specifically commented on by members of the collaborative group.

In all of these differing relationships, gender, race, ethnic, and/or language differences were not amongst the kinds of difference which were mentioned in any of the extracts. This may be because ‘difference’ was overlooked. Or, based on assumptions of equality, such differences were not considered as necessary/important, and/or as needing to be addressed.

*Teaching*

This was the area in which there was the most diversity of perspectives, and the most complexity, because of the variety of ideas which were variously linked with, or presented as additional to, teaching in higher education. Because of this diversity and complexity I have summarised the materials under a number of headings [quality teaching, quality teachers; quality teaching, research and researching teaching; teaching
teachers and graduates; quality teachers and the teacher-as-a-person; quality teaching and improving teaching]. These headings enable me to group the ideas in ways which demonstrate that diversity. Recognising at the same time that some of these categories are overlapping.

Quality teaching, quality teachers

In the statements from the national and institutional sites I found clear messages that defining and recognising quality teaching and/or quality teachers is unproblematic, and that the criteria for quality teaching/teachers are agreed on, and easy to identify and/or recognise. But contrary to such modernist assumptions, I have been able to demonstrate substantial gaps, contradictions and contestations of/between definitions and criteria, within and between the three sites.

One clear example of contradictions/contestations between definitions is Chubb's claim (1992b, p.35) that it is not possible to define good teachers, but that it is possible to define "characteristics of effective teaching" (1992b, p.35), whilst Ramsden and Martin (1994b, p.2) argued the opposite position, saying that there is no one 'best' way to teach, but that "good teachers" display some "common characteristics" (1994b, p.2).

These opposite positions not only challenge ideas of shared meanings, it also has the effect of positioning the discursive fields of 'teaching' and 'teachers' as operating separately. This separation of teaching and teachers was continued through different definitions of teaching which included or excluded, variously, the nexus between teaching and research; and/or researching teaching; and particular kinds of approaches and/or strategies for teaching. At the same time statements about teachers presented varied expectations that they would have different kinds of personal attributes and knowledges, and be able to establish a range of differently defined relationships with students and/or their colleagues and/or knowledge(s). I found some support for each of these constructions of meaning of quality teaching/teachers in materials from each of the three sites. I found some, such as the previously mentioned definitions from Chubb and Ramsden & Martin, which directly contradicted each other. And other definitions which relied upon a series of add-on expectations, rather than links between behaviours, abilities, attributes and knowledges. Significantly, I found no definition which included all of them.
One of the most obvious disconnections within the definition of quality teaching in higher education, was in the separation of discourses about expectations that academics would be involved in research, from definitions of quality teaching. One of the contributing factors to this, is that I found no definition which addressed teaching in higher education as potentially different from teaching at any other level of education. This was exemplified by Chubb’s use of a definition of quality teaching, written by another government sponsored group, which was addressing teaching in compulsory education.

From the perspective of postmodern critical theory the multiplicity of definitions about teaching/teachers and the disagreements, separations and gaps between them, can be interpreted as an example of ‘the politics of discourse’ where in the naming of a need to improve teaching in higher education, the government opened a space for/of contestation, in which academics-as-teachers could have contributed their own meanings. However working within this context, a number of the participants in the collaborative research group identified potential dangers of multiple perspectives when unproblematic views were being applied by others, within what they understood as a problematic environment.

Quality teaching, research and researching teaching

Although research is acknowledged in the materials as both an important role of academics, and a significant factor in teaching in higher education, I found little connection between the definitions of quality teaching and the discursive field of academics-as-researchers.

One explanation could be that whilst definitions and assumptions about quality teaching appeared to be considered to be generic to all levels of education, the expectations of academic-as-researcher at the ‘cutting-edge’ of their discipline and/or contributing to new applications of knowledge, is specifically applied to teachers in higher education, and not to other teaching environments.

Such assumptions of teaching as generic rather than potentially different in higher education, might also explain why there was little attention paid to the kinds of
relationships which academics-as-teachers could be expected to have with knowledge(s). For example, even though Chubb referred specifically to teaching and research as "equally valuable parts of quality in higher education" (1992b, p.41), it was only in statements from HERDSA (1992) and the AV-CC (1993), groups which could be assumed to be much more focused on teaching in higher education rather than other environments, where academics were referred to as scholars who could ‘integrate’ their teaching and research.

One area where teaching and research were brought together was in the advocacy of teaching as scholarship which, in different ways, was supported in all three sites. In the national materials, HERDSA (1992) was the only place where I found a specific reference to researching teaching, but the AV-CC (1993), talked about scholarship, and HERDSA (1992), AV-CC (1993), Ramsden (1993) and Ramsden and Martin (1994b) all talked about teaching requiring continued study and reflection. Within the institutional site, action research into teaching and learning was specifically stated as being valued (Else, 1993; 1994). And the collaborative research group process was founded on participants' interest in studying their own and others' teaching. All of these have some links of meaning with notions of researching teaching and/or teaching-as-scholarship (Boyer, 1990).

In other levels of education, such ideas of teachers researching their own teaching are not new, as indicated in the breadth and depth of literature on action research, teacher thinking, and/or reflective approaches to teaching. This introduction of a language of the need for this kind of professional development as a general practice in higher education may be another indication of both differences between, and assumed equivalence of, different levels and contexts of teaching.

Another explanation of the gap between the definition of quality teaching and research is that, in most instances, these perspectives of research were more closely attached to statements about the characteristics of good teachers, rather than good teaching, in higher education. As such they tended to be situated as quite separate from statements about quality teaching and/or discipline research. One of the results of this separation was/is that there seems to be no acknowledgment that there may be differences between teaching-as-scholarship, and research in the academic's own discipline area. Or that research in a discipline, and researching teaching, might be informed by different
assumptions and/or different values about knowledge development, and/or involve different research processes. In the materials I have analysed, both kinds of research, and their connections to/through teaching, are not presented as either/or options. They are both argued as "essential" (Chubb, 1992b, p.41), and/or requiring a "lifelong" commitment (Ramsden, 1993, p.42). However, in this construction of the relationship between research and quality teaching, there seems to be little recognition of the long history in higher education of contestations over what constitutes legitimate research. Or that research approaches advocated for teaching might fit within qualitative, rather than quantitative approaches, and as such, potentially require a very large paradigm shift for some academics-as-teachers.

Also, within the advocacy for qualitative research through reflection and/or action research, I found that even in documents which advocate teaching-as-scholarship, there seems to be a tendency to assume/support a value-free approach to the connection between teaching, learning, and the study of teaching and learning. Whether they are arguing for reflection on teaching (HERDSA, 1992; Ramsden & Martin, 1994b); the study of teaching (AV-CC, 1993); a reflective application of theory (Ramsden, 1993); or action research (Else, 1993; 1994); there seems to be no recognition that these approaches also have a history of contestation over meanings. For example, action research which focuses on what-works is considered by critical writers to be significantly different to reflection which draws on social critique (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Gore, 1991; Gore & Zeichner, 1991).

From the perspective of postmodern critical theory, this lack of acknowledgment of differences and/or the dis-connections between teaching and research, plus the process of applying the same words, research and scholarship, to different academic roles and expectations, can be interpreted as another example of 'the politics of discourse' where one established meaning has been meshed with, overlaid on, another. With the result that different meanings became subsumed, and the complexity of what was expected of teachers in higher education was being camouflaged.

**Teaching, teachers and graduates**

Like the gaps and dis-connections which I have identified between teaching and research in defining good teaching in higher education, I found a lack of continuity in the
discourses about quality teaching, quality teachers, and the desired outcomes for graduates. In my analysis I showed that there were statements about teaching approaches which seemed to take a modernist approach of assuming a direct relationship/correlation between teaching and learning. Yet, following that assumption, I found no one definition of teaching which addresses all of the kinds of learnings described in the desired characteristics of graduates. In particular I found that, even in statements which advocated particular teaching strategies, the links between certain graduate attributes such as curiosity, creativity and imagination, seemed to be hoped for/assumed outcomes, rather than planned for (Candy et. al. 1994; Else, 1994).

I also found little recognition of potential problems in the adding on, and/or implementation of different teaching strategies, with the intent of achieving the designated graduate characteristics. There was a ‘silence’ in almost all of the materials I analysed about the possibility that the teaching approaches which were advocated are open to multiple interpretations. All of which can either contribute to, or restrict, the kinds of learnings which might be achieved, depending on the assumptions and/or intentions of the teacher and their students.

There was also little recognition of students having different expectations. Ramsden (1992; 1993), and Else (1994), recognised that students may choose to learn at a superficial level, rather than a deep one, and Chubb (1992b) argued that the change of student population to mass higher education should be seen as a challenge. Both of these seemed to be placing the responsibility for good learning on teachers. However, I found no acknowledgment in either the national or institutional sites that students might have motives and expectations of their own; that they may not want to be in higher education; or that they may not want to become lifelong learners who love learning. It was only in the discussions of the collaborative research group where these issues were raised as problematic. For example, within the collaborative research group each of the participants described teaching approaches which they saw as contributing to the development of learning skills, the development of students as autonomous learners, and/or changing students' approaches to knowledge. Based on those experiences they also spoke about the difficulty which they, and their students, experienced in developing different ways of learning.
The desired graduate attributes in the area of values and ethics are another example of attributes which, in most instances, except HERDSA (1992), were assumed to happen rather than something which was planned for and/or taught. And even where this kind of teaching was mentioned by HERDSA there was no recognition of teachers' and/or students' own values, or the importance of the inherent power relationships between a teacher and their students. Both HERDSA (1992), and the AV-CC (1993), talked about the importance of the teacher-as-role model within the teaching/learning context. And this seems to have been interpreted as an appropriate way to teach values and ethics. However in both instances, it seemed to be taken for granted that the teacher was a person who could be an 'appropriate' role model; that students would identify them as such; and that students and teachers would be in a particular kind of relationship where this kind of learning-by-impression was likely to occur. None of these recognised possible alternative purposes of either teachers or students, or the impact of other discursive positionings such as teacher-as-gatekeeper, or student as active, independent learner. And all of this appeared to be based on contradictory assumptions that, in a context where teaching and teachers might be assumed to be value-free, students can learn values.

