The marketisation and commodification of leaders', teachers' and students' work: An institutional ethnography of an all-boys school

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List of abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CBC	Christian Brothers College
CBD	Central Business District
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
EREA	Edmund Rice Education Australia
ESO	Educational Support Officer
HASS	Humanities and Social Sciences
IE	Institutional Ethnography
LAP	Learning Assessment Plan
NAP	National Assessment Program
NPM	New Public Management
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRP	Personal Responsibility Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SATAC	South Australian Tertiary Admission Centre
SEA	Socio Educational Advantage
SES	Socio Economic Status
SLC	Student Learning Coordinator
SRS	Student Resource Centre
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAS	Tertiary Admission Subject

Summary

This thesis traces the everyday work and experience of students, teachers and leaders as they are shaped by power relations related to the marketisation of education. Operating in the wider neoliberal policy context of privatisation, which emphasises parental choice and fosters competition between schools, this research took place within an all-boys Catholic college suffering unprecedented decline in enrolment numbers. The research shows leaders engage in stratagems to promote the school as a vehicle of educational excellence and quality to lure clientele. In an effort to improve the school's position within the competitive single-sex school market, leaders emphasise the institutional goal of academic performance while promoting an ideal form of student masculinity. Consequently, such initiatives are seen to have discursive and material effects on the work and identities of teachers and students. This thesis explicates the work of leaders, teachers and students in separate chapters; however, it illustrates the tightly bound nature of these relationships by mapping participant interviews to texts and institutional processes that are both local and translocal in origin.

Drawing on institutional ethnography as the method of inquiry, the research views the school from multiple standpoints through semi-structured and visual methods to illustrate how identities are realised and contested in relation to institutional discourses and practices emphasising standardisation, accountability and performativity. Due to my position within the school as an alumnus and teacher, I complement this research with autoethnographic methods to provide richer detail and context. In order to map 'how things work' at the local level, I collected and analysed a range of texts, documents and policies activated by – therefore playing a significant role in coordinating – the participants. In doing so, this research shows the school as a bounded space subject to a variety of competing local and translocal forces that are historical, political and economic in nature. This study unpacks the global marketisation of education systems experienced at the school level by exploring how individuals negotiate hierarchal tensions that form within the commodification of schooling. This research provides evidence that the work of leaders, teachers and students is shaped by forces operating outside of their control.

Declaration

I declare that:

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, are clearly acknowledged.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A group of Year 9 boys enter my classroom to begin their English lesson. From a fleeting glance, they all appear to be wearing the college uniform; however there are individual variations. One could conjecture these are individual resistances. The pulled-up collar, some rolled-up sleeves, shoes that dangerously air on the side of breaching college protocol, hair tied back and so forth. Arguably, they are essentially the same, but vary enough to express an individual or desired identity.

There is tension between resistance and compliance.

A student storms up to my desk, visibly upset. *'Sir, this is bullshit.'* A small group of his peers follow in the march towards me, assumedly to show support, but also sharing a vested interest in the issue. The student stands at my desk with tears, not sobbing but clearly shaken. His mobile phone had been confiscated for *'no reason'* according to him. There was an argument between the student and a teacher, but he ultimately forfeited the phone. He wants it back. In his words, he *'needs'* it, or so he tells me. The device, it can be surmised, serves as a portal to other facets of his life, his friends, his interests and a way of knowing the world.

There is tension between resistance and compliance.

The lesson begins; we are exploring persuasive texts. In the previous lesson, we read and argued about content. Today was about the techniques, a precursor to the task. A monotonous groan echoes from one table. *'Sir, this is boring. Why do we have to learn this? I never need this, and I don't think I ever will.'* Any effort made on my behalf to justify the potential pertinence of the skillset, or topic, is quickly snuffled out with the student's resignation, *'Just what do I need to get an A?'* This is followed by muffled grunts of agreement. A disparity is evident here: the boys do not connect with the curriculum, but they are willing to do what the system requires. They know that it is in their interest to do so. Their interest that is informed by many things, some personal,

> some cultural and some yet to be fully articulated regarding identity: how they see themselves, how others see them and how they see themselves being seen by others. As the teacher, I have planned according to the curriculum and tried to make my lessons engaging with consideration of their needs. But I know how students perform in my class will shape how I do as a teacher. Teachers and students respond to one another, in a classroom shaped by things beyond our control. I roll up my own sleeves and begin teaching to the A band.
>
> There is tension between resistance and compliance.

The anecdote above captures how the everyday experience of school can be wrought with tensions. When at school, students, teachers and leaders negotiate a melting pot of competing demands in relation to their academic and social entities. Most telling in this anecdote is the simmering tension between a school idealism – seen in uniforms, planning and aspirations for high grades – and an individual expression of self – seen in the student breaches of uniform or my forfeit of lesson preparation to appease the whim of the class. When I began this research, the above anecdote was one of my earliest journal entries. I begin this dissertation with the anecdote as it appropriately captures the subtle complexities of school life which this study explores. On a surface level, students and teachers within a school have a particular image and purpose. When visiting the school website, it is the aesthetic of students in uniforms, working over books and playing sports, all under the watchful eyes of teachers and leaders who are dressed in suits or corporate attire, that meets the outsider's gaze. Yet, if those images could talk, the daily life – which these images supposedly represent – is riddled with fascinating and complex tensions illustrating how power relations within the school are shaped by wider contextual factors such as policy, school markets and discourses, and micro-contextual factors such as individual aspirations and internal politics. Thus, as interactions between people occur within schools, one must consider schools as institutions that are bound to historic, political and geographical contexts. What may appear as a simple matter of a student questioning the validity of a learning task or the relevance of a mobile phone policy, when examined, unveils how schools 'are connected into the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their intersections' (Smith, 2005, p. 29).

My thesis presents findings from an institutional ethnography conducted over the course of 9 months at Christian Brothers College, an all-boys Catholic college located within the Adelaide

CBD. It is informed by autoethnographic methods. Informed by previous scholarship on institutional ethnography, my study begun as an open 'program of inquiry and discovery' without a 'pre-given theoretical destination' (Smith, 2005, p. 38), whereby I used the students' accounts as an analytical point of entry into the complex institutional relations of the school. As such, I was not beholden to a particular analytical agenda when commencing this work; rather I was invested in discovering the key influences shaping participants' lived experience, and in turn, my own. Thus the study centres on the coordination of school life and its impact on how students, teachers and leaders operate within the school, particularly in relation to what the school does in the everyday to shape identities as an extension of the school as an institution.

As an educator, researcher and alumnus of the school, I am interested in 'how things work' and 'how they are actually put together' (Smith, 2014, p. 417). In order to achieve this analytic agenda, my research had to consider how the school was positioned within a wider context operating outside the school gates. In other words, I needed to consider how policy, discourse, markets and politics create for schools – and by extension the people working within schools – particular climates that shape institutional and individual performances. As an all-boys site, the school subscribes to a particular institutional identity drawing from outside the school, particularly boy-orientated discourses regarding learning, achievement and masculinity. Furthermore, as a private school relying on fees, it is compelled to lure enrolments to safeguard its future. By mapping interviews and texts, my study traces how the school has succumbed to neoliberal market forces by employing a range of marketisation and commodification tactics seen as a necessary stratagem of survival in times of enrolment and funding uncertainty.

1.2 Introducing the school site in 'survival mode'

While I was conducting this study, the school was facing unprecedented levels of declining enrolments. According to the *My School* website, Christian Brothers College peaked in enrolments in 2014 with 1250 students; however it currently has 950. This decline fits within a wider state-level trend of South Australian Catholic schools experiencing a significant decline in enrolments of more than 3000 students from 2014 to 2018 across the sector. Conversely, public and independent schools (non-Catholic) have seen a rise of 10,000. Within this context, Christian Brothers College, like many of its brother and sister schools, is in survival mode. Enrolments equate to money; thus student numbers are vital to the school's survival and, despite the local newspaper's assertion that Christian Brothers College is 'elite', the enrolment

base draws predominantly from aspirational middle- and working-class families diverse in ethnic and socio-economic background.

The impact of declining enrolments is not unique to Christian Brothers College. There are four Catholic all-boys schools in South Australia, and of these, two have made considerable staff redundancies in recent years and the other has recently announced its transition to becoming co-ed in an effort to boost student numbers. Through natural staff attrition, namely retirements and staff members leaving, Christian Brothers College has been able to absorb dwindling student numbers and avoid measures such as staff redundancy. Nonetheless, the school's leadership and staff are acutely aware of the enrolment imperative. The school has recently borrowed a significant amount of money to build a new building and engaged with significant marketing strategies, including engaging with advertising firms, in an effort to lure prospective enrolments. This remains critical work to the future of Christian Brothers College. As a consequence, Christian Brothers College is a dynamic site of power struggles internally and externally, where the everyday milieu is infused with a logic of market survival which has implications for the commodification of students and the structuring of teachers' employment.

1.3 Situating myself in the research

Conducting such research requires extensive reflexivity. My motivation for this study is twofold.

Firstly, as an alumnus, I cannot deny I am caught in an exercise of nostalgic narcissism, fascinated by how the experience of others, of the same institution albeit different historical periods, mirror or refute my own. While I recognise this admission could be seen as problematic for a researcher, I defend this in later chapters by arguing that the method of inquiry is complemented by my current experience as an educator and leader and former experience as a student, and is bolstered with richer detail and insight not privy to an outsider.

Secondly, my motivation for this research dates back to when I started teaching at Christian Brothers College. I recall my first few weeks as a time of excitement and intrigue. In my previous years of teaching, I had never taught all boys; however a year teaching at an all-girls school gave me some experience of single-sex education. The move to the school marked the first time I taught at a high school (Years 7 to 12); thus I remember finding the invigoration

that comes with learning and being somewhere new. However, I was not completely new to the school. As an alumnus, I had completed my high schooling at Christian Brothers College. I recall a sense of nostalgic dissonance. Architecturally the school had changed little at this point and a small group of teachers that taught me remained. Yet I was fascinated by how the school felt so corporate, with merchandise, banners, posters and its own notion of student celebrity. As such, the school was now a brand and a product, clearly selling itself.

By the time I completed this research, I had won several leadership positions within the school. Thus when this project started I was a general teacher; I am now a member of the Executive and Head of the Senior Campus. As such, my position as a researcher and member of the same institution was in a constant state of change. Therefore, as I describe in later chapters, institutional ethnography as a framework of inquiry assisted in nuancing my two identities, but never do I claim objectivity as a researcher.

1.3.1 The making of celebrity students and teachers by leadership

In my first year of teaching at CBC, on the first day of students arriving, I recall sitting at the back of the gymnasium while the entire student body was hauled in for first-day orientation. The College Captain at the time addressed the school; he was impressive in his articulation and confidence. Speaking to his student peers, he spoke of the school's values, school pride and the opportunities that come with being a student. At the time, I was in awe. Perhaps largely because during the previous six years I had been teaching at a parish primary school, seeing a 17-year-old student addressing a gymnasium so boldly was not what I had expected. However, one thing was clear: he had been appointed as a role model, someone whom other students should aspire to emulate.

Through my first three weeks as a teacher at the school, the valorisation of certain students for achievement, academically, athletically or for leadership, became a reoccurring theme. By extension, particular teachers involved with the successes of these students equally received accolades from their peers and school leaders. I was fascinated by how particular students, often the same ones and irrespective of the accomplishment, were given a celebrity-like status. I learnt that the Year 12 student leadership team, including the College Captain and eleven vice-captains, were specially selected the previous year. The Student Leaders had their faces on a specially designed poster in every classroom, wore a white blazer, in comparison to other students who wear purple ones, and often would assume a seat next to the principal when on

stage at whole-school ceremonies. Academically recognised students, with their teachers, also received accolades for their performance in Year 12. Another poster eminent in every classroom showed the top-performing students of the previous year, with their scores and Tertiary Education Rank accompanying their photos. What was most apparent was that Year 12 results were important to the school, particularly when the previous year's highest-achieving student enjoyed a whole-school assembly in his honour, to which he gave a speech about the imperatives of hard work and listening to your teacher as fundamentals of a successful school experience. As a teacher in a new setting, I quickly learnt the school privileges certain performances, achievements and identities over others. As such, the students, often through the work of teachers, were used as products of the school to sell a particular ethos and brand.

1.3.2 Questioning celebrity: From teacher to researcher trying to understand the school

The celebrity-like status of certain students was interesting and worrying. Before working at Christian Brothers College with high school students, I had worked in either primary or middle-school settings, where students were given merit for participation and inclusivity over achievement and performance. The idea of a small selection of students serving as institutional benchmarks was foreign, as my experience as an educator up until this point had largely been around finding ways to celebrate every student. As an alumnus, many of the aforementioned ceremonies appeared new: while I remember the College Captain as a student, he was not afforded the status I was now seeing. When I was a student at this school, posters of student achievements were non-existent. Classrooms, irrespective of what building they were in, aesthetically emulated one another with rows facing the whiteboard and teacher's desk. In my recollection, while students informally had status over one another in the milieu of peer subcultures, the school did not appear to engage in such branding and marketing exercises that I was now experiencing as a teacher.

Reflecting on my initial weeks as a teacher at Christian Brothers College, my research arose from trying to understand how the identity of a student in a school is coordinated. This led me to explore various facets of the institution. Why was the school invested in giving primacy to only certain types of students and forms of achievement over others? What was the message being sent to the community about what the school values? How does a student accrue the appropriate currency to achieve institutional validation and recognition? Is there recognition for students who do not demonstrate these institutional ideals of athleticism, academia or

leadership? What influence do the teachers and leaders have in shaping this culture of adoration? My line of questioning in relation to students was paradoxical: do the students shape the school, or does the school shape the students?

At the time, as someone new to teaching in an all-boys setting, I was heavily invested in trying to learn and understand my students, while also understanding the institutional context. During this period of my teaching career, I had begun to engage with scholarly literature as a doctoral student interested in the area of boys and schooling. Consequently, my thinking as a teacher wishing to understand *new students* and a *new school* evolved critically to a researcher seeking to investigate the complexities and intricacies of school in relation to power. I found a great deal of scholarly work in this area, either examining staff experiences of working with boys, or examining boys' experiences of school but, irrespective of the focus, these studies were largely beholden to preconceived theory. As a doctoral student, such literature intrigued me. While it centred on 'boys' and their schooling, it did not seem to acknowledge them as the experts in their own experience or identity. Furthermore, there appeared to be a gap and/or an overemphasis on certain things in the literature. For example, too much on the study of laddishness fails to show the complexity of identity formation in relation to the institution. The focus of these studies appeared to always be on the boys and not the boys in relation to the school, institutional practices or teachers' work.

This is not to say the readings did not significantly influence my research. Throughout this thesis, I draw heavily on literature in the areas of *educational policy, neoliberalism, masculinities, marketisation of schools* and *learner identities* to assist in explicating how power operates within the school site. My experience as a doctoral student helped in joining the dots between the school's imperative to lure enrolments and its commodification and coordination of students. Thus my roots as a researcher are grounded in my identity as a teacher wanting to understand how students are shaped and managed by the school. So under the theoretical guise of institutional ethnography, my experience as a doctoral student and teacher led to this examination and mapping of *what* boys do every day at school and *how* their action/s are shaped in relation to others and wider discourses. Within this initial process, the research naturally extended to considering teachers and school leaders.

1.3.3 My gender politics in relation to the study

As an emerging researcher, the influence of feminist theory and literature shaped my understanding of the school as an institution and myself. According to Gardiner (2005), the 'most important accomplishment of 20-century feminist theory is the concept of gender as a social construction; that is, the idea that masculinity and femininity are loosely defined, historically variable, and interrelated social ascriptions to persons with certain kinds of bodies – not the natural, necessary or ideas characteristics of people with similar genitals' (p. 35). I often found feminist theories and gender constructionism as confusing, confronting, while also enlightening and explanatory. Perhaps out of privilege and race, my masculinity was never something I had given thought. As a man examining boys' education, my personal gender politics evolved throughout this project – and still is. For most of my life, I had held an unattainable archetype of what being male is. While I knew no one could be the *ultimate male*, attributes used to measure masculinity in idealistic terms were things such as athleticism, popularity, fitness, charisma, confidence, success (professionally) and so forth. Considering my masculinity, I knew that some of these characteristics I faired well in, but others not so much. How I perceived myself was contextually bound but always done so in relation to other males. As an athlete I would often feel inadequate, yet in professional circles my confidence soared.

When starting my career as a teacher, in both co-ed and single sex schools, I was guilty of measuring and comparing students grounded in gendered assumptions. Thoughts like "s*he is sporty"* or *"he is arty"* was a language I drew from to fix students to gendered norms or at least explain their points of difference in relation to others. As a male researcher examining boys' education, in the context of a single-sex institution, who is a product of that very institution, I recognise there is a complex overlap between my personal identity and value systems and the ones I professionally project and value. In relation to gender, this tension influences the way I engage with students as 'boys' and how I work with my colleagues in preparing to educate students. These tensions emerge when making assumptions about students as boys, making decisions that cater more to the archetype of what the school assumes students want as boys rather than actually asking them. For example, any school celebration or tradition is always marked with competitions and a type of physical activity. Part of my role now as a leader is to plan such events. Such example demonstrates the tension of my gendered politics, caught between the researcher holding an evolving, pluralistic and inclusive notion of

masculinity, and the school leader trying to create an institutionally ideal one. While the overarching focus of this research is the commodification and marketisation of schooling, inherently grounded within it is the explication of how ruling relations are gendered by the school and people working within it.

· Hearn (2013) writes: 'For men to critically interview men is likely to be a contradictory process – necessitating politeness and respect, avoidance of collusion, and even use of control, firmness and authority in the interview' (p. 27). While not discounting this critique, or the power differences in research interviews, there is a need for increased reflexivity at every stage of the research (Vanderbeck, 2005) given that both the masculinity of the participants and the masculinity of the researcher are subject to change in terms of routines and performances realized through ongoing interactions. Reflexivity, as an approach for interrogating researcher subjectivity, fosters a continual awareness and informs influence of interviewer gender on the interpretation of data (c.f.; Hearn, 2013: Pini & Pease, 2013). I was consciously aware I served as an audience to them and certain identities were performed. Clearly the interview in itself can work as an important setting for *doing gender* (Egeberg Holmgren, 2013) and good research keeps a critical eye on power, privilege and positionality.

Research is always framed by uneven complexities and dilemmas surrounding relationship-building – often termed 'rapport development' (Parker, 2016; Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007; Stahl, 2016). Pini and Pease (2013) assert that '[w]hen men interview men, they need to be reflexive about the impact of gender sameness on the construction of interviewee narratives and the analysis and interpretation of the interview material' (p. 8). Such a consideration has implications for how the voice of the participants are treated. As a researcher, my understanding of power relations was crucially informed by previous experiences with gendered, classed and ethnic identity practices. There is exactly twenty years age difference between the participants and myself.

1.4 Developing the problematic

In response to my experience and initial questions described above, this research is an exploration of leaders', educators' and students' everyday experience within an all-boys Catholic school. I draw significantly from the work of Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2005) whose method of inquiry centres on the belief that people are the 'experts in their own lives' (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 111). In institutional ethnography, finding and

researching the problematic is essentially investigating a disjuncture 'between different versions of reality – knowing something from a ruling versus an experiential perspective' (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 48). Thus, while the research is anchored in the embodied experience of students, the scope is far greater than describing their situated experience. Drawing from Smith (2005), my research was based on the belief that the reality of leaders, educators and students is organised or coordinated within a context of social relations and forms of power that constitute the lived experience. As the school operates within an increasingly competitive market and suffers from declining enrolments, I examine the ways particular texts and policies are designed and/or implemented locally to commodify students and their experience in an effort to sell the school. In doing so, I am able to connect the local to translocal (referring to national and international governments, their policies and how media coverage helps in creating narratives and truths about schooling) ideologies and 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005), showing the school's response to economically and politically laden educational policy and markets that filter down to influence the various actors' daily experiences in contemporary schooling.

1.5 Questions guiding this research

Through this research I came to problematise the marketisation of school and to understand how institutional processes and policies coordinate teachers', leaders' and students' daily experience of school. As this study is a sociological inquiry, I viewed the embodied experience of people as situated within a wider network of 'ruling relations' (Smith, 1990). Therefore my research objective was to trace discourses and texts prevalent within the school site designed to commodify students as an extension of the school's marketed campaign to lure enrolments. Consequently, the questions shaping my research were:

- In what ways are leaders', educators' and students' identities performed/realised/ validated in relation to institutional discourses and practices?
- What roles do texts play in the school culture and how do they contribute to shifting power dynamics?
- How do agents/individuals negotiate institutional tensions that form around learning and marketisation and commodification at school?

1.6 Significance of this research

As touched on earlier, a great deal of school studies are largely theoretical – and the everyday practices of a school institution are localised in this theory. My study connects things happening beyond the school to the ground level of the leaders', teachers' and students' experience. It aims to show how educational policy, discourses and trends within education systems manifest in the everyday experience (or on the ground floor). My research is significant as not many studies operate outside theory. While they may refer to broader institutional discourses (e.g. deficit boys discourse or neoliberalism) as a peripheral context concerning how participants are constructed within their studies, most do not clearly map the manifestation of these discourses to the participants' experiences by focusing on the school as an institution with attention to texts, policies and events. In short, my research aims to connect the local to the translocal by examining policies and context in concrete ways, as tools and mechanisms to coordinate and connect policies to the real experiences of leaders, teachers and students.

1.7 Thesis outline

This dissertation is presented in nine chapters. I have begun with this introduction chapter to provide a contextual background to my research. By introducing the school, the initial motivations driving my inquiry, the research problematic, research aims and objectives, and significance, my intention has been to outline the personal and scholarly significance of this research.

The literature review in Chapter 2 provides wider context to this research. Drawing on a wide range of scholarly work, this chapter illustrates key understandings and documents the impact of societal and political changes upon education systems, which in turn trickle down and shape the local experiences of schooling. The intention of this chapter is to establish how schools in Australia operate within a globalising and neoliberal paradigm through policies and discourses. Consequently, schools as institutions are subject to market mentalities and mechanisms emphasising competition and comparison between schools. This chapter maps how this macro-context in turn generates certain truths about schools and schoolboys. This chapter is vital in locating my study within a scholarly context, but also in introducing a key web of discourses that my participants speak *of* or *through* in the subsequent data chapters.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide detailed explanations of the research design and approaches underpinning this inquiry. Chapter 3 details the rationale and theoretical underpinning of institutional ethnography as a framework of inquiry, and, considering my position within the research site, the complementary employment of autoethnography. Rather than simply describing these frameworks, I discuss how I draw on the tenets of these theoretical frameworks to create a research design appropriate to my position and aims as a researcher. Chapter 4 details the qualitative research methods I employed to explore the work of leaders, teachers and students from their standpoint. Here I describe the school site and processes for participant recruitment, and rationalise my approaches to gathering data, namely semi-structured interviews, observations, photo-elicitation and journaling. In closing this chapter, I discuss the limitations of my research approaches and ethical considerations when conducting the project.

Chapter 5 is the first of the data chapters and aims to introduce the school site with attention to institutional discourses and practices promoted by leadership. In the context of my study, this chapter is significant as it aims to introduce how Christian Brothers College connects to, and is influenced by, a wider network of neoliberal discourses that see the school valorise academic achievement and a particular construction of schoolboy masculinity in an effort to promote itself within the local and volatile school market. This chapter frames the subsequent data chapters, in that, through explicating and mapping the work of a school leader, I establish how institutional imperatives, discourses and idealisms come to coordinate the daily experience of teachers and students.

Chapter 6 illustrates how the work of teachers is coordinated by both external and internal policies. This chapter focuses on the structuring of teachers' work around formal academic learning and illustrates how their professional subjectivity is subsumed by a managerial logic that espouses improvement in student academic performance in order to increase enrolments. This chapter highlights the heavily textual nature of teachers work. By describing teachers' preparation and implementation of external curriculum policy and enforcement of internal school policies designed to ensure every student academically achieves, I begin to map the heavily coordinated nature of everyday schooling. Furthermore, this chapter is an important precursor to the subsequent student-focused data chapters as it helps to explain the complex and institutionalised relationship between teachers and students.

While chapters 7 and 8 explore different features of my student participants' experience of schooling, being formal academic learning and identity work within the school, they work together to examine how students are commodified as subjects of the school in the context of marketisation. Chapter 7 begins by explicating how students are coordinated to measure their academic performance in relation to high achievers through a textually mediated chain of processes. In doing so, I show how students lose agency and voice in an effort to appease the demands of curriculum implemented by teachers. Chapter 8 begins by introducing the promotion of CBC's ideal masculine subjectivity in the form of its student leadership team (known in many other schools as prefects). This chapter explicates the student participants' response to this institutional ideal and then details how their experience of everyday schooling is heavily policed by rules and regulations regarding behaviour and appearance. However, despite the school's efforts to coordinate most features of students' schooling lives, I provide two anecdotes that illustrate how students perform identities that are largely shaped by the informal subcultures of their peer group. As such, through the student data chapters, I show ways in which the students' identities are performed in relation to and in tension with institutional discourses and practices.

Finally, Chapter 9 provides a closing reflection and conclusion to my research. I offer a brief commentary on the key insights and contributions this research offers and potential opportunities to extend its work. I close with a reflection on the evolving nature of my identity as a researcher and member of the school site. This reflection discusses how one's identity performed within the institution is largely influenced by one's position and ruling relations.

Chapter 2: Literature review – From the global marketisation of education to local subjectivities in schools

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context to this research. According to Stahl (2017a), 'essential to the work of educational researchers is our ability to understand and document the impact of fundamental societal and political changes upon the education system' (p. 1).

Within a globalising and neoliberal paradigm, the marketisation of education systems makes schools – as institutions – subject to market mentality and mechanisms which work to increase quality, innovation, effectiveness and efficiency (Whitty & Power, 2000) while arguably exacerbating inequality and accelerating performativity. While I recognise that neoliberalism is a relatively recent phenomenon, as a result of it, schools and schooling have become more corporatised and are driven by data and targets rather than relationships. These wider shifts in global competitiveness, emphasising big data, surveillance and performance, has significant implications when considering the school site as a place for identity formation (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016; Reay, 2010; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Swain, 2006b; Stahl, 2017a).

2.1.1 Approach to the literature review

My approach to this literature review was framed by the contours of institutional ethnography (outlined in Chapter 3). Subsequently, this approach to inquiry has implications for the examination of existing knowledge, its social construction, what counts as knowledge and what and whose knowledge is considered authoritative. As the architect of institutional ethnography, Dorothy Smith (2005) suggests a central feature of this method of inquiry is to study 'the social relations of knowledge of the social' in which researchers must broaden the scope of what is visible in order to show how we 'are connected into the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their intersection' (p. 29). Therefore, in reviewing literature to write this review, my intention is to provide context to show where my study sits in scholarly work and to identify prominent discourses in relation to the marketisation of education.

This area of scholarly work falls under the wide umbrella of sociology of education, but more specifically, to areas such as neoliberalism, educational policy, school ethnographies, and

gendered learner identities. The research in each of these areas is broad and contested. Therefore my intention is not to provide an exhaustive account but rather 'give shape to the topic of interest' (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 7). As a researcher, I am entering a conversation with the literature (Campbell & Gregor, 2004) by identifying larger conceptual ideas relevant to my topic and scrutinising how they have come to be. Thus I heed the cautions of both Smith (2006) and Rankin (2017b) by maintaining a stance in relation to the literature and ensuring my research does not become derailed by pre-existing authoritative knowledge. One way I achieved this was to maintain a critical gaze that searched for 'material' and discursive examples of explanation rather than abstract and conceptualised ones. In the field of institutional ethnography, the method of inquiry serves as the means to understand the data and how power relations are framed, thus refuting theoretical frameworks for explanation is essential. This does not mean this review or study does not draw from literature in which theoretical frameworks were employed (rather the opposite); however connections between my participants' experience and the social relations that orchestrate these are the empirical knowledge of primary relevance. Throughout all stages of this study, my conversation with the literature was ongoing, and consequently references to literature are woven throughout the entirety of this thesis and are not limited to this chapter.

2.1.2 Literature review structure

The literature review is structured in line with how policies trickle down and inform our everyday realities and lived experiences (see Figure 1 below). Crossley (2000) asserts that educational practices and policies must be understood in reference to global influences. There is a wide body of research (Ball, 2012; Levin, 1998; Lingard, 2009; Maguire, 2002; Reid, 1999; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997) that suggests economic imperatives arising from globalisation have changed the way education and schooling is conceptualised. Such changes see the search for efficiencies in education based on 'financially-driven, free market ideology, not of a clear conception for improving education' (Carnoy, 1999, p. 28). While Figure 1 below presents a seamless top-down model, where neoliberal policies are positioned as dominant and trickling down, this is clearly not always the case as people have agency and can engage in resistance. Furthermore, the scholarly work within each frame does not necessarily fit into a neat box and remains highly contested.

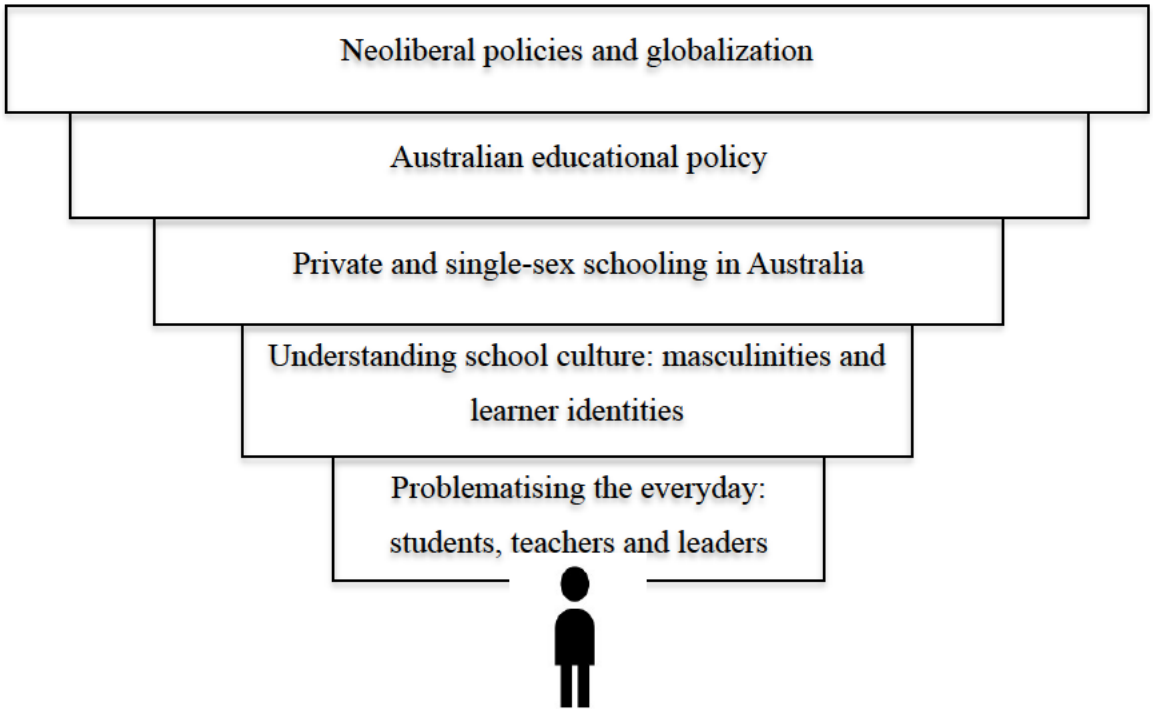


Figure 1: Structure and themes of the literature review

Firstly, in order to explore both the marketisation of education and its effects on daily school life, I must consider the context of globalisation within a 'neoliberal imaginary' (Ball, 2012). In describing the ubiquitous and ambiguous nature of neoliberalism, Shamir (2008) suggests neoliberalism:

> Is treated neither as a concrete economic doctrine nor as a definitive set of political projects. Rather, I treat neoliberalism as a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organized around a certain imagination of the 'market' as a basis for the universalization of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives of the discourse and/or practice of commodification, capital-accumulation and profit-making. (p. 3)

Scholarly work on the relationship between contemporary schooling and educational policy documents a variety of challenges faced by education systems within Western countries; specifically, a socially constructed dichotomy between the performativity devices such as tests and measurement used within schools, and the everyday lives of people in these schools (Wilkins, 2012a). Educational policy initiatives emphasise these basic skills imperatives and are largely connected to a neoliberal set of practices which discursively work towards

constituting education as economic (Clarke, 2008). Understanding this shifting context allows me to assemble the foundation for a more thorough analysis of policy enactment in Australia. To do this, I introduce and explicate two curriculum policies pertinent to this study (the Australian Curriculum and the South Australian high school certificate).

Considering my research site takes place in a single-sex boys school, I explicate the discursive ramifications of such policies with particular attention to the proliferation of the deficit schoolboys discourse. Then, I examine the location of private and single-sex schools in Australia with attention to funding, which, in turn, supplies a context as to why non-government schools like mine are understood to prioritise student achievement as a marketing strategy to lure enrolments. Considering the single-sex nature of my school site, I then draw on the literature on schoolboy masculinity and learner identity to explore how power operates in schools, both formally and informally. In doing so, I locate my study within a specific context and web of discourses that my participants speak *of* or *through*, either directly or – more often than not – indirectly.

2.2 Education systems within the context of globalisation and neoliberalism

This study involved the tracing of neoliberal ideologies and discourses and how these are constructed in relation to educational policy assemblages. In neoliberal policy contexts, market forces and profit margins structure the expectations placed upon teachers and the provision of education for students. Working with the knowledge that business now directly engages with educational policy (Lingard, 2010; Ong, 2007), and using this as a starting point, it is important to consider the advice of Rizvi and Lingard (2010):

> An analysis of education policies therefore requires not only an examination of their specific content but also an investigation of the context that provides them meaning and legitimacy. Since education policies cannot simply be inferred from a particular value position, policy analysis requires an understanding of how multiple, sometimes competing, values are brought together, organized and configured in a policy statement and are allocated in an authoritative manner. Policy analysis needs to show how some values are glossed over while others are highlighted, re-articulated or sutured together in any given policy context. (p. 75)

In other words, the enactment of policy at the local level cannot be examined without considering the macro policy network context in which it is born and, by examining such networks, 'we are looking at the institutionalization of power relations' (Marsh & Smith, 2000, p. 6) or, more simply, how people are coordinated by both local and translocal discourses. Importantly, I recognise the highly political and emotive arena of policy enactment within educational institutions and what this means for the daily lives of staff and students in schools. Thus, the disjuncture or 'push and pull' (Wilkins, 2012a) within different levels of policy enactment receives attention towards the latter part of this section when I discuss the subjectivities of students, teachers and school leaders.

Throughout this study, I assume that policy is predominantly manifest in a definitive and material form of texts, meaning words, numbers or images (Smith, 2005; Smith & Turner, 2014). In institutional ethnography, 'texts are never looked at in abstraction, devoid of the context in which people use them but once read or used in some way, they and the discourse embedded within them are viewed as being "activated"' (Kearney, Corman, Hart, Johnston, & Gormley, 2019, p. 19). As my study examines the diverse effects of neoliberal educational policy – specifically the marketising of education in one specific school site, my intention here is to illustrate some of the macro-economic discourses coordinating educational policy and subsequently filtering down into schools. While in this section I introduce and discuss globalisation and neoliberalism separately, I do so to clearly delineate terms and discourses. I do recognise the significant overlap and interplay both have in relation to one another and upon education systems.

2.2.1 Globalisation: A focus on competition and comparison

Globalisation is a complex phenomenon that not only has far-reaching effects but also varies in definition between scholars (Bakhtiari, 2017). Therefore, to narrow the focus, I consider globalisation within the context of educational policy discourse, which Lingard (2009) suggests is a 'neoliberal globalization, an ideology which promotes markets over the state and regulation and individual advancement/self-interest over the collective good and common wellbeing' (p. 18). The highly contested notion of globalisation can be seen as an outcome of various structural processes manifesting in the economy, politics and culture (Glenn, 2007). It refers to both shifts in patterns of transnational economic activities and the ways in which information technologies reshape contemporary politics and cultural configurations (Rizvi, 2000). In the

context of globalisation, particularly considering ongoing developments in information and communication technologies, the circulation of ideas and information has become increasingly easier. Developments in technology have seen an intensification of economic activity changing the modes of production and consumption. Not surprisingly, capitalism has taken advantage of these opportunities and possibilities. Castells (1996) suggests the proliferation of round-the-clock markets, involving more rapid flows of information than ever before, privileges those with 'access to technological know-how' (p. 23) thus evincing a shift from manufacturing to service jobs. In this context, the reach of globalising capitalism arguably shapes all aspects of human life and relations. However, this requires the help of national governments.

According to Rizvi (2007), global capitalism relies on strong nation-states that benefit global economic activity by influencing and coordinating the behaviour of their citizens. This complex phenomenon impacts on nation-states as they search for security and sustainability (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004), which Conley (2001) posits has 'both a material effect and an ideological construction' (p. 224). Invested in security, many Western countries 'exercise considerable coercive power in order to produce the social conditions necessary for capital accumulation, including greater educational provision and individual dispositions favorable to market activity' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, g. 29). Thus, ideologically speaking, globalisation represents a shift in the view of government and governance, from one that supplies goods and services to ensure social well-being to a political-economical model invested in the extension of global market relationships (Apple, 2001; Ball, 2008). It is pertinent to mention that liberating opportunities do exist within globalisation; there are positive connotations to McLuhan's (1964) idealistic concept of the 'global village', and Castell's (1996) terms 'the information age' and technological revolution, which largely centre on a notion of local and global interconnectedness. However, many scholars writing about educational policy and globalisation (e.g. Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005; Kelly, 2009; Levin, 1998; Maguire, 2002) caution that such a notion dilutes the way economic imperatives influence policy development.

This brief description of globalisation merely scratches the surface in relation to the depth and scope of scholarly work in this area. However, my intention is to illustrate how economic discourses influencing education are inextricably linked to the context of globalisation. Irrespective of the empirical reality, or the individual experiences and research that contest it, the ideological discourse of globalisation promotes a certain truth of inevitability, irreversibility and potential benefit for everyone (Steger, 2003). In education, globalisation

promotes competition and performance on a global scale and translates into actual material practices on a local level.

2.2.1.1 Evincing the influence of globalisation on education: OECD and PISA testing creating competition and comparison

In the context of educational policy assemblage, globalisation is imbued with economic discourses, thus serving as an ideological manifestation of power that 'works as a way of thinking and speaking that makes possible certain ways of acting and behaving and at the same time, works to conceal other versions or alternatives' (Maguire, 2002, p. 263). In education systems, one consequence of globalisation has been the insurgence of testing and national comparisons of student results. Neoliberalism (discussed in Section 2.2.2) has privileged the notion of economic rationalism in the education sector. This shift is not surprising considering the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) increasing significance in education globally achieved through its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing. PISA was purportedly designed to measure school students' ability to use or apply the knowledge acquired in school to solve problems encountered in everyday life (Araujo, Saltelli, & Schnepf, 2017). As the PISA assessment framework states:

> PISA is a collaborative effort undertaken by its participants – the OECD member countries as well as over 30 non-member partner countries and economies – to measure how well students, at age 15, are prepared to meet the challenges they may encounter in future life. (OECD, 2013, p. 13)

PISA testing has become an exercise in international comparative education analysis. A prominent criticism of PISA is its idealisation of particular countries and their educational cultures (Waldow, Takayama, & Sung, 2014) and its significant influence on policy making (Grek, 2009). The publication of PISA league tables presents certain countries as star performers and other countries as underperforming (Takayama, Waldow, & Sung, 2013). However, such comparisons conceptualise a notion of excellence void of significant contextual factors, such as Asian countries' strong performance being attributed to effort and ambitious parenting styles (Smithers, 2013) or the renowned status of Finland's commitment to high-quality teachers and pedagogical programs (Simola, 2005). Problematically, as Brown, Halsey, Lauder and Wells (1997) observe, 'the competitive advantage of nations is frequently redefined in terms of the quality of national educational and training systems judged according to

international standards' (p. 8), which results in PISA garnering influence within the global educational policy field (Lingard & Rawolle, 2011). Thus the contribution of PISA testing expands the influence of the OECD in global governance in education (Jakobi & Martens, 2010; Meyer & Benavot, 2013) which is important as this sees an amalgamation of economic and social policies promoting the primacy of the market. Furthermore, Sellar and Lingard (2014) suggest the OECD has become a 'global provider of technical expertise in the measure of schooling performance by governments' (p. 918), which Eccleston (2011) recognises has 'rational-legal and moral dimensions' (p. 248). In education, the demands for international comparative measures of performance result in an age of accountability, audit culture (Hopmann, 2008) and evidence-informed policy making (Wiseman, 2010). While this international comparative climate is not distinctly economic, the OECD by its very nature works to develop employability skills (Levin, 1998).

It is not hard to see how globalisation fosters a competitive fervour that ensures standards and competition permeate national educational systems. While Western governments are not obligated to engage in PISA testing, the fact that they do suggests – at the very least – that politicians subscribe to a market mentality that resonates with the OECD. A central feature of this study is the manner in which students, teachers and leaders are constantly drawing on comparisons, results, rankings and performance to determine success either as an individual, practitioner or institution. While connecting the local experience of these participants to the international scale of OECD might be ambitious, through my discussion of globalisation I intend to create a through line of *competition* and *comparison* that is a prominent feature throughout this study. In this section, I have not scrutinised the validity of the PISA testing in design or implementation, nor the moral dimensions or intentions of the OECD. Rather as an institutional ethnographer, I have simply begun to illustrate the social construction of knowledge and authority relevant to my study (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). In the following section, I intend to illustrate how globalisation has occurred within a 'neoliberal imaginary' (Ball, 2012) that is understood to coordinate Western education systems and policy.

2.2.2 Neoliberalism: Economic discourse in education

My intention here is to contextualise how education systems have been steered towards certain tenets of neoliberalism, particularly the adoption of market mentalities and mechanisms designed to increase quality, innovation, effectiveness and efficiency. The concept of neoliberalism lacks coherent and identifiable dimensions. Despite its prevalent use by

academics, journalists and activists, Wilkins (2016) points to 'the muddiness of neoliberalism' (p. 51) in its indiscriminate use as a concept employed to explain diverse and disconnected processes and practices. Arguably, neoliberalism encompasses a variety of economic, social and political ideas, policies and practices, functioning on both individual and institutional levels (Saad-Filho & Johnson, 2005). Neoliberal policies and practices, which operate at local, state, national and global levels, further complicating their identification, are also in a constant state of change (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004).

In educational scholarly circles, neoliberalism has been used to 'explain the development of cultural, economic and political changes across a plurality of sites and practices' (Wilkins, 2016, p. 50), and, as a result, the issue for emerging scholars such as myself is the lack of clarity as to what is to be included in and excluded from a definition. In considering my study, I am drawn to Springer's (2015) perspectives of *neoliberalism as policy and program* and *neoliberalism as governmentality* (discussed below). While I recognise these perspectives can by no means be seen as absolute or precise, the following section employs them as an instrument to introduce neoliberalism within the context of my study. Following this section, I then discuss scholarly criticisms of neoliberal education.

2.2.2.1 Neoliberalism as policy and program

Firstly, *neoliberalism as policy and program* helps us to understand the macro-context of my study as it extends to many Western governments loosening regulations on the economy and their reimagining and reformulation of life through the lens of the market. These changes have profoundly impacted the functioning of governments and public services (Harvey, 2007). Rose (1996) argues neoliberalism saw 'a new relation between expertise and politics' (p. 328) in which previous Keynesian modes of governance were replaced by certain truths of management and economics. In an Australian context, neoliberalism has emerged as 'the dominant paradigm of public policy' (Peters, 2010, p. 27) and saw the overhaul of Keynesian policies in favour of market solutions throughout all levels of government (Savage, 2013; Springer, 2015; Ball 2012). Arguably, and central to this study, choice and competition are seen as two main mechanisms reorganising education systems within Australia. Some scholars have argued that this change in governance is advantageous. Researching in America, Chubb and Moe (1990) suggest school choice and competition works on the basic principle that giving parents the ability to choose schools for their children is likely to increase competition for students, therefore improving productivity, quality and relevance at the school level. As a

policy, school choice is said to improve the effectiveness of education by causing schools to openly compete for enrolments (Caldwell, 1999), which in Australia equates to resources (Morrow, Blackburn, & Gill, 1998). However, generally scholars argue such aspects of neoliberalism – particularly in relation to choice and competition – have had negative impacts on educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes for schools (Ball, 2008; Burrow & Martin, 1998; Campbell, Proctor, & Sherington, 2009; Meadmore, 1999; Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004; Whitty & Power, 2000; Wilkins, 2012b). I expand on these criticisms later in this literature review (see Section 2.2.2.3).

2.2.2.2 Neoliberalism as governmentality

Neoliberalism as governmentality draws on a Foucauldian reading that argues neoliberalism has perpetuated 'the economization of the entire field' (1979/2008, p. 242), meaning markets have become the 'truth' in governing civility. Throughout the 1970s, Foucault provided a series of analyses of neoliberal practices that were beginning to take hold globally (Ball, 2013). Foucault brought attention to how neoliberalism was shaping governments and individuals, arguing it promoted a new political rationality based on certain 'truths' associated with the economy, the market, human capital and an entrepreneurial vision of the individual (Savage, 2017). A key feature of Foucault's view of neoliberalism was the proliferation of market thinking towards 'domains previously considered to be non-economic' (Foucault, 1979/2008, p. 215), including education. In my study, the conceptualisation of governmentality within a neoliberal paradigm furthered my understanding of how individuals are inherently economic and are fundamentally self-interested entrepreneurs striving for self-maximisation and self-capitalisation (Foucault, 1972). Foucault suggests this has implications for how governments govern and how individuals seek to govern themselves. Neoliberalism assumes that differences such as gender, race and class play no significant role within an economic arena in which the onus is placed on the individual to 'skill up' and invest in the future (Dalley-Trim, Alloway, & Walker, 2008). As I will discuss later in this literature review with attention to educational policy (see Section 2.3), I argue that globalisation and neoliberalism have led governments to view students and their education as a form of human capital investment (Connell, 2009). Furthermore, a prevalent feature of my data chapters is an examination of how members of the leadership team, teachers and students are framed in primarily economic terms by mechanisms of surveillance, measurement and comparison.

2.2.2.3 Criticisms of neoliberal education

Critiquing neoliberal policy in education, Carter and O'Neill (1995) emphasise that the benefits of neoliberalism often centre around cost reduction, efficiency, value for money and the promotion of the market to foster school choice. The shift in global educational policy has resulted in a change in 'how policy and public services get done' with 'advocacy and dissemination of "private" and social enterprise solutions to the "problems" of state education' (Ball, 2012, p. 12). Consequently, policies in education drive market forces, which Lingard (2009) argues impedes the ethical and social justice intentions of policy. Thus education governed by neoliberal economic imperatives dramatically reconfigures the relationship between government, private enterprise and society as its economic and social policies provide primacy to the market and unrestricted flows of capital. In this light, the infusion of neoliberal technologies in education has seen increased 'exposure to competition, increased accountability measures and the implementation of performance goals in the contracts of management' (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 254). Consequently, institutions such as schools become part of the market and within this view 'there is nothing distinctive or special about education or health; they are services and products like any other, to be traded in the marketplace' (Peters, 1999, p. 2).

2.2.2.4 Evincing neoliberalism: Markets in Australian education

Australia's steps in a neoliberal direction begun in the 1970s with 'the strengthening hegemony of market ideology in the federal public service as well as among the politicians' (Connell, 2013, p. 101). Linked with the onset of globalisation, the Australian version of neoliberalism begun by the government turning away from local industrialisation towards export industries during the 1970s. This shift in industry proliferated throughout institutional sectors during the 1980s – including education – where neoliberal governance was considered essential for driving up quality and for a shift towards a high-skill knowledge economy. As factory work declined in Australia, there was an increasing need to recast education to keep up with employment demands around technology. While governments at the state and federal level introduced different policy changes gradually over time, Connell (2013) posits these 'all move in the same direction – increasing the grip of market logic on schools, universities and technical education' (p. 102).

Universities and TAFE were most impacted by the onset of neoliberalism. Historical changes in funding mechanisms saw the introduction of fees and an increase of cheaper and more

flexible labour still prevalent today. While efforts to create a private university sector have been thwarted at the government level and universities are still all state run, universities have corporatised as they compete for consumers from home (state and interstate) and abroad (international). Comparatively, schools have been more resistant to neoliberal managerial influence; however they too are reshaped by the market agenda (Campbell et al., 2009). Pertinent to the school site in this study, the growth in federal government subsidies for religious schools – which was largely expanded by the Labor government of the 1970s and is still in place today – has helped cultivate competition between the public and private schooling sectors. This competition is largely due to correlation between funding and enrolment numbers (this will be explained in more detail in Section 2.4.1).

The funding of private schools is highly contentious because 'Australia is the only country where schools outside the public system draw tax monies' (Morrow et al., 1998, p. 10), which essentially sees more students equate to more money for schools. For private schools, the government – to some degree – subsidises fees, thus lessening the reliance on parents for funding. Subsequently, government support for private schools means schools that were once financially inaccessible to the working and middle classes became viable options in the schooling market. Campbell et al. (2009) argue this situation provides an opportunity for families to choose their own advantage as school markets create a hierarchical system of schools where some are considered better than others. Not surprisingly, this situation has intensified competition and marketing stratagems (billboards, social media pages, prospectuses, etc.) designed to lure potential students. The educational agendas of many schools became largely centred on having state-of-the-art facilities and impressive student academic results. Thus private schooling is seen as an investment to gain 'competitive advantage over other students in the competition for jobs, income, social standing and prestige' (Marginson, 1997, p. 38).

At the time of my study, all my participants – both staff and students – had not experienced education outside the context of the neoliberal imaginary. This experience, or lack thereof, means the current school system appears as a fixed reality. This is not to say the experience of education within a neoliberal paradigm is not shaped by ethical tensions around neoliberal practices, or what may be considered 'push back' (Doolan & Blackmore, 2018) or 'push and pull' (Wilkins, 2012a). Such tensions are discussed in more detail in Section 2.4 and serve as a prevalent feature of this study. As an institutional ethnographer, a key component of my work

is examining accounts of participants in which conflicts between 'authorized and experiential knowledge' (Rankin, 2017a, p. 3) help reveal ruling relations.

It is important to understand the historical context of this study, and the influence of neoliberal policies shaping discourse and ideology on the form and function of education, when considering the subjectivities my participants present in line with the mission and agenda of their institution. Their daily experiences are enmeshed in the neoliberal principle that the business of schools is to develop people with the skills and attitudes necessary for a productive workforce and ability to contribute to 'an ever-growing mass of profits for the market economy' (Connell, 2013, p. 104). The neoliberal reconfiguration of schools, whether public or private, seeks to produce 'highly individualized, responsibilized subjects who have become entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives' (Brown, 2003, p. 38), which, in turn, holds implications for the subjectivities of people working in schools.

2.2.3 The restructuring of school subjectivities within neoliberalism

My intention here is to examine the structuring of student, teacher and leader subjectivities within the context of neoliberal education systems. In such a context, I am interested in the interplay between subjectivity and performativity, two concepts I define and expand on below. Then, after these are discussed, the following subsections provide a snapshot of the wider contours of the theoretical underpinning of the study.

2.2.3.1 Defining subjectivity

In relation to this study, my understanding of the term *subjectivity* is greatly influenced by the scholarly work of Dorothy Smith, Stephen Ball and Michel Foucault. Smith (2005) understands subjectivity as a link between everyday events and the reasons why these events happen. It is an endless process of identity construction, 'constrained by the contingencies of the particular historical moment in which they are inscribed' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 87). The concept of subjectivity is best understood as *processes of becoming* and as centring on 'what we do rather than what we are' (Ball, 2013, p. 120). Therefore one can never form or hold a complete subjectivity; rather it is a 'consummated entity and envisioned objective' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 87). Subjectivity is also paradoxical in that it involves one being governed by others while at the same time governing oneself. Importantly, subjectivity is largely understood through examining the resistance of power. As Foucault (1972/1980b) explains, 'in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of

resistance, there would be no power relations at all' (p. 292). Therefore to examine subjectivity requires the researcher to examine contextual factors (historical, political and economic), as 'these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group' (Foucault, 1997, p. 291). As education within a neoliberal paradigm promotes an economic ideal of schools and the people working within them, as an institutional ethnographer I seek to describe ways in which students, teachers and leaders present subjectivities which are performed, realised and validated in relation to such institutional discourses and practices.

2.2.3.2 Schooling in a neoliberal performative agenda

As the conception of education has changed, we see schools are now compelled to reorganise themselves to 'a new ensemble, based on institutional self-interest, pragmatics and performative worth' (Ball, 2003, p. 218). The majority of policy technologies operate through schools from a distance yet aim to steer the organisational culture of schools towards various forms of commodification, performativity and economisation emulating private-sector management (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). With this in mind, the implementation of educational policy – locally, nationally and internationally – promotes performativity and accountability agendas. In a performative culture, educational identities are reshaped as competition and accountability are valorised as necessary aspects of the school enterprise. Drawing on Ball's (2000, 2003) notion of the 'culture of performativity', productivity is demanded of everyone and every person within the school must develop as potential market assets, meaning they are active and enterprising individuals. Within this culture the subjectivities of people working in schools are in 'a particular type of struggle against/with the practices of performativity' (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 86).

Stephan Ball provides an extensive, historical, critical and in-depth account in this area (see Ball 2003, 2008, 2012, 2016a, 2016b). I am drawn to his conception of performativity as it helps in understanding an effect of neoliberalism on education and introduces an analytical frame to understand how ruling relations permeate the local and coordinate subjectivities. Ball (2016a) uses the term performativity 'not just to refer to systems of performance management or the deployment of performance indicators but rather to the complex and powerful relationships between such indicators and managements system and teacher's identity and professionalism' (p. 1052). The majority of Ball's work centres on the influences on teachers'

lives and their sense of professionalism, and by drawing on other scholarly work (Wilkins, 2012a, 2012c; Blackmore, 2017), I extend this examination, albeit briefly, to understand my participants (students and school leaders) in order to examine how subjectivities are understood in the context of neoliberalism, schooling and a culture of performativity.

2.2.3.3 Students performing neoliberal subjectivities

Students' experience of classrooms and learning can often centre around notions of output, competition and performance. Therefore the good student – or the ideal neoliberal one – adheres to assessment procedures vested in individualised learning and competitive behaviour (Reay & Wiliam, 1999). Their subjectivity can be seen as coordinated towards a 'high-achieving pupil' (Wilkins, 2012c) or 'good student' (Archer & Francis, 2007) model through policy implementation shaping classroom practice. As students enter classrooms, educational policy conceptualises them as autonomous and responsible users of educational services (Leadbeater, 2004) who are assumed to be reflexive, consistent and predictable and 'who therefore share the capacity to maximize the utility of their decisions in a rationally self-interested way' (Wilkins, 2012a, p. 768). Wilkins (2012a) examines how classroom strategies invested with competition are inscribed into the dynamics of classroom interactions, which, he argues, links these practices to market trends in educational policy discourse. His article centres on a small group of academically high performing and socially popular students who both comply with and resist ways of thinking and behaving which might be considered neoliberal. His work emphasises intersecting axes of power and identity. As the students in Wilkins' study juggle and combine socially constructed behaviours of the 'high-achieving pupil' model and complexities of peer friendship, he illustrates the tension-riddled nature of student subjectivities in contemporary schooling. While this is only one example, it offers insights into how students can engage with schooling simultaneously with social and academic subjectivities, all the while responding to an educational narrative venerating a managerialist culture of 'testing, targets and tables' (Wilkins, 2012a, p. 766).

2.2.3.4 Teachers' struggles with neoliberal subjectivities

Ball (2008) calls performativity 'a culture or a system of terror' (p. 66) requiring teachers to exert extensive energy in meeting accountability standards. Within an Australian context, Connell (2009) closely examines teacher registration bodies' efforts to define a 'good teacher' through standard documents consisting of lists of sentences or clauses about what teachers do, or should do. There has been a great deal of scholarly work examining the subjectivities of

teachers within a neoliberal paradigm (Ball, 2003, 2016b; Cochran-Smith, 2018; Comber, Klenowski, & Harris, 2017; Connell, 2009; Hogan, Thompson, Sellar, & Lingard, 2018; Shacklock, Hattam, & Smyth, 2000; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). A theme across the work of Connell, Ball and Lingard is that teacher subjectivity is discursively bound to systems of quantified data that are central to their accountability to ensure they produce the 'right' sort of citizens.

I am drawn to Raewyn Connell as her work originates from an Australian context and specifically responds to teachers under performative pressures due to narrow curriculum policy. In comparing two articles by Connell (2009 and 2013), we understand teacher subjectivity is torn between a 'good teacher' (2009) rhetoric framed by accountability standards and student performance, and a historically crafted social practice and 'process in which we nurture and develop capacities for practice' (2013, p. 104). For many teachers, a tension lies between the economistic idea of human capital, seen as the business of forming skills and attitudes in students necessary to be productive in the workforce, and the relational and affective side of learning. Consequently, teachers' work is geared away from learning as a response to students and towards measurement of student achievement. The daily negotiations and tensions schools face means that many teachers' work in contemporary Australia is institutionally allied to enhancing student or school performance data rather than providing a genuine, inclusive approach to all students and their learning.

2.2.3.5 School leaders' subjectivity

The role of school leaders has become increasingly managerial in nature. They are responsible for whole-school performance, report to education departments and boards, provide annual reviews and audits, complete grant applications, and publish school results to name a few (Niesche, 2013a). As such, school leaders, as neoliberal subjects, are 'accountable, disciplined and perpetually assessable subjects' (Niesche, 2013a, p. 150). School leaders can be seen as the policy gatekeepers of a school. They must decide how educational policy is adopted, adapted, ignored or countered in a complex context of 'situated necessity resulting from the history, location, pupil and parental social mix, staffing, material and economic conditions of the school and community infrastructure' (Blackmore, Hutchison, & Keary, 2017, p. 108). This responsibility, or power, also comes with a high level of policy accountability. The work of Blackmore (2017) and Keddie (2014) is useful here, showing today's school leadership in Australia is accountable to school effectiveness and improvement plans in light of fundamental

restructuring towards a self-management schooling model operating more like a small business within local, national and global education. Furthermore, Doolan and Blackmore (2018) analyse the scrutiny and pressure felt by six principals in response to parental anxiety relating to media coverage of standardised national assessment and rankings of their schools. This research demonstrates that, while principals have some agency in 'talking back' with regard to their school's performance, a policy discourse of failure positions leadership teams as 'vulnerable' to 'reputational and financial damage if their NAPLAN results are poor' (Doolan & Blackmore, 2018, pp. 217–218). In this light, the subjectivity of school leaders is complex, political and paradoxical as leaders must balance accountability, performance and reporting requirements against the needs of their communities.

2.2.4 Complexity of neoliberal performativity and school subjectivity

Research shows that schools are complex political sites where policy, curriculum orientations, expectations and philosophies of education contest the 'right' neoliberal way to school. In other words, research shows how policy idealism is disrupted by the actors it attempts to coordinate. An emerging area of focus in educational policy sociology examines how actors within schools work *within* and *against* policy. The culture of performativity, seen in accountability pressures and the competitive nature of neoliberal educational policy, is highly problematic. Examining the subjectivities of individuals – whether a student, teacher or school leaders – allows closer scrutiny of the ruling relations.

Examining key debates around neoliberalism and performativity in education, it becomes apparent that educational policy demands *individual* accountability for students, teachers and school leaders regarding performance and achievement, all the while, significant contextual factors influencing performance go widely ignored. For example, educational policy writers assume students' performance is an artefact of efficacy and performance in relation to curriculum standards. Yet this does not consider factors such as aspiration, race, experience of school, socio-economic status, ability to speak, read and write the language, and so forth. On the other hand, educational policy seemingly ignores the important interplay between students, teachers and school leaders when measuring individual performance. For example, policy makers overlook the fact that a student's achievement of scores and rankings requires access to necessary facilities, qualified teachers and pedagogy to reach particular standards. A teacher's performance can be largely measured by the results of their students, but the

complexity of the class mix garners little attention. Similarly, school leaders will often face scrutiny for school-wide results while funding and socio-economic status are glossed over.

Thus a prominent theme across critical scholarly work in this area suggests neoliberal forms of educational policy assume a distorted notion of equality that is blind to significant sociological and contextual factors. Central to the research is the significance of context in understanding policy enactment in school. Braun, Ball, Maguire and Hoskins (2011) remind us that 'policy-making and policy-makers tend to assume "best possible" environments for implementation' (p. 595), but this is always vulnerable to disruption due to the particular reality of the school. Thus, in terms of policy enactment, it comes as no surprise that actors within schools often 'blur the boundaries of the political, personal and philosophical' (Riddle & Cleaver, 2017, p. 498) as the oversimplification of policy (the ruling relations) is juxtaposed with the inherent complexities and multifaceted nature of schools (the lived realities).