Another area of discursive dis-connection which I identified in relation to teaching for the kinds of characteristics defined as desirable, or necessary for graduates, occurred between the ideas of graduates as lifelong learners who have a "sense of personal agency" (Candy et. al., 1994, p.44), and what that meant in terms of the kinds of teacher-student relationships which might need to be developed. I found that, whilst these graduate attributes were designated as being desired in all three sites, the issue of relationships was addressed specifically only by the research group, and Candy et. al. (1994). But even in Candy et. al. the relationships were seen as problematic, only to the extent to which teachers were prepared to share control. And, like the material about the development of other graduate characteristics, their arguments did not acknowledge the values of the teachers; assumptions/intentions of students; inherent power relationships between teachers and their students; or the expected/required role of academic-as-gatekeeper for the professions. Because of these omissions there is a sense that students were being positioned as becoming autonomous whether they want to or not, and/or of students learning that agency can only be exercised within somebody else's structures. This latter positioning is a notion of agency and self-direction which Gee and Lankshear (1995, p.13) named as "coercion and constrained choice" rather than autonomy.
This complex web of expectations, problematic/unproblematic links, and disconnections between discourses of graduates and teachers, and between relationships, autonomy, responsibility and agency, was identified within the group discussions as being a source of confusion for academics, if not for students. And in connecting the kind of environment she was trying to give her students, to what she would have liked in her "own teaching" (September 20, line 2106), Bridget quite explicitly drew those discourses together. In so doing, she raised questions about the autonomy of academics-as-teachers. And brought into question the possibility of teaching students to develop their own 'personal agency' (Candy et. al., 1994) in a context where the teachers themselves did not feel that they had agency.

Quality teachers and the teacher-as-a-person

Besides the separations between teaching, teachers, graduates and research I identified a further dis-connection in the discourses surrounding quality teaching in higher education. My analysis shows that in the construction of what it means to be a good teacher in higher education, there is a separation between the expected characteristics and/or attributes of the academic-as-teacher, and the idea of a teacher-who-is-a-person with their own life-experiences, values and beliefs. This is demonstrated through the depersonalised, ungendered, generic way in which the 'teacher' was talked about in all of the materials from the national and institutional sites, and even to some extent within the collaborative group.

At the national site this approach to 'the teacher' occurred alike in policy documents (Baldwin, 1991), statements about 'teachers' (HERDSA; AV-CC) and in texts about teaching in higher education. In these extracts the qualities and attributes which teachers were expected to have were mainly directed towards defining relationships between teachers and their students, and/or their subject. Even though they used different language HERDSA, the AV-CC, Ramsden, and Candy et. al., all referred to teachers as having interest and commitment to their subject, and concern and respect for their students. All of which presents a teacher as personable, but not as individual people influenced by their own understandings, expectations and/or needs. For example, Ramsden (1988; 1992), even whilst arguing that teaching is problematic, still spoke of a generic teacher who can/must learn to care for students and improve their teaching. In
these constructions there was no suggestion that the teacher-as-a-person might have values, expectations, and/or ideals which may, or may not, be the same as the institution or other people around them. Such a construction has the impact of suggesting that all academics-as-teachers might/must be expected to have the same attitudes towards their work and their students, and/or that they can be considered interchangeable parts in the system or institution.

In contrast, in the materials from the institutional site I found few statements at all about academics-as-teachers, except in the goals of the Staff Development Program (SCELT, 1995) where they were spoken about as multi-skilled, motivated, effective managers and leaders. However, in my analysis, this was set beside the positionings of academics-as-teachers through claims in the Handbook of a ‘climate of genuine caring and concern’, and the message in the Mission and Goal statements of consideration for students as individuals, as well as students' needs for equity and opportunities. Put together, these perspectives from within the institution presented a range of very different kinds of relationships between teachers and students. These different positionings of students and academics-as-teachers can alternatively be read as opportunities for academics-as-teachers to select which one of those positions they are most comfortable with, or as expecting academics to meet potentially conflicting expectations.

Within the collaborative research group there were also times, particularly when participants spoke about teaching as a performance, when they too seemed to distance themselves from the notion of teaching-as-an-expression-of-the-person. Alongside such impersonal views, all of the participants, at different times, and in different ways, talked about the significance of their personal experiences and personal values in the ways they think and act as teachers. In particular they spoke about a teacher-as-a-person holding a philosophy or personal beliefs and values, which has been influenced by their personal experiences. These beliefs and values were seen to impact on the ways they teach, not only at the level of teaching strategies as indicated by Candy et. al. (1994), and Else (1993; 1994), or teaching styles, but as a statement of who they are and what they hold to be true.

All of these interpretations in relation to quality teaching and the teacher-as-a-person might be argued to be different styles of discourse, based on different locations within higher education, and/or different relationships with teaching (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1987).
To some extent I accept that explanation. But I also argue that these discursive differences are not only a matter of degree, or of perceptions. I believe that the meanings associated with 'teacher-as-a-person', as another form of knowledge, and/or a discursive field, offered a rich source of meanings, which was being marginalised in the construction of meanings, of quality teaching in higher education in Australia during 1992 – 1996.

This does not mean that, at the personal level, individuals did not draw from those resources to construct their own meanings, or that groups of academics did not form associations to support each other in constructing and maintaining meanings which were outside those of the formal levels of discursive construction (Yeatman, 1994). The material from the collaborative research group is an indication of just such practices. However, because of the dis-connections between meanings about teacher-as-a-person, and those about quality teaching and/or quality teachers, there was both the opportunity for this construction to exist outside of the dominant meanings, and the associated problem of how to bring such a construction into the politics of discourse as it was being contested.

**Connections between quality teaching and improving teaching through evaluation and/or appraisal**

The introduction of the discourses of evaluation and appraisal were supported by a range of assumptions and arguments. Some of the connections which were being made between quality teaching and teacher appraisal, at the national and institutional sites, seemed to be based on assumptions that, because research has shown that 'good teachers' regularly use self-evaluation and/or use peer-appraisal, if these processes were applied to all academics-as-teachers, that would improve teaching. On a similar basis, the standardised processes of student-evaluation which were introduced into the institution, presented a view of unproblematic, cause-effect improvement of/to teaching. However, within both the national site, and the collaborative research group, those links were recognised as being somewhat problematic. For example, HERDSA (1992) argued for teacher directed approaches; the Unions expressed concern about some of the potential uses of teacher-evaluations (Hardy, 1992; 1993b); Ramsden warned strongly about the dangers of both 'other-directed' processes potentially taking away teachers' feelings of responsibility and control over their teaching (1993); and Chubb (1992b)
questioned the value of standardised student-evaluations. In comparison, the views of
the group were more tentative, because they were able to see the advantages, and
disadvantages, of both self-directed and ‘other-directed’ evaluations.

One of the arguments being put forward, at the national and institutional sites, for the use
of teacher-appraisal and student evaluations was the need for teachers to be accountable.
And in the language, metaphors, and value assumptions, of accountability which came
through arguments of the people who support ‘other-directed’ processes, there seemed to
be assumptions that teaching and learning are not significantly different from any other
business (Baldwin, 1991; the unions). What appears to have been over-shadowed in that
perspective is a language of education as a learning environment which is different from
commerce; the complexity and problematics associated with quality teaching and
learning such as differences in teacher’s and student’s interests and motivations; and/or a
view of the university as a place of political and/or social contestation(s) over values.
The result of this was that the definition of quality teaching was potentially being
constrained within, directed towards, an unproblematic definition, rather than a
problematic, contextual, relational, values-saturated one.

Alongside these arguments and practice, in the language and meanings of much of the
material I analysed from all of the sites, there were expectations that academics-as-
teachers would take some responsibility for the improvement of their own teaching.
However, there was much less agreement about how this might be done. Within the
national site, notions of teachers-improving-teaching were most clearly evident in the
discourses relating to teaching as scholarship and/or professional development. But it
was also in ideas of listening and learning from students (Ramsden, 1993); the need to
learn and use different teaching approaches (Candy et. al. 1994); and teacher as lifelong
learner (AV-CC, 1993). From the university, it was suggested in materials which talked
about action research in/on their teaching. However, it was only in the language of the
collaborative research group where the experience of changes in teaching were
associated with personal changes in values, and/or acknowledged to be emotional,
difficult and occurring over a long period of time. These differences are not only based
on perspective, or examples of people speaking from different positions. Rather they are
people calling on different discursive fields and/or different value assumptions about
how change/improvement happens. Which, when they are juxtaposed against/besides the
mandated processes of evaluation and appraisal, challenge meanings about professional
development, and the assumptions on which the appraisal/evaluation processes were introduced.

My analysis of the areas about teaching, teachers, graduates, and research, made it possible to see the potential for a wider variety of meanings and resources which were available to be called on. However, within the advocation of evaluation and appraisal as it was being supported during the period 1992 – 1996, it was possible for me to identify that in mandating particular processes, there was a calling on, and movement of, government and/or institutional power to maintain and strengthen some meanings whilst overlaying or marginalising others.