My examination of globalisation, neoliberalism, subjectivities and performativity is by no means exhaustive. As Hill (2007) observes, forcing schools to produce 'compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, pro-capitalist, effective workers' (p. 120) illustrates the pervasive role of neoliberalism in education. The subjectivity of a student, teacher or leader at a school operates in a tightly bound and tense interplay between the personal and contextual, 'a double bind of being damned if you do and damned if you don't' (Wilkins, 2012c, p. 208). It is important to recognise that 'policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set' (Ball, 1994, p. 19). Importantly, education within a globalising and neoliberal paradigm deflects 'attention away from aspects of social, emotional or moral development that have no immediate measurable performative value' (Ball, 2016a, p. 1054). Not surprisingly, this blind eye to contextual factors garners a great deal of criticism from scholars whose research remit has been how educators 'push and pull' or 'push back' from individuals and/or school communities. Exploring the continual tension between performativity and subjectivity is highly significant to my own study as an institutional ethnographer interested in 'tensions, or puzzles that are latent in, yet arise from, people's everyday actualities' (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 19).

2.3 Australian education policy in the context of my study

In the previous section, I provided an overview of the influence of globalisation and neoliberalism within education systems. This view was important in understanding how certain economic truths now proliferate in education systems on a national and global scale. In this section, I narrow the focus to examine the curriculum within the Australian context and illustrate how certain regimes of competition, standardisation and performativity are imbued into their design and implementation. This section explicates two curriculum policies – the Australian Curriculum and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) – that are highly significant to this study. I then explicate how curriculum policy – as a structuring force – has aided in the proliferation of the deficit schoolboys discourse. In doing so, I illustrate how policy enactment can lead to further policy responses.

2.3.1 ACARA and SACE: Ruling relations

As my study is based in a South Australian school it is important to introduce the two governing curriculums coordinating educational experience. From Reception to Year 10, the Australian Curriculum serves as the statutory or authorised policy. The Australian Curriculum is a national document implemented across the nation in all states and territories. However, when students enter Years 11 and 12, their final years of schooling, they must complete the requirements set forth by the SACE Board in order to achieve the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Each state and territory has its own version of the high school certificate. In considering this, the aim here is to illustrate the historical, current and political location of both curriculums within my study.

2.3.2 ACARA and its economic priority

The Australian Curriculum comes from the work of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). This authority is governed by all of Australia's state education ministers through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council. Put another way, it is politicians – not educators – who serve as the authoritative source in relation to the learning of all young Australians. ACARA was born in the early stages of 2007. Under a Labor government, there was bipartisanship support for a national response to schooling in the context of globalisation. In the context of PISA testing, where presumably the Australian government did not want to be poorly ranked, it was the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) and its 'Goals for Young Australians' that laid the foundation for the

Australian Curriculum, which granted primacy to preparing young students for a global world. The influence of globalisation and education is prevalent in the preamble to the declaration:

1. 'In the 21st century, Australia's capacity to provide a high quality of life for all will depend on the ability to compete in the global economy on knowledge and innovation' (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4).
2. 'Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade' (p. 4).
3. 'Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever' (p. 4).
4. 'Australia has developed a high-quality, world-class schooling system, which performs strongly against other countries of the … OECD' (p. 5).

In the Melbourne Declaration, the global influence on education is seen as the reason that Australia needs to strengthen disciplinary knowledge and its competitive position comparatively with other nations. Not surprisingly, this leads to approaches to education centred on national accountabilities and tests, a national curriculum and a range of national partnerships between state and federal governments. Subsequently, ACARA came to be and to this day the ACARA framework still governs national curriculum, testing and accountability of all schools in the country through three distinct – yet entwined – functions:

- The *Australian Curriculum*, which ensures national standardisation of curriculum, which in turn allows,
- The *National Assessment Program (NAP)* to oversee national testing, while
- The *My School* website promotes competition through comparison of student achievement, thus legitimising both the Australian Curriculum and the need for the NAP.

These three functions illustrate neoliberal policies (accountability, measurement and surveillance) enacted by the state to control the actions and behaviours of the population.

2.3.2.1 The Australian Curriculum: Standardising learning

The Australian Curriculum is a three-dimensional curriculum emphasising (1) disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding, (2) general capabilities and (3) cross-curriculum priorities (see Figure 2, sourced from ACARA, 2019b).



Figure 2: Three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum

According to its website, the Australian Curriculum is 'designed to develop successful learners, confidence and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (ACARA, 2019b). The curriculum evinces a response to globalisation through the inclusion of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Lingard and McGregor (2014) posit that:

> these elements attempt to conceptualise part of the curriculum as preparing young people for a rapidly evolving world of new work, new cultures and new technologies, in which they will need capacities and dispositions to cope with significant global changes as implied within the goals of the Melbourne Declaration: competing in the global economy; being globally connected; coping with technological change; developing skills in response to changing job markets in Australia and helping the nation achieve an international competitive edge. (pp. 106–107)

Similar to other curriculums in Westernised countries (e.g. USA, UK), the Australian Curriculum is quite traditional as it centres on disciplinary knowledge. The curriculum seeks to simultaneously provide a content-rich education while creating a very specific market-based skill set in young people. It does allow for teacher agency to a certain degree, in that teachers have autonomy over some of the patterns of disciplinary knowledge they can teach (e.g. in History they may choose from three ancient worlds to study in Year 7), and the teaching methodology they chose to employ in doing so. However, as teachers across the nation are accountable to this document, learning and classrooms nationally become increasingly standardised through testing regimes that arguably undermine teachers' sense of agency. Standardisation across schools is vital is order for the government to measure student performance, which is largely achieved through ACARA's National Assessment Program.

2.3.2.2 National Assessment Program (NAP): Testing performance and regimes of truth

According to its website (ACARA, 2019a), NAP provides 'the measure through which governments, education authorities and schools can determine whether or not young Australians are meeting important educational outcomes'. These outcomes are derived from the Australian Curriculum. NAP is most commonly known for its overview of the annual NAPLAN testing in literacy and numeracy, but also oversees implementation of international assessments including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. Whether it is the individual student or school data in general, performance in NAP tests creates certain truths that work to valorise some and undervalue others within education. Foucault (1980a) writes:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its *general politics* of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned. (p. 19, original emphasis)

Foucault (1979/2008) was concerned about the way governments structure the actions of individuals or groups, believing that modern governments have shifted from visible or sovereign power to 'disciplinary power' (p. 221). NAP creates certain regimes of truth that are

difficult for schools in Australia to resist, which is largely due to the enormity and the compulsory nature of these tests. The Australian national NAPLAN tests are taken by all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, in the areas of reading, writing, language and conventions and numeracy. NAP is an important tool by which ACARA tests and compares schools and student performance on a national scale. Therefore, where the Australian Curriculum ensures the delivery of knowledge and skills, NAP works to measure it. Considering Australia's participation in the OECD, the function of NAP can easily be traced to the intention of improving performance on international tests such as PISA. According to the NAP (ACARA, 2019a) website, its purpose and function creates two benefits: *driving improvement* and *accountability*. With regards to improvement of learning, ACARA suggests that NAP can 'identify strengths and weakness which may warrant further attention' (ACARA, 2019a). Research that evinces the impact of NAPLAN testing on teaching pedagogy and classroom experience (see Singh, 2018; Thompson & Cook, 2014; Thompson & Harbaugh, 2012; Ward, 2012) shows the NAP justifies the discipline and knowledge of the Australian Curriculum by creating certain regimes of truth through the data it creates.

Thus, there is economic rationality underpinning ACARA's design of NAP. For example, if test data reveal students are performing poorly in reading benchmarks, this becomes an obvious area to drive improvement. Equally, if data suggest student performance is particularly strong in one area, the data validate the design and implementation of the curriculum. Scholarly criticisms of such logic point to the fact that broader sociological and contextual factors are ignored (Hardy, 2019; Ward, 2012). Furthermore, it assumes the tests assess knowledge properly or that pedagogic instruction is testable in the first place. Therefore one must realise that ruling relations exist between teachers and students as well as in the relationship between NAP, schools and teachers. In this sense, the regimes of truth create 'a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised' (Foucault, 1972/1980b, pp. 202–203). In Section 2.3.4, I provide one example relevant to my study to illustrate how an overemphasis on student performance has fostered a 'deficit schoolboys discourse' (Epstein et al., 1998; Francis, 2006). My intention here is not to pathologise testing regimes but to illustrate how NAP works to imbue education in Australia with a culture of testing and performance. This climate of testing has led to the proliferation of comparisons, and subsequently competition, between schools as the data is publicly available through the *My Schools* website, which I will now focus upon.

2.3.2.3 Creating competition and surveillance: *My School* website

Demonstrating the normalisation of neoliberalism's work of surveillance and accountability, the highly contentious *My Schools* website serves as a resource to find information about every Australian school. The site contains data on socio-economic status, NAPLAN performance, funding levels, enrolment numbers and attendance rates. The NAPLAN results of each school are published on the website early the following year and have had significant implications in the competitive context of Australian schooling. A particular function of the website allows users to view the NAPLAN data in relation to *like schools.*[1] Akin to a consumer comparing product reviews online, the *My School* website encourages a consumerist mentality to education and illustrates that schools not only sit within a local competitive market, but a national one. In the view of the Australian Government, access to this kind of information is a parental entitlement:

> The focus must be on providing parents with clear, meaningful and comparable information about student achievement across all areas of the curriculum in a format that is nationally consistent. Parents are entitled to honest judgments about how students are progressing at school, and without this clear communication, learning cannot be effective. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, p. 32)

Not surprisingly, the *My School* website has been contentious as the NAPLAN tests underpinning the site have created high-stakes performative climates for schools (Sellar & Lingard, 2013) and have had a detrimental impact on pedagogy (Hursh, 2008; Stobart, 2008). However, highlighting the tension many educators experience daily, while many principals and teachers have voiced doubts about NAPLAN as a measure of student or school performance, they still exercise considerable effort to improve results (Blackmore & Doolan, 2018). Performance on NAPLAN is a strong source of concern for many schools, and an indirect consequence of these national benchmarking exercises is the manifestation of new norms, understandings and routines towards learning within schools. In preparation for, or in response to, these tests, many schools redirect attention and resources to improving results. Arguably they would not if the results were not made public. While in some cases this response to data has seen an improvement in results, it also shows how ACARA (through the *My School* website

[1] Comparisons are in relation to national averages and statistically similar schools (derived using the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage – a tool developed by ACARA).

and NAPLAN) frames learning with a discourse that is 'data-centric', which contributes to the constitution of the subjectivities of students, teachers and schools (Hardy, 2019).

My discussion of ACARA highlights the challenges faced by schools. Through ACARA's mechanisms, schools are accountable to the Australian Curriculum, tested by NAP, and compared on the *My Schools* website. My intention here is to illustrate that the neoliberal and globalising educational agenda of accountability and competitiveness is certainly alive within an Australian context. As ACARA serves as an authority from Preparatory/Reception to Year 10, I now examine the curriculum authority responsible for the high school certificate within South Australia.

2.3.3 The South Australian Certificate of Education

The SACE Board issues the South Australian version of the high school certificate. In order for a school to be able to issue the certificate, or a student to be able to achieve one, they must meeting the requirements of subjects and assessment standards set by the SACE Board. In this light, SACE has three functions. Firstly, it mandates the requirements of certificate achievement. Secondly, it provides curriculum and courses for schools to implement. Finally, it moderates and standardises all assessment of the work of students completing these courses.

2.3.3.1 SACE: A brief history

SACE has had two historical manifestations, *old* and *new* (Hattam, Garrett, & Simons, 2015). The *old* SACE was a response to the *Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education (Gilding Inquiry)* (Gilding, 1998), which suggested that radical changes to the assessment and credentialing processes in South Australia were needed and called for a more 'coherent, coordinated set of experiences across the two year program' (Gilding, 1998, p. 23); the two-year program being Years 11 and 12. Imbued with a problematic notion of democracy, the *old* SACE was introduced as being 'within reach of all and appropriately prepared students who were willing to make a serious attempt' (Gilding as cited in Collins & Yates, 2009, p. 135). Yet, as Teese and Polesel (2003) highlight, the secondary curriculum structure was built around certain kinds of knowledge that conserved their superiority. Hattam et al. (2015), in discussing the *old* SACE, note:

> This hierarchy operates to translate social power into academic merit thus conserving the wider social structure. Consequentially, efforts to implement change for the benefit

> of more diverse groups represents risks to those with interests in maintaining the status quo and are strongly resisted. (p. 31)

In order to maintain this status quo, the curriculum of the *old* SACE placed high demands on students to engage with their schoolwork (Reid, 2006), with each subject requiring more time than was available within the academic calendar year. Not surprisingly, the intensive nature of this curriculum saw many students during this time opt to drop out of school (Reid, 2007; Smyth & Hattam, 2004). Thus 'these adolescents through rejecting the "hidden curriculum" are in point of fact resisting the dominant ideology of school and work' (Smyth, 1997, p. 259). While inspired by an ideal of equal access, the *old* SACE was a tool for universities to use the final years of schooling to sort and select students. Problematically, and naively, the *old* SACE's notion of equality was people having the opportunity to do the same thing. The nature and design of the *old* SACE was traditionally discipline rich, with heavy emphasis on examinations and performance, and often void of important sociological considerations such as social class, race, gender, religious backgrounds, or aspirations of the students. Thus, in response to decreasing retention rates, the *old* SACE was revamped.

The *new* SACE was born in response to the state Labor Government's review of South Australian senior education that culminated in a report titled *Success for all* (Crafter, Crook, & Reid, 2006). This report led to the authorisation and development of the *new* SACE, a concerted effort to respond to young people's discontent with schooling and to encourage them to complete Year 12. In a movement away from the discipline-based nature of senior schooling, the *Success for all* report recommended a capabilities approach to learning rather than competencies and outcomes. The report defines the capabilities as a 'higher-order outcome of the learning of subject or disciplinary knowledge and processes' (Crafter et al., 2006, p. 107), representing 'attributes needed to live, work and be a responsible and active citizen in a changing and globalising world' (Crafter et al., 2006, p. 90). The capabilities are drawn from ACARA. However, ambiguity as to what these capabilities mean and how they are to be sequenced and assessed has not really seen the transformation of SACE to any large degree (Reid, 2012). Furthermore, the heavy emphasis on curriculum content, and stringent demands of assessment tasks responding more closely to the disciplines of subjects, means the capabilities often sit on the periphery, failing to garner real influence in shaping the learning experience or to sway the emphasis of SACE away from achievement. Subsequently, the SACE Board as an authority and source of curriculum for senior years schooling, espouses similar

attributes of competition and surveillance to that of ACARA through standardised curriculum and a heavy emphasis on assessment.

2.3.3.2 SACE: Influences on school cultures and subjectivities

In South Australia, students, teachers and school leaders involved in the senior years are judged by school results to varying degrees. As such, the SACE, and its annual unveiling of Year 12 results, can be seen as a form of ruling relations coordinating the local education system. SACE, operating as a credentialing apparatus, positions students and schools into a wider arena of competition through complicated examinations and assignments where performance eventually equates to rankings which then form part of marketing campaigns. Yet, it is important to delineate that the culture of performativity and accountability is experienced differently for students, teachers and school leaders, as there may be differences in how they coordinate their subjectivity, similar to their responses to ACARA and its NAPLAN testing. In the next three subsections, I highlight how students, teachers and leaders are caught up in discourses of performativity through apparatuses of the SACE board.

2.3.3.2.1 Students playing the meritocratic game SACE

For students intending to go to university,[2] their performance in SACE is converted into an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).[3] Students must heavily rely on their schools to provide resources (such as courses and facilities) and adequately trained or experienced teachers in order to bolster their opportunities. Success in the senior years (Years 11 and 12) also rests on an astute knowledge and understanding of how to perform and navigate the bureaucratic minefield the SACE Board creates. Different subjects carry more value than others and therein lie opportunities to bolster performance. For example, completing specialised vocational education and training courses or accruing 'bonus points' by demonstrating individual disadvantage has advantages for ranking position. Therefore it is important to understand that the SACE Board – as an authority compiled of a myriad of policies, processes and curriculum – creates a complex meritocratic game for students that directly influences their

[2] Achieving the certificate does not guarantee that students are eligible for university entry. University entry is contingent on students completing a set amount of Tertiary Admissions Subjects (TAS). Students completing non-TAS subjects can only achieve the certificate.

[3] Students who have completed the compulsory amount of TAS subjects will automatically be given an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank upon successful completion of SACE requirements. Irrespective of how students perform in individual subjects, their ranking is contentiously bound to the performance of all other students in the country. This means one student could achieve the exact same results as another in a separate year, yet achieve a completely different ranking.

subjectivities. Within this context, it could be argued that the process of subject selection, under the guidance of school-appointed subject counsellors, is a highly significant factor in students' final results and rankings. As a consequence, many students do not choose subjects connected to their post-schooling aspirations, nor perhaps of interest, but rather, subjects in which they are confident they will achieve high results and will accrue a higher ranking in the process. In this light, success in SACE is seen as much as a game of meritocracy, teaching to the test, bureaucracy and strategy, as it is actually learning content knowledge and practising of skills. For students who aspire to attend university, the imperative is to not only to out-perform their peers academically, but also outmanoeuvre them in relation to the academic pathways they select.

2.3.3.2.2 Teachers' experience of accountability and standardisation

For teachers of SACE, their capacity to develop curricula appropriate to the needs of students is undermined by a culture of accountability and an audit culture prevalent in neoliberal policy (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2004; Power, 1997). Teachers bear the responsibility of ensuring they design courses and cover content that align s with the requirements set forth by the SACE Board. At the end of each Year 12 year, teachers must submit samples of their students' work and course outlines (referred to as Learning and Assessment Plans) for moderation to the SACE Board (2019), who on their website offer:

> As teachers, you are supported in your assessment role by the moderation process. Moderation is part of the *confirming phase* of the *quality assurance cycle* and confirms your interpretation of the *performance standards* before your students receive their final subject grades. (emphasis added)

Importantly, and as evidence of neoliberal policy enactment, teachers hold no agency should their work samples be moderated and class grades changed. DeVault (2006) reminds us that ruling relations are not just a heuristic device that simply points to structure and power, rather it 'refers to an expansive, historically specific apparatus of management and control that arose with the development of corporate capitalism and supports its operation' (p. 295). Thus, as teachers of SACE learn their class results on the same day as students, meaning they have no avenue to challenge the moderation process, they are framed by a system of results and performance largely beyond their control. On their website, the SACE (2019) Board

ameliorates this in their eyes with the following: ‘After moderation, we provide feedback to your principal on the outcome. You can use this feedback to improve your planning and assessment for the following year.’

Consequently, and I draw from personal experience here, the end of the year is an anxious time for teachers who wait to see if their courses and grading have survived the moderation process unscathed. While professional dignity plays a part, teachers of Year 12 understand that their course design and assessment of tasks can heavily influence students’ achievement, which I would argue many care about greatly. In this situation, teachers are accountable to their students and their school leaders, and their reputation and integrity as professionals becomes vulnerable when results are not only made publicly available, but possibly changed. The moderation process evinces another example of standardisation within education. The standard of curriculum and assessment must be consistent across all schools operating under SACE, irrespective of contextual factors such as school, facilities and teacher experience. In Section 6.2, I describe and explicate this process in far richer detail.

2.3.3.2.3 School leaders marketing results

As we see the reshaping of school leaders ‘in the neoliberal imagination as a managerial class, exactly parallel to corporate managers in the private sectors’ (Connell, 2013, p. 107), SACE results are often used as a tool by leaders to market their school product through advertising. While SACE results may not face the scrutiny available on the *My School* website, the publicising of Year 12 results by schools still heavily occupies local papers come December each year. Unlike *My School*, school leaders have some agency as to what results they choose to advertise or share. Often these are available on school websites, social media platforms, and/or local newspaper advertisements. Such commercial stratagems further illustrate the highly competitive and marketised nature of the local school market and many school leaders’ sense of obligation to engage.

However, there are calls for Year 12 results to be accessible and comparable in a similar way NAPLAN results. For instance, Williams (2018) calls for SACE to provide comparative school performance data. Provocatively, Williams (2018) argues that, ‘to get a clear picture of the results of individual schools, you’d have to move, to say Victoria or New South Wales, because SA is the state of secrecy when it comes to education’ (p. 1). Not surprisingly, teachers and school leaders in editorials, and likely staffrooms and school hallways, vehemently contested

this policy proposal. In considering Doolan and Blackmore's (2018) assertion that 'increasingly mediatized policy processes influence practice in schools as education becomes a site of parental anxiety and choice exacerbated by standardized national assessment and ranking of schools in the media' (p. 818), a school's capacity to celebrate and contextualise achievement in its own right goes against the grain of the neoliberal ideals of accountability and transparency. School leaders are torn between their lived experience and knowledge of the school and the potential and performative culture that is entrenched through SACE results.

2.3.4 Curriculum as a structuring force

The neoliberal tendencies underpinning both ACARA and SACE are traceable in the mandated high-stakes curriculum which places students – and to a lesser extent educators – onto a common scale and in the focus on the creation of citizens ready for a globalised world. My intention thus far has been to trace how both curriculums are seen as a response to educational agendas of accountability and competitiveness within a neoliberal paradigm. Importantly though, this policy paradigm orchestrates a narrow framing of what counts as evidence and equity (Luke, Green, & Kelly, 2010). The neoliberal philosophy in education grounds itself in a deceptively objective and apparently rational approach. By quantifying achievement and success at school, education has seen shifts in teacher pedagogy (Kamler, 1998) and philosophy (Maguire, Hoskins, Ball, & Braun, 2011) pandering to measures such as NAPLAN, public examinations and PISA tests to name a few. Subsequently, many schools develop an 'obsession with academic achievement' (Mahony, 1998, p. 41), transforming their view of students into generalised, measurable and fixed qualities (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000).

Arguably, these generalisations have contributed to the proliferation of the deficit discourse of boys in schooling which I attend to for two reasons. Firstly, my study takes place in an all-boys school; therefore the policy framing of boys as students is highly significant. Secondly, such a discourse is a pertinent feature of how my teacher and leader participants engage with their work with students. I recognise that the deficit discourse around boys in schooling is an extension of the broader failing boys discourse (Epstein et al., 1998), which considers other factors such as social class (Stahl, 2017b), ethnicity (Sewell, 1998) and special needs (Hey, Leonard, Anthonys, & Smith, 1998) to name a few. However these lie outside the purview of my research. My intention here is to illustrate how curriculum can coordinate perspectives and responses to the academic attainment of boys and how it influences daily practices which contribute significantly to the structuring of subjectivities. Furthermore, my discussion here is

important as it holds implications for single-sex and private schools as institutions, which I explore in the next section.

2.3.4.1 Deficit discourse of boys in schooling

Debates around boys and schooling extend from a narrow frame whereby terms such as 'achievement' and 'education' must be understood in the context of the globalised economy. While the deficit discourse is not a new phenomenon (Cohen, 1998), the educational 'culture of performativity' (Lingard, 2003) has sparked a series of concerns and contentious debates regarding boys in schooling. More broadly, with achievement gaps in school performance, a decline of job markets in de-industrialised economies and the growth of women attending post-secondary institutions (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002), a 'moral panic' (Watson, 2011) is propagated by media and government known as a 'deficit boys' (Francis, 2006; Hayes & Lingard, 2003) or 'failing boys' discourse (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Keddie, 2007; Watson, 2011).

The deficit schoolboys discourse grounds itself in essentialist assumptions and ignores wider societal complexities. Martino and Berrill (2003) suggest this discourse is 'manifested in the articulation of "common sense" understandings about boys which have been deployed to advocate simplistic steps for teachers' approaches to addressing the educational needs of boys in school' (p. 114). The skewed perspective regarding boys' schooling achievement is exacerbated when governmental responses, such as the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into Boys' Education, Boys: Getting it Right, valorises such concerns. Such policy initiatives work to shape schools through recommendations for a more boy-friendly curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, and increased employment of male teachers (Mills, Martino, & and Lingard, 2007). Such recommendations are afforded credence through the likes of Biddulph (2004) who is seen to pioneer educational programs that harness boys' energy, to suggest boys have slower development, to work to remove boys' feelings of being outclassed by girls in more expressive subjects, and to advocate a mythopoeic masculinity (Mills, 2003). However, the work of Biddulph is widely contested in academic circles due to his narrow constructions and assumptions regarding boys, and his ignorance of broader sociological factors. Connell (2002) refers to Biddulph as a 'pop psychologist' (p. 6) and warns of the precarious nature of assumptions that all boys subscribe to one type of masculinity. However, and more pertinent to this discussion, is the concern Mills (2003) raises that such gendered remediation strategies

to address the gap in learning between boys and girls exploration of broader factors related to boys and their learning.

There is extensive international research examining the social and behavioural factors associated with boys' underachievement at school. Cuttance and Thompson (2008) reviewed current international research knowledge and strategies regarding boys' schooling places and found that *identity construction, behavioural issues, family environment, socio-economic background* and *geographic location* are seen as significant influences on academic performance. When considering all these factors, Cuttance and Thompson (2008) suggest that, 'contrary to popular belief, there is no broad evidence that boys as a group are achieving at levels below those for girls' (p. 50). In this light, Biddulph's formulaic and simplistic approach to boys as learners, which panders to narrow constructions of learning and gender, does little to address the economic stranglehold on education and its coordination of how schoolboys are understood. In order to challenge such narrow constructions, employing an anti-essentialist perspective (Rowan et al., 2002) allows for greater understanding of boys – as students – beyond the view of them as simply gendered subjects. For example, socio-economic status makes a larger difference in achievement (Collins, McLeod, & Kenway, 2000) and exam results (Francis & Skelton, 2005) than gender, for example, middle-class boys consistently outperform working-class girls (Teese, Davies, Charlton, & Polesel, 1995), and when racial and economic parameters are combined with gender achievement there are 'disturbingly low achievement for poor, black and Hispanic boys' (Mead, 2006, p. 9). Overall, the 'underachievement of boys at school is a strongly classed and racialized phenomenon' (Epstein, 1998, p. 11).

Irrespective of the findings of this critical research, the deficit schoolboys discourse influences schools, and this I argue is particularly the case for private single-sex ones. As schools adopt classroom pedagogies designed to bolster boys' interest by working with their perceived strengths and correcting perceived weaknesses, this reflects how discourse exercises power within schools. In one way, schools exercise considerable effort to improve the academic performance of boys, particularly and obviously within all-boys schools. There is an economic rationale underpinning this, as stronger results for boys bode well for positioning within the competitive school market. Therefore, as schools employ resources and expend effort into performing to the tenets of curriculum policy, they effectively legitimise their own existence as institutions in the process. On the other hand, schools adopting 'boy-friendly' pedagogies

and approaches engage in gendering the student populace.

While I am not suggesting educational policy within the neoliberal paradigm is gendered, it certainly assists to create a context in which 'common-sense' assumptions about gender proliferate, which in effect spawns additional educational policies. For example, in order for a 'boy-friendly curriculum' to exist, a particular understanding of what 'a boy is' must also exist. Attempts to address the academic performance of boys in schooling draw on a globalised common-sense understanding of boys that is generally essentialist and drawn from biological discourses suggesting attributes such as aggression, fighting and delayed maturity are innate (Weaver-Hightower, 2008). Problematically, not all boys fit within the narrow silos of biological essentialism, but schools and education systems often assume they do as curriculum policies and government reports coordinate them to do so. In the next section of this literature review, I explore how private single-sex schools harness such gendered discourses to bolster their position within the competitive private school markets.

2.4 Private and single-sex schooling in Australia

As a result of neoliberal policies introduced into education, Ball (2012) suggests one of the main axes of global trends is 'parental choice and the role of private schooling' (p. 11). For policy makers of a 'neoliberal persuasion' (Heather, 2002, p. 304), school choice by parents should be based on instrumental rationality. In such an ideal, a parent concerned about their child's literacy skills would be able to use a tool such as the *My Schools* website to identify a high-performing school in literacy, or a parent holding university aspirations for their child might review the public release of university offerings to identify the best-performing high schools. Parents in the neoliberal imaginary are able to make a choice based on comparable and publicly accessible data (Rowe, 2017; Rowe & Windle, 2012). However, as Watson (1997) argues, a challenge to the neoliberal ideal is the influence of social class on school choice, which finds parental choice of secondary schooling can 'prioritize certain factors over others, such as location, sibling or family member, attendance, reputation, academic results, facilities, religious affiliation, or restriction to one sex' (Heather, 2002, p. 304). Thus it is not surprising to see single-sex private schools in Australia carefully negotiate competing discourses regarding student achievement, institutional identity and gender in order to survive economically.

In this section, I begin by explaining the funding model of non-government schools. In doing so, I aim to contextualise the economically volatile climate of the Australian and South Australian private school market, which in turn provides context to the imperative for single-sex private schools to lure enrolments. I then make connections to how conceptions of gender regimes, particularly masculinities, are promoted by single-sex private schools as a tool of advertisement, thus evincing further the marketisation of education. Finally, I close by arguing there is a gap in scholarly work examining the institutional practices of Catholic all-boys private schooling.

2.4.1 Government funding of non-government (Catholic) schools in Australia

Australian independent schools are part of a wider trend of neoliberalism in Western countries whereby state organisations hand over educational services to the private sector (Ball, 2012). Within Australia, 34.8% of all students attend non-government schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015), and this perpetuates schools' participation in educational 'quasi-markets' to build and maintain enrolments (Apple, 2001; Leathwood & Hayton, 2002; Meadmore & McWilliam, 2001; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). Within the broader context of the OECD, Australia's education system is unique due to the size of its non-government sector. According to the Nous Group (2011), this can be attributed to the 'subsidisation of the fee-charging, autonomously run independent school sector with public funds' which increases the choice that 'parents with a reasonably high level of disposable income can exercise' (p. 5). There is truth to this; however funding for schools is a complicated process (Kenway, 2013), and this is especially the case for non-government schools. I will now briefly outline the funding model for Catholic schools within South Australia.

The Student Resource Standard (SRS), which is used as the basis for funding at *a per student level* in any Catholic, independent or government school, is assumed to be equivalent to the actual cost of educating a student in a school setting. There is an SRS for a primary student and an SRS for a secondary student. In government schools, the Commonwealth government pays 20% of the SRS for any primary student and secondary student (refer to Figure 3 below). Each state government is expected to contribute the remaining 80%, but each state is transitioning towards this total 80%.