In terms of ‘the politics of discourse and representation’ my analysis has shown that the processes and practices associated with the use of ‘other-directed’ forms of evaluation and/or assessment gave priority to a very narrow group of potential meanings which were available. Similar to the arguments of Ramsden (1993), and the unions (Hardy, 1992; 1993b), my material from the group site showed that a conflation of meanings of evaluation and appraisal has the potential to restrict, rather than contribute to development. As well as that, my analysis showed that in the introduction of mandated evaluation/appraisal, discourses about teachers as autonomous professionals, and teaching as scholarship, were being potentially marginalised, whilst some of the discourses of self reflection and self-evaluation seemed to be being overlaid by meanings from management and accountability discourses. It can also be seen that differences between academics-as-teachers as people, between disciplines, between contexts, and between students, were all being posited as irrelevant, in terms of the claimed need for teachers to be accountable. This potentially made it difficult to use difference as a point for further contestation.

All of these processes of conflation, assumption/absorption and re-interpretation of the meanings of evaluation/appraisal, plus the ways in which these terms were being connected/disconnected with professional development and autonomy brought particular relationships of power between the federal government and institutions, and between institutions and the academics-as-teachers, into sharper focus.

To make that dimension clearer, and, at the same time, put these findings into the wider arena of meanings and other processes which were being introduced into higher
education in Australia, in the name of ‘quality’, during the same period, I now turn my attention to ‘Quality Management’ and ‘Quality Audits’.

**Shared meanings and common goals**

The construction of meanings about ‘quality teaching in higher education’ which I have been focusing on were not isolated from other discursive politics within the wider social/political contexts of the time. During the period of this study other issues and processes were being introduced into Australian higher education under the tag of ‘quality’. Total Quality Management (TQM) and Quality Audits were two of these. And within the national and institutional sites, these discursive constructions were linked with the construction of meaning of quality teaching.

As I pointed out in Chapter 1, there were a number of individuals and groups at the national site, including those within the Federal Government and its agencies, who claimed that because of the changing economic and social context, universities needed to be able to demonstrate that they are effective and efficient in providing value for money, and/or able to assure their stakeholders of their quality. On this basis they argued the need for increased individual and institutional accountability, and for ‘quality’ organisational planning within the higher education system, as well as within each university (Dawkins 1987; 1988; Warren Piper 1993a&b; Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 1995a&b).

It is not appropriate in this section of this chapter to examine the impact of those other ‘quality’ processes in detail. Rather I intend to simply situate my analysis in relation to one of the central issues of TQM, that of shared meanings and common goals. And to briefly examine one of the effects of the TQM and Quality Audit processes. That is, the impact of changing power relationships.

A key element in the concept of TQM was the setting of goals which encompass all aspects of university management "which define corporate commitment", assuming "common ends", "certainty and unified effort" (Warren Piper 1993a, p.17). My analysis has shown that this language was taken up, and applied, in a number of ways within the University. And through these processes a view of shared/uncontested meanings was being re-enforced [Chapters 7 & 9].
Throughout this thesis I have contested that view and, as I have demonstrated consistently through the analysis, the discourses surrounding quality teaching in higher education are much more complex than suggested in the language of single definitions, common ends, shared maps and/or unified effort. For example, in the discursive construction of desired graduate characteristics, even though statements from the three different sites about the kinds of qualities, skills, characteristics, personal attributes and values desired in graduates contained some similarity of language, each of those words, as well as the qualities attached to those words, have the potential of multiple, rather than single interpretations. Adding to that complexity and contestation of meanings about graduates, whilst some of the views of quality teaching and quality teachers, were shown to have discursive links which connect them with the kinds of graduates which people in each site argued that higher education should be developing, there were others which I have shown to be disconnected or conflicting.

Another difficulty for those advocating and/or assuming the possibility of shared meanings, is that I also found substantially different meanings within, as well as between sites. In my analysis, there are many different, and potentially conflicting, ways of describing what quality teaching and/or quality teachers might be (e.g. Chubb & Ramsden). I acknowledge that it could be argued that some of these differences are a matter of degree or emphasis, depending on the circumstances of the writer/speaker, or that some of the differences might be interpreted as dependent on the issues which were being foregrounded. To some extent that may be true. But that does not explain why some materials, from each site, presented teaching, learning and/or knowledge, as though they were/are objective, clear-cut and/or unproblematic, whilst others suggested different degrees of complexity. Nor, in my opinion, does it address a basic problem of assumptions that one statement can speak for the interests, meanings and/or intentions of everybody within a group, institution and/or system. That is the problem of what is un-stated, omitted and/or disconnected. For example, in the area of teaching values and ethics I found strong indications of assumptions of shared, known, and agreed on, meanings. But in my analysis I found very little reference to what these values might be, or how that kind of teaching might be achieved.

In the context of TQM and ideas about shared meanings, this could be interpreted as a statement that academics can be expected to model the values, work-practices and
attitudes which coincide with the values of the government and/or the institution, and/or that students should learn the same values. If this is the intended meaning, then there is a potential danger that ideas about higher education as a site for social critique could be lost. However, from a postmodern critical perspective, as I have shown, this level of shared meaning is unlikely to occur. Because even if there was statements about, and agreement on, those expectations, values and/or ethics, at the level of language, personal meanings remain potentially different.

A further complication for supporters of the push for 'shared meanings', was/is that in my analysis I identified that the ideas of the collaborative group were sometimes closer to some of the meanings from the national site, than they were to those of the institution. In relation to teaching, and particularly in relation to the kinds of knowledges which were emphasised, the statements at the institutional site offered a narrower range of definitions, This kind of discursive leap-frogging raises questions for advocates of monovocalism about which, or whose, set of meanings might be legitimately argued as the most appropriate to be designated as 'the one'.

Another challenge to assumptions of shared meanings which I identified, has already been discussed in this chapter. That is the disruptions and/or dis-connections between the discourses and discursive fields which were all part of the construction of meanings of quality teaching in higher education. As I demonstrated throughout my analysis, different statements, definitions, and/or practices based on those definitions, included or excluded different expectations as well as meanings. I found support for a whole range of meanings in materials from all three sites. But I found no definition which included all of them. And frequently links between abilities, attributes, behaviours, and/or knowledges, were difficult to find.

My analysis has also brought forward some examples of how assumptions of sameness of meaning could lead to dis-incentive, or frustration, for academics-as-teachers. Such reactions were instances which seem to have occurred as a response to assumptions, at least at the administration level, that there was one agreed meaning of good teaching within the institution. They were also examples of how the same words can have potentially different meanings with different outcomes, as well as the difficulty of communication when people in different situations assume that words have only one meaning.
Also from the discussions of the collaborative research group there was evidence of challenges to assumptions of possible consensus, even at a person-to-person level. Within that small group there were differences in meanings about what constituted quality teaching. My findings showed that the personal theories, philosophies and values of each teacher were different because they had developed from their own lived experiences as very powerful influences on the ways they thought and acted as teachers. Other examples of the difficulty of attaining consensus can be identified in the ways the participants spoke about students having different, but unspoken, ideas and expectations of teachers, and of their experience of conflict within/between their own values. As well as this, materials about academics-as-teachers experiencing change showed that a change of purposes, aims and meanings in teaching was not an add-on process, but requires substantial, emotionally difficult, long term personal change.

Such fragmentation and complexity of meanings, plus the multiplicity of potential messages which were/are inherent within those messages, confronts the possibility of shared meanings of quality teaching in higher education. Rather it supports a view of meanings as the medium and site for/over which, meanings were/are being contested. From the perspective of postmodern critical theory the multiplicity of definitions, and the dis-continuities between them, can be interpreted as an example of the difficulties associated with trying to develop a comprehensive statement; and/or as an example of the politics of discourse where in attempting to improve teaching in higher education, and/or direct the definition of quality teaching towards particular meanings, the government opened up spaces for contestation. However, as I will present in the next part, these constructions/contestations were not operating in an environment separate from unequal power relationships.

Shared meanings and power relationships – academics-as-teachers and the institution

In the language of TQM and assumptions of shared meanings, power relationships between academics within their institutions were in some ways quite overt, and in other ways subtle. According to Warren Piper (1993a p.31), TQM was designed to address every aspect of the institution, to describe all of the purpose, aims, and future direction of the organisation, and to involve people in relation to the work for which they are directly responsible. This was claimed to be a democratic process which would bring about
collective pride, and unified effort (Warren Piper, 1993a, p.19). But it also assumed shared values which would/should be explicitly and implicitly the same. So that, although academics-as-teachers were presented as being involved in the decisions about their work, that work and the values and philosophies informing that work, were assumed to fit within the purposes, aims and directions of the organisation. There did not seem to be any space in such an assumed consensus for academics to have their own values which may, or may not, be the same as those of the institution.

Bridget's connection between the discourses about graduates as self-directed, autonomous, critical thinkers [Chapter 8], and ideas about the needs of teachers, brought into focus both the assumed democratic power relations, and the kinds of qualities expected of academics-as-teachers in a way which enabled them to be re-examined. By juxtaposing the idea of students developing autonomy and flexibility to go outside guidelines beside/against the expectation that their teachers should direct their energies towards shared meanings and common ends, raised questions about the extent to which both 'truths' could co-exist. Such a framing introduced further and/or different challenges and questions about TQM assumptions of shared meanings, and, at the same time, brought into the open the kinds of power relationships which were inherent within those assumptions.

Using this kind of framing, the introduction of mandatory teacher-appraisal and standardised student-evaluations can be examined as an example of shifting power relationships. Both processes were introduced into Australian higher education during the period of this study. They were argued at both the national and institutional sites as appropriate ways to improve teaching (Baldwin, 1991; AV-CC, 1993; the Unions, NEXUS, 1994; Else, 1993; 1994) and/or as part of the need for teaching to be monitored, and teachers (and institutions) to be more accountable (Baldwin, 1991; Chubb, 1992b; Else, 1993; 1994; BUC, 1993b&d; UB, 1994b). And whilst these arguments were not very different from the arguments put forward by those who advocated self-evaluation and teacher determined student-evaluations (HERDSA, 1992; Ramsden, 1993; members of the Collaborative research group), the processes, power relationships and outcomes are potentially very different.