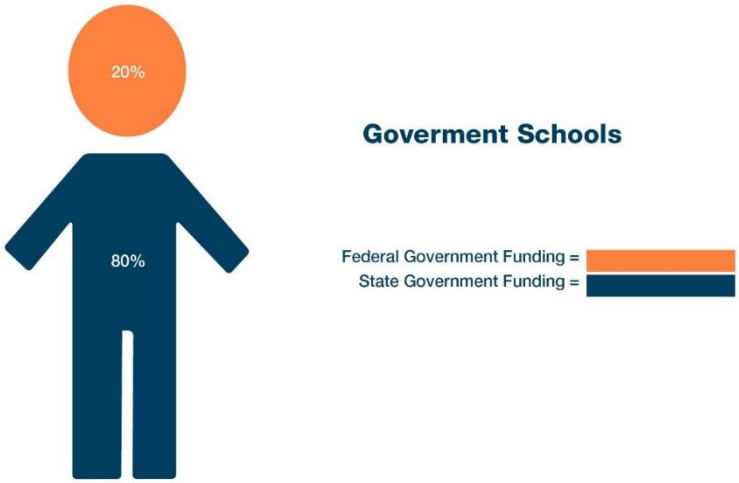


Figure 3: Sources of funding for government school students

While it is unclear exactly where the South Australian state government is in relation to this transition, for the purpose of explanation we will assume it to be 77% of the SRS for a primary student and a secondary student. For the purposes of this example, I will break the costs to educate a student into hypothetical $10 blocks. Therefore in South Australia, the Commonwealth and state governments combined provide $9.70 of every $10 spent on educating a child in a government school. School and student loadings are then added to this figure, if and where appropriate. The 30 cents difference between the amount received and each $10 block is reduced slightly by parent contributions. However, over time, this difference will be eroded as the state government increases its contribution up to the 80% requirement.

Funding for non-government schools is made even more complex by the fact that parents who choose a non-government education for their children are effectively charged for doing so. In policy terms, this is referred to as the 'capacity to contribute' (*Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth)). In non-government schools, the respective contributions from the Commonwealth and state governments are reversed. This means the Commonwealth government is expected to contribute 80% of the SRS, although the Commonwealth, just like the states in the earlier example, is transitioning towards this 80% requirement, on a per school basis. This means some schools are transitioning up towards 80%, while others are transitioning down towards 80%. The state government contributes the remaining 20%. However, at a per school level, the Commonwealth contribution and the state contribution are discounted by the capacity to contribute. In South Australia, the discount is dependent on enrolled students' socio-economic

status (SES) (Ainley, Graetz, Long, & Batten, 1995), which is measured by data on parental occupation and education (Marks, McMillan, Jones, & Ainley, 2000). The discounts vary from a low of 10% through to a high of 80%. Figure 4 (below) illustrates funding in relation to SES and in comparison to government schools.

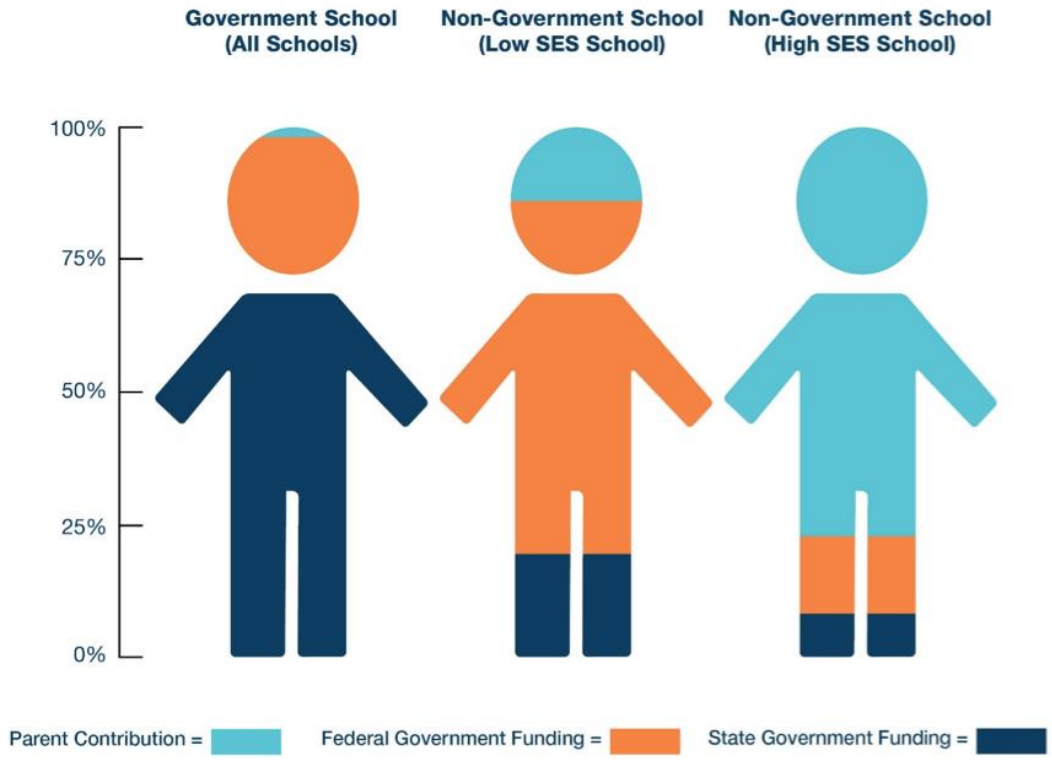


Figure 4: Sources of funding for government and non-government (low/high SES) schools

As can be seen, there is a gap between the amount of government funding received by a Catholic school for each student, and the apparent cost of educating that student. In South Australia, the amount received per student in each Catholic school is less than a government school receives, ranging from a difference of $1000 per student to a difference of $8000 per student.[4] When compared with the SRS, which is the purported cost of educating a child in a school setting, the amount of funding received per student by a Catholic school ranges from approximately $1400 below the SRS to approximately $8400 below the SRS. In broad terms, each Catholic school receives funding per student somewhere between these two figures, noting that specific loadings are then added in. Due to the discounting effect of the capacity to

[4] These figures are taken from a Catholic Education South Australia circular sent to all Catholic school leaders.

contribute, meaning parents are expected to pay something towards their children's education in a non-government school setting, Catholic schools charge fees.

In general terms, the fees try to fill the gap between the amount of funding received per student and the SRS. The published fee also considers necessary fee remissions and includes costs associated with capital building projects, IT costs and general maintenance. Therefore, in almost all cases, the fee is higher than the actual gap between the funding received per student and the SRS. In some cases, it is necessarily considerably higher. Importantly, though, income derived from fees is an essential contribution to the education of a child in a Catholic school. In almost all cases, Catholic schools could not operate without a contribution from parents. In this light, not only are enrolments vital to the economic sustainability of the school, but more particularly enrolments of families able to afford to pay the fees. Therefore Catholic schools often bear connotations as elite schools, as notions of exclusivity extend from the financial obligations (fees) placed on parents.

In recent years, school funding in Australia has been the source of great public and scholarly debate. This was likely sparked by the release of the *Review of funding for schooling* report (Gonski et al., 2011), colloquially known as the Gonski report, a policy attempt to address issues of inequality in Australian schools. Jane Kenway (2013) critically denounces some of the Gonski report findings and argues its 'fixation on sector-by-sector (government, Catholic and independent) analysis and disputation distracts from layers of disadvantage and advantage across all sectors' (p. 286). Kenway (2013) illustrates that socio-economic status equates to educational advantage and does so by comparing schools on extreme ends of the socio-economic scale. Not surprisingly, in schools like Geelong Grammar where annual fees are upwards of $30,000, 65% of students are drawn from the top quartile for socio-educational advantage (SEA) and the school can boast of impressive academic results in the Victoria Certificate of Education and International Baccalaureate. Comparatively, in a neighbouring high school 52% of students are in the bottom quartile of SEA, and academic results pale in comparison. Kenway (2013) addresses a range of equity issues; however pertinent to my study is what she describes as: 'The high fee/SEA schools are seen as the gold standard. This then involves a process of emulation in which other schools are either explicitly or implicitly encouraged by a range of forces to emulate such schools' (p. 296).

In relation to my study, it is pertinent to mention the diversity of my school site enrolment, where the majority of families fit within the two middle quartiles of SEA. It is worth noting more are drawn from the bottom quartile than the top. Arguably, my school site does engage with *processes of emulation* of the high fee/SEA schools, and while outside the purview of this study, it is logical to assume many parents who send their son/s to this school aspire toward upward social mobility (Butler, 2015; Campbell et al., 2009). In relation to funding and expectation, this position places my school site in an interesting and paradoxical position. On one hand, by the very fact it is non-government, the school's finances are strained in comparison to government schools. On the other hand, due to the school's SES level, it cannot rely on the same contributions from parents that more affluent independent schools – like the ones Kenway critiques – can. A central concern of Kenway's argument is the exclusivity of high fee/SEA schools who, in receiving government funding, bear no responsibility to the less fortunate rungs of the schooling system. However for schools like the one in this study, social responsibility must co-exist with economic rationality. The marketisation of the school to ensure enrolments is essential and it has subsequent effects on staffing and infrastructure (Shaker, 2001).

2.4.2 The marketing of gender in all-boys private schooling

All-boys private schools recognise that success in such markets is 'contingent on a positive, flexible, adaptable disposition towards change' (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 377) and schools are simultaneously pressured to perform 'excellently to the tenets of performativity' (Lyotard, 1979, p. 83), whilst being 'well placed in relation to the cultural urban edge' (Gottschall, Wardman, Edgeworth, Hutchesson, & Saltmarsh, 2010, p. 27). Interestingly, private schools will only use resources to address student achievement if demanded by parents (Davies & Davies, 2014). As private schooling holds connotations of the elite (Connell, 2002; Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005), many parents show greater interest in their child's opportunities to develop high-status social capital (Yang & Kayaardi, 2004) through their schooling. On these grounds, parents presumably select particular private schools that align with their own values or appear advantageous to achieving the aspirations they hold for their children. Considering that the numbers of students attending single-sex schools is declining in each generation (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015), never before has there been such an imperative for single-sex schools to engage in marketing strategies to defend their relevance.

Symes (1998) argues Australian schools are succumbing to neoliberal forces, causing them to become 'more conscious of the need to engage in stratagems such as advertising and promotion' (p. 133). While Martino (2001) argues that schools need to become more inclusive environments which recognise all manifestations of boyhood, for an all-boys school, competition for enrolments has seen the proliferation of marketing materials privileging certain forms of masculine subjectivity (Gottschall et al., 2010) as a point of difference in the market. Considering the wide scholarly work suggesting masculinities and learner identities are formed in various settings, which are largely contingent on the cultural resources made available, the school site plays a prominent role (Connell, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman, 2002).

Many all-boys private schools are seen as idealised masculine spaces that 'assert masculinist values' and 'virile discourse' (Synott & Symes, 1995, p. 148). Contemporary private boys schools in Australia echo market values by espousing characteristics of 'competitiveness, aggressiveness and control' via a host of implicit rules (Harding, 2003) which draw from Victorian ideals of athleticism and idealise 'hyper-masculine physical strength and endurance over other qualities' (Synott & Symes, 1995, p. 147). In essence, the ideal all-boys private school subject becomes inextricably bound to a competitive, neoliberal self-enterprising, and successful masculine subject.

Boys who attend such private schools, to an extent, are indoctrinated into a particular masculinity promoted by the institution (Burke, 2011; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). However I do note that the students' lifeworlds often push back on these institutional regimes and my data chapters suggest as much. However the modes in which private schools communicate their ethos and values afford insight into how a student would be constituted within it (Davies & Saltmarsh, 2007). Gottschall et al. (2010) explore how all-boys private schools use prospectuses as a vehicle to demonstrate quality and excellence, arguing these are 'both text and artifact of neo-liberal agendas and as residue of consecutive conservative governments in Australia' (p. 19). Such artefacts are saturated with boys engaged in athletic activities, absorbed with traditionally masculine subjects such as the sciences and mathematics, all while wearing a distinct college uniform. While these materials illuminate some of the ways schools engaging in market strategies, they also serve to communicate particular ideals that can work to coordinate student, teacher and leader subjectivities. Through an economic gaze, where all-boys schools are seen as businesses producing certain types of citizens, it is logical to

deduce that people working within them are expected – or at the very least somewhat expected – to contribute to the direction and vision of the institution.

In the local context of South Australia, where enrolments for single-sex schools continue to decline, it is not surprising to see many all-boys schools harness the failing boys discourse (Epstein et al., 1998) and promote themselves as educational experts in teaching boys. A simple search through any South Australian all-boys school website will lead to a page explaining why boys are best suited to a single-sex learning environment. My school's site is no different. Additionally, all of these school websites contain a myriad of downloadable pamphlets evincing the same marketisation strategies Gottschall et al. (2010) critique such as representing masculinities that position older boys as hard, strong and capable, and younger boys as small, weak and vulnerable. I am interested by these shared stratagems. While they evince the necessity to engage in ongoing campaigns to maintain a presence within the arena of school markets, the similarity between them also suggests they are subscribing to a somewhat universal gold standard of all-boys private schooling. Whilst the buildings, uniforms and Latin mottos may vary on a basic aesthetic level, they often emulate each other. Thus, for an all-boys private school operating in a market where demand is dwindling, finding a niche in the market seems difficult, which – as my data chapters show – creates pressure for those working within them.

2.4.3 Institutional studies of Catholic all-boys schooling

There has been little research specifically in the area of the institutional practices of Catholic all-boys schools in Australia. Research has examined the effects of single-sex classes and the construction of masculinities (Kenway, Kraack, & Hickey-Moody, 2006; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Macleod, 2018; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Willis, 1977) in co-educational settings; however in my review of literature, both recent and historical, there is a noticeable gap concerning the tensions between schools as neoliberal institutions and the lived realities of boys as learners, with the exception of Burke (2011), Kuriloff and Reichert (2003) and Stahl (2015).

Of the studies read, Burke's (2011) autoethnographic study of a Catholic all-boys school in Australia examines the construction of traditional masculinities. He found these constructions of masculinity to be similar to those mentioned by Synott and Symes (1995) which idealise 'hyper-masculine physical strength and endurance over other qualities' (p. 147). However, a

critique from Estrada (2014) is that Burke's focus is fixed primarily on masculinity theory and does little 'to advance a multidimensional view of manhood above and beyond the dominant hegemonic type' (p. 184). Burke's (2011) exploration of how the school cultivates perceived differences in gender congruent with the Catholic Church's view by working to suppress authentic expressions of emotions in students does have some relevance here. However, he predominantly theorises the wider interplay between student, school and translocal context around gender rather than mapped them to institutional practices. Burke's work does support wider scholarly findings that the promotion of a particular type of masculinity is congruous with the competitive values of elite schools (Harding, 2003) and this resonates with the idea of schools being places that promote masculine spaces, as suggested in the work of Gottschall et al. (2010). On such grounds, Catholic all-boys schools, like their elite counterparts, can be seen to value particular forms of masculinity and actively work towards constructing these institutionally.

Importantly, my study is not beholden to theories of masculinity, rather, through institutional ethnography, I explore and explicate ruling relations used to coordinate and organise students into sequences of action and activity (Smith, 2005). This delineation separates my study from many school-based studies exploring masculinities and masculine subjectivities (a point I elaborate on in the following section) as I do not start and end with theory that 'stands in for the social relations that exemplify the theory' (Smith, 2001, p. 159) and displaces the participants.

2.5 Understanding school cultures: Masculinities and learner identities

My discussion thus far has traced literature regarding the wider economic and political forces, which, overtly and inadvertently, position the operation of schools as institutions. While the focus of my study is not specifically about schoolboy *masculinities* and *learner identities* per se, it does investigate the coordination of students, staff and leaders within an all-boys school. Therefore as gender and learning are inherent features of such a setting, in order to understand school culture I must address and define the nature of school-based perceptions of masculinity and their (dis)alignment with learner identities. Importantly, the vast majority of scholarly work in these two areas is heavily beholden to theories of masculinities, whereas my study – as an institutional ethnography – is deliberately not. However literature in this area has been essential in developing my understanding of how power operates in schools, both formally and

informally, and assists in contextualising the school site as a place where both *masculinities* (Swain, 2006a) and *learner identities* (Erstad et al., 2016) are coordinated by institutional regimes of power.

2.5.1 Schoolboy masculinities

As a researcher, I operate with an understanding that the performance of gender is socially constructed, and within school settings this is highly complex due to hierarchal tensions (between students, teachers and leaders), traditions, institutional images and ideals, and of course, the political and economic arena beyond the school gates.

Studies of masculinities in schooling extend from the broader branch of masculinity studies. Grounded in sociology, contemporary theories of masculinity offer a lens to understand adolescent boys. Masculinity is not about gender; it is about social practice, and how certain forces position boys to act a particular way. Connell (2015) recognises that masculinities 'speak about gender relations; they concern the *position* of men on a gender order. They can be defined as patterns of practice by which people engage that position' (p. 3) and one can engage with various types of masculinities. The negotiation of certain masculinities for schoolboys is nuanced and complex, relating to 'wider technologies of normalization and regulation' (Martino, 1999, p. 260). Boys are not intrinsically wired to act or behave in a particular way; they are positioned to adopt certain practices congruent with institutional and societal pressures. To varying degrees, boys are 'jostling' between multiple masculinities shaped by a hierarchy of differing contexts (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985). For adolescent males, this can mean grappling with a multitude of identities and learning practices 'in' and 'out' of school. Whether they comply with, subscribe to, or resist, the values of the school, society or peers, their identity practices 'display themselves as incumbents of certain categories of masculinity on particular occasions' (Hearn & Morgan, 2014, p. 240).

With this in mind, the work of Raewyn Connell has shaped sociological work exploring schoolboys' masculinity. In particular, her concept of *hegemonic masculinity* is a commonly accepted reference point for understanding masculinity in sociological studies. As Connell (1990) and Francis (2006) explain, hegemonic masculinity sets a cultural agenda, is often culturally idealised and is considered a leading pattern of masculinity to which other boys attempt to subscribe. Hegemonic masculinity can be dominant and oppressive (Swain, 2006a), shaping students' behaviours, perception of self and engagement within school (Martino,

1999). In schools, hegemonic masculinity generally operates through a number of sociocultural constructs such as physical/athletics skill, strength, fitness, control, competitiveness, culturally acclaimed knowledge, discipline, courage, self-reliance and adventurousness (Swain, 2006b; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). A consistent theme across research on boys and schooling is the complexity involved as boys negotiate their own identity, and this is largely context specific; being a male means one thing in one place and can take on another meaning somewhere else. Considering the plurality of subcultures and spaces that exist within any given school site, the concept of the malleability of hegemonic masculinity is helpful as an analytical device to map masculine hierarchies within the school institution.

2.5.1.1 Contemporary studies of masculinities in schooling influencing my work

Seminal studies shaping current understandings of masculinity in schooling date back to the 1970s and 1980s (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982; Kessler et al., 1985; Pollard, 1985; see Willis, 1977). In contemporary times, there has been significant scholarship exploring 'wider technologies' positioning boys at school. Mac an Ghaill (1994) and Martino (1999) conducted seminal studies showing how sexuality, social class, peer pressure and teachers all serve as mechanisms shaping the values and practices of particular adolescent male groups. Mac an Ghaill's (1994) *The making of men: Masculinities, sexualities and schooling* reports on a five-year study at an English co-educational high school that interrogates the dominant modes of heterosexual subjectivity operating and shows that gender regimes are fundamental in the organisation of school. Martino's (1999) '"Cool boys", "party animals", "squids" and "poofters": Interrogating the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities in school' focuses on a group of boys attending a Catholic co-educational high school in Australia, investigating ways in which boys fashion their masculinities within the context of peer-group relations and the dynamics of the school. Within these two seminal studies, the scholars show that masculinities in schooling are grounded in 'resistance' to anything perceived as feminine or homosexual. These two bodies of work were greatly influential in developing my understanding of how 'schoolboys' can be understood within schools.

2.5.1.2 Laddish behaviours in neoliberal times

While the above studies were very influential in this study, it is also pertinent to briefly examine the term 'lad', or 'laddishness' as it is commonly referred to in contemporary school masculinity studies. This is important because attempts to explain 'laddish' patterns of

behaviours by boys in school have drawn predominantly from sociological theories of masculinities. The term is perhaps most famously associated with the seminal work of Paul Willis (1977) who furthered understanding of disaffection with schooling as gendered, classed and ethnic. He concluded it was the culture of the 'lads' and the promise of joining their fathers on the factory floor that led to boys' disaffection from their schooling as, in their eyes, it served no point. Historically, the concept of laddishness precedes neoliberalism. However, Francis (1999) argues the term has been appropriated and popularised in more recent times. She provides a useful explanation of the concept in which 'being one of the lads' evokes an image of: 'A young, exclusively male, group, and the hedonistic practices popularly associated with such groups (for example, "having a laugh", alcohol consumption, disruptive behavior, objectifying women, and an interest in pastimes and subjects constructed as masculine)' (p. 357).

While the term is perhaps most prolific in the United Kingdom, in the global context of the deficit schoolboys discourse, 'laddishness' is often attributed to the gender gap and anti-school attitudes impeding boys' progress in school (Jackson, 2002, 2003) as it is argued some boys are motivated to protect their sense of self-worth over succeeding academically at school. Jackson (2010) explores how teachers' assumptions and concerns about schoolboy 'laddish' anti-learning and anti-school cultures manifest as school strategies to tackle these problems to enhance boys' learning. The responses to laddishness reported in her study are broad, with some teachers employing draconian measures of control and consequence, while some male teachers shared that they have 'been sort of laddish with [students] … one of the gang' (Jackson, 2010, p. 513). Both extremes are obviously problematic. However, as a large feature of my study is exploring students' moments of disjuncture between the personal and institutional, 'laddishness' helps in understanding how schoolboys perform masculinities *in* and *against* school regimes. Bearing in mind that neoliberalism is dependent on individuals buying into notions of meritocracy, individual responsibility and economic competitiveness, all of which conjure an image of the archetypal 'good and hardworking student', the errant schoolboy 'lad' is problematic for politicians, parents and policy makers (Francis, 2006).

In the context of my study, the concept of 'laddishness' is pertinent as it helps in examining the intersection of competing demands experienced by students as a student and a member of a peer group within the school, or in other words, the formal versus the informal. Informally, generated mainly in their subcultures (Swartz, 1997) and through 'a long process of social

learning' (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996, p. 48), certain behaviours may give boys value within the collective social, but these same behaviours often hinder their academic progress (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007). I am not suggesting the student participants in this study embody the complete definition Francis (1999) and Jackson (2002, 2003, 2010) offer, but they do regularly cite their peers as influences in how they engage with schoolwork in positive and negative terms. Furthermore, the teachers and leaders in my study shared their vexation when students do not engage with – or complete – schoolwork or behave in accordance with school policy. These experiences create stress that bears on their professional identities.

2.5.2 Learner identities

While masculinity theory offers a sociological understanding of how boys enact masculine identities and perform certain subjectivities, scholarly work in the area of learner identity complements this by offering a socio-cultural explanation of how students can identify as learners. In formal school contexts,

> learner identities refer specifically to the conceptualizations children have of themselves as learners, but as with social identities, these are relational and pupils construct themselves and are constructed by others as particular types of learners in relation to both other pupils and their teachers. (Reay, 2010, p. 279)

Learner identity theory adopts a multidisciplinary approach to 'understanding the complex issues around how young people experience learning across time and space as parts of their everyday practices' (Erstad, 2012, p. 29). The use of the term 'learning', rather than training or education, is deliberate as it 'privileges agency and process, enabling a more organic conceptual connection between subject and social context' (Chisholm, 2003, p. 71).

There are multiple connotations of the term of learner identity (Sefton-Green & Erstad, 2016). Some definitions focus on how the learner is produced through a learning experience or on how identity serves as a precondition or context for learning, or as a requirement of the learning process (Sinha, 1999). Learner identity is largely fashioned by context; whether formal (school) or informal (social), it is shaped by the material and symbolic resources of history, language and culture required to sustain it (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). Furthermore, Sefton-Green, Nixon and Erstad (2009) argue that learners' trajectories over time and place should be considered when thinking about education; therefore 'biographical turning points' (Du Bois & Stauber,

2005) for learner identities require consideration as they may serve as an indicator of why students behave or respond in particular ways. For the boys in this study, their perception of self and their ambitions are coordinated to some degree by experiences of learning and their interaction with their peers and the staff. I next explore how neoliberalism has influenced learner identities to broaden the exploration of how students are mediated and constituted within schooling.

2.5.2.1 Learner identities and subjectivities in neoliberal schools

Many students develop differentiated learner identities across formal and informal contexts (Reay, 2010), but boys may struggle with this versatility (Reay, 2002). Whilst there are varying degrees of overlap and synergy between identities, these cannot be transposed onto one another (Pollard & Filer, 2007). Formally, the school context positions the learner identity to measure oneself against others, thus it is seen not as fixed, rather influenced over time by broader factors. Educational research has noted how students come to perform neoliberal subjectivities and neoliberal performativity (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Keddie, 2016; Keddie, Black, & Charles, 2020). The impact of neoliberal discourses and practices on the school culture is particularly salient in my study. As Bansel and Davies (2007) observe, schools are forced to create individual subjects as 'individual entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives' (p. 252).

While trends of neoliberalism may be global in nature, scholarly work illustrates how different schools respond and the implications this can have for learner identities. Mentioned earlier in this review, Wilkins (2012c) provides a school-based ethnography of two groups of 12–13-year-old students identified as high achieving and popular to explore how relations between teachers and students are mediated and constituted through the 'spectre of neoliberal values and sensibilities' (p. 197). Wilkins (2012c) simultaneously highlights the deep interconnection between neoliberalism, pedagogy and school orientations towards learning, while also illustrating 'the interpellating demands of neoliberal discourses in the context of intersecting dynamics of gender, friendship and popularity' (p. 207). Conversely, Stahl's (2017a) more comprehensive work provides a greater institutional examination of schooling practices and strategies by drawing on his experiences working in charter school management organisations in the United States. His project explores the controversial schooling practices in charter schools that draw upon corporate America, specifically 'a "Goldman Sachs model" of zero-tolerance and firing of the bottom 10% of underperforming staff each year' (p. 4). More

specifically, Stahl explores how these practices influence neoliberal subjectivities through teaching and learning, school leadership, teachers' professional identities and students' understanding of success.

In relation to learner identities, Stahl (2017a) illustrates how one school's 'culture of exactness', with a dogged focus on rigorous academic standards, institutionalises students through mechanisms of *surveillance and control* and *rules and routines* under the guise of 'tough love'. Subsequently, students develop 'self-regulatory behavior [that] is productive in terms of raising test scores and, thus, in neoliberal terms generates both capital and growth' (p. 119). In differing ways, both Wilkins (2012c) and Stahl (2017a) illustrate how learner identities pertain to competitive and individualistic components fitting within the principles of a 'neoliberalised' education (Hill, 2009). Such trends in education extend to wider ambitions of government education policy that compel schools to adopt performative and managerial approaches to improve standards and raise achievement (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). In other words, the research exploring contemporary school learner identities suggests students' identity, behaviour and efficacy are guided by educational policy.

Erstad (2012) calls for new ways to conceptualise and research young people that 'move beyond conceptions of formal and informal learning' (p. 40). With this in mind, I found Livingston and Sefton-Green's (2016) *The class: Living and learning in the digital age* a useful example of research capturing ways in which adolescent learning and identity are coordinated. Particularly interesting is the juxtaposition between formal school learning and informal learning taking place outside the classroom, suggesting students learn in a myriad of contexts and showing how little teachers know about their students' lives outside of school (Livingston & Sefton-Green, 2016). While Livingstone and Sefton-Green do not identify their study as an institutional ethnography per se, there is certainly some congruity as they trace experiences of school life to 'the fierce discursive struggle going on above their [students'] heads among governments, pedagogues, technologists, and pundits seeking to redefine the purposes and practices of education in the digital, networked age' (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016, p. 8).

Unlike a great deal of school masculinity and learner identity studies, Livingstone and Sefton-Green avoid the sociological convention of relying on categories such as gender and ethnicity; however they do recognise these as significant themes. In regard to schools as institutions, Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) show that schools define, measure and record student

learning progress through spoken discourse, creating a nexus between students' perception of self as learners and achievement shaping student subjectivities. In this light, Livingstone and Sefton-Green show that schools' coordinating practices, predominantly through curriculum standards, infiltrate and shape discussions of learning. I am largely drawn to this feature of their work as their descriptions of students speaking of themselves through the lens of a curriculum exemplifies what an institutional ethnographer would refer to as texts becoming 'constituents of social relations' (Campbell, 2006, p. 231). Importantly for my study, the interplay between students' learner identities and institutional texts assists in unearthing how power relations exist and play out within school sites.

2.5.3 The relationship between masculinity and learner identities: The position of my study

There has been a significant body of research exploring the intersection of masculinities and learner identities (Connell, 2005; Mac an Ghaill, 1994: Martino, 1999; Renold, 2001) that suggests many schoolboys resist conformity to school in order to avoid being perceived as studious. Studies in the UK (Mac an Ghaill, 1994: Renold, 2001) and Australia (Martino, 1999) highlight the tactics of boys such as deployment of humorous techniques, engagement in disruptive behaviour, and downplaying of success as indicators of such avoidance. Whilst this is certainly not applicable to all boys, it does suggest that many boys experience tension when in school with regard to their identity. With attention to masculinities and neoliberalism, a relationship Mac an Ghaill (1994) and Renold (2001) ignore, wider scholarly work (Burke, 2010; Francis, 2006; Phoenix, 2004; Stahl, 2015) shows boys in schools are not simply concerned with gaining an education, but equally with negotiating the complex social processes that produce boys' masculine subjectivities. These studies suggest many boys spend a great deal of time and effort in practising strategies that allow them to achieve at school while being accepted by peer groups. While some boys repudiate their schooling by displaying disruptive behaviours due to their association of studiousness with femininity (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Watson, Kehler, & Martino, 2010), whereby anything considered feminine, such as compliant behaviour and academic success, serves as a direct threat to a desired hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000). Interestingly, many of these boys are described as 'middle-class and clever' (Renold, 2001, p. 376), which is confirmed by their test results. Boys who were interested in pursuing academic success were seen by the researchers to forfeit particular 'masculine' attributes within the school milieu.

Importantly, Wortham (2006) posits that social identification and academic identity are highly dependent on each other. Understanding learner identity is important as it gives 'an in-depth understanding of how learners are involved in different processes of growth, and how both school cultures and everyday cultures develop them as persons and learners' (McLeod & Yates, 2006, p. 31). Obviously, any researcher at an all-boys school needs to recognise a variety of intersecting factors that work beyond the binary of gender and learning, but I contend these must serve as central points of focus considering the school culture. However, as with all sociological work, it is problematic to suggest all boys see their masculinity and learner identities at school in oppositional terms. While the scholarly work does not suggest this, it is important to acknowledge these studies work within the paradigm of traditional sociology where abstract theory is used to provide explanation.