I found that, whilst mandated teacher-appraisal and standardised student-evaluations were presented within the institution as opportunities for staff to improve their teaching,
the processes of introduction and implementation seemed to maintain strong hierarchical power relationships and/or assumptions of shared meanings. Such inherent power relationships within the evaluation/appraisal processes were recognised and challenged by Ramsden (1993), but accepted as appropriate by the Unions, at least for teacher development, if not for staff appraisal.

The introduction of such processes, seemingly based on assumptions of the neutrality of power relationships and/or of single rather than multiple meanings, appear to have contributed to a conflation of the meanings of standard with standardisation, quantity with quality, and evaluation with appraisal. One result of such processes was that the definition of quality teaching was being directed towards an unproblematic cause-effect definition, rather than a problematic, contextual, relational, values-saturated one. My analysis indicated that both mandated teacher-appraisal and the standardised student-evaluation processes presented a message to the institution, and to academics-as-teachers, that there is one, agreed on, set of criteria of good teaching which could be applied to all disciplines, all teachers and teaching approaches, and all student groups. This unproblematic, uniform view of teaching, with its assumptions that teachers can, and should, be monitored and compared, could be interpreted as an attempt to fore-close questions about the rights and responsibilities of academics-as-teachers to define their own meanings. And whilst members of the collaborative research group were not against either of the processes, they strongly questioned the value and purpose of ‘other-directed’ processes where control of the questions, and interpretations, were collated and analysed within administration and/or management.

One problem for such an approach was pointed out by members of the research group. This was in the assumption that, for those who already used processes of self-evaluation and/or appraisal, there would be no difference between self and ‘other-directed’ evaluations. Thus overlooking, and/or subsuming, differences in the purposes and power to define intention and meaning(s). Besides this, my material from the collaborative research group showed how significant personal direction of any change processes are in educational change. For people who defined teaching as a personal expression of their values and meanings, personal control of the processes was necessary for any significant change.
These two factors together suggest that the very processes which were mandated in the name of improving the quality of teaching in higher education have both the potential to shift substantial control of teacher improvement away from academics-as-teachers, and at the same time, limit the impact of such processes in achieving what they were said to be introduced for. That is improving the quality of teaching.

**Power relationships and surveillance - the government, the institution, and academics**

As I indicated in Chapter 1, the national policy on higher education which was introduced in 1988 included within it arguments that institutions should become more efficient and more accountable (Baldwin, 1991). To ‘encourage’ institutions to respond positively to the introduction of processes designed to achieve this, incentives in the form of grants were offered to support the implementation of TQM and ‘financial rewards’ were given to institutions who were judged as performing well in the Quality Audits.

As an institution the University of Ballarat ‘took advantage’ of both of these, as is demonstrated in the materials relating to these two ‘quality initiatives’ which I analysed [Chapters 7 & 9]. It is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to understand the reasons/motives behind the institutional management ‘volunteering’ into such processes, or to canvas the extent of change which those decisions made within the institutional management. However some of the effects/impact of both processes within the institution, in terms of the levels of accountability/autonomy of the institution, and of academics, have been made visible in this research, in the language and practices relating to improving teaching.

Through such ‘volunteering’ processes the government was able to both claim that the higher education system, and the institutions, were ‘independent’ of direct government intervention, and to shift the balance of power and influence the shaping of meanings.

A further government contribution/intervention towards the meaning of quality teaching in higher education was the introduction, in the form of incentives for individuals and/or groups of academics to improve their teaching through the competitive grant scheme administered by CAUT. This process occurred parallel with, as part of, the opening up of a space for the redefinition of quality teaching in higher education during the period
1992 – 1996, and was a very visible part of the construction of meanings about improving teaching.

However, unlike the TQM and Quality Audit processes, CAUT conveyed a message that quality teaching, and the improvement of teaching, was in the hands of individual academics-as-teachers. But at the same time it gave a government agency the potential to leap-frog across the institutional level and directly influence teachers and teaching.

All of these different messages about who was/should be responsible for quality teaching, and/or the improvement of teaching, co-existed and had the potential to be read differently by individuals and/or in different institutions. However, as I demonstrated through the choices which were institutionalised through the introduction of mandated evaluation/appraisal, the differing power relationships and resources between governments, institutions and academics, limited and shaped the meanings which became dominant.

Re-view

Whilst many of the documents which I have analysed from the national, and institutional sites, have been written in ways which attempt to make their arguments ‘self-evident’, the process of politicising teaching in higher education and placing it in the public arena meant that, in attempting to either reshape higher education towards political ends and/or reduce complexity and uncertainty in a system which is subject to rapid changes, it became a forum for contestation and potential re-definition.

This study has been an attempt to trace the intersections and interpretations of meanings of 'quality teaching in higher education' within and between a small group of academics-as-teachers, in one institution, in the Australian National Unified System of higher education, in a time of substantial change for those people, for the institution, and for higher education in Australia.

My sustained argument has been that the meanings of academics-as-teachers are part of the available pool of meanings, and their meanings, could have been acknowledged as part of the processes of politicisation and contestation. Not only because of their vested
interests, but because they have a contribution to make which might have enriched the meanings on which other sites appeared to be drawing.

The work in this dissertation has been to make visible processes of both the politicisation, and attempted discursive closure of meanings relating to teaching in higher education, in the name of 'quality'. In identifying the potential for multiple meanings, contestations, contradictions and discontinuities within and across discourses/discursive fields, I have also identified how certain meanings became dominant through processes of both regulation and absorption.

In this chapter, by more closely juxtaposing my findings from each of the three sites, the national, the institutional, and the group, in relation to their definitions of quality teaching and quality teachers; the kinds of characteristics and qualities desired of graduates; and some of the language and practices relating to how teaching in higher education can be improved through evaluation/appraisal, I have been able to demonstrate both the complexity and the many irresolvable issues and differences within and between sites. And, by highlighting the strongest messages and the most obvious omissions, disconnections and contradictions, I have also been able to point to gaps and discontinuities within and between the discourses and discursive fields. Through these processes I have identified spaces where academics-as-teachers could contribute to on-going contestation and construction of meanings as the politics of discourse and representation continue to be played out.

I have also demonstrated some of the difficulties which people advocating the need to establish a set of shared meanings seemed to be attempting to camouflage. I have done this to indicate the complex, multiple and irresolvable, differences of meanings which exist within and between sites, discourses and discursive fields, and so bring into question the possibility of shared meaning. This questioning is done here at two levels. One is to challenge the reality of the task. The second is to foreground the discourse of shared meanings as a set of language and practices which were being used as a discursive tool, particularly under the guise of 'improving teaching', to mobilise certain mechanisms of power, and to promote and legitimate particular meanings of quality teaching in higher education.
I now move to the second phase of my re-contextualisation of this study, which is to reflect on changes in the construction of meanings of quality teaching in higher education, at the national and institutional sites, since 1996.

Re-view - three years on

From the vantage point of almost three years since the 1996 change of national government, I can now reflect on my findings about the construction and contestation of meanings about ‘quality teaching in Australian higher education’ during the period 1992 – 1996, in different ways and for different purposes. The purpose of this reflection is to try to identify some of the meanings which have persisted and those which have become dominant, as well as new/different meanings which have been introduced into the ways in which quality teaching is being talked about/constructed at the national and institutional sites. [Note: It is not possible to re-visit the group site because only two of the six participants continue to be employed at the University. Three of the others resigned and are no longer working in higher education, and one has transferred to another institution after not being re-employed when their contract expired].

A series of shifts and changes over those three years, particularly continued increasing numbers of students, together with changes in funding arrangements between the national government and institutions, have contributed to changing pressures on universities. In terms of funding, the budget which was brought down only a few weeks after the election made it clear that the national government funding would no longer be set at a level which would meet the requirements of higher education. As a consequence, institutions would need to develop ways to find increasing proportions of their monies from other sources (Kemp, 1996). In the language of the Minister for Education, Dr. David Kemp (1998a):

We encourage institutions to expand and diversify their sources of income on a secure base of public investment but with increased self-reliance.

This change has contributed to, and been part of, the introduction of metaphors of higher education as a ‘market-based system’ (Kemp, 1998b), and/or an ‘enterprise’, an ‘industry’ (West, 1998a). These are metaphors which were only implied, or hinted at, in 1992 [see Chapter 1]. Now, in 1999, the business metaphor is carried through into the
language about ‘student choice’, students as ‘paying customers’; education as an ‘export earner’; and knowledge as ‘currency’ in a ‘knowledge economy’, and/or as a ‘product’, ‘commodity’, and/or ‘service’, which is to be ‘delivered’ in ways which suit the ‘preference’/ ‘demand’ of students/ ‘clients’ (West, 1998a). It is also evidenced in the practices of increasing ‘deregulation’ of the numbers of students/courses, together with promotion of competition between institutions for students, and additional sources of funding (Kemp, 1998b).

This discursive construction of higher education as a ‘business’ which must both ‘generate independent revenue’ and be ‘responsive to the market’, and/or ‘clients’, is replicated at the institutional site in the language of ‘developing an enterprise culture’, and/or an ‘entrepreneurial culture’, and ‘marketing strategies’. And in the language of learning as ‘value-adding’, ‘products and services’, which can be ‘packaged’ and/or ‘delivered’ to ‘address market needs’ (UB, 1998; 1999a&b). In some ways this could be seen as an extension of the ideas of teachers as ‘managers’, and ‘learning as value-adding’, which were in some of the later documents I analysed from the institution (1995) [see Chapter 7]. Or alternatively that the ‘business’/ ‘industry’ metaphors have become ‘naturalised’ in the language and meanings of the management of the institution.