Therefore as an institutional ethnographer, I intend to add to this area of study by rejecting abstract theory and adopting what George Smith describes as a 'sensuous world of people's actual practices and activities' (Smith, 1990, p. 48). This means my inquiry 'begins in an embodied standpoint in the social, rather than abject theory' (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 20) and focuses on institutional regimes more than the identity of participants. Erstad (2012) suggests understanding learner identities will require exploration of the personal histories and future orientations of students as they 'create narratives of the self' (2012, p. 31), and the foci of my study do begin with the narratives of the participants but move to explore and explicate the social relations that organise these experiences in the institutional setting of school. In this light, institutional ethnography provides an opportunity to develop understanding of the context in which identity formation at school can occur. Castells (2004) asserts that it is easy to agree on the fact that identities are constructed. Rather, he argues, the real issue is 'how, from what, by whom and for what' (p. 7). It is this area that my institutional ethnography explores.

2.5.4 Bourdieu's form of Cultural Capital

While my study avoids employing theoretical concepts to explicate social relations, throughout the data chapters, I draw on Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital to bolster explanatory power in relation to student identities. Capital, for Bourdieu, is both objectified and embodied (Grenfell, 2008, p. 105). Cultural capital is established through: "an embodied state, that is in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods; and in the institutionalized state, resulting in such things as educational

qualifications" (Nash, 1990, p. 232). Cultural capital consists of familiarity with the dominant culture of society, especially the ability to understand and use 'educated' language' (Sullivan 2002).

As educational researchers, Lareau and Weininger (2003) proposed that cultural capital is institutionalised, widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion. They argue:

> cultural capital in school settings must identify the particular expectations – both formal and, especially, informal - by means of which school personnel appraise students. Secondly, as a result of their location in the stratification system, students and their parents enter the educational system with dispositional skills and knowledge that differentially facilitate or impede their ability to conform to institutionalized expectations. (Lareau and Weininger, 2003, p. 488)

Therefore, schooling is a radically different experience for students who have the necessary capitals and are able to operationalise them to make the system work in their favour. In using Bourdieu's theoretical tools, MacLeod (2009) argues:

> Hence, schools serve as the trading post where socially valued cultural capital is parlayed into superior academic performance. Academic performance is then turned back into economic capital by the acquisition of superior jobs. Schools reproduce social inequality, but by dealing in the currency of academic credentials, the educational system legitimates the entire process. (p.14)

Student identities form in relation to their perception of their own embodied cultural capital, the labelling, the understanding of the system and their ability to manipulate the system to their advantage. If the capitals they possess do not fit with the system, they look for spaces in which their capitals will be useful and elevate status. The relationship between cultural capital and the schools is important as it can be assumed that the cultural capital within a fee paying school in the CBD is higher.

It should be noted that prior to my PhD, when I was working as a teacher, I rarely engaged critically with my environment or the people I worked with. As an alumnus of the school site

of this study, seldom did I question the traditions and practices of the school, let alone how these practices influenced the subjectivities of students', teachers' and leaders' identities. This study is born from my initial readings of Mac an Ghaill (1994) and Martino (1999) and the questions they generated for me personally as an educator working with boys. Some of these questions are addressed in this thesis and others I will apply in my role as an educator. However, their work is not focused necessarily on the relationship between the institutional processes and the identity practices of their participants, whether it be students, teachers or leaders. A great deal of their exploration centres on the social organisation of people in relation to one another, which happens to be at school. Arguably, the school site is somewhat lost as a significant factor in coordinating the daily functions of students and their experience of the social; thus my institutional ethnographic study aims to interrogate this gap further.

2.6 Conclusion: Problematising the everyday

The intention of my literature review has been twofold: to locate my study in wider trends in globalisation and neoliberalism and also to provide a context in which it takes place. Thinking of my participants and their experience, it becomes clear that context is paramount when considering identity (Edwards, 2009) as 'it informs us in an analytical sense of the way we interpret and understand the inter-relationship between people, their learning identities, and the circumstances they are involved in at different times and in different places' (Erstad, 2012, p. 31). An institutional ethnography is an exercise in mapping and presenting the context in which people work. It is premised on a belief that work is organised or coordinated to happen as it does in local and translocal settings through the activation of texts, discourses and 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005).

Throughout this literature review, I have sought to demonstrate how the marketisation of education within Western countries occurs within a neoliberal imaginary promoting the 'economisation of social life' (Ong, 2007, p. 5). Educational systems around the world have looked to market solutions (Lingard, 2006) and within Australia contemporary curriculum has been fundamentally reshaped by neoliberalism, evincing a shift towards standardisation, measurement, comparison and competition. Single-sex private schools such as mine must simultaneously negotiate highly competitive school markets while responding to the deficit schoolboys discourse, both created by the policy context. Subsequently, for students, teachers

and leaders working in schools, their experience of daily school life can be seen as highly bound to discourses and institutional texts operating within and beyond the school site.

Yet I recognise the irony underpinning neoliberalism. It promotes the entrepreneurial self which dismisses intersectional factors such as class, race, gender, disability – yet it also promotes testing and comparison which shows that boys largely underperform. Therefore it highlights what it seeks to ignore. It is this context which my study problematises, and in the following chapter I outline the research framework and methods employed to guide my examination of it.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

As previously stated, the purpose of this study is to examine the everyday experience of leaders, educators and students at Christian Brothers College. As articulated in the introduction chapter, the context and history of the school is highly significant and contributes to how it responds to developing neoliberal market forces. As the school experiences declining enrolments, not only is there a strong emphasis on marketing but also an intensification of accountability measures for school leaders and teachers that filter down and influence the everyday experience of my participants. As such, Christian Brothers College, as an institution, is a bounded space subject to a variety of competing local and translocal forces that are historical, political and economic in nature. Thus the central aim of my research is to examine and map the experiences of agents within the school, in relation to the wider networks of power relations, in order to (1) further an understanding of the ways in which leaders', teachers' and students' identities are realised and validated in relation to institutional discourses, (2) explore the roles texts play in contributing to shifting power dynamics, and (3) examine how individuals negotiate institutional tensions. The intention of this chapter is to outline the theoretical framework employed to guide this research agenda. This study primarily draws on the theoretical frameworks associated with institutional ethnography, while simultaneously incorporating autoethnographic methods to complement my position as researcher.

As part of the introduction to this chapter, I focus on the history of school ethnographies and their influences on critical scholarly work carried out today and discuss my rationale for drawing on institutional ethnography and autoethnography as a framework for this particular inquiry. The first section of this chapter introduces the theoretical underpinning of institutional ethnography and autoethnography by drawing on a wide body of scholarly work to support its use in this study. In doing so, I am able to introduce the influential work of Dorothy Smith, whom I draw upon when interpreting my data.

3.1.1 Ethnography and school ethnography

As this study draws on ethnographic approaches to guide my research, it is important to acknowledge the rich history of school ethnographies in the sociology of education as their legacy is influential in the critical work carried out today. In recounting the main trends in

school ethnography, I focus on definitive monographs that have been pivotal in shaping ethnographic inquiry. While there is no consensus on what constitutes an ethnography, Willis and Trondman (2002) describe ethnography as 'a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience' (p. 394). Irrespective of the various interpretations and definitions, ethnography is – in one form or another – employed within a variety of disciplines with their own internal histories, most prominently anthropology (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Therefore, the lack of consensus in definitions of school-based ethnography is not surprising (Erickson, 1984; Ogbu, 1981). Within this section, I draw on historical and contemporary school ethnographies, and institutional ethnographies from other scholarly fields, to locate my study.

My intention in this section is to outline some of the main trends, common methods and seminal works – historical and contemporary – influencing my study and shaping my method of inquiry. Famous school ethnographies by Willis (1977) and Ball (1981) highlight connections to the outside world, while other scholarly examples lay claim to school ethnography (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1999)and focus on the micro-context of the school site. Arguably, school ethnographies fall into two areas: ones that focus on what occurs within the school walls and ones that focus on school cultures in relation to wider societal forces. Ogbu (1981) contends that school ethnographies become increasingly robust where they examine 'the features of the wider society (e.g. the stratification systems, the corporate economy)' and how such systems 'shape the community patterns (interactional styles, communicative styles, motivational patterns, etc.)' (Ogbu, 1981, p. 4).

According to Stahl (2017a), ethnographic studies have shown 'schools have consistently been documented as sites for the reproduction of the relations of domination and subordination necessary for the maintenance of a capitalist society' (p. 15). The focus of earlier school ethnographies responded to trends in sociology concerning social class. The seminal works of Ball (1981), Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), and Willis (1977) largely examine how student subcultures explain student disengagement from formal education. More specifically, these studies illustrated a link between the formation of learner identities and the systematic organisation of the school as students were identified as either 'winners' or 'losers'. A consistent finding in historic ethnographic research in schools was how institutional practices contribute to social class reproduction (Anyon, 1980; Jackson & Marsden, 1962; Oakes, 1985;

Rist, 1970; Willis 1977). These works conceived of schools as 'sites of cultural transmission where the child develops attitudes, values, notions about the world and notions about the self in reference to the school' (Stahl, 2017a, p. 17). Such works have greatly influenced the methodological design of school ethnographies today (e.g. interviews with students, teachers and leaders, analysis of achievement data, observations) and remain a feature of more contemporary school ethnographies (Livingston & Green, 2016; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 2003; Thomson, 2002).

Willis's (1977) seminal work *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs* is a more conventional ethnographic study that went beyond the walls of the school in documenting how a culture of 'the lads' perpetuated failure at school in reference to post-industrialisation. Willis's (1977) book has significantly influenced contemporary school ethnographies and research on school masculinities (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 2003), schooling in disadvantaged areas in a post-industrial city (Thomson, 2002) and the intersections of school, family and peer groups of young people (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016). Irrespective of whether research is a more traditional ethnography or school ethnography, historical or contemporary, a theme threading through such work is how schools impose certain values. Moving forward, today's school ethnographers are challenged by the imperative to pay close attention to 'resources, institutional practices, political movements and wider policy agendas' (Stahl, 2017a, p. 17) in order to make visible the 'circuits through which structural conditions are enacted in policy and reform institutions as well as the ways in which such conditions come to be woven into community relationships and metabolized by individuals' (Weis, Cipollone & Jenkins, 2014, p. 174). To achieve this, I draw on institutional ethnography, which requires the ethnographer to look within and beyond the walls of the school. My study builds on the aforementioned scholarly work through accounting and examining the political and neoliberal policy pressures coordinating a particular school, and subsequently the people working within it.

3.1.2 Rationale for institutional ethnography and autoethnography as a framework of inquiry

As an institutional ethnographer, I am interested with what *people are doing* and how that *doing* is shaped by the *doings of others*. My attraction to institutional ethnography (IE) was primarily ontological as – at its core – it refutes overly sociological approaches that are theory laden. Early school ethnographies (Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey 1970; Willis, 1977; Woods,

1979), adopting a predominantly Marxist ontology, viewing schools as sites of social reproduction to evince the pervasiveness of social class. More recent research in education investigates neoliberal policies on education (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Khan, 2011; Thomson, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999) and adopts ethnographic methods to broaden the ontological and methodological tradition of such research. However, I believe there are dangers when school ethnographies are too beholden to theory, which can risk abstracting people and their experience (DeVault, 2006) without necessarily moving beyond the micro-local context. This is not to say theory is not important to my study. A number of chapters in the collection by Gulson, Clarke and Petersen (2015) discuss theory as a set of assumptions about how the world works. As the subsequent discussion will show, IE is a theory and has a strong conceptual framework which Smith developed by drawing on theory. I interpret my research findings through the theoretical framework of IE, but I also draw on a range of other theoretical perspectives from social theory that have explanatory power in my analysis. Therefore while IE does not strive to create or contribute to theory, it does open up spaces to capture experience and map how power operates in and beyond the school walls.

In her introduction to IE, Smith (1990) critiques traditional sociological studies, suggesting that they discuss 'social relations organizing the actual activities of people, but the social relations themselves are presupposed without being explored or analyzed' (Smith, 1990, p. 37). This is not to suggest that IE lacks theoretical scope. As this chapter will later illustrate, Smith's work – as well as the work of her followers – draws on a range of theoretical and philosophical scholarly work to ground their approach to sociological inquiry. This range allows for examining, reinterpreting and extending many influential ideas such as looking at how people perform (Goffman, 1959), language as coordinators of individuals (Mead, 1962), materialism (Marx & Engels, 1976) and knowledge, power and discourse (Foucault, 1970, 1972). Furthermore, there was overlap between IE and the robust sociological literature pertaining to schoolboy masculinities and learner identities, which was vital in developing my understanding of how power and discourse shape schools and the individuals within it. Specifically, the seminal scholarly contributions of Connell, Mac an Ghaill and Martino greatly influenced my thinking and perception of formal schooling – particularly how power can operate within a schooling context, both formally and informally.

Throughout my preliminary readings and research, I often contemplated a wider set of unanswerable questions. Does the school make the individual or does the individual make the

school? What are important factors influencing the agency and construction of both individual and institution? Despite lacking experience as a researcher with expertise in sociology, I did understand that this line of questions was too ambitious and broad in nature. IE offers a new way of thinking about my own experience working in an institution while drawing attention to how it is informed by historic and political contexts. Such thinking does generate a tension. Firstly, I care greatly for the people that I work with (students and their families, teachers and leaders) and honouring their agency and narratives is important. Yet I am anxious that I cannot honour them all at the same time and equally, knowing their collective and individual identities influence each other and myself. Secondly, academically I am striving to be a critical researcher in order to connect the practices of Christian Brothers College to the wider field of single-sex education in Australia and the independent schooling market of Adelaide. Thus as my research appetite lay in examining people's lives and work within a specific situational context, I was drawn to IE as it 'offers a way of knowing' (Smith, 2007, p. 12) that valorises the embodied experience of people rather than applying abstract and institutional versions of knowledge to them.

IE is immersive, focused on the everyday and the problematics embedded in everyday experience, where it allows 'for understanding material and social relations of ruling through the actualities of their lives as both a social subject in the research and a conscious and embodied being' (Russell & Reid, 2019, p. 5). Before I proceed to discuss IE as an approach to inquiry, I first highlight some limitations – specifically how, as a member of the school community researching the school, I cannot ignore my location within the social context. This position means that, as an ethnographer, my interaction and experience with the school culture under scrutiny is likely to be greater than more traditional sociological studies. By drawing on autoethnographic methods to complement the wider institutional ethnographic approach, I am able to 'extend understanding of a particular culture' (Holt, 2003, p. 18) but recognise I will never fully understand it as institutions and their complexities – as products of the wider social world – can never be fully accessed.

Autoethnography assists me in examining how I formed my understandings and how I negotiated my own sense of meaning in reference to the school. As a researcher and member of the site, paradoxically this means reflexivity can never be fully achieved. It is important to rigorously be reflexive at every stage of the research, as I argue my own experiences that I brought to the research positively contribute to the wider project. Therefore, in the context of

this ethnographic project, reflexivity involves two things. Firstly, I must reflect upon my research processes to understand the significance of my presence within the project. The school, as a site and institution, holds an identity of its own which I cannot deny having a vested interest in as a professional and as an individual. Understanding my presence in the study means considering questions such as to what extent is what the participants telling me what I wanted to hear? Am I projecting my views onto the participants? Do my processes of data collection prevent other forms of data being gathered? Secondly, reflexivity requires I continually reflect on the theoretical structures I employ in my analysis. This exercise is most important to ensure I do not simply fit the data into preformed notions of ruling relations or institutional forms of knowledge.

IE provides a critical method of inquiry that keeps the institution in view by tracing how its discourses, texts and action create certain conditions and experiences for the people there (McCoy, 2006). Adhering to the principles of IE allows me to maintain a critical gaze as a researcher. My intention as a researcher is not grounded in nostalgia; rather I am committed to scrutinising and problematising the everyday experience of people within the school by drawing on key texts and interviews. IE allowed me to develop an understanding of how people perform, are formed, and are validated in relation to the school, but simultaneously examine how the school performs, is formed and is validated by external forces and the individuals that make it. IE provides a theoretical underpinning to this type of work, not a prescriptive method of inquiry. Therefore in the following section I detail the essential features of this approach before detailing the methodology employed to apply it.

3.2 Theoretical underpinning: Institutional ethnography

In this section, I begin by explaining the history and relevance of IE in order to demonstrate how it varies from traditional sociological and ethnographic studies. In doing so, I locate the relevance of my research within the historic and contemporary body of school ethnography (Ball, 1981; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Thomson, 2002; Willis, 1977; Woods, 1979) and IE in education (Hewson, 2013; Kerr, 2006; Parson, 2016; Reid, 2018; G. Smith, 1998; Spina, 2017b; Stahl, 2017a; Winton, 2019). By drawing on a wide body of scholarly research, I introduce the key terms and theoretical underpinnings to support my use of IE to investigate the everyday experience of students, teachers and leaders at school.

3.2.1 Defining institutional ethnography and its relevance to my study

Feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith (1987, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2005) developed IE as a method of research to explore the social relations coordinating people's everyday lives. The starting point of any IE is 'the actualities of people's lives' (Smith, 2003, p. 61) and it assumes people are experts in their own life. Smith's sociology for women, which adopted the term 'standpoint' from Harding (1987), originated in her own experience and exploration of how her subjectivities as a university academic and mother were organised and situated within society (Smith, 2005, p. 12). Her approach rebukes traditional sociological methods of inquiry by valorising her participants' lived realities (Grahame, 1998) over the objectification of research subjects and privileging research knowledge. While Smith (1999) argues IE rejects the Archimedean point of knowing in traditional sociology, Walby (2007) critiques her work by suggesting the social relations of research always entail a degree of objectification and thus 'is not transcending of objectification, and the institutional ethnographer still retains a high degree of authority over representations of the subject' (p. 1026). However, Smith's (2005) purpose in developing an approach to inquiry beginning from women's standpoint was to 'discredit sociology's claim to constitute objective knowledge independent of the sociologist's situation … The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within' (p. 28). Therefore, Smith argues life is in the actions of real people in real places, so she embraces the subjective and subjectivity. Thus for Smith (2005), IE involves:

> exploring the social relations organizing institutions as people participate in them and from their perspectives. People are the expert practitioners of their own lives, and the ethnographer's work is to learn from them, to assemble what is learned from different perspectives, and to investigate how their activities are coordinated. It aims to go beyond what people know to find out how what they are doing is connected with others' doings in ways they cannot see. The idea is to map the institutional aspects of the ruling relations so that people can expand their own knowledge of their everyday worlds by being able to see how what they are doing is coordinated with others' doings elsewhere and else when. (p. 225)

Smith's critique of mainstream sociology was that it starts and ends in theory, resulting in what she calls the '14th floor effect' whereby 'theoretical concepts stand in for the social relations that exemplify the theory' (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 19). Critical to Smith's position is that the

inquiry begins from an embodied standpoint rather than 'theory' (Kearney et al., 2019, p.19). This is not to say Smith's work lacks theoretical or conceptual density. In her seminal texts *The everyday world as problematic* (1987) and *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people* (2005), the philosophical and theoretical work of Marx, Garfinkel, Foucault, Mead, Bakhtin and Volosinov are profoundly influential in her constructions of language, power, knowledge and methodology. These conceptions are essential in order for the researcher to discover, describe and explicate the political, social, historical, gendered and economic aspects of participants' lives (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). For the institutional ethnographer, this means employing a range of traditional data collection methods (such as observations, interviews, journals and collecting texts) that allow the researcher to investigate the material and tangible world of participants' experiences and contexts (Campbell, 2006). What makes IE different from traditional sociological studies is how this data is mapped or traced with the intention of exposing connections between the work of participants, the way they talk, the way they live, what they believe, and the textually mediated nature of their worlds. The analytic work of the institutional ethnographer is to explicate these connections and 'bring into view' the social organisation of people's lives (Rankin, 2017a).

Importantly, IE is not beholden to a particular field or sphere within social research. Rather, Smith (2005) explains the general problematic of an institutional ethnographer takes the 'everyday world as an unfinished arena of discovery in which the lines of social relations are present to be explored beyond it' (p. 39). As a method of inquiry, institutional ethnographic work spans various spheres of social life to include policy documents (Eastwood, 2005; Ng, 1995; Stooke, 2003), funding proposals and planning documents (Grahame, 1998; Turner, 2001), the accounting records of bureaucratic workplaces (McCoy, 1998; Mykhalovskiy, 2001), or the charts and records of professional–client relations in health care, social work and educational settings (André-Bechely, 2005; Parada, 2002; Rankin, 2001). This list is by no means exhaustive but demonstrates how Smith's IE aligns with intentions to unearth the relationship between global inequalities and lived experiences. By reading and rereading other studies in the form of dissertations, articles and books that originate from various spheres of social life outside of education, my thinking became broader and I found connections and interconnections. As such, the study presented in this dissertation intends to contribute to the global effort of IE scholars to examine how ordinary people's lives are hooked into the larger fabric of the social world in ways that are not necessarily observable within the everyday.

As the popularity of IE has grown in social research, and with it the methodological nature of its application, there is a common lexicon, set of principles and concepts that mark a study distinctly as an IE. In the following section, I introduce and explain these to illustrate their relevance to my research design. I then follow these explanations with a discussion of how I operationalised IE within this study.

3.2.2 Standpoint: A starting point for the method of inquiry

Institutional ethnographers ground their work in an understanding that people are 'active and competent knowers' (Smith, 1987, p. 142) of their own lives. Therefore the focus of an institutional ethnographer is to explore people's lives in situational contexts from the standpoint/s of those engaging in the work. Drawing from anthropology and feminism, IE applies the concept of 'embodiment', which 'emphasizes people's knowledge of the world as generated from the experience of their lives' (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 611). Therefore, the method allows for 'a way of knowing' through exploring embodied experience and attempting to provide an authentic account of people's actual experience, rather than versions of knowledge that are abstract, theoretical and institutional. Campbell (2003) argues bureaucratic and institutionalised ruling perspectives coordinate the daily lives of people. As the actualities of lived experience become the lens to explore the socially organised world, Smith's 'notion of standpoint doesn't privilege the knower [researcher] … It shifts the ground of knowing, the place where inquiry begins' (Smith, 1992, p. 90) to therefore privilege the people living within the area of social life being investigated.

The research design of my study was intended to include multiple standpoints from various people within the school. While I began the study interviewing a small group of Year 10 boys who described the kind of work that they do at school, I extended this to teachers and leaders. Naturally, as schools are highly social institutions, the student participants' mention of teachers and leaders led to further interviews and standpoints being imbued into the study, further opening a space to explore how identities are formed relationally in reference to hierarchies within institutions. Recognising that students, teachers and leaders possess different forms of social and institutional power, I sought to understand these power differentials that were not always what was expected. However my interpretation of Smith's work is that as a researcher I am not beholden to only one standpoint or position within the institutional hierarchy. Accessing the perspectives of Year 10 boys was simply the starting point for the inquiry, yet their concerns and experiences helped steer the analytic focus and 'organize the direction of

the sociological gaze and provide a framework of relevance' (Smith, 2005, p. 27). Through examining the participants' (students', teachers' and leaders') and my own standpoint and discovering how it organises our work, I am able to explicate the ruling relations coordinating these experiences of school as an institution. Consequently, I draw from various standpoints, students, teachers, leaders and my own, working from an assumption that 'people's knowledge and experience hold the clue for tracking what actually happens' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 3).

3.2.3 Epistemology and ontology

IE allows me to focus on the participants' experiences and work at school without being completely absorbed by their perspective or denying their agency through the possible constraints of theoretical frames. By adopting a standpoint – as a starting point – this method of inquiry provides an opportunity for an exploratory study which seeks to understand how the working school lives of students, teachers and leaders are mediated by texts and social relations while tracing how these connect to broader discourses and regimes of power. As an IE researcher, I am required to make an epistemological and ontological shift that strays from the traditional paradigm of sociology and focuses upon the institution as a site of struggle. This has certain epistemic and ontological implications, which I will now explore separately.

3.2.3.1 Epistemology

Epistemology 'is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). According to Henslin (2012), sociological theory consists of five major theoretical perspectives: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, structural-functionalism, feminism and postmodernism. Drawing upon an IE approach requires what Deveau (2009) calls an 'epistemological shift' which Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson and Tilleczek (2006) deem 'radical', as the thinking locates problems in society (e.g. institutions, structures), rather than individuals. IE originates from a feminist epistemology, tending to privilege and valorise people's knowledge and experience as particular and concrete rather than abstract and conceptual. Such an epistemological approach requires me as a researcher to take seriously the interconnected world of people within the socially orchestrated and controlled features of their lives and work (Mann & Kelley 1997; Olesen, 2003).

To demonstrate how such an epistemological shift can work, I draw upon one example from the research of Deveau (2009). In describing her experience as a federal public servant with a disability, for her IE 'chairs are a problem' (p. 4), which captures how the institutional

ethnographer's epistemology shifts the focus of the researcher. By explaining how chairs are made to serve the social organisation of work, Deveau contrasts the 'objectified' view of an employer or doctor, who might see her physical problem with a chair as biological, thus residing in her, with an applied institutional ethnographer method whereby the chairs are recognised as objects to serve the needs of the social organisation of work. The problematic that emerges from the standpoint of Deveau centres on who organises the chairs and this shapes the inquiry accordingly. In this light, chairs exist in the social and are not part of Deveau's identity. In this context, Smith (2005) understands 'social' as 'people's ongoing activities viewed under the aspect of their coordination with the activities of others' (p. 227). As an institutional ethnographer, the epistemological difference here involves

> rejecting 'objective accounts … and instead [practising] a reflexive way of knowing the world she or he inhabits'. Institutional ethnography strives for a way of knowing that is experiential, from the inside, rather than the truth or objective or ideological. (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 20, quoting Smith)

In this light, Smith draws on the work of Foucault, where he writes:

> Each society has its own regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the *mechanisms and instances* which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the *means* by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures *accorded value* in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980a, p. 109, original emphasis)

In Chapter 2, I drew on scholarly literature to provide analysis and critique of media and policy texts that create 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1972) about all-boys schooling. In the subsequent data chapters of 5, 6, 7 and 8, in my role as an institutional ethnographer I examine and map the different ways students, teachers and leaders at the school site experience everyday life at school against the objectified actions of an institution performing to the tenets of an increasingly competitive school market. This involved examining how participants' work 'is hooked into and shaped by social relations, organisation, and powers beyond the scope of direct experience' (Smith, 1992, p. 82), exposing how school policies and responses influence particular politics of truth despite the jarring experience of the people within it.

Returning to Deveau's problem, where a chair can be seen as a problem within the individual or a socially constructed problem at work, in the study presented in this dissertation student academic 'achievement' can be understood in a similar way depending on the standpoint. For example, while a student's academic 'achievement' in a subject may suggest growth and success on a personal level, the achievement still may not meet the prerequisites of a particular course, thus it is seen as a failure through an institutional lens. Furthermore, there are many factors I witnessed that contribute to achievement. For example, some students would build relationships with teachers strategically to gain assistance with assignments.

The performance of certain masculinities by some students would gain a certain currency with some teachers, while ironically creating conflict with others, and these relationships between students and teachers would often influence achievement. Additionally, teachers would experience pressure from school leaders in relation to student grades. In other words, the objective institutional view of student achievement in school often jars with the various embodied experiences of the people working within the school. These observations are not surprising as the marketisation of education creates pressure to perform and compete and the participants of this study were not immune, irrespective of their position within the school. As an institutional ethnographer, I explore such disjunctures between participants' embodied experience of school and the textually prescribed ways of knowing which are manifested in different school policies and texts.

3.2.3.2 Ontology

Ontology 'is concerned with what is, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such' (Crotty, 1998, p. 10) or more simply, 'the study of being' (Crotty, 2003, p. 10). Guba and Lincoln (1989) state ontological assumptions are ones that respond to the questions 'what is there that can be known?' or 'what is the nature of reality?' (p. 83). Deveau (2008) maintains IE also requires an 'ontological shift' due to research participants' standpoint being the entry point (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Deveau, 2008). A central feature of the ontology which serves as a basis for IE is the presupposition that all knowledge is socially constructed and therefore people's everyday lives and work are coordinated by such knowledge (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Smith, 1990, 1999, 2005) or hooked 'into the ideological way of knowing something' (Deveau, 2009, p. 5). Thus, the ontological shift for scholars in IE requires a

rejection of speculative, abstract theoretical explanations and an exploration of what George Smith (1998) describes as a 'sensuous world of people's actual practices and activities' (p. 18).

Dorothy Smith (2005) uses the terms *discriminative animus* and *attitudinal barriers* to 'express social relations organizing the actual activities of people, but the social relations themselves are presupposed without being explored or analyzed' (p. 37). In other words, she resists a positivist view in which decontextualised knowledge can be constructed objectively outside the social settings of people's lives (Smith, 2006). This is not to say Dorothy Smith refutes or ignores concepts and theories completely; in fact her pioneering work draws on a variety of concepts and theories that underpin this complex method of inquiry (refer to Section 3.2.1). However, consistent within scholarly work on IE is that it remains not beholden to one form or theory. Complementing this shift, the IE presented in this dissertation speaks to various fields of sociology and social theory, particularly the areas of policy sociology (Ball, 2012, 2016a; Lingard, 2009, 2011), gender (Connell, 1995; 2003; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli), learner identity (Erstad, 2012; Reay, 2010) and textual/discourse analysis (Foucault, 1987; Smith & Turner, 2014). I also draw from scholarly work that employs a range of conceptual and theoretical schema to explain how power permeates the school site (Davies, 1996; Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016; Stahl, 2017a). Therefore, rather than being driven by theory, I am theory-informed so that that my research creates 'a way of seeing, from where we actually live, into the powers, processes and relations that organize and determine the everyday context of that seeing' (Smith, 2005, p. 9).

My research illustrates an ontological shift as an institutional ethnographer by returning agency 'back to the embodied knower so that we come to understand how things happen the way they do' (Deveau, 2009, p. 5). In other words, the participants' experiences and words shone light on how the institution works. The ontological underpinning of my research therefore recognises that social knowledge and people's lives are bound to the local, contextual, historical, embodied, personal, cultural, interactive, authoritative and so forth (Darville, 1995; Smith, 1999). As Smith (2006) suggests, the social construction of knowledge is perpetually in motion. Therefore, rather than focusing on why people focus on some parts of school and not others, this study as an IE explores *how* people's schooling lives are orchestrated.

3.2.4 Everyday chafing and the problematic

An institutional ethnographer begins their point of inquiry by listening to people describe their everyday work. Central to the researcher's investigation is locating people's experiences of tension and contradictions in their daily lives. Campbell (2003) and Rankin and Campbell (2006) refer to this as 'different ways of knowing', highlighting the disjuncture between an individual's work and knowledge and authoritative institutional knowledge. Central to the analytic work of an institutional ethnographer is using these moments of disjuncture (Smith, 2003) or chafing (DeVault & McCoy, 2012) as threads in understanding and mapping the social organisation. A thread line running throughout this thesis is the disjuncture between the institutional idealism of the school and the lived reality of the people working within it. The opening anecdote of Chapter 1, in which I describe a student's resistance towards the school uniform by rolling his shirtsleeves up, his angst as his mobile phone is confiscated and his scepticism regarding the relevance of academic work, illustrates a disjuncture between an individual's actuality and perceptions and institutional authority.

My study seeks to draw data from multiple standpoints in order to better understand how these moments of chafing present and are experienced differently depending on where participants are within the institution. Throughout the data chapters of this thesis, students, teachers and leaders, including myself, share similar experiences of disjuncture albeit in relation to different matters. Some of these disjunctures are obvious and some are more subtle. Vital to my work as an institutional ethnographer is tracing and mapping these moments that led me to form the research problematic.

A distinction between IE and other approaches is the focus on the exploration of the *problematic*. Smith (2005) explains that a problematic requires the researcher to consider how everyday life is 'orchestrated by a set of social relations and produced from beyond the local' (p. 103). It is essential to this kind of work that the problematic stems from the participants' experiences of disjuncture (Benjamin & Rankin, 2014) and not from within the 'social relations of the ruling apparatus' (de Montigny, 2014, p. 179). In other words, the problematic is a territory of discovery more than a question that is concluded with an answer. The formulation of the problematic begins with the concerns and experiences of the participants; therefore it functions simultaneously as both a concept and method. The problematic of this study is as follows:

> As the school operates within an increasingly competitive market and suffers from declining enrolments, I examine the ways particular texts and policies are designed and/or implemented at the school level to commodify students, their masculinities and their experience in an effort to sell the school.

The above problematic could not be identified until this final stage of writing; it naturally unveiled itself in the process of my analytic work over time. As the researcher locates people in their own lives who are thinking, imagining and acting within 'particular actualities' (Smith, 1997, p. 345), as researchers 'we would seek from particular experience situated in the matrix of everyday/every night world to explore and display the relations, powers, and forces that organize and shape it' (pp. 345–346). The problematic is understood through Smith's broad definition of 'work', which includes anything that 'people do in the course of their daily lives … everything that people know how to do and that their daily lives require them to do' (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 72), irrespective of whether they consider this to form an official part of their work. Beginning with the standpoint is crucial and requires attention to activities that may often go unnoticed. In the context of this study, people are coordinated and brought together for certain purposes. From dressing in a school uniform, filling out a school diary, representing the school in a sport, or a teacher double-checking assessment guides before marking class essays, these often mundane or seemingly unimportant examples of work are important in understanding coordination, as Smith (1999) describes:

> Whatever exists is produced/accomplished by people 'at work,' that is, active, thinking, intending, feeling, in the actual local settings of their living and in relationships that are fundamentally among particular others – even though the categories of ruling produce particular others as expressions of its order. (p. 75)

While the methodological advantages of 'an orthodox ethnographic gaze of looking within a bounded setting or group' (Doherty, 2015, p. 270) contribute to the theorisation of the social world, IE allows people's experiences to be the departure point for sociological inquiry. This opportunity to 'look up and into' (Smith, 2006, p. 5) creates spaces for mapping power relations coordinated through institutional texts and processes. Thus, the institutional ethnographer's concern centres on the organisation of people's lives. In practice, this means discovering what

Smith (2006) calls the 'social' in people's everyday ongoing activities rather than a study of an organisation in itself.

3.2.5 Power, discourse and exploring ruling relations

As Smith's work draws heavily on the work of Foucault, power and discourse is understood as 'systems of knowledge and knowledge making independent of particular individuals … What can be said or written is subject to the regulation of the discourse within which it is framed' (Smith, 2006, p. 7). However, looking to expand this definition and demonstrate how ruling relations are translocally achieved through language and discourse, she draws on Bakhtin's (1981) insistence that discourses are a local accomplishment enacted daily. Therefore, power is evident when local discourses regulate what people think and do, which is what Foucault (1972) calls 'governmentality'. Within the field of IE, this is understood as *ruling relations.* Smith (2005) explains:

> The concept of the ruling relations directs attention to the distinctive translocal forms of social organisation and social relations mediated by texts of all kinds (print, film, television, computer, and so on) that have emerged and become dominant in the last two hundred years. They are objectified forms of consciousness and organisation, constituted externally to particular people and places, creating and relying on textually based realities. (p. 227)

Importantly, ruling relations privilege authoritative forms of knowledge by displacing individuals' local knowledge and experience by inserting authoritative interests into the daily lives of people across multiple locations (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; McCoy, 2006). The agenda of ruling relations is to generalise. Smith's (2005) reference to 'translocal' assumes local circumstances are weaved together to other local sites through 'texts and discourses produced from outside the immediate local, or extra-locally' (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 613). I will expand on the function of texts below. As IE centres on unveiling how translocal activities connect, the 'empirically traceable connections between what happens here and what happens in extra- or translocal places there' (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 33) becomes the crux of the analytic work as these connections 'are not necessarily obvious or apparent to us, which is why they are objects of critical social inquiry' (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 613). Thus within IE, the study of discourse is important given its power to structure and coordinate. Campbell and Gregor (2004) explain:

> In Foucault's work and in work taking up his approach, for example, the notion of discourse designates a kind of large-scale conversation in and through texts … For Smith, discourse refers to a field of relations that includes not only texts and their intertextual conversation, but the activities of people in actual sites who produce them and use them and take up the conceptual frames they circulate. (p. 40).

In this light, the study of ruling relations, which are invisible to people, are paramount in the institutional ethnographer's agenda where the concern is to not only discover and explicate what is happening in a particular setting but to connect these experiences or types of work to other locations (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; McCoy, 2006; Smith, 1990). However, ruling relations are not a one-way relationship as people have agency and do not passively accept dominant discourses. The ruling relations are both enacted and resisted by people in power (in this case school leadership and teachers) making regulations. Similarly, people affected by these regulations (teachers and students) can comply and resist. Thus the scope and effect of regulation varies with each individual and to varying degrees. Exploring the daily, mundane and ordinary interactions allows the institutional ethnographer to explore how agents in various positions have access to – and various amounts of – power. Examining and explicating ruling relations assist in bridging the work of institutional ethnographers across various fields and settings, making this type of scholarly work a collective effort to bring into view socially organised knowledge and the orchestration of the everyday world.

3.2.6 Mapping discourse and power through texts

For institutional ethnographers ruling relations infiltrate and coordinate the everyday primarily through texts. The role of texts is central to the concept of ruling relations and distribution of power as they have the capacity to objectify people 'thereby mediating, regulating and authorizing people's activities' (Smith, 2001, p. 160). For the purposes of this investigation, texts are visible in the form of curriculum policies, teacher planning, school policies, school posters, uniforms, emails and so on. In short, texts are defined as material objects which carry meaning. Furthermore, texts in this investigation play a part in the ongoing sequences of action coordinating participants' lives, such as regulating student behaviour, guiding teacher assessment, promoting a leaders' vision and so on. As social organisation is 'textually mediated' when texts are engaged and activated (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 29), my role as an institutional ethnographer is to make observable just how such texts enter into, coordinate,

influence and organise the participants' daily work at school as they participate in the manifestation of ruling relations (Smith & Turner, 2014). Mapping and understanding texts is vital to investigating any institution, as Smith (2006) argues:

> The organized character of institutions and agencies depends heavily on the various uses of texts to coordinate, order, provide continuity, monitor, and organize relations between different segments, phases, and levels of organisational courses of action. Organizational texts order and coordinate activities, which are dispersed spatially and temporally in a variety of organizational settings. (p. 175)

As this study will show, schools are highly textually mediated spaces and arguably account for and/or coordinate nearly every feature of school life. In South Australia, schools are expected to follow a national and state curriculum where the teacher's familiarity with the expectations set forth is largely assessment centric. A great deal of teachers' time centres on the production and collection of educational data (see Spina, 2017a) which, according to the *National report on schooling in Australia* (ACARA, 2019a), focuses on 'improving performance and student outcomes, is both locally and nationally relevant and is timely, consistent and comparable'. Smith (1990) explains institutional texts are pervaded with 'ideological code' (p. 157), which are replicable and 'organise intertextualities across discursive sites' (p. 158). It is in this replicability that texts assume much of their power:

> The relations of ruling form a complex field of coordinated activities, based in technologies of print, and increasingly in computer technologies. They are activities in and in relation to texts, and texts coordinate them as relations. Text-mediated relations are the forms in which power is generated and held in contemporary societies. Printed or electronic texts have the generally neglected property of indefinite replicability. Replicability of identical forms of meaning that can be activated in multiple local settings is fundamental to the relations of ruling. (Smith, 1990, p. 79)

In short, for texts to have power across various sites, they have to be reproducible and activated through individuals. An important feature of my work as an institutional ethnographer is mapping texts located locally to translocal ruling relations. A feature throughout this study is the adaptation and implementation of what appears as local texts (rules, academic processes, subject content and course work), which are extensions of translocal texts (legislation, national

policies, Australian and state curriculum). While the local may – on the surface – appear different, the 'ideological codes' of competition, standardisation and accountability are pervasive. A salient feature of my analytic work is mapping these translocal texts to the embodied experience of the participants. Thus the 'ubiquity of the organizing text' (Smith, 1996, p. 178) is premised on standardisation as this allows local activities to be in 'correspondence with standardized texts' (p. 173). As every school in Australia is accountable to national educational policies in one form or another, these texts apply 'rules and instructions … from one setting and time to others' (Smith, 1996, p. 182).

In the field of educational policy and its effects, Maguire et al. (2011) demonstrate how school discourses of a 'good student' are worked into the everyday practices of school life through particular policies. They specifically detail how educational policy is represented and translated in a wide variety of artefacts, mainly posters, which embody a specific representation of the student subject that is 'premised on the belief that if students have high academic expectations of themselves they can successfully achieve them' (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 600). Specifically, their analysis of the posters illustrates how 'codes of behaviour' and 'ways of being' are 'encoded, enacted and embedded in a vast range of visual cues and prompts that all schools produce' (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 600). The arguments Maguire et al. (2011) make remain particularly pertinent to my own, where in the data chapters 4 to 7, I explicate how particular posters and policies lacing the walls of classrooms and open spaces within the school site espouse a particular discourse regarding the ideal academic and masculine subject of the school. Evident in both the work of Maguire et al. (2011) and in my own study, the capacity of texts to generalise is evident in how texts create standardised language and representation of the self that connects to the ideological code of the school. Thus, according to Smith (2001):

> The replicated identical text as utterance activated by participants joins them in a situation which it names and defines, standardizing among them the terms in which they can know, understand and evaluate it, regardless of how its naming and its terms provide for the utterance of what they are actually experiencing … Texts provide the basis of a technology enabling, among other things, an order of facticity suppressing divergent perspectives and establishing shared and enforceable common ground, a virtual reality standardized across multiple settings. (p. 176)

The work of Smith centres on an understanding that textually mediated social organisation presupposes that texts are active and cannot be 'separated from the world they are written and read in. Rather, texts are taken up as constituents of ongoing social relations in which our own practices of reading enter us' (1990, p. 11). Consequently, Smith rejects 'analytic strategies [that] presuppose the text as something that appears before the sociologist already in its character as a specimen, inert, dead and out of context' (Smith, 1990, p. 120). Therefore, texts are only activated when people connect to them (Smith, 1999) and, I would argue, use them to further the ideological goals of the institution.

Furthermore, the discursive and ideological coordination of people across multiple sites is fashioned by texts, which prescribe how things are seen or done. With this understanding, texts' 'capacity to rule depends upon carrying messages across sites, coordinating someone's actions *here* with someone else's *there*, for instance' (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 33 original emphasis). In the context of my study, I argue the neoliberal tools governing through translocal texts (e.g. Australian Curriculum, high school certificate policies, *My School* website) cultivate a competitive fervour amongst schools (especially fee-paying schools), which, in turn, permeates into the school-level context influencing the relations between leaders, teachers and students. With this in mind, it is important to note that texts, as tangible forms of ruling relations, can be contested as well as accepted or manipulated. Therefore it is important to theorise texts as having an effect where 'people who know how to do so must activate the text' (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 33).

Within institutions, such as schools, the ability to control activities is dependent on 'actors' carrying the discourse and ideology of the institution from the texts to a specific site or context like the classroom, resulting in their 'naturalisation' (Thompson, 1990). Therefore, an important component of this study is to examine how translocal texts filter into the classroom and make visible who is activating them. For example, I would surmise that a large majority of students are tepid in their knowledge of translocal policies such as the curriculum and, as this study shows, any interaction with curriculum is ordinarily after a teacher has adapted it to suit a particular task or objective. This example highlights the multiple layers of power and possibilities regarding texts and their activation that are seen as beholden simultaneously to people activating them (teachers implementing curriculum) and people receiving them (students complying with the assignment/policy). The study of the role of texts remains a

prevalent feature of all institutional ethnographic work – and a central aim of this study is to examine the roles texts play in school culture and how they foster shifting power dynamics.

3.2.7 Operationalising institutional ethnography within formal education

My intention in this section is to capture how IE serves as an approach to examining formal educational settings. By reading a substantive body of literature using IE to investigate social phenomena, I was introduced to a variety of approaches that illustrate its versatility as an approach to inquiry. IE has been employed to study the social coordination and organisation of various spheres of social life such as hospitals (Quinlan, 2009; Rankin & Campbell, 2009), aged care centres (Diamond, 1992; Rankin, 2003), and schools (Comber, 2012; Griffith & Smith, 2005; Nichols & Griffith, 2009) to name a few. Logically, as each study begins with participants' standpoint and is not beholden to a particular analytic agenda, each IE is unique. Importantly though, the employment of IE as an approach to inquiry requires particular attention to its principles and features. In Table 1 below I have provided a brief summary of institutional ethnographic studies conducted within the context of formal educational settings between the years 1998 and 2018. In constructing this table, my intention is to illustrate the versatility of approaches as well as the foci of IE. Thus this allows me to position my own study within the wider body of work on IE and education.

Table 1: Approaches to institutional ethnography in formal educational settings

Author, year and title	Focus, country and setting	Contributions	Approach/es
Smith, G. (1998) 'The ideology of "fag": The school experience of gay students'	**Focus:** This study of gay teenagers' experience in school was born from the author's own educational experience as a gay youth. **Country:** Canada **Setting:** Secondary school	Unveils how language constructed by homophobic ideology, experienced by informants within a situated context, is where 'the social relations of heterosexuality and patriarchy dominate its public space' (Smith, 1998, p. 309). For George Smith, an IE was beneficial due to its 'ontological presupposition that an actual world exists that people actively bring into being and that can be studied and described' (1998, p. 309). In his body of work, Smith demonstrates how homophobic social relations operate within schools from the standpoint of his participants' experience.	• Interviewed gay young men in school or who had left school recently. • Gathered informants' stories as data. • Interviews were designed reflexively to create a dialogue between two gay individuals, the researcher and a participant.
Kerr, L. (2006) *The plight/flight of secondary teachers: Educational reform in Ontario*	**Focus:** The study centres on secondary school reform in Ontario, mapping 'ruling relations' and identifying the ideological code of public education. **Country:** Canada **Setting:** Secondary school	Demonstrates how 'the ideological code constitutive of public education restructuring in Ontario (p. 31) is orchestrated through broader organisational policies and procedures across multiple school sites. These texts are seen to carry ideological beliefs, norms and values, thus exposing them is at the core of IE. Furthermore, Kerr acts as researcher, author and teacher within her own study, employing autoethnography as part of the analysis to include inter-subjective and self-reflexive analysis of the socio-political context and power relations shaping her experience.	• Focus group interviews • Follow-up individual telephone interviews • Relevant documentary text analysis • Autoethnography
Hewson, S. (2013) *Control, shift, insert: Living and enacting policy in teacher's day/night work*	**Focus:** Research explores the implementation of an electronic curriculum and assessment tool as both a policy and as a text that organises teachers' work. **Country:** Australia **Setting:** Prep/Reception to Year 12 college	The study values and gives voice to teachers' embodied knowledge, experience and practices as people living and enacting policy discourses in their work. Contributes to understandings of teachers' work in a context of globalisation. Importantly, while providing evidence that teachers' work is shaped by policy, it is not always taken up as intended 'as teachers work within parameters of what is possible amidst competing discourses' (p. 4).	• Participant researcher • Semi-structured interviews • Focus groups • Research journal • Observations • Collection of texts (print and material)

Parson, L. (2016) *Science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) in higher education from the perspective of female students*	**Focus:** In considering recent scholarship on gendered institutions, explores the everyday work of female undergraduate students completing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. **Country:** United States of America **Setting:** University	Parsons elucidates how gendered discourse is shaping the everyday work of STEM education and calls for a movement away from 'fixing the women' towards 'fixing the system' (p. 17). Parson's work is an important piece of advocacy for women in science as, despite her participant's assertions that science-based university programs are not marginalising, their experiences of these environments are uncomfortable. Her work illustrates the embedded 'masculinist' discourse dominating the study of sciences at a local and translocal level.	• Multiple interviews with participants over the course of a semester • Interviews with lecturers • Observations of classes • Identified and collected texts that coordinated the work of female students • Analysed the texts with the goal of exploring gendered language
Spina, N. (2017b) *The quantification of education and the reorganisation of teachers' work: An institutional ethnography*	**Focus:** The study explores how the everyday work of teachers is organised by powerful interconnected national and subnational power relations that rely on the quantification of education. **Country:** Australia **Setting:** Two schools, primary and secondary	Reveals how teachers' work is connected to chains of texts that enforce the production and collection of educational data by linking numbers to funding and performance management. Spina's work demonstrates how 'outside of the classroom' (p. 11), teachers are coordinated to engage with a range of calculative work regarding student assessment data as public and institutional discourse (such as 'data conversations') that frame teachers' work in the form of individual performativity.	• Semi-structured interviews with teachers and school leaders • Collection of texts produced *within* and *by* the two schools • Collection of video recordings, audio recordings • Collection of publicly available texts such as policy and media reports
Reid, J. (2018) *Primary teachers, inspection and the silencing of the ethic of care*	**Focus:** Provides a critical explication of teachers' understanding and experience of care during a period of inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). **Country:** England	While drawing on IE as a method of inquiry, Reid employs Joan Tronto's (1993) argument for a 'political ethic of care' as a conceptual framework for understanding teachers' experience. Provides argument that 'care' is a matter of political and social interaction rather than individual reason, examining how teachers' practices are coordinated and mediated through institutional relations (texts) through social and material relations.	• Observations • Interviews (with leadership and teachers) • Personal journal • Participant poems (teachers) • Paper artefacts (minutes of meetings, reports)

	Setting: Primary		
Stahl, G. (2017a) *Ethnography of a neoliberal school: Building cultures of success*	**Focus:** Drawing from personal leadership experience at a charter school in the US, Stahl describes how the activities of leadership, teachers and students in one school connect to neoliberal discourses designed to raise aspirations and mitigate the impact of poverty for low-income students of colour. **Country:** United States of America **Setting:** Charter school (secondary)	With astute attention to a specific model of schooling, Stahl explores how neoliberal rationality seeps into school life by structuring practices around pedagogy and subjectivities concerning the treatment of children and teacher professionalism. Identifies numerous complexities and contradictions of educating children. Contributes to wider understanding of how institutional practices generate meanings and subjectivities and illustrates how these are always in a process of formation. By placing tremendous emphasis on texts, Stahl illustrates how these texts promote, 'become active' and coordinate members of the school towards 'aggressive neoliberal inscriptions' (p. 166)	• Autoethnography – drawing on journals, recollections, etc. Stahl finds this approach to be at times complementary and blurring with IE. • Observations • Collection of texts (print and material) and textual analysis
Winton, S. (2019) 'Coordinating policy layers of school fundraising in Toronto, Ontario, Canada: An institutional ethnography'	**Focus:** Winton investigates the politics and coordination of school fundraising in the Toronto District School Board by centring from the standpoint of parents asked to give money to their children's schools. **Country:** Canada **Setting:** Middle school	Explores how school fundraising, parent involvement and school policies organise parents' experience of school and enables them to meet neoliberal expectations of a 'good parent' and how such efforts secure advantages for their children. Winton's work illustrates how such activities are accomplices in the privatisation of public education. Illustrates how parents' local experience of school is impacted by the principal's decisions and wider policy initiatives. This work suggests current policy models disproportionately benefit middle-class parents. Using IE as a means to identify possibilities for intervention, Winton suggests a ban on school fundraising as this may address inequities and dilute pressure placed on parents to do whatever they can to ensure their children's success.	• Study begins from Winton's own standpoint as an 'everyday parent' and involves journal writing • Collection of texts in relation to school fundraising (e.g. email notices, back-to-school packages, school newsletters and social media posts) • Interviews with three parents, two principals and central administrator • Attended meetings about fundraising events and collected handouts, meeting minutes and media releases

3.2.8 Criticisms of institutional ethnography and considerations

In order to substantiate my claims and the validity of my research, it is important to acknowledge and consider criticisms of IE as a method of inquiry. I will discuss two prominent criticisms of IE in relation to my study. In responding to each of these, I draw from scholars in the field of IE to address the concerns and provide comment in relation to this study.

3.2.8.1 Criticism of the universality of standpoint theory

As my study draws on multiple standpoints including students, teachers and members of the leadership team, it is important to acknowledge several scholars who provide theoretical debates and have articulated concerns regarding the universality of standpoint theory (c.f. Harding, 1997; Hartstock, 1997; Hekman, 1997; Hill Collins, 1997). In their work on feminist methodologies, Stanley and Wise (1990) question standpoint theorists and methodology by asking how a white ethnographer can research a participant that embodies 'a standpoint she could not share, like black women, or who she would morally or politically disagree with, like women abusers of children' (p. 36). Considering such criticism, it is important to highlight the underlying intention, epistemology and ontology of the institutional ethnographer (see Section 3.2.3). Additionally, Grahame (1998) defends IE by saying that, regardless of the researcher's capacity to understand or relate to a participant's standpoint, the institutional ethnographer should focus on explicating social and ruling relations. IE is not invested in providing universal claims on the behalf of research participants; rather it intends to explicitly discuss and examine the frontline of people's everyday life and its coordination by outside organising forces, thus creating scope for making visible aspects of the social world that often go unquestioned or recognised. Institutional ethnographers build from this epistemological perspective by valorising the knowledge and experience of the participants and ontologically by rejecting speculative abstract theoretical explanations and resisting decontextualised knowledge about people.

Standpoint is highly significant to Dorothy Smith (2006) as a feminist scholar celebrating her own experience and rebuking any claims to universality by arguing that 'experience is a method of speaking that is not preappropriated by the discourses of the relations of ruling' (p. 394) and that 'it is this commitment to the privileges of women to speak from experience that opens the women's movement to the critique of white and/or heterosexist hegemony from those it marginalizes and silences' (p. 394). My use of IE serves as an important point of distinction

within educational research. While there has been a great deal of research into boys in schooling (Martino, 1999; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Whelen, 2011), these studies do not start with the standpoint of the students, nor employ IE. Additionally, institutional ethnographies conducted in Australia (Comber, 2012) and Canada (Griffith & Smith, 2005; Nichols & Griffith, 2009) exploring the work of schooling predominantly begin with the standpoint of parents, teachers or school leaders only. Therefore, the study presented in this dissertation is unique in that it seeks to capture the experience of a variety of different people within the institution. As IE seeks to explain and make visible how everyday things happen, this method of inquiry is an appropriate sociology and methodology to explore the everyday schooling lives of students, teachers and leaders as their worlds are largely social and textually mediated by ruling relations from a variety of translocal sites.

3.2.8.2 Criticism of reflexivity and objectification

According to Walby (2007), methodological reflexivity and objectification require consideration when undertaking an IE. Walby critiques conventional qualitative processes such as interviews and transcribing as interpretative and objectifying, as they 'produce rather than preserve the presence of the subject' (p. 1009). Essentially, he is concerned with IE's 'authority over representation of the subject' (p. 1026) and its lack of reflexivity in this regard. The paradox all institutional ethnographers must face is that its nature is contrary to its claims and what it strives to achieve. While I recognise and exercise considerable effort to valorise the authority of all the participants in my study as experts in their own everyday experience, I do also understand there is an 'authority of the institutional ethnographic frame' (Walby, 2007, p. 1022) employed to guide my data collection processes and satisfy my ontological claims.

I recognise Smith's insistence that 'investigators use informants' accounts not as windows on the informant's inner experience' (2006, p. 15) but rather, 'the social as the focus for study is to be located in how people's activities are coordinated' (2005, p. 59). However, as a researcher, I accept that I must practise ongoing scrutiny of my own engagement with texts and textual practices to ensure a degree of reflexivity, such as explicating processes of transcription. In this study, I acknowledges the reciprocal and relational nature between myself, the participants and the setting, and therefore I complemented my approach to IE with autoethnography, which I expand on in the subsequent section.

3.3 Autoethnography: A complementary method to institutional ethnography

As mentioned earlier, this study draws on the theoretical approaches commonly associated with IE while combining it with an autoethnographic approach. Over the course of five years, my experience at the school as teacher, alumnus, leader and researcher meant I vacillated between these roles as I sought to enact policies within the institution and – simultaneously – to document the institution and its effects on students, teachers and leaders. While a general qualitative approach (such as phenomenology, ethnography or case study) may have been useful in exploring the experiences of students, teachers or leaders within the school, such approaches tend to dismiss the researchers' experiences, as well as the complex overlap between institutional practices and policies and the experiences of people working within it. Solely, autoethnography would allow me to draw on personal experiences but the emphasis of this approach is generally on the self and lacks clear explanations of links to the social (the institution). By working across autoethnography and IE, my methodology contemporaneously allows the examination of students', teachers', leaders' and my experience, institutional practices and texts within a research context that begins from the everyday and aims to investigate policies and social practices in institutional contexts.

While I am not the first to draw IE and autoethnography together (Griffith & Smith, 2005; Kinsman, 1995; Walker, 1995), nor the first to do so while exploring the current manifestations of policy in education (Heap, 1995; Hewson, 2012; Kerr, 2006; Parson, 2016; G. Smith, 1998; Spina, 2017b; Reid, 2018; Stahl, 2017a), it is important to recognise research methodologies are constantly evolving and researchers must 'continually push methodological boundaries in order to address research questions that cannot be explored with traditional methods' (Taber, 2010, p. 5). In the next section, I detail the essential features of autoethnography to demonstrate its compatibility and complementarity to the overarching IE framework. I then address relevant criticisms and discuss how these were negotiated.

3.3.1 Defining autoethnography within the context of institutional ethnography

Autoethnography draws on autobiographical materials of the researcher as primary data (mainly journals, fieldnotes, observations and collecting artefacts) and can be seen as a combination of three aspects: content focused on the self (auto); interpretation with emphasis on the cultural (ethno); and the methodological orientation exploring the data through a critical

and analytical lens as part of the research (graphy) (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Due to the critical relationship between the researcher and the cultural situation, autoethnography is seen as more than autobiography or journal writing due to its rigorous ethnographic, broadly qualitative research method (Chang, 2008). Therefore, as an approach, autoethnography has many overlaps with anthropology. It requires continuous reflection around the researcher's positionality and – as I will describe – I take considerable care with my own reflexivity. My embedding within the research site meant often contentious and paradoxical practices – both as an employee and as a researcher. For example, on one hand as a researcher I was examining how students are coordinated by particular school policies. On the other hand, as a teacher, I was often required to enforce such policy to coordinate students. Coffey (1999, p. 1) argues in ethnographic research one needs to recognise fieldwork as 'personal, emotional and identity work'. In researching the school as an institution I am equally examining my role within it.

An autoethnographic approach is frequently used in educational research (Granger, 2012; Hayler, 2011) though it has been subject to criticism (Atkinson, 2006; Atkinson & Delamont 2006, 2008; Delamont, 2009; Holt, 2003; Van Manen, 1988). Coffey (1999) writes the 'construction and production of self and identity occurs both during and after fieldwork. In writing, remembering and representing our fieldwork experiences we are involved in processes of self presentation and identity construction' (p. 1). Considering this definition, my study is not an autoethnography in the conventional sense. Firstly, the content of my study draws on the standpoints of multiple participants and I accept I am one source of data. Secondly, the data I draw from, mainly in the form of journals and observations, works to describe and contextualise the culture of the school site. Finally, the analytical agenda is premised by my employment of the institutional ethnographic framework (discussed in Section 4.7). By drawing on these sources and my own assumptions, I recognise the inherit tension of being a participant researcher immersed in teaching at the site of the study. While this position brings prior knowledge of the institutional interface that is both an advantage and disadvantage, I managed the tensions by maintaining awareness of the risks of speaking from within the ruling discourses and naturalising the very discourses I am trying to analyse (DeVault & McCoy, 2012).

The employment of autoethnography is appropriate in IE. Reed-Danahay (1997) argues autoethnography is 'defined as a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context' (p. 9) and IE explores the social from the standpoint of the self's experience with the

everyday. Dorothy Smith (2005) discusses the value of researchers drawing on their own everyday experience, which she evinces in her seminal IE researching single mothers' interactions with schools (Griffith & Smith, 2005). In order to augment autoethnographic approaches with IE, a different emphasis on self and social occurs. Smith's (2005) work promotes this connection by 'looking out beyond the everyday to discover how it came to happen as it does' (p. 3). Therefore, I recognise that simply writing autoethnographical accounts is not enough. My narrative or standpoint, as well as the standpoints of other participants, must be examined in relation to both each other and the institutional processes. In addressing criticisms of autoethnography below, I further expand on how I adopted various methods in an effort to ameliorate the tension between my standpoint as a member of the school community and that of a researcher.

3.3.2 Criticisms of autoethnography and considerations

Scrutiny and criticisms of autoethnography are concerned with academic rigour and methodological validity (Holt, 2003) due to the high levels of subjectivity involved (Van Manen, 1988). Delamont (2009) argues: 'Autoethnography cannot meet core social science objectives' (p. 59). Central to Delamont's objections to autoethnography is that it cannot fight familiarity and is problematic ethically for publishing as 'it is normally impossible for other actors to be disguised or protected' (2009, p. 59). Delamont draws on the work of Atkinson (2006) who criticises the fact that 'the methodological has been transposed onto the plane of the personal' (p. 43). Thus scepticism regarding autoethnography questions its scholarly purpose, theoretical bases, and disciplinary contributions. However, Chang (2008) suggests that this does not imply the method is necessarily faulty, but does illustrate potential pitfalls an autoethnographer must watch out for, those being:

> (1) excessive focus on self in isolation from others; (2) overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation; (3) exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling data as a source; (4) negligence of ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives; and (5) inappropriate application of the label autoethnography. (p. 54)

In considering these criticisms or potential pitfalls, I draw attention to the wider methodological design of the study. I reiterate that this study is not an autoethnography, rather an IE complemented by autoethnographic methods (similar to Kinsman, 1995; Griffith & Smith, 2005; Walker, 1995; Heap, 1995). As such, my standpoint and that of the participants act as

the beginning point of the inquiry. Regardless of my familiarity with or ability to relate to other participants, my objective as a researcher is to explicate social and ruling relations. However, I recognise that, as a member of the school community, extra steps were necessary to ensure the data collected and analytical work of this study became more than an exploration of self (Walford, 2004; Coffey, 1999) or simple storytelling (Ellis, 2004). With this in mind, documenting my shifts in my personal epistemology and ontology as an institutional ethnographer is vital to avoid such pitfalls. For example, my epistemology requires me to take seriously the interconnected world of people within the socially orchestrated and controlled features of their lives and work.