Within the institution, one of the outcomes of the changes in funding which was experienced in the latter part of 1996, and again, to a lesser extent, at the end of 1998, was a significant cut in academic (and support) staff. Which, in an environment of increasing number of students, was experienced by those remaining, as increased workloads. Another change, at the institutional level, was a shift from management through representation to a ‘leaner structure’ which was “a little more centralised” (Kemmis & Maconachie, 1998, p.9). These changes had a range of interlinking effects on staff commitment and/or motivation which were indicated through increased staff ‘uncertainty’, ‘anxiety’, and ‘cynicism’, ‘decreased staff morale’, and/or ‘loss of a sense of shared purpose’ (Kemmis & Maconachie, 1998, pp.18, 33-34). Attempts were made to combat this through processes such as the Vice-Chancellor’s forums (1996) and a staff conference (1997) to ‘support open communication’ (Kemmis & Maconachie, 1998, p.x), on ‘key’ issues such as teaching and learning.

It is within this context of on-going change that I am now reflecting back to the complexity and contestation of/over potential meanings of quality teaching in higher
education in Australia during the period 1992 – 1996. The question which I am addressing here is:

*What changes have occurred in the construction of meanings of ‘quality teaching in higher education’, in the national and institutional sites, between the period of this study 1992 – 1996, and 1999?*

One of the first issues which comes to my attention, because of its absence, or low priority in current documents, is that the definition of ‘quality teaching’ is no longer an area which is receiving a great deal of attention and/or focus in either the national or institutional sites. For example, in a draft of the university Strategic Plan produced in early 1999, the word teaching did not appear at all (UB, 1999b). Whether this diminished attention was an intended outcome as a form of discursive closure; whether it was the impact of the change of government; or whether it was the result of/part of the impact of the changes of perspective because of the increasing power of economic meanings, it is not possible for me to determine. But what has become clear, by the diminishing of public exposure in government and institutional publications and/or media coverage, is that quality teaching in higher education has been moved out of focus as an area for/of contestation.

That is not to say that there are no further publications on this issue. There continues to be conferences, books, and other sources of information being made available. However many of these, such as the International Conference on Improving University Learning and Teaching; the HERDSA annual conference; Ballantyne, Bain & Packer, 1997; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1997; and Dart & Boulton-Lewis, 1998; tend to be academics talking to/about each other. From my experience in this research it seems that such conferences and publications are only likely to indirectly impact on the contestation/construction of meanings at other sites.

However there is still a mixture of potential meanings of ‘quality teaching in higher education’ which have some form of dominance in the current discursive constructions as they are being supported at the national and/or institutional sites. Some of these are similar to, or the same as, meanings which were evident during 1992 – 1996. Whilst other meanings have been introduced and are having an impact on previous constructions.
In particular the language and metaphors of higher education as a ‘business’, ‘industry’, and/or ‘market-place’, have introduced/strengthened positivist assumptions and values about education. Which, as argued by Rizvi & Lingard (1996), and Gee, Hull, & Lankshear (1996), are being re-formulated in terms of changing patterns of production and consumption, based on a ‘new work order’, and new/different kinds of relationships and meanings of knowledge. In this construction of meaning the ‘product’ must be ‘customised’ to the client’s needs; relationships are moderated through the highly competitive market-place, although employees are expected to have a strong ‘commitment’ to the organisational goals; and knowledge is both a commodity, and a form of energy which is used to enhance the work being done.

The focus on graduate characteristics which was evidenced in all of the sites during 1992-1996, is one set of meanings which continues to be supported at both the national and institutional sites in 1999. However there have been changes in the language and/or meanings about those characteristics. ‘Lifelong’ learning seems to have been changed to ‘learning for life’(West, 1998a). There is an apparent change, at that national site, in the qualities which graduates might be expected to have achieved. Chubb talked about “higher level generic skills”, as well as “personal attributes, and values” (1992b, p.20), as being ‘critically important’. The current statements seem to be less specific about the skills and/or attributes, whilst remaining specific about the purposes. For example, Kemp spoke about the “personal and social benefits of education” (Kemp, 1998b), and also defined learning as being “important for individuals to maximise social, economic and employment opportunities” (Kemp, 1998c). West was even more specific when he referred to the need to “equip our graduates to play a productive role in an outwardly oriented, knowledge-based economy” (West, 1998a, p.2).

In contrast, the institutional ‘vision’ and characteristics of a graduate have been expanded to now include a range of additional skills and/or attitudes which are stated as “qualities which contribute to self reliance” (UB, 1999b). These additional skills are:- I.T. literacy, critical awareness, cultural sensitivity, scholarship, a global perspective, capacity for enterprise development, information literacy, personal confidence, and practical application of theory (BU, 1999d, p.1)
An explanation for these apparent shifts in focus of graduate expectations might be that whilst the government were attempting to legitimise the discursive construction of ‘student as clients’ and/or ‘paying customers’, the institutional management were trying to both respond to various pressures within and outside of the institution, and further define/control the kinds of learnings which are expected.

The arguments of the government that education is a personal, as well as a social good, fits well with liberal ideas. However the connection between education and employment, economic enhancement, and/or national development, draws meaning from an economic, positivist, basis. The initial statement of the institutional ‘vision’ of self reliance can be interpreted from either a liberal, or critical perspective as someone who is ‘independent’ (liberal), or ‘empowered’ (critical). However the collection of ‘qualities’ which have been put together to ‘demonstrate’ this vision brings together very pragmatic skills, current jargon, and personal values, in a mixture which potentially draws on/can be interpreted from, the whole range of meaning making perspectives. This kind of blending is probably done to convince/cajole particular audiences, but because of the mixture, it also has the potential to alienate and/or confuse.

For example, if links are made between ‘cultural sensitivity’ and ‘a global perspective’ it is possible to think in a postmodern way about multiplicity, complexity, and difference - of different knowledges and meanings, of different ways of thinking and doing, and different relationships. But the following phrase ‘capacity for enterprise development’, in an institutional ‘enterprise’/ ‘entrepreneurial culture’, has the capacity to frame the meaning of the earlier phrases within a aggressive, competitive, economic understanding. An understanding of relationships which draws on/contributes to meaning within a white, western, middle class, male dominated society. And which promotes positivist values and/economic relationships above any other interpretation.

The phrase ‘self reliance’ which is significant in the way in which the institution talked about/constructed graduates, was applied differently in the nation site, and, in a different context in the institutional site. Kemp (1998a) used the phrase in the sense of institutions needing to get more funding from sources other than the government. And when applying the phrase to staff development and ‘professional development assessment’, the management document posited it as a set of characteristics which all staff should ‘model’ (UB, 1999b, p.1). The government use of the term can be interpreted as part
of/contributing to the push for deregulation of universities. Whereas, within the institution the statement can be interpreted as either/both drawing on the ideas of ‘staff’ as models which was supported in relation to academics-as-teachers at the national site during the period 1992–1996 (HERDSA; AV-CC), and/or positioning ‘staff’ as being developed/ assessed on their self reliance. This suggests that, the institutional management has not yet resolved the internal contradictions between their expectations and their appraisal/development approaches [see also Chapter 8 &9].

Another construction of meaning/language which is supported at both the national and institutional sites is the linking of ‘teaching’ and ‘scholarship’ (West, 1998b; UB, 1999c). This construction had some currency in all of the sites which I focused on in my earlier analysis. Although it seems that the same language now has potentially different meanings at/within the two sites. In his recommendations, West talked about the need for institutions to develop/adopt a “code of quality for scholarly teaching” (1998b, p.4). Which, linked to the previous dot-point in the list, could be interpreted as teaching in a way which would “promote the development of graduates who have a respect for scholarship and learning” (West, 1998b, p.4). That is, teaching for scholarship. Whereas, in the institution, ‘teaching as scholarship’ is most frequently interpreted as one of the four scholarships, based on Boyer (1990), which academics are expected to apply to the different aspects of their work, and on which they can be evaluated and/or promoted (UB, 1999c). As such it could be interpreted as meaning something like the notion of teaching as a ‘scholarly activity’ (HERDSA, 1992; AV-CC, 1993; Ramsden, 1993) [see also Chapter 6].

Each of these potential constructions of meaning can be interpreted as supporting, and being supported by, liberal meanings of learning as scholarship. And although it might be argued that it is not possible to carry out one kind of ‘scholarship’ without the other, the differing purposes suggest differing kinds and/or directions of power/empowerment as well as potentially different versions of scholarship [see Chapter 6]. The institutional construction could be interpreted through a critical frame as self directed empowerment. However, by placing this within the context of institutional evaluation, it can also be interpreted as a managerial directive with positivist over-tones.

Another construction which I found some support for at both the national and institutional sites in 1999, is the notion that academics need qualifications in teaching.
This notion was introduced during the period 1992–1996, and whilst it was given some acknowledgement at the national site (Chubb, 1992b), it was left very much to individual institutions to develop. In response to this movement towards academics-as-teachers needing a teaching qualification, the University of Ballarat introduced a Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching in 1996, [which was changed to a Graduate Certificate of Education (Tertiary Education) in 1997]. In 1997 HERDSA put forward a discussion paper which identified a wide range of questions and issues which need to be addressed if there was to be any form of national accreditation of programs for teaching in higher education (HERDSA, 1997). In the West recommendations one of the roles of CUTSD (formerly CAUT) is to ‘encourage institutions’ ‘to appoint new academics on probation until they have a teaching qualification’. This may be a stronger position about teaching qualifications than previous constructions. But it still leaves the kind/level of teaching qualification open to be interpreted by each institution.