As my research processes involve the collection and mapping of textual artefacts, I am able to 'fight familiarity' (Delamont, 2009) by unveiling ruling relations that were unfamiliar. My ontological shift requires a rejection of speculative abstract theoretical explanations and an exploration of people's actual practices and activities. Such examination occurs by drawing on key institutional ethnographic based questions: To what institutional texts does my standpoint lead? How does my standpoint connect to such texts? How do texts connect to institutional ruling relations? How do ruling relations connect back to my standpoint? In reading various IE texts throughout the research process, I was able to conduct analysis of how power works within the institution and investigate how everyday practices are coordinated from beyond the local.

3.4 Conclusion

The design of Smith's IE intends to explain and make visible how everyday things happen as they do. Researchers conducting this type of work explore the socially and textually mediated organisation of the world designed to construct and maintain the situation people experience. As such, the day-to-day practice of people's work, thoughts and actions are theorised as coordinated by social relations beyond their knowing. As an IE researcher, I must recognise my own position and location within the social. I draw on autoethnography to ensure ongoing scrutiny of my personal experience, thus allowing me to engage with the research project and acknowledge the reciprocal and relational nature between the participants, the setting and myself. Therefore I do not make any claims to objectivity through this research. I do not believe this is possible given my immersion in the discourses and practices of the school – and education more broadly – as an alumnus, teacher and leader. However, I do recognise the need

to be critically conscious of the risks presented by my position within the school and the wider potential limitations of participant research. In the following chapter, I describe the research methods employed to conduct this research.

Chapter 4: Methods of inquiry

4.1 Introduction

This research is an exploration of institutional practices, power and knowledge within a school site, and how they influence the subjectivities of school leaders, teachers and students. Building on the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 3, this chapter describes the research methodologies used to undertake this investigation. Campbell and Gregor (2004) explain that the methods of IE are an:

> attempt to uncover, explore, and describe how people's everyday lives may be organized without their explicit awareness but still with their active involvement. Conceptualizing the operation of power such that it can be discovered in people's everyday actions is a crucial theoretical feature of institutional ethnography. This kind of inquiry begins with a description of what research subjects are actually doing. (p. 34)

This section begins by introducing the research site and participants of the study. It then outlines the sequence of data collection before detailing qualitative methods employed to gather such data. The following section outlines the approach to analysis. Finally, I outline ethical considerations and issues arising from being an insider researcher and the limitations of this study. Being a teacher and alumnus at the school site provided distinct advantages, which included familiarity with the cultural practices and routines of the college, accessibility to all areas and resources that saved time, and that I am a familiar person for the students. The ethical implications of my employment at the research site are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

4.2 Research site

The research site was Christian Brothers College, a large Catholic Reception to Year 12 all-boys college based in Adelaide, South Australia. Christian Brothers College is one of three Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) schools within the state, joining over 50 member schools across Australia. The EREA is a network of schools established by the Christian Brothers in 2007 with its own canonical and civic identity, meaning all EREA member schools are governed by, and responsible to, the EREA Council (I describe the governance structure in more detail in Chapter 5). In 2018, Christian Brothers College celebrated its 140th anniversary,

marking it as one of the oldest schools in the state. It has a reputation for its all-boys, diverse enrolment pool and *purple* blazers.

4.2.1 Enrolment base

The school has slightly fewer than 1000 students from Reception to Year 12 and draws from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and geographical locations.

4.2.1.1 Socio-economic status

According to the 2018 school board report – which is freely available on the school website – the school represents an SES category of disadvantage index of 102. The school serves a high proportion of School Card recipients with 154 students eligible in 2019. Fee remissions for financially struggling families exceeded $1.2 million dollars in 2018. (I detail the fee structure of the school below.) Thus, while the school is thought of as a fee-paying school, students come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. At one extreme, the sons of wealthy families attend the school on account of generational affiliation with the school. At the other end, the school, or staff in the know, discreetly sends food supplies, clothing and other forms of support to marginalised students and their families. For the most part however, the enrolment base draws from predominantly working-middle-class families.

4.2.1.2 Cultural diversity

The school is culturally diverse, with students representing 12 faith traditions and 47 cultural backgrounds. 143 students are identified with a language background other than English and in 2018, four students were English as a Second Language funded. It is worth noting that, irrespective of a student's cultural or religious background, they are required to participate in certain Catholic traditions and events of the school.

4.2.1.3 Enrolment pool

Given its location in the CBD, the school is easy to access, making it historically a popular school site for parents who work in the city. Due to its central location, the school draws enrolments from northern, eastern, southern and western suburbs. Many of the boys attending the school have sister/s attending one of the two inner-city all-girls' colleges that are within close proximity. The closest all-boys school is an independent one charging nearly three times the Christian Brothers College fees (discussed in Section 4.2.1.6).

4.2.1.4 Facilities and upgrades

Due to its CBD location, the school occupies a relatively small geographical footprint and is divided into two campuses, the Junior School (Reception to Year 6) and Senior School (Years 7 to 12). These two campuses are approximately 400 metres apart. In both campuses, every building is multi-story in order to make use of limited land. While the Junior Campus sits next to the local parklands and can use this space for sports and physical education lessons, the Senior Campus has a sports field on the roof of a car park and a single-court gymnasium. My study took place at the Senior Campus. It is worth nothing that Christian Brothers College Senior Campus changed significantly over the course of the research to meet market demands. Towards the end of the study, a new $16 million building was opened, homing a new administration area, classrooms, science laboratories and a Year 12 study area. The front reception area is akin to a foyer of a wealthy corporation, with large lounges and an over-sized plasma television comforting guests who wait in the foyer.

The new building also starkly contrasts with more traditional and older classrooms. The new building is home to an assortment of classroom furniture (different sized and shaped desks, couches, chairs and the absence of a teacher desk), no doors between classrooms, panoramic views of the Adelaide hills and city through oversized windows, and a modern hallway interior with plants and glass displays. Compared to traditional classrooms, the new classrooms do not have a clear front or stage as the multiple screens placed in the corners of each room mean students are not required to look in one particular direction to draw information from what the teacher projects on the screens. These new learning spaces contrast with the more traditional and older classrooms that generally contain single desks in a row formation, a whiteboard and a teacher's desk. In the last 10 years, in order to be competitive in the non-government school market in Adelaide, the school has undergone three other building projects:

- In 2014, $3 million was spent on upgrading the internal classrooms of an older building. Installed were glass walls with no doors on classrooms, new furniture (similar to that described above), large sunroofs, plasma screens and couches.
- In 2010, the school accepted a $3 million government grant to upgrade its trade centre facilities to include equipment to support the teaching of electronics. Additional facilities in this space include metal and woodwork equipment.

- In 2008, over $8 million was spent at the Junior Campus in a complete rebuild of the school site. The older building was demolished entirely and replaced with a sleek, multi-level glass-trimmed building that provides panoramic views of the city and neighbouring parklands.[5]

4.2.1.5 Staffing

Total teaching staff, including part and full time, across both campuses was 165 as at the end of 2018. These are equivalent to 124.5 full-time teachers. Teaching staff numbers are subject to student intake, which depends on marketing. In addition to teaching staff, there are 41 (including part and full time) Education Support Officers (ESOs) whose roles include administration, education, grounds and facilities, and human resources support. Of the teaching staff, there are 27 leadership positions that include five executive positions, five senior leadership positions, and seventeen middle-management positions (these are curriculum leaders, pastoral care leaders, etc.) The staffing of the school consists of predominantly experienced and senior teachers who have taught for 25 years or more.

In 2018, the staff retention rate was 95%. There are currently six staff members who have been at the school for 35 years or more. One staff member will reach his 50th year of teaching at the school in 2020. During the period of my study, only three graduate or early career (within the first five years) teachers were employed by the school; these were all short-term contracts. The school also experienced significant leadership changes during my study period. In 2018, a new deputy principal began his tenure due to the former deputy winning a principal tenure interstate. Additionally, during 2018, at the end of my period of data collection, the EREA announced a recruitment process to find a new principal for the school. The tenure of the principal was coming to an end and it was not to be extended or renewed. The newly appointed principal begun his tenure at the school in 2019.

[5] I was not a staff member at the school during the Junior Campus site rebuild. However, I did learn that during this period both senior and junior students shared the Senior Campus.

4.2.1.6 Fee structure in comparison to other all-boys schools

In South Australia, there are six all-boys colleges (for years 7 to 12),[6] placing the school in a relatively competitive market. The school is fee-paying and on its website it boasts that its 'all-inclusive fees are among the most affordable of any private College in South Australia (website, 2019). Arguably, this is a fair claim in relation to all-boys schools. In Table 2 below, I have listed the total tuition fees for each of the private all-boys schools in the state (Catholic and independent). I have only included fees for Years 10 to 12 as my study is focused on students in this range. All these fees were made available by the institutions and accessed from the schools' respective websites. Two of these schools are connected to Christian Brothers College through EREA governance.

Table 2: Comparison of all-boys' college fees in South Australia, 2019

Year level	EREA school 1	Christian Brothers College	EREA school 2	Catholic school	Independent school 1	Independent school 2
10	$7995	$9,621	$12,230	$10,063	$26,790	$27,210
11	$7995	$9,972	$12,350	$10,063	$26,790	$27,210
12	$7995	$9,972	$12,350	$10,063	$26,790	$27,210

Others forms of fee paying include School Card subsidies and scholarships. In regard to School Card subsidies, according to the school's 2019 financial information the process is as follows:

- All School Card[7] families must complete a School Card Application (2020 form). Once **approved**[8] by The School Card Section of the State Government, **CBC will grant a maximum of 50% remission on the tuition portion of the account inclusive of sibling discount and any other discounts that may apply.**
- Near Miss School Card Families – the College may assist on an individual basis those families who apply and who do not qualify for a School Card remission.

[6] There is one additional all-boys primary school; however it is a feeder school to a co-educational high school. Therefore it is not included in Table 2.
[7] The term 'School Card families' refers to a government scheme offering financial assistance with school fees to families earning below a certain threshold. The support offered is limited, meaning families wishing to send their child to a private school must still pay fees (which are ordinarily negotiated with the school).
[8] The bold font replicates the school's financial statement.

- **Please note:** families that are eligible for School Card or a Fee Remission are still required to commit to minimum regular monthly payments between February and October towards the discounted tuition fees. (School's financial information, 2019)

Additionally, families are welcome to apply for one of the four scholarship categories available (listed below). Importantly, each of these scholarships involves a stringent application process and approval from the principal. The dollar amount of the scholarship is not advertised[9] and varies for each successful applicant. Below, I have drawn from the school website in order to describe each scholarship category:

- *Academic Scholarships (Year 7 or 10)* – Scholarships are awarded on the basis of results in the ACEP examination conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and at the discretion of the Principal.
- *Edmund Rice Scholarship (Year 7 to 12)* – Through Edmund Rice Scholarships, the College supports new and current students who would otherwise not have the opportunity or means to attend CBC.
- *Indigenous Heritage Scholarship* – Recognises students with Indigenous heritage who will contribute positively to College life. Priority is given to those families in financial need.
- *Music Scholarships* – The Music scholarship program recognises students with exceptional music talent who will enhance the College Music program. The scholarship is open to new and current students entering Year 7 to 10.

4.3 Recruitment of participants

As stated earlier, my intention is to explore how institutional practices influence the schooling lives of students, teachers and leaders working in a single–sex Catholic college. While gaining an understanding of the students' embodied experience was the starting point for my inquiry, I broadened the scope to include teaching and leadership team members as they were a vital part of the students' experiences and help illustrate how ruling relations can infiltrate an institution through people.

[9] No scholarship at Christian Brothers College is for the total amount of the fees.

4.3.1 Student participants

The student participants were seven Year 10 (15–16-years-old) boys attending Christian Brothers College. They had a cross-section of experience: four of the students started at the school in Year 7, while the remaining three have been there since Reception. The selection of this year level was deliberate as during this time participants were transitioning from middle school to senior school, albeit on the same campus. In this transition, students are required to respond to and consider possible career pathways that involve being introduced to a range of institutional texts relating to their high school certificate and academic success. As this study will show, academic success and achievement is greatly valorised and promoted within the school and externally in advertising. During Year 10, there is arguably a strong emphasis on students performing well academically so they can select desirable subjects in Years 11 and 12. For example, a student who does not meet a particular grade benchmark in mathematics is not able to select certain levels of mathematics in the following year. The type of schoolwork these students engaged in during this research period held implications for and would coordinate their future experience of school. Additionally, I do not teach this year level, which was an important ethical consideration I will expand on later.

4.3.2 Recruiting student participants

In order to recruit participants, I presented at a year-level assembly and outlined the focus and requirements of the study. In short, I shared with the cohort my interest in learning about their experience of school from 'their point of view'. I provided additional information regarding the logistics of participation, such as interviews and observations. I called for expressions of interest by asking interested participants to email or come and speak to me personally. I was initially overwhelmed with student interest, with over 60 students expressing interest to support my study. While there was no criterion for selection per se, selection was framed with the intention of establishing a diverse pool, which would offer a cross-section of responses and standpoints using a principle of maximum diversity. The student participants represent a spread of academic achievement and participation in school sport programs. Additionally, I drew on my local knowledge of students and their history at the school to make the final selection, meaning I tried to avoid certain caches of friendships groups, sports players and so on. Below, I introduce each student research participant and share excerpts from my journal that offer my

preconceptions prior to the first interview (details regarding the interviews are provided in Section 4.6.2).[10]

Luke: Luke exudes confidence and appears as an archetypal 'all rounder'. Luke is well regarded athletically, stable academically, and comfortable socially. He highly values relationships and determines one's worth based on his relationship with them. He comes from an upper-middle-class family with two sisters, and a mum and a dad who both work. His parents are highly regarded in the community as approachable and supportive. Luke highly values his own appearance, wearing the uniform proudly; however will breach small rules (such as wearing a sports jacket under a blazer). Hair is important; he is often checking his phone and boasts of having a large contingent of female followers on social media. There have been times when I have had to tell female students from neighbouring schools to leave the gates or fences, to which they were asking 'if [I] knew where Luke was'. (Personal Journal, 2017)

Callum: Callum can often project a rather unassuming and quiet demeanour; he often will dress meticulously and seems to navigate the school site with little fuss. However, Callum has had significant altercations within school, outside of school and in relation to the school. Callum lives with his sister and mother, and his father's presence can be a source of angst for Callum, although he does have regular contact. In regard to school, Callum marches to the beat of his own drum, but ensures a place of harmony with school expectations to avoid too much trouble. He will spend a lot of time at the drinking taps during class, and seems to know how to quote teachers in a bid to avoid trouble for being late. He does exude a sense of confidence; he plays football and holds social capital amongst the boys. Whilst not the dominant figure of the year level, his comfort and movement within various social circles suggests that peer culture is an aspect of school he thrives in. His physicality is important, always deliberate in presentation in hair, uniform and labelled clothing. (Personal Journal, 2017)

[10] The student participant descriptions are extracted from my journal entries written at the beginning of the study. With researcher hindsight, I recognise these frame the student participants largely through an institutional lens.

Anthony: Anthony has been a student at Christian Brothers College since Year 7. His initial interest in partaking in my study came as a bit of a surprise, as he is ordinarily very reserved and uses his peers as a blanket to maintain some anonymity. In many ways, Anthony is quite stereotypical in the context of CBC. He is enthusiastic about soccer, enjoys the peer aspect of school and can achieve relatively successful results but efficacy is rather inconsistent. Socially, he is involved with a group self-labelled 'the wogs', but would not be deemed a leader of this group, as his behaviour is quite reserved and shy. His ethnicity is an important part of his identity. There have been episodes recently though, whereby he will advocate for his peers, but only do so in a respectful manner. Generally compliant, there have been times where he customises the uniform, such as Nike trackpants or a jumper under the blazer, but generally, follows expectations. Anthony lives with his married parents and sister who attends the all-girls private college down the road. (Personal Journal, 2017)

Cody: Cody is a student who exudes confidence, charm and charisma as he navigates the school. He possesses year-level student leadership positions (voted by peers), presents at various school functions and can be seen in various social circles, all within one period. He has a renowned sense of humour. Many teachers speak highly of him and he seemingly invests much effort in fostering positive relationships with staff. Whilst he will teeter on the line of crossing boundaries, he knows where the line is and appears to have a skill set in reading people, as such, rarely gets reprimanded. Interestingly, his greatest conflict appears to come with teachers and others who do not reciprocate his open affection. Interestingly, school is a race for grades. He will openly seek the most efficient route to achieving an A; quite happy to have older peers heavily draft and even re-write his own work. In many ways, Cody appears to see school like a game. He plays a part, but ensures he is having fun in the process. (Personal Journal, 2017)

Peter: From a distance, Peter presents a compliant identity. His uniform is worn with meticulous presentation; a clean blazer, shirt tucked in and pants worn properly. When meeting for the first time, he will be polite, using greetings such as 'sir' and 'Ms', and even will go out of his way to assist. However, there can also be

a rather aggressive side, or antagonistic, depending on the context. Peter is highly invested in a small peer group. He is masterful in his ability to cast blame on others for his behaviour, avoiding responsibility or ownership of particular behaviours; however would 'get in trouble' for a range of behaviours such as arguing with staff, ignoring instructions, loitering in the city and not completing work. He is of African descent, and whilst this is not necessarily an angle or identity he presents, culturally he is a minority within the school. He speaks of great respect for his mother and will use his 'Ethiopian culture' as a means to circumnavigate certain school rules regarding facial hair. I am not sure if his father is living with him, or the family composition, as Peter has never spoken of him. (Personal Journal, 2017)

Adon: Adon is a passionate student of Christian Brothers College and engages in many spheres of school life. From a sporting perspective, he was an established rower and possesses some social capital within these circles. His commitment for the school, particularly rowing and football, is demonstrated in his relentless determination to contribute or be involved in every event. Even his involvement in this study was sought under the pretence he sees my study as some way towards improving the school. Academically, he is diagnosed with learning disabilities and masks this from his peers methodically. Any form of assistance or support from teachers or Educational Support Officers (ESO) is swiftly refused. When trying to offer support, staff has learnt to approach him carefully, usually using the façade of assisting someone else in his proximity in order to assist him. Adon speaks of older students with reverence, often idolising their achievements. He speaks of ambitions to be on the assembly stage like his idols, receiving awards, recognition and praise from the school community. As such, I am interested in Adon as he strives to be what the school promotes without questioning the cost to his own identity. (Personal Journal, 2017)

Oliver: Oliver is often referred to as 'a nice kid' by other teachers but bears the tag of 'struggler'. In many ways, he often misreads social situations when compared to peers in the same cohort, particularly when sarcasm is used. Academically, he receives various forms of support, addendums and modifications. He is diagnosed with a range of learning disorders and has a reading/writing level of

> Year 3/4. He struggles to manage the organisational aspects of school. With regularity, he would appear to class with no books, late or unprepared. Furthermore, he voices complete confusion as to the requirements of coursework or the nature of specific content. Socially, he appears welcome to move between various circles; however I am not sure how much status he holds. Often, he is in 'trouble' but not for malevolent things, more just lateness, lack of work submission and skipping class. He, like most students, is compliant and respectful when in the presence of staff. (Personal Journal, 2017)

4.3.3 Teacher and leader participants

When interviewing the student research participants, the regular mention of 'teachers' and 'staff' highlighted a significant point for further exploration. Furthermore, being a teacher at the school and a researcher, it was important not to assume that my standpoint and experience encapsulates that of others. As an IE researcher my intention was to trace ruling relations; therefore it was important to recognise such relations can be – and often are – experienced differently. In addition to the students who participated in my study, data was also gathered from two teaching and two leadership staff (one middle management and one executive level) working at Christian Brothers College. At CBC, teachers are often leaders and leaders often teach. Only the executive member of the leadership team currently does not teach.

Similar to the process of recruitment of student research participants, I spoke at a staff meeting seeking volunteers to support my study. During this meeting, I outlined the scope of my study and purpose of the interview. Conveniently, four staff volunteered their time to engage in the project from various positions in the school. The staff numbers were obviously in contrast to the student interest. While many staff, after the meeting, expressed they would be 'happy to help out', their involvement in the project was largely conditional on me being able to orchestrate release time from teaching in order to conduct the interview. One staff member asked if she could be 'paid' for the interview as universities pay teachers for mentoring pre-service teachers and she felt this was similar. Therefore the staff listed below are those who did not impose conditions on their involvement in the study. As with all research participants, pseudonyms are used, and staff interviewees (shown in Table 3 below) have not been identified by name or actual title/role to protect confidentiality. The staff research participants were interviewed once for approximately an hour. Data from the transcripts of these recordings were drawn upon for analysis.

Table 3: Teacher and leaders participants

Name	Role	Description
Mark	Teacher	Mark has over ten years' teaching experience at a variety of different high schools across the state. He has taught at Christian Brothers College for four years in the middle and senior year levels. He teaches sciences and mathematics.
Eliza	Teacher	Eliza has over 15 years teaching experience at EREA all-boys schools in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. She has taught at Christian Brothers College for two years in the middle and senior year levels. She teaches English, history and religion.
Joseph	Head of Faculty	Joseph is one of the young leaders within the school, occupying a middle-management position. He has taught at the school for five years and attended the school as a student.
Paul	Executive	Paul sits on the executive level at Christian Brothers College. He has been involved in education for over 35 years. He attended Christian Brothers College as a student and has been a staff member for over 20 years.

The interviews with staff and leaders were semi-structured and once off. I was interested in learning about the type of work they engaged in in relation to their role. General themes were around engaging with students, formal academic learning and certain issues that the student participants had raised. These are outlined further in Section 4.6.2.

4.4 Researcher relationship with participants

Schools as research settings are complex, filled with paradoxes and contradictions. They are often 'composed of ambiguities where power relations and hierarchical tensions shape both the learning experiences and identities' for leaders, teachers and students (Stahl, 2017, p. 146). Within the context of this study, it is important to discuss my capacity to negotiate and build relationships. As a member of staff researching the school site it was important to recognise 'that in order to comprehend the "biography of the individual", we must reflect upon how power relations are negotiated through the qualitative research process' (Stahl, 2017, p. 146). There is a great deal of scholarly work examining the way boys (Connell, 1989; Frosh et al., 2002; Lingard, Martino, & Mills, 2009; Mac an Ghaill, 1994), teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Freese, 2006; Hoban, 2007, Olsen, 2008; Sachs, 2005) and school leaders

(Blackmore, Thomson, & Barty, 2006; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; Blackmore & Thomson, 2004; Thomson, 2004; Thomson, Blackmore, Sachs, & Tregenza, 2003) express their identity in relation to school structure. However, within this research, it is rare that the notion of relationships between participants (negotiating, maintaining, building) is discussed. Critical to my work as a researcher is an understanding that relationships, and relationship building, are always framed around power. As a teacher at the school site, my relationship with members of the school community is arguably built on a rapport and trust that have built over time.

4.4.1 Researcher relationship with students

In recruiting student participants, I may have been overwhelmed with 60 participants (as stated above in Section 4.3.1) but I was not completely surprised. Many would consider my identity as a teacher more relational than that of my colleagues. Where some teachers will not acknowledge students unless within the formal confines of a classroom and lesson, I intentionally stand at the door of every one of my classes to welcome students into the room. Some meet me with handshakes, others fist bumps and a few will even give me a hug. I am happy to stop in the yard to talk to students and it is not uncommon when out socially or with family for a student to approach and say hello. My identity as a teacher taps into the emotional lifeworlds of students (Stahl & Keddie, 2020), which is reciprocal in nature, and such emotional display provides currency as well as acceptability. Therefore, I build relationships with parents, teachers and leaders, and many are often witness to this relationship building which, in turn, contributes to the construction of both my persona and my reputation.

However, while I am generally described as ‘friendly’ and ‘approachable’, I do recognise there are differences between the teacher–student relationship and the researcher–student relationship. In research there are competing positions on relationship building between teachers and students in schools, particularly in relation to boys. For example, Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2003) theorise that a particular male teacher’s popularity and ‘mateyness’, while respected by male students, problematically reasserted the use of stereotypical masculine ‘humour, references to physical aggression and prowess’ (p. 221). This is extended by research done in the UK on ‘laddishness’ as both a currency and a medium to foster masculine bonds (Jackson, 2010). I often employ humour to engage with students, to discuss their interests (e.g. television shows, sports) and at times to be a shoulder to cry on.

Over the course of the research, the scholarship of Reichart and Hawley (2014) informed my thinking both as a teacher and a researcher. They contend building relationships with boys in schooling is tremendously valuable, particularly if seeking to motivate boys as learners. Thus I also do not deny that my relationships and status at the school has held particular advantages as a teacher. There have been times when some teachers will ask me for support in dealing with a group of students who are not following instructions or acting inappropriately, to which the boys will generally comply with my instructions or – likely to agitate the other teacher – sit passively and politely welcome me with a 'hey sir'. This is not to say I am well received or respected by every student; one could argue that the students who did not volunteer for this project – of which there would be over 70 from the same cohort – may have done so if the researcher was different. However, for the purpose of my study, I argue my teacher identity – which is performed and enacted – and the status that comes with it was largely advantageous in recruiting participants as there was a pre-existing level of trust.

4.4.2 Researcher relationship with staff

In regard to my relationships with staff participants, I would argue my rapport and reputation is of a similar status to that with students. I engage with staff both in a joking and professional manner, am often sought after for advice or assistance in certain areas, and engage with many socially outside of school. While not as many teachers volunteered compared to students, I was expecting this considering their workload and a perceived risk to their professionalism.[11] As one could predict, where many students expressed interest in my study as an avenue to potentially get out of schoolwork, teachers politely declined because they saw it as an additional commitment.

Throughout the period of this study, I must also that acknowledge my dynamics with some staff – not the participants interviewed – changed on an account of my promotion to leadership positions. Such relationships were not an issue at the time of staff interviews as my role during this period was that of a teacher. However this does provide insight into the ambivalence that exists in thinking about friendships, relationships and pedagogy, particularly in relation to teachers' work in schools. While Sellar (2012) shows that teachers in disadvantaged areas see relationships – with each other teachers and students – as key, I believe this can and often does

[11] In applying for ethics approval from the University of South Australia, I had to guard against perceived risk to my professional identity. I spoke of confidentiality and ensuring the anonymity of participants.

apply to any educational context. But this does not mean my colleagues share my view. Outside the obvious risks of unprofessional conduct, friendship can be a source of tension between aspects of teachers' practice (Green, 1998; Sellar, 2012).

Within every school there are historically bound micro-political contexts, professional communities, and friendship circles that are internal –and mostly informal – sites of power struggles. Within the school site, while there is no teacher I cannot have a comfortable and personable conversation with, there are clearly different philosophies and views on teaching, particularly with regard to relationships with students. On one hand, some teachers view a student as a product there to learn, thus they do not exercise the effort required to learn names.[12] On the other hand, and I recognise I would fall into this category, some teachers operate with an approach of 'I teach the student not the subject' and often exhaust a lot of emotional time and energy in supporting students with aspects of life outside the formal structures of school.

In considering relationships in schools as sites of research, Sellar (2012) offers: 'Friendship … has an important pedagogical role to play when it creates conditions in which we might both connect with others, at least in part, and allow these connections to change our understanding of ourselves and our worlds' (p. 73). Acknowledging Sellar's words, it is important to recognise my relationships with staff – and students and leaders more widely – influenced my behaviours and perceptions as a researcher. Therefore, drawing from the recommendations of Matthew Engelke (2018) in *How to think like an anthropologist*, my sensibility to cultural relativism – recognising other groups of people often have very different ideas of the world than I – means my views, findings or claims can never be universal. Furthermore, through drawing on institutional ethnography as a framework and approach to inquiry, I have also sought to keep some critical distance (Engelke, 2018) by investigating and capturing the mundane of everyday (Smith, 2005) such as: How do people greet each other? How do people use space? What material objects do people interact with?

[12] In 2019, a senior student was involved in a serious car accident, placing him on life support. During the announcement in a staff meeting, one teacher – unclear on who the student was – searched for the boy's name on the school digital database and surprisingly announced, 'Wow, he is in my class, I had no idea.' At the time of the accident, the boy would have been in this teacher's class for approximately 36 school weeks – the accident was towards the end of the year.

4.5 Data collection sequence

Considering the autoethnographic aspect of my study, arguably my data collection begun in 2014 when my teaching appointment at the school started. Furthermore, my biographical roots in the college extend to 1998, when I attended the college as a student until graduation in 2001. In many ways, this is typical of autoethnography and institutional ethnography as people may come to their research by happenstance rather than strategic undertaking. However, I took great care to not afford my experiences or perceptions any privilege or weighting over that of the participants, as this would undermine the strength of the institutional ethnography and its analytical agenda. This took continual effort and was not something that could be fully achieved. Subsequently, I used my experiences as a cultural insider within the body of my research to provide 'aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 277) and to provide additional and contextual information to the data collected from the participants. Therefore the study is a composite of my reflections, my experiences, the interview data, and textual evidence from meetings and classrooms – it is a study subject to bias and subjective opinions.

The data collection process, with this specific analytic agenda in mind, technically begun at the beginning of 2017. Through means of a journal (Magolda, 1999; Monaghan, 2006; Pellatt, 2003; Snow, Morrill, & Anderson, 2003; Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009), I recorded observations, reflections and questions openly, meaning that I was not searching for particular artefacts or interactions, rather trying to trace the daily events and routines of the school (I elaborate on journal entries in Section 4.6.3.). Additionally, I collected a wide range of texts (newsletters, posters, policies, etc.) that were provided to staff and the community such as handouts to staff during professional development sessions. In the early stages of my study I was not sure what these artefacts could offer (discussed in Section 4.6.5). But the process of data collection did allow me to rehearse a sense of detachment from the school, whereby I transitioned from teacher to researcher. The process of recruitment and interviewing student research participants began in May 2017 and finished towards the end of Term 3, being October. Following this, it became apparent I would need to interview some school staff in order to trace the power relations which the student participants revealed, which occurred in early Term 4. Throughout this time, and during the analysis stage of my research, I continued to write my research journal and collect key texts pertinent to the study. I completed the collection of data from participants at the conclusion of 2017.