This introduction of the discourse of teaching qualifications is, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, a change in the required qualifications of academics-as-teachers. As such it can be interpreted as an example of the increasing demands for certification; a recognition of the importance of knowledge about teaching and learning; attempts to improve the quality of teaching; and/or an additional gate-keeping mechanism for increased control over who becomes an academic. Each of these interpretations calls on, and exemplifies, different value perspectives including critical theory (the first & fourth), liberalism (second) and/or positivism (third).

One set of meanings which I found much more support for at the national site, than the institutional site, draws on/feeds into the notion of enhancing quality through competition. This is supported at the national level by the government established and sponsored competition (1997 & 1998) between individual academics, as well as institutions. The individual competition was variously claimed by the Minister to have been introduced to “celebrate excellence in university teaching” (Kemp, 1998d), and to “recognise, reward and promote best practice in university teaching” (Kemp, 1998e).

The way in which this kind of competition is organised, based on students’ assessments, is both similar to, and different from, the meanings which were available in 1992 – 1996. There were suggestions of competition between teachers, and/or notions of ‘best practice’ although this was usually carried out at an institutional, rather than a national
level. There were also suggestions of competition between academics in the CAUT grants, although this was based on the proposal, rather than a ‘result’ or ‘behaviour’. One meaning which was present during the period 1992 – 1996, which has clearly been given even greater discursive power than it had in the materials I analysed on teacher evaluation/appraisal, is the idea of student evaluations. Such a strengthening is consistent with the construction of students as customers/clients.

This construction supports/presents the views that quality teaching is both a personal issue, and an arena for competition. It also seems to be based on assumptions that academics can be motivated by external rewards [see also Chapter 9 on this issue] and/or that ‘best practice’ can be judged, and transferred from one teacher/context to another. Such a construction is a blending of liberal and positivist ideas which present ‘quality’ as an identifiable (if not quantifiable) capacity, whilst overlooking the significance of person and/or context, plus liberal notions of personal excellence, and/or positivist links with economic definitions of work and motivation.

A set of meanings of/about quality teaching which I found continuing support for at the national site is ideas of excellence in teaching being linked with/defined as innovation and/or diversity (West, 1998a; Kemp 1998d). This construction is set against/besides the ideas of teaching, and institutions, being more responsive to students’ choice, and students looking for “products tailored to their particular interests and needs” (West, 1998a, p.4). Such connections of meaning, in one sense are complementary because it seems that teachers are being directed to change/adapt/diversify their teaching in response to students’ needs. However, in the context of more students and fewer academics it could be interpreted as either/both a further intensification of teacher’s work and/or that innovation is only appropriate if it matches the expectations/interests/needs of students.

There was some support for ‘innovative teaching’ in the institutional promotions policy document (UB, 1999c). And ‘flexible delivery’ to suit ‘students/customers needs’ is strongly promoted in the current strategic planning(UB, 1999b&d). This is a phrase which could be interpreted as having some kind of equivalent meaning. But diversity is not mentioned.
In the documents which I analysed previously the ideas of ‘innovation’ and ‘diversity’ were much more open to interpretation. And, in some instances were framed as clearly under the direction of the academics-as-teachers (Ramsden & Martin, 1994b) and/or as a critical/social construction of student’s needs. However, this positing of students/customers seems to draw meaning from/contribute to the re-formulating positivistic construction of knowledge as a commodity to be ‘customised’.

I found no mention in the national site documents of teacher evaluation and/or appraisal. Within the institutional documents there are only minimal references to these discourses in the strategic plan and in the promotion documents (UB, 1999b&c). And there they are stated as expectations which are firmly entrenched into the processes and culture of the institution. Such a construction suggests that these areas of evaluation and/or appraisal are no longer arenas of contestation but have been absorbed within the language and processes as forms of accountability/surveillance, as techniques of control and/or a legitimate expectation within the customer driven discourses. Each of these interpretations, in different ways, contributes to/draws from positivistic positionings and meanings.

In this re-view I have elaborated on only a limited number of meanings which have continuity with those I identified in my previous analysis. By being able to look back over some of the most significant changes which have occurred in the three years since my original analysis, it has been possible for me to trace some of the trends of discursive definition and closure which were beginning during 1992 – 1996, but which have intensified since that time. The major shift in the possible/available interpretations of knowledge, learning, relationships, and teaching, has been within/as part of the re-formulation of positivist ideas and values. For example, in the language of students as clients or customers; of knowledge as a product and/or currency which can be purchased and/or consumed; and teaching/learning as service delivery and/or value-adding in response to students needs.

There are clearly contradictions and/or conflicts within this current construction of meanings which are being conflated or ignored. One of these is that, whilst students are being posited as choice makers, their choices are actually constrained within the ways in which the institution has defined graduate outcomes. Meaning that courses of study may be ‘customised’ for some ‘needs’, but students are assumed to want the same outcomes
as the institution. Related to this is a second area of potential conflicts which are being conflated/ignored. That is the subsuming of teaching and learning within/beside graduate competencies (UB, 1999d), thus suggesting that any/all of the defined characteristics are not only unproblematic, but easily taught/learned. A third area of contradiction is in the kind of relationships between teachers, students, and the institution. The current construction appears to have changed the balance of power. But this construction either overlooks, or potentially challenges/contests, the gatekeeping role of academics-as-teachers and institutions.

As a study of some of the impacts of the duel processes, initiated by the federal government, of opening up a discursive space where diversity of meanings about/or quality teaching in higher education were canvassed, paralleled by the ‘encouragement’ of universities to introduce more intrusive management and surveillance mechanisms over their own work, and the work of academics, I have needed powerful research tools to help me to conceptualise and to identify how these politics of discursive construction of meaning(s) has been played out.

I will now move to the third section of this chapter. That is to reflect upon ‘postmodern critical theory’ as the conceptual platform for this research.

**Postmodern critical theory as a platform to investigate discursive relationships**

In this section of the chapter I want to un-pack and examine some of the theoretical underpinnings on which I have based this research. Postmodern critical theory is, in Yeatman's terms, "emergent" and "under-specified" (1994, p.26). This research provided an opportunity to work with and examine that theory as a platform for research. Therefore, besides my analysis of the discursive constructions of quality teaching in higher education, the relationship of meanings between the three physical sites of my study, and the connections and discontinuities within and between discourses and discursive fields relating to quality learnings, quality teaching and improving teaching, I have been questioning the strength of the theory as a conceptual platform.
This is not intended as a criticism of the theory in terms similar to those used by the vast array of critiques of postmodernism and/or poststructuralism, which is from somebody standing outside of the theory and comparing it unfavourably to their own preferred position (e.g. Carr, 1995; Kemmis, 1995). Rather, this is a criticism from an ‘insider’ perspective.

The questions which have informed and directed this component of my research are:

*To what extent can postmodern critical theory function as a theoretical platform to investigate and illuminate the discursive relationships of people in different sites?*

*How do the politics of knowledge, discourse and representation, contribute to an understandings of power, positioning, subjectivity and/or democracy?*

And, as an example of praxis, I will consider the question: *What were the constraints and the opportunities for academics-as-teachers to participate in and influence the construction of meanings of ‘quality teaching in higher education’ in Australia in the period 1992 to 1996?*

In this research I wanted to look below the surface of language to identify the potential for multiple meanings and to develop an understanding of those meanings as being constructed by people drawing on different, latent values and/or assumptions. I also wanted to try to examine the processes of contestation and meaning making, as they were evolving. Therefore I needed to be able to ground my analysis in a theory which acknowledged polyphony, complexity, on-going contestation and multiplicity, rather than modernist ideas of change as meaning cancelling out prior meanings, or of change being uni-directional.

I also needed a theory which would allow me to identify and examine power both as contained within discourses and meanings, and as a part of current relationships. To do this I wanted to move away from modernist adversary views of power, but was/am not prepared to accept relativity of ideas, which are suggested by some forms of postmodernism (Lather, 1990; Yeatman, 1994).
Yeatman claims that postmodern critical theory "does not abandon the values of modern universalism and rationalism, but enters into a deconstructive relationship to them" (1994, p.vii). This description acknowledges that social understandings are not made anew, but are always partly dependent upon the values, priorities and cultural definitions of prior social contestations. She also argues that through this deconstructive relationship to the values of modernism and an interrogation of discursive constructions of the different versions of 'truths' which we have inherited, critical postmodernism opens up a political, contestatory space for "people who contest them in the name of equality" (1994, p.ix). But because 'equality' itself is recognised as a contested concept in postmodernism, there is no attempt to totalise the different emancipatory struggles; no assumptions of a universal humanity; no utopian vision; and no sense of completion of the process of emancipation; simply an acknowledgment of continual contestability.

To identify the movement and impact of power, postmodern critical theory places a great deal of emphasis on discourse as the medium of power. And by drawing on critical and feminist views of contestation, conflict and difference, Yeatman claims this perspective can provide opportunities to scrutinise discourses through ideas of the 'politics of knowledge, discourse and representation' (Yeatman, 1990a&b; 1994).

In using postmodern critical theory as the platform for this research, I found that this explanation of discourse as both the site, and the outcome, of social and historical construction of meaning in which power is embedded, provided me with the conceptual space to be able to understand meanings as having a history of on-going contestation. The idea that discourses carry past, as well as present meanings, assisted me to identify meanings which were/are being omitted, marginalised or dis-connected as well as those which were/are made prominent within the then current discursive construction of meaning about quality teaching in higher education. It also gave me an explanation of how it is that, in the process of contestation, some meanings can be taken up and then subsumed by, absorbed into, dominant meanings. Which, in turn, enabled me to begin to see dominant meanings not only as powerful influences, but as having evolved symbiotically with alternative meanings and still containing the potential for different interpretations.