4.6 Methods used to gather data

The research involved qualitative methods to gather data from the research participants and the institution. As an institutional ethnography intends to uncover the working lives of individuals working within an organisation rather than to transpose or confirm theories or practices, the direction and scope of the study often broadened or changed direction throughout the data collection process. Data was gathered through interviews, journal entries, direct observations, photo-elicitation and collection of texts. In the following section, I outline the strategies and rationale behind these methods used to gather data.

4.6.1 Observations

According to Smith (2006) participant observation 'explores the social *in motion*, as an ongoing converting of activities' (p. 67) and is 'grounded in actual events from which description and stories are derived' (p. 48). Central in conducting the institutional ethnography, I strove to make my observations purely descriptive and to avoid evaluative comments or thoughts where possible. My observations primarily comprised both formal lesson observations involving the student research participants and incidental observations that I recorded in my journal.[13] However, I was an individual embedded in the institutional culture of CBC so it is difficult to draw the line between observation and my general work responsibilities as both a teacher and school leader over the course of the data collection. Therefore, I draw a distinction between incidental observations and formal observations.

4.6.1.1 Incidental observations

The incidental observations were recorded as an effort to trace historically contextual events at the time of the study, meaning that something happening 'now' may become significant later in the participants' lives (Magolda, 1999; Monaghan, 2006; Pellatt, 2003) as well as the life of the institution. The incidental observations provided data related to how the participants behaved, engaged and responded within different places and spaces at the research site. I recognised the types of challenges experienced during observations were 'closely related to [my] role [as] the inquirer in observation' (Creswell, 2007, p.139). Importantly, towards the end of the study my incidental observations changed as my role transitioned from teacher to leader. Through the study period, I had roles as both a curriculum and pastoral care middle

[13] Considering my journal entry descriptions of student participants (see Section 4.3.2), I recognise I did not achieve this fully. Thus recording descriptively and without judgement was an ongoing exercise of refinement.

school leader. With these roles came an increase of release time from teaching and an increase of responsibility. This promotion was advantageous for making incidental observations as my presence and movement around the school increased, meaning I was able to observe things that I would not ordinarily capture if in the classroom. For example, I was amazed at how much movement of students I observed during lesson time.

My assumption – as a teacher – was that students were kept in class with their teacher bar circumstances such as toilet breaks. However, as a leader, I was increasingly speaking to students about being out of class, and interestingly, this provided insight as to why they were out of class. Multiple reasons were often shared, of which some included: teachers not turning up to class; students being 'kicked out'; a relief teacher was in place instead of the normal teacher; or students had 'just got here' (to school) and were waiting for the next lesson to start. Such observations provide insight into the unpredictability of incidental observations. By just checking an email and going to see a student, I would come across another student or staff member, which could lead to such incidental observations that helped in understanding how the everyday of the school operates. Consequently, I was able to capture more incidental observations that might not have occurred if my role was just that of teacher. Furthermore, many of these incidental observations become relevant to capturing the disjuncture between institutional idealism (e.g. students being in class and learning) and the embodied reality of participants (e.g. students out of class).

4.6.1.2 Formal classroom observations

All student research participants were observed formally twice in their lessons with the goal of documenting some of the participants' formal experiences in school, which could later be discussed in interviews. This was then balanced with photo-elicitations that sought to capture their informal experiences at school, which will be elaborated on further (see Section 4.6.4). I recognise classroom observations 'can only be understood when it is accepted that they are situated in time' (Delamont, 1984, p. 30) where teachers and students exist in an ongoing negotiation. In this study, the observations of formal learning were required in order to observe social dynamics and patterns while looking for steps in the institutional processes and discourses (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). Furthermore, these observations are important in identifying how texts coordinate student work (a particularly detailed analysis of this is

provided in Chapter 7). Prior to formal lesson observations, I ensured the teacher facilitating the lesson was comfortable with my presence in the room.

The teachers I approached did not decline any of my requests. Importantly, the teachers of lessons in which I observed student participants were different teachers from the ones interviewed. While I will discuss the limitations of the study later on (see Section 4.8), it is worth noting that in hindsight observing teacher participants' lessons would have been advantageous. However at the time my rationale was this study would only be student orientated. I often referred to my notes taken during the observations – or shortly afterwards – in the subsequent interviews with student research participants as starting points for the inquiry (Rankin, 2017b; Smith, 1999, 2005) and during the data analysis stages (McCoy, 2006, 1998) that are outlined in Section 4.7. I understood that, due to my role at the school, student participants could possibly perceive my seeking justification or explanation of behaviour as a form of institutionalised judgement. That is, they might perceive my line of inquiry was that of a teacher investigating an event rather than a researcher trying to understand it. While I recognised that I could never completely dissolve this paradigm, I did try to alleviate it by avoiding evaluative statements and maintaining a line of questions designed to elicit a descriptive account of the student's experience.

4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were a valuable instrument to generate data from the research participants about their working lives at school. In general qualitative research, an interview is defined as a 'specialized pattern of interaction' (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, p. 16) used when the objective of the research is human experience, perceptions and beliefs with the purpose to explore these beliefs, experiences, and views connected to the experience (Crotty, 2003). In institutional ethnography, the purpose of interviews is to 'track the macroinstitutional policies and practices that organize local settings' (DeVault & McCoy, 2012, p. 29), in an effort to make the invisible work processes visible. In order to do this, Smith (2005, 2006) explains interviewing is 'talking with people' and is designed to learn how things are typically organised around the idea of work.

This type of interviewing requires attentively listening to the stories of the participants to go beyond the ruling discourses from within, which most of the participants speak, or felt obliged to speak. Subsequently, I followed the advice of DeVault and McCoy (2012) whereby 'the

interviewer must find ways of moving the talk beyond institutional language to "what actually happens" in the setting' (p. 28) and ask clarifying questions to determine the sequence or processes at play. This line of questioning is different to more traditional or structured interviews whereby the interviewees are asked the same questions in the same way (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick 2008). Therefore I employed semi-structured interviews as a way to be both planned and prepared (Wengraf, 2001) while providing a more flexible platform to talk with the participants about the everyday.

Semi-structured interviewing 'uses key themes and questions derived from theory, which allow the researcher to explore and pursue new avenues of thought based on the response' (Neergaard & Leitch, 2015, p. 5). Importantly, I recognise that institutional ethnography rebukes theory (Rankin 2017a, 2017b; Smith, 2005, 2006; Taber, 2010). However Neergaard and Leitch (2015) talk about theory in the context of grounded theory approaches, which, if applying Thornberg and Charmaz's (2013) understanding, involves reducing diversity in the field and in the data by identifying a basic social process. My intention with semi-structured interviews was to generate discussion regarding the type of work each participant does, which Smith (1999, 2005) argues is a socially coordinated process. Within these conversations about work, participants would often share emotions and perceptions of their experiences within the school. I found the flexibility that is frequently associated with semi-structured interviews to be a strength here as, rather than dismiss these human responses, I would ask the participants questions like 'What did you do during …?' or 'What happened when …?' or 'Can you tell me exactly what made you feel that way as …?' I found these lines of questioning led the participants to be more descriptive about events being discussed and the nature of their work. Thus, I was able to glimpse their subjectivities in relation to their perception of their work as well as the institution. However, it was important I also demonstrate 'greater methodological awareness particularly concerning possible downsides of subjectivity, the generalization of the findings, conscious and unconscious biases, influences of dominant ideologies and mainstream thinking' (Diefenbach, 2008, p. 1).

At several times over the course of the interviews, the participants would demonstrate mild agitation and state something akin to 'You know what I mean' or 'You know what I am talking about', assuming that my position at the school equipped me with knowledge of what they were talking about. However, it was important that I did not fall for the risk of 'missing traces' of ruling relations as 'we are all very good at filling in the blanks' (DeVault & McCoy, 2012,

p. 28). To combat interviewees' assumptions about my knowledge, and to avoid assumptions entirely, I often played naïve with statements such as 'I am not sure what you are talking about' followed with a question along the lines of 'Can you describe that for me?' I found the use of semi-structured interviews to provide flexibility in developing a conversation within a particular subject area with the added benefit of allowing spontaneity to ask questions, thus developing a more conversational method within the boundaries of my interviews.

All interviews were recorded on an electronic device and externally transcribed by professional transcription services. Below I detail features of the student and staff semi-structured interviews.

4.6.2.1 Student semi-structured interviews

I interviewed the student research participants individually on three separate occasions with each student. Interviews were conducted during the school day at a time mutually convenient for the student participant and myself. The three stages of interviews allowed me to develop an understanding of their everyday experience, and provided me time between interviews to reflect and generate follow-up questions. While I asked similar questions of each student (see Appendices A, B and C for the interview guides), the interviews were diverse on account of the students' differing standpoints, and the fact that in the second and third interviews I sought clarification and further exploration of discussion points raised in the previous interview/s and observations.

From the interview rounds with students, I noticed general themes emerged such as:

- career aspirations/Year 12 aspirations
- paradoxes within school – regarding formal academic learning and behavioural policies
- importance of relationships with peers and teachers
- desirable features or subcultures of school life, for example, being a Student Leader, an academic high achiever or a member of the football team.

It is important to note that these themes were identified in reflection following each round of interviews; thus they were not exhaustive and served more as a snapshot. The themes mentioned above assisted in framing questions for the teachers and leaders (outlined below).

4.6.2.2 Teacher and leader semi-structured interviews

Interviews with the staff participants occurred only once and were taken during a mutually agreeable time during school hours. The interviews were approximately an hour in length each. All the teacher interviews were conducted in an empty classroom to avoid disruption. Interviews with school leaders occurred in the leader's office. My decision to interview staff and school leaders was made at the conclusion of the student interviews. Throughout the student interviews, students mentioned teachers frequently. My decision at this time to interview a senior leader was due to student participant conversations discussing certain policies. My thinking at this time was that the senior member would be well poised to offer insight, context and rationale regarding these rules/policies. I found interviewing staff members quite a different experience compared to students, as teachers and leaders required minimal prompts. They would begin talking about a topic, describe it in great detail, and then steer the conversation in a new direction. Comparatively, the student participant responses were often quite short and they required a great deal of prompting. Similar to the student interviews, similar questions were used to frame the staff discussions (see Appendix D), and these framing questions were derived from my interviews with students. Consequently, the themes mentioned above (Section 4.6.2.1) were largely used to open the conversation and steer it.

4.6.3 Journal and fieldnotes

As discussed in Section 3.3, autoethnographic methods supported the data collection. As a teacher at the research site, I drew on my experiences by means of a journal to provide context and description when referring back to interviews and observations. I made a ritual of recording in the journal after interesting interactions/altercations/epiphanies that happened throughout the school day, following professional learning sessions, and other events that sparked personal reflection. Somekh and Lewin (2005) argue 'in any type of research where a person or group is trying to make sense of experience, and where the eye of the beholder is a variable in the research, research diaries are called for' (p. 27). It is important to note I was aware of bias that would be inherent in the journal; however, autoethnographers 'view research and writing as socially-just acts; rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, the goal is to produce analytical, accessible texts' (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 284). Therefore, my journal did not serve as a source of truth, rather a tool to capture and represent my own standpoint within the institution as well as the change in my opinions over time. Subsequently, I treated data from the journal similarly to other types of data during the process of analysis and mapping of ruling relations (outlined in Section 4.7.1).

4.6.4 Photo elicitation

During the time between interview sessions two and three with student participants, I provided students with a camera to capture images that represent their everyday experience at the school site. The use of photo-elicitation allowed photos to be used as a stimulus to deepen and/or orient the conversation depending on the participant (Cappello, 2005). Through this process students were asked to take photos with two criteria: the photos must be taken within school hours and only on school grounds. Additionally, they were asked not to take images of other people unless they received consent. There were no issues or concerns raised with me during or after this activity from students, teachers or leaders. Student participants nominated the day in which they would take the camera to engage in the exercise. Following the return of the camera, I printed all the images that the student had taken and employed them as a point of discussion in the third interview. As a researcher and staff member who had been working at the school for four years at the time the photos were taken, I felt I had a solid knowledge of how the boys behaved and worked within the school site. However, I recognise that this was largely from a teacher – thus institutionalised – perspective. Therefore, in employing the use of visual images (composing and discussing), I was able to dilute my own impositions and perceptions upon the participants and create a visual paradigm for discussion.

While I recognise there is scepticism regarding participants composing images of their own in visual ethnography (Piper & Frankham, 2007, p. 374), I also understand that visual methods have an important role to play in research with youth, particularly in exploring the contradictory and deeply contextual interpretations and messages symbolic images can represent (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010). Whilst there is no set methodology for the use of photography in the social sciences (Rose, 2007, p. 239), image-based approaches are common in ethnography and must adhere to the ‘same standards of evidence and inference demanded of traditional non-image based research and it should make logical connections that start with a study’s initial research questions’ (Aull Davies, 1998, p. 117). In the previous two interview sessions, I noticed that the student participants required considerable prompting before they elaborated on their responses, so I considered that my participants would respond ‘more easily to visual, rather than lexical prompts’ (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, p. 123). Importantly though, I did not use the images taken by students to replace their words, rather to be used as a complement and prompt to be ‘incorporated when it is appropriate, opportune and enlightening to do so’ (Rose, 2007, p. 6).

While in Chapter 8 I do share some of the images taken by the student participants, these images do not stand alone as data; rather meaning was made as student participants discussed particular images with me during their third interview. Given the IE emphasis on relationality, I see these images as in a dialectical conversation with other sources of data such as institutional texts and the interviews with teachers and leaders. Thus the images, with the accompanying conversation, steered my analytical work. To do this bridging work between image and dialogue, I drew on Cappello's approach (2005) by asking student participants during the third interview what was happening in the photographs and to explain why they believed the images to be interesting. Through this process, I found that the photo-elicitation enabled me to step aside as a researcher continually prompting students with questions as the use of photography gave 'research participants a means to reflect on aspects of their lives that they may usually give little thought to' (Rose, 2007, p. 238).

4.6.5 Collecting, tracing and reading institutional texts

Throughout the data collection process, I collected a variety of institutional texts such as 'assessment task sheets', behavioural and uniform policies, curriculum documents, promotional materials, social media posts, newsletters and so on. Identifying the texts activated in the lives of the students, teachers and leaders is an important part of the institutional ethnographic agenda. My position as an educator at the research site was advantageous, as firstly, I could easily access the texts being discussed, and secondly, I had insider knowledge of their origins or at least access to this knowledge. In Section 4.7.2, I address the risks associated with such proximity. According to McCoy (2006), institutional ethnography requires a particular 'reading' of texts to trace themes and directions for further investigation. She expands on this, explaining the approach involves:

> Picking out the institutional traces in people's accounts and seeing how their work takes shape at the institutional interface … The objective is a kind of analytic mapping that locates individuals and their experience within a complex institutional field. (p. 113)

In order to heed McCoy's advice here, I surveyed and read a variety of institutional texts. Central to my analysis was looking at alignments and disjunctures with the experiences of my participants. For example, in one interview, student participant Peter spoke of an altercation with a staff member over his uniform. By mapping his experience in relation to a sequence of

institutional texts that were activated in this altercation – such as detention slips that are recorded onto the student's record, communication with home, the school uniform policy – one can see how Peter's yearning to express an individual identity does not align with school policy. Furthermore, the uniform policy connects with the school's marketing stratagems regarding image, which then extend to the governing body's (EREA's) policy regarding student representation on a national level. Thus, by tracing texts as sources of meaning making and one student's experience of school we can begin to glimpse the intricate web of policies and agendas which extend their immediate experience of the school to a translocal web of ruling relations. In this light, rather than coding data according to themes derived from theoretical approaches, I am following chains of textually mediated events. Thus, I viewed texts as clues which can – at times – unveil aspects of the ruling relations, because they 'are imbued with discursive influences and have a strong mediating role in people's actions (Ng et al., 2013, p. 5).

4.7 Analysis of data

In this section, I describe how the data I collected was analysed. Throughout my research, the processes of data collection and analysis were contemporaneous. This approach to data collection was important in tracing 'chains' of power: as emerging data from observations and interviews were traced, I was able to seek clarification or elaboration from the participants in subsequent interviews and trace coordinating texts accordingly. This was not a straightforward process and the analytical rigour was born out of tracing and mapping between the types of data sets. The institutional ethnographic analytic aim is to map out complex institutional chains of actions, describe the mechanics of text-based forms of knowledge, elaborate the conceptual schemata of ruling discourses, and explicate how people's lived experience takes shape within institutional relations (DeVault & McCoy, 2012; Kerr, 2006).

4.7.1 Synthesising and analysing the data

There is a myriad of ways to manage, analyse and synthesise qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). My synthesis of data was grounded in the theoretical framework introduced by Dorothy Smith (see Section 3.2), and began with a careful reading of texts and transcripts to discover how they are caught up in wider networks of ruling relations. This type of synthesis work involved effort and was largely contingent on my ability to recognise the institutional discourses that text and participants spoke. Thus I recognise that complete synthesis can never

be fully achieved. In analysing all forms of the data, I drew from Smith's (2006) advice to ask particular questions:

> What is the work that these informants are describing or alluding to? What does it involve for them? How is their work connected to the work of other people? What particular skills or knowledge seems to be required? What does it feel like to do this work? What are the troubles or successes that arise for people doing this work? What evokes the work? How is the work articulated to institutional work processes and the institutional order? (p. 111)

As mentioned above, analysis was an ongoing part of the entire data collection process rather than subsequent to data collection. In order to capitalise upon Smith's analytical approach here, I listened to the recordings and reviewed the transcripts to note obvious and subtler forms of disjuncture between the participants' identities and their school-based practices. Additionally, often through this process, I would refer to my journal and observation notes for additional information or insight. It was interesting listening to these interviews, as the participants recounted common or daily stories and experiences of discord between their own identity and the school institution, which I had never considered professionally as an educator. These stories were the first important step in allowing me to identify potential chains of actions shaping the students' lives. Furthermore, the teacher interviews provided additional depth to the analytic agenda.

Whilst initially, teachers present themselves as representations of power within the institution – which to the students they are in a formal capacity – these additional interviews allowed me to trace broader ruling relations that trickle down into the students' working lives through teachers yet are beyond the control of the teachers. In this light, the mapping of complex institutional chains was made more visible. Rankin and Campbell (2009) explain the 'role of an institutional ethnographer is not to code or theorise the concerns of research informants, but instead to explore the often invisible everyday work of frontline workers to expose the operation of ruling relations' (p. 24). Therefore, while I am interested in how the participants perceived and constructed their work lives, I am also aware that their work lives went beyond their perception of what their work actually entailed.

In many examples, the student research participants were able to clearly articulate a series of institutional actions or sequences which shaped their lived experience of school, and impressively, often identified examples of contradiction or hypocrisy. From a personal perspective, it was confronting at times listening to the participants express angst, annoyance or even anger regarding some events orchestrated by the school. However, Smith (1997) explains that, regardless of how 'moving and instructive (individual) accounts may be' (p. 131), central to the institutional ethnographic project is the importance of mapping the ruling relations.

4.7.2 Avoiding institutional capture as a researcher

Smith warns of 'institutional capture' whereby researchers begin 'converting informants' accounts of their experience into the terms of an institutional discourse that constitutes people and their activities as the objects of professional or managerial knowledge' (McCoy, 2006, p. 110). DeVault and McCoy (2012) caution of speaking from within the ruling discourse and naturalising the very discourses being analysed. As a teacher and leader at the research site, I am immersed in the community and its discourses on a daily basis. Therefore, to avoid 'institutional capture', I needed to consider the experience of conducting interviews and tracing institutional texts in a different light. To do this, I looked for the institutional texts that were activated in ways that shaped participants' lives. Furthermore, this process required a code switch, where I moved from teacher to researcher. I did not laden participants' responses with assumptions or ruling discourses; rather I returned to Smith's (2006) guiding questions, set out above.

My consciousness of this agenda was integral to the handling and writing of data. Throughout the process of reviewing and considering all forms of data, my goal was to identify the 'institutional traces' of the participants' stories in the school and, more importantly, bring to the surface the textually mediated processes that organise such experiences. As a researcher working in the site of the study, it was important to maintain a reflexive approach when transcribing, reading and mapping data. This effort was largely achieved by taking a critical view of institutional language, or what McCoy (2006) would describe as 'a dialogue with data' (p. 122) where the analysis involves a rethinking of how the researcher uses language. For example, in one of the interviews a student participant shared his angst and annoyance about a particular area of the school being out of bounds during break time.

As a teacher, my default thinking was that this rule has to do with safety and ensuring all students are under supervision. This type of thinking was institutionalised. Fascinatingly, by listening to the student describe his reason for wanting to return to the same location during break times, I realised that it was largely due to him feeling unsafe within the supervised areas. As he described events that made him feel this way, he was able to illustrate how school behaviour policies – designed to ensure safety – are only activated by certain teachers at certain times. As such, stepping outside of the institutional discourses was vital so that I could identify discourses and experiences that may have gone unnoticed. This additionally allowed me to ensure a process of looking at local practices for 'institutional traces in people's accounts' (McCoy, 2006, p. 122) and experiences.

4.8 Limitations

As with any research, there are limitations due to my logistical, temporal and theoretical decisions. In this section, I address some of the limitations of this study.

4.8.1 Data collection: One school site and one time period

The study was at one school site in which I am employed as a teacher and leader. It is important to acknowledge that throughout this project I maintained a full-time teaching load, thus proximity to – and embeddedness within – the research site was an important factor in considering how to undertake this project. On a personal level, my interest in the site also connects to my history as a former student and current staff member. The primary limitation regarding the school site is that it is one site. Additionally, and whilst I draw on historical accounts through autoethnography for contextual information, the study centres on the student, teacher and leader experience during the year 2017; thus it makes no cross-temporal claims either. Arguably, I could have expanded my study to include other schools within the governing EREA network, or other all-boys schools within the state. However, to reiterate an earlier argument regarding the validity of institutional ethnography, my study is not intended to provide any claim to universality in boys' education or even the school site in which it is based. As my analytic agenda was to 'expose the discourses of the relations of ruling' (Smith, 1997, p. 394), my intention is to contribute to a broader understanding of how the everyday practices of people are coordinated beyond the local. With this in mind, I recognise this study is a snapshot in time, of a particular place, made possible through the experiences of particular people.

4.8.2 Single-sex schooling and participant pool size

I recognise another potential limitation of this study is that it was undertaken at a single-sex school and a large portion of the data was drawn from a small group of Year 10 boys. Furthermore, considering the size of the school staff, the pool size of staff participants was also relatively limited. However, in this study I do not intend to make universal claims about schooling, a particular year level, or more specifically boys' schooling. At the core of my epistemology and ontology is the recognition that the participants are not subjects; they are people living out the everyday within an educational institution. Personally and professionally, I see all students, teachers and leaders as important threads in the school community so it was important to recognise their identity and stories and respect they are the masters of their own experience.

As discussed in my literature review, the various debates, perceptions and arguments regarding boys and education moves through various fields such as sociology (Connell, 2005), sociology of education (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 2003), psychology (Biddulph, 1997, 2004), boys' literacy (Alloway, Freebody, Gilbert, & Muspratt, 2002), and curriculum policy (Lingard, 2003; Mills, 2003). However, I could not find any institutional ethnographically informed studies of adolescent boys and schooling; thus this provides my study with an opportunity to make a unique contribute to multiple areas of scholarship. Additionally, my research design was an important decision, as I did not want the participants (leaders, teachers, students) to lose agency in the scope of the research and, in many ways, this study could be considered an effort to validate their experiences and voices. While the coordination of these participants' working lives holds relevance for these individuals, and potentially some others in their cohort, it also provides insight into how the research site operates and is coordinated by internal and external discourses and representations of power. Therefore, the limitations of the gender and year level of the participants are outweighed by their contribution and insight.

4.8.3 Reflexivity and positionality

Arguably, my existing position within the school as a staff member and alumnus could be considered a limitation to my capacity as a researcher. The ethical implications of my position and power are addressed below (Section 3.9). Objective claims are not the intent of this study and I have made every effort to acknowledge my own position and identity as a reflexive researcher throughout the research and analysis. Such an approach adheres to the tenets of both institutional ethnography and autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Atkinson, 2006; Chang,

2008; Walford, 2004). Additionally, the access to and pre-established relationships within the research site for the most part served as advantageous on a pragmatic level, particularly in establishing rapport and gaining access to participants. These relationships are important in institutional ethnography, as Smith (1996) suggests: 'undertaking an Institutional Ethnography requires a shift from traditional sociological method (where objects are studied) by an "outsider" (the researcher) towards recognizing that there is a relationship between researcher and embodied "expert" participant informants' (p. 185). I do not make the claim that all relationships positively influenced research outcomes, as certainly many factors shape how relationships form and are maintained. Furthermore, what is recounted in this dissertation is only my perception of these relationships. While I acknowledge that my connection to the research site is part of the research process, my commitment to the analytic approach of institutional ethnography was important in ensuring the ruling relations of the school site were exposed, rather than justified or ignored. Additionally, it is due to my insider status that certain aspects of both the data and the data analysis have come to fruition. A similar study at this school site from an 'outsider' perspective would not necessarily be able to access or unveil what my study has.

4.9 Ethics

In this final section of this chapter, I describe the ethical considerations for my project. The University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee granted my research permission to proceed. Additionally, I sought and received permission from the school site principal and its governing body Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). I did not seek research ethics clearance from the Department of Education as CBC is an independent school under the governance of the EREA. In the context of social research, Crotty (1996) contends that 'ethics has nothing to do with morality but stands for "proper" ways of behaving for members of a profession or other group' (p. 86). Throughout this research, I aimed to explore the way people interact within the context of a particular social institution and examine how these interactions are institutionalised. Through this research I intended to gain further understanding of the organised character of institutions and ruling relations. Ethics is important to all research, particularly institutional ethnography as the theoretical framework begins with the standpoint of the participants and avoiding objectification. Therefore it was vital to respect the stories and experiences shared. I recognise that there are certain difficulties encountered by

insider researchers regarding ethical principles of privacy, confidentiality and informed consent (Creswell, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which I expand on below.

In recruiting, interviewing and dealing with data pertaining to all participants, I employed a range of steps to ensure consent and confidentiality was consistent throughout my study. The student participants were invited to participate during a year-level meeting. To alleviate concerns regarding recruitment, I attended the Year 10 weekly cohort meeting and read the contents of the information sheet to the group, emphasising the focus of the study and its requirements for participation, rather than speaking to students individually. Any students seeking further clarification were asked to email me; however I received no emails. Any students interested in participation were welcome to collect an information sheet (Appendix E) at the end of the meeting. To ensure students did not feel compelled or coerced in any way to take an information sheet, I left the meeting space immediately after my presentation and before the meeting had finished. Over 60 students expressed interest in participation; thus recruitment was done on grounds of diversity (described above in Section 4.3.2). All students participating in the study were required to sign a consent form (Appendix F). Additionally, students' parents/guardians were also required to sign the same consent form. All participants and their families consented to participation. Following several interviews, it became apparent that interviewing staff would be beneficial to my study. Therefore staff were invited to participate at a staff meeting, at which four volunteered. Staff participants also completed a participant consent form. Individual observations and interviews were scheduled at convenient and mutually agreed time/s and in a suitably private part of the school to allow for discussion. Interviews with student participants took place in an interview/meeting room with the door open in accordance with child protection policies. The use of the interview/meeting rooms further ameliorated any power imbalance that may be felt if interviews took place in a location such as an office or classroom where the teacher–student dynamic is more apparent.

While my study does not hide the school site (CBC is not a pseudonym), the use of pseudonyms for participants and their interview transcripts ensure anonymity to some degree. Following the audio recording and transcription of interviews with participants, all participants' pseudonyms were applied to the data. The subject matter and direction of interviews was kept confidential and all forms of data with potential to identify participants has been either electronically locked away in password-protected servers or physically in a filing cabinet. While none of the participants communicated particular expectations around their anonymity, steps were still

taken to ensure this. In relation to roles of the participants, these include:

- **Executive Leader** – In seeking an interview, I never communicated publicly to staff or others who this leader was, or in fact that I had sourced an interview with them. Furthermore, the title role of the Executive member was excluded from this study.
- **Staff** – Details regarding the staffs' (including middle management) history and expertise was general. For example, rather than stating how long a teacher had been at the school or teaching, general comments like "over ten years" helped maintain anonymity. The actual roles or titles of teachers and managers were omitted. Teacher participants could not be identified by the classes they taught as the size of the school means several of these classes run across both senior and middle school. For example, participant Eliza is one of over 20 English teachers.
- **Students** – provided pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Forms of data collected from students that could be used to identify them (e.g. work samples and photo elicitation) were kept in a locked file cabinet, deleted, destroyed (via shredder), or returned to student. Any data generated by student participants used in this dissertation contains no identifiable features (such as names or images of faces/personal belongings).

Some forms of data, namely the Dux Poster, shares images of former students of the school site. These images are of alumni and are publically available from the school website. These images are not the participants of this study. At no stage during the study did a participant suggest they were at risk. No participants withdrew from the project.

The welfare of participants was paramount. Therefore, when leaders, teachers and students spoke to me about other people, I ensured identities were protected and opinions were recorded or used in a professional manner. As my concern is mapping and tracing institutional relations and processes, this project was not designed to be critical of teachers or students, even though there is scope for criticism from the participants. My reflexive research design worked to ensure I acknowledged my different roles within the school, as researcher, teacher and alumnus. Throughout the research, I dealt with any contentious statements in a confidential and professional manner. The relationship between researchers and participants is the 'overarching ethical issue in teacher research' (Shockley Lee & Van der Berg, 2003, p.93). Therefore, as a teacher at the school, I did not want to damage any relationships. My status at the school site is premised on respect and trust, and it was important that I did not threaten this with poorly managed research practices. Therefore, confidentiality was the most important aspect of ethical practice considered. There are strengths and limitations to insider research that I had to

recognise (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and throughout the interviews there was a professional risk in learning of, and documenting, the experiences of students, teachers and leaders that they may wish to remain private.

As the data chapters will show, all the participants – in one form or another – shared paradoxes, criticisms and concerns regarding their own experiences within the school. In sharing these experiences, at times participants would refer to other people or aspects of school life in a critical matter. My role as researcher here was not to take this as truth and, more importantly, I was obligated to ensure such personal insights remained within the paradigm of my research and were not discussed outside the confines of the interview. In this light, confidentiality was paramount to the ethical processes of my research and protecting – to some degree – my integrity as a professional. The use of pseudonyms for participants and locations mentioned in interview transcripts ensure anonymity to some degree. The subject matter and direction of interviews was kept confidential and all forms of data with potential to identify participants has been either electronically locked away in password-protected servers or physically in a filing cabinet. At no stage during the study did a participant suggest they were at risk. No participants withdrew from the project.

4.10 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have detailed and outlined the research methods of inquiry informing