I also found Yeatman's analysis and description of the complex workings of postmodern state politics and the discursive relationships between individuals and the state helpful in
providing tools to begin to unpack the multiple strands of this research and conceptualise relationships between people who may never come in contact with each other, but who interact with each other through interconnected spheres of power and influence [as I described in Figure 1, Chapter 1]. Postmodern critical theory also provided me with a different kind of understanding of how people are able to impact on the ways that others think and act through the kinds of meanings which are available to them, and the discursive constructions which become part of the ways in which they understand their world. Because of these strengths I found that postmodern critical theory provided a theoretical/conceptual space in which I was able to identify multiple meanings which intersected across and between discourses and discursive fields, and linked between and across separate sites.

However, in applying the theory, I found that there were also some areas where the move from acknowledging the value of the description, to application of theory, was a difficult step. The first of these is related to the identification of appropriate forms of and/or approaches to analysis. For example, in writing about analysis, beyond talking about deconstruction, Yeatman is not specific about the processes of deconstruction which she sees as most appropriate. And because there are many approaches to deconstruction, not all of which carry a 'critical' component, there is a risk of stopping at the postmodern point of multiplicity/complexity, rather than using it as a tool to examine social practices, relationships, and/or power.

A second problem was that, whilst postmodern critical theory is strong in describing relationships between individuals and the state, and in explaining the variety of ways in which people who are 'Othered' by discourses, can subjectively take up contesting positions in relation to those discourses, I could not find an explanation in the theory of how people become aware of that positioning and/or prepared to contest rather than accept it. This is an issue of agency, and how people become agentic, which is also problematic in critical theory and/or some forms of feminist theory.

I will now further elaborate on this second problem because, I believe, it goes to the core of postmodern critical theory, and the extent to which it is different from other postmodernisms.
Investigating and illuminating the discursive relationships of people in different sites

In using critical postmodern theory as a platform for my research 'the politics of knowledge', 'the politics of discourse' and 'the politics of representation', were important for me because, in my initial attempts at analysis, whilst I was able to examine and identify some of the different discourses and discursive fields which were/are being called on, I found that my potential for discerning multiple meanings within and between each of the three sites of my research was limited because it was very difficult to get beyond/underneath a monovocal or binary perspective.

In postmodern critical theory the discursive relationships between individuals, groups, institutions, and the state, are described as a combination of positionings whereby latent power within discourses situates people within the complex, multiple, shifting and contradictory web of discourses, and subjectivity as the potential for people to actively read and interpret those positions, take up their identities and construct and govern themselves. On this basis it is argued that whilst people cannot move outside discourses, it is through the recognition of their discursive positionings that individuals can act as agents for their own empowerment. On this basis Yeatman (1994), claims that postmodern critical theory provides for individual subjectivity as a potentially active response against attempts to achieve discursive closure. However, from my research experience I would argue that in order to act as an agent in that sense, people need to have the resources to read the contradictions within discourses and/or have access to alternative discourses.

In doing my analysis I came to realise how important this area of the theory is. I also realised that this was the area of the theory which raised the most questions for me. I became aware, like Yeatman (1990a&b) and Fairclough (1995), that whilst the material in the texts and discussions remain open, and provide opportunities for multiple and/or selective interpretations of meanings, the potential to identify and interpret these multiple and/or contesting meanings is not transparent, but relies on the resources of the reader. Therefore in order to be able to show some of the symbiotic-oppositional relationships within the discourses which constitute quality teaching in higher education, it was necessary for me to draw on my own resources of different social theories and value positions, plus a strong understanding of different approaches to teaching and learning, to be able to identify the contestations within the language and/or between meanings. It was
only through combining postmodern critical theory, with my knowledge of other social theories and the ways they become manifest in teaching/learning practices, that I was able to construct a frame for analysis which made it possible for me to discern the mixing and contestations of social views, values, and perspectives, which were present, to some degree, in all sites, and in all discourses. Through this combination, and knowledges, I have also been able to identify the potential for different interpretations and multiple meanings and the flexibility to identify and interpret congruencies, discontinuities, and omissions within and between the sites of this research.

The processes of dealing with the complexity of the ways in which quality teaching in higher education was being named and constituted within/across three sites was difficult enough. What I found even more difficult to identify were the on-going processes of power and contestation. One of my analysis problems in relation to power might be related to the need for power to be invisible to function effectively as a discursive mechanism of investment or colonisation (Foucault, 1980), or as ideology (Fairclough, 1989). During my analysis, I found that the movement and impact of power is easier to identify in the accumulation and cross linking of meanings, and in practices which direct attention towards specific meanings, rather than in language or texts which are open for deconstruction, but which do not necessarily identify power relationships and/or direct interpretation towards one specific meaning. This means that to examine the impact and the movement of power within relationships, I needed to look at the embodiment of power through discursive practices and the accumulation of links within and between discourses and discursive practices, as well as language and texts.

In relation to contestations over meanings of quality teaching in higher education, it was in the conjunction between discursive fields outside of quality teaching, teachers, and graduates such as TQM, shared meanings and accountability, as they were being related to improving teaching, and the introduction of teacher and student evaluation processes, where I was able to more clearly identify movements of power and attempts to narrow and contain meanings within unproblematic definitions of teaching and learning. And it was in the materials from the group where I found the most evidence of alternative meanings, contestation and/or resistance.

On this basis I now believe that postmodern critical theory has as its strength, and its weakness, the capacity to recognise the material effects of discursive power, to
acknowledge differences, and to explain the contestation within and over meanings. Its strength is that, in an environment where there are attempts to de-problematise and naturalise meanings, postmodern critical theory offers the capacity to deal with complexity of meanings. But its weakness seems to be that it may be that only people who are very aware that they have been positioned as "Other" (1994), or those who Yeatman referred to as "oppositional intellectuals" (1994, p.28), who are able to subjectively read such positionings and/or take part in contests over the ways in which a discourse is being named and constituted.

The contribution of the politics of knowledge, discourse and representation, to an understanding of power, positioning, subjectivity, and democracy

Yeatman (1994) talks about three different ways in which subjective contestation can occur. That is the personal, within a group or movement, and/or in a public space. Applying this to the construction of meanings about quality teaching in higher education 1992-1996, it can be interpreted that there was the potential for different sites and processes of contestation. The first are people who are positioned as 'Other', who through their lived experiences have access to alternative meanings, and who choose to go on holding to their beliefs and selectively reading the connections and gaps between the discourses to teach in the ways they believe are most appropriate. The second way is as part of a group or movement, possibly like the collaborative research group, which operates within the plurality of everyday life, supporting different meanings and providing members with alternative readings, without taking part in more public levels of political contestation. The third and most public way for subjective contestation to occur is through the actions of individuals and/or groups who have the resources to overtly contest and challenge discursive constructions. From my reading of Yeatman (1994) it seems that she expects these latter people to take a leadership role. Not in modernist terms of trying to gain consensus, but through a 'politics of representation' to open up contested spaces and question whose reality is being represented and whose is being deprived of authority.

But this is the difficulty because, in my interpretation of the 'politics of discourse and representation', those processes require that the people involved have access to alternative meanings which will enable them to read dominant discourses, to identify contradictions and/or discontinuities, and to participate in contestations. From my
analysis and understanding of change and agency, it seems that even the first two of these processes of contestation requires more than lived experiences because, whilst those experiences are necessary, to challenge any form of positioning also requires an ability to identify/articulate the differences or conflicts between dominant discourses and the meanings learned from personal experiences. An example of this transition was provided in the research group by Peter who talked about feeling frustrated about working in an environment where the philosophy and values were 'not me', but initially not having the resources, either the knowledge or language, to challenge or change that.

That is not to say, as Kenway (1992) argues, and as I stated in Chapter 1, that everybody is not situated inter-discursively, or that they do not have access to multiple meanings from which they make choices, depending on the context. But in my understanding, subjective contestation is, as part of the politics of discourse, more of an intentional mobilising of tensions or contradictions within, or between discourses (Yeatman, 1990b). This requires, in terms of this study, not only a knowledge of different ideas about teaching in higher education, but a way to identify those differences as conflicting meanings. Otherwise the multiple discourses about graduates, quality university teaching and teachers, plus improving teaching in higher education, could be experienced by academics, as they are being presented in much of the literature I examined, as a set of 'add-on' expectations and/or as a source of frustration, because of the contradictions and discontinuities between them.

One of the implications of this, is that in order to be able to participate in the 'politics of discourse', in this instance over/about the meanings of quality teaching in higher education, academics needed to be able to discern dominant and alternative meanings and assumptions, and to question them. This requires that they are knowledgeable enough to be able to recognise what has been left out, as well as what is included and/or emphasised. Also, in a political context, where issues are being presented as unproblematic and uni-dimensional, it is difficult to argue from the perspective of complexity, multiple perspectives and contradictions. Therefore the 'politics of discourse' could act as a 'politics of exclusion' because to challenge discursive constructions seems to require more knowledge than to accept them.

This is a point of confusion for me because Yeatman places emphasis on "subjects finding their own "voice" (1994, p.119). Because of this, it seems that, like Elsworth

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(1989), she is not arguing for discursive contestation and the 'politics of representation' as something which is done only by those who feel that they have agentic power, or those who have access to a range of linguistic forms (Lather, 1990). Alternatively she does argue the importance and responsibility of 'oppositional intellectuals' in ensuring that people's expressed needs are heard (Yeatman, 1994, p.39) and/or in facilitating change by opening up spaces for contestation (1994, p.37; p.112).

Therefore the roles which Yeatman has given to 'oppositional intellectuals' seem to me to be crucial in enabling people to move from unconscious positionings to active participation in the 'politics of discourse' at either the personal, group or public levels. But this is also, as she pointed out, both difficult and dangerous. Because in enabling people to become aware of their discursive positionings, the 'oppositional intellectuals' are also presenting an interpretation of 'reality' which might equally subsume the languages, meanings and voices of the people who are positioned differently. Without criteria for determining 'truth' or 'justice', actions which are claimed to be taken in the name of equality (Yeatman, 1994, p.ix), such 'intellectuals' also need to address questions about whose discourses, whose justice, and whose meanings and rights are being represented. There is therefore a great risk that anything that an 'oppositional intellectual' might do can be interpreted as taking a vantage position, of 'acting on behalf of', or of allowing people to think that having the resources will necessarily make a difference beyond their personal sphere.

Yeatman acknowledges the position of 'oppositional intellectuals' has the potential to create difficulties, but argues that they can be overcome through taking up a position which is between, but not part of, the audiences they are accountable to; by acknowledging multiple perspectives; by making the criteria for decisions open to scrutiny and interrogation; and by accepting that any resolution is attained, not through consensus which excludes those who disagree, but through the politics of representation where differences are valued and resolutions are provisional and temporary (Yeatman, 1994). However, whilst acknowledging that this process must in some ways be consensual "in the sense of requiring agreement on how to approach decisions" (1994, p.106) she seems to fall into the same trap that she accuses Habermas of, that is of holding to an ideal 'dialogical approach' to negotiation, where people are willing to listen to each other, invite contradiction and conflict and respect differences as sources of alternative information (Yeatman, 1990b).
In carrying out this research I have also become aware of this trap, its implications, and
the limitations of subjective contestation at the personal and/or group level. Because,
whilst the group discussions functioned as a space for sharing ideas and building
understandings, ultimately it had little or no impact on the meaning making of the other
sites because the links were informal, personal and outside of the institutionalised formal
decision making structures.

As Yeatman points out, contestation does not necessarily change existing forms of
discursive domination (1994, p.31). Many of the challenges in the public sphere may be
treated as symbolic rather than actual because, whilst such challenges make power
visible, decision-makers are able to take the ideas that they what they want, and in the
process neutralise contestation (Yeatman, 1994, p.115). But, in trying to argue for
agency and some level of self-determination, and/or some opportunity for participatory
democracy in this multi-layered, complex society, it seems to me that there are dangers
that postmodern critical theory either gives people false hopes, or positions intellectuals
as a new form of power-brokers.

In arguing for subjectivity as a form of personal agency, it is not clear to me how the
theory, as it stands, recognises the extent to which people need to be aware of their
discursive positioning in order to take part in the politics of discourse and
representation. What I am arguing here is that, as feminists from all perspectives have
discovered, being positioned as 'Other' is not enough for people to necessarily want to
contest that positioning. In the data from the collaborative research group I found
examples of people reading their positioning as a lack in themselves rather than some
position or expectation which was being imposed on them from outside. Because of this,
it not clear to me in the theory, or in my research, how/why it is that some times people
read their positioning as a positive, and other people and/or other times, read it as a lack
within themselves. So, whilst I found that 'the politics of representation' is useful for
describing positioning and subjectivity between individuals, groups and the state, I feel
that it does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the effects of self-positioning and
the ways that people tell themselves to understand the world.

Another problem associated with this is that postmodern critical theory, like critical
theory, places a great deal of emphasis on education as an effective processes in enabling
people to become 'empowered' to challenge the hegemonic influences in their everyday life (Elsworth, 1989). Perhaps because of this it is not clear how people make the transition from self-blame to seeing their positionings as a combination of personal/professional history and changing discursive constructions of what is expected. Therefore I believe, one aspect of a more powerful explanation of the politics of knowledge, discourse and representation, needs to address the processes of transition from positionings to subjectivity, which include the difficult and often long and painful experience of individuals who choose to change the way they read those positionings.

I am arguing this need because in a theory which is taking some of Foucault's ideas of power being personal as well as public, and of power being interwoven within discourses, I see that the discursive power which people impose on themselves and how they construct/contest that power within themselves, as well as in other spheres, is an extremely important part of the 'politics of knowledge, discourse and representation'.

To briefly summarise. I found that postmodern critical theory is strong in description of relationships and the impact/movement of power through meanings. As such it has the potential to maintain and support concepts of personal agency within democratic relationships. However I experienced problems in identifying analysis tools which would enable me to look at multiple layers of meaning and/or power. I also found that, whilst the concepts of positioning and subjectivity explain some of the relationships of power and representation, it was unclear in why/how some people are able to mobilise the kinds of resources which would enable them to actively participate in the politics of discourse.

**New directions - definitions of quality teaching - revisited**

The proposals and interpretations in this chapter are not presented as a master theory or the definition of quality teaching in higher education, but as a desire to add some productive insights into the pool of meanings from/against which others might react.

It has not been my intention to attempt to construct a definition of quality teaching which would include all of the aspects of teaching, learning, knowledge and teachers which I have encompassed here and which might arguably be necessary to include. Having opened up potentially different ways of looking at quality teaching and teachers in higher education, and the multiplicity of meanings, values and assumptions, plus ways that
discourses such as those about research and graduates, which have been kept largely separate, might intersect with, intertwine and enrich, discourses about teaching and teachers, I have no wish to truncate what I see as the possibility of widening the politics of discourse and representation over and within definitions of quality teaching in higher education. But in order to do that there are many issues which need to be brought to the surface and recognised as inextricably part of quality teaching in higher education.

It is my argument that the presentation of teaching discipline knowledge, teaching for the capabilities, values and attitudes for lifelong learning, plus discipline research, and researching teaching, as add-on processes, does little to enhance the understanding of quality teaching in higher education. Whilst the tendency to place responsibility, but not control of teaching, in the hands of teachers, and responsibility, but not control, of learning in the hands of learners, can be seen as part of a social trend to use the language of self-direction within pre-defined, Other dominated structures of power.

Besides this, the introduction of practices claimed to improve teaching, without taking into account the deeply felt personal experience of teaching, and of change, is to diminish the potential of the academics-as-teachers, as well as the processes. All of these discursive constructions I believe are contributing to assumptions about teaching as unproblematic; teaching as de-personalised; teaching as appropriately directed by others; and teaching and teachers as value-free conduits for the transference of value-free knowledge in a value-free context.

To the extent that most definitions of teaching/teachers at the national and institutional sites overlooked the significance of the person's values, ethics and personal views about teaching, learning and knowledge, academics-as-teachers were/are in a position to contribute to/within the politics of meaning of quality teaching in higher education. They were/are the people best situated to add a dimension of teaching and learning as dynamic, relational and emotional, as well as value laden and contextual. From the discussions of the group members there seemed to be a consistent line of argument that teaching and learning needed to be considered with due thought for the values and expectations of teachers, learners and the context in which they are brought together. This argument might be interpreted as suggesting, because all teachers (and learners) bring their own value assumptions, that their personal definition of quality teaching, what-ever they are, should be given priority. That is a relativist argument which exists
in some forms of postmodernism, but which has been criticised by Yeatman (1990a, p.292) and Lather (1990, p.321) who argue that such a position assumes a free play of meanings which denies the underlying power relations which have contributed to those meanings. I have also criticised this view as foregrounding personal understanding and, in so doing, losing sight of the fact that all knowledges and understandings are socially constructed (Crebbin, 1994a).

However, keeping in mind notions of 'the politics of difference' and 'the politics of representation', I am questioning the efficacy of definitions of quality teaching in higher education which potentially marginalise the meanings and/or voices and/or experiences of academics-as-teachers. Instead I am arguing for an acknowledgment of the complexity of coming to grips with a kind of definition of quality teaching in which people's understandings, values and personal theories are posited as part of the meaning, as well as the outcomes.

The tendency at the national and institutional sites to talk about teaching and learning, research and scholarship, teachers and learners, and the connections between them, as unproblematic, is I have argued, to limit the meanings of, and understandings about, all of these aspects of teaching in higher education. By juxtaposing such views against materials from the collaborative research group, and positioning the wide range of associated discursive fields side by side, I have been able to posit teaching and learning in higher education as contextual, relational, problematic and much more complex. At this point it is not just a matter of semantics or of relative positions, because what is at stake is the very thing which is being constructed. That is the quality of teaching and learning in higher education.
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Appendix A:
Letter to participants in the 1993 CAUT group
Dear

This letter is partly to do with CAUT, and partly a personal request.

As some of you know I am currently doing my PhD. On "The meaning of quality teaching in higher education". As part of that work I plan to set up, and work with, a small group of 4-5 BUC lecturers during 1994. My intention is to make this an extension of our CAUT work, and therefore am hoping that some of you would be willing to be part of that program.

My plan is that whilst this program will provide data for my study, and obviously be to my benefit, that it will also provide a forum for all of the participants for on-going reflection and co-operative learning about teaching in higher education.

I hope that, like CAUT, we will be able to meet regularly (fortnightly) to share ideas and learn from each other. The actual content of what we talk about, and the direction of the study, will depend greatly upon the interests and concerns of the participants.

I recognise that you are all very busy people who have already given a great deal of time and energy to thinking, talking about, and improving your teaching. But I hope that at least some of you would like to continue to be involved in this way. Incidentally one of the goals of the BUD Support Centre for Quality Teaching for 1994 is to establish teachers-researching-teaching programs such as this one focusing on 'action research' and 'reflection in practice'.

Please contact me if you are interested,

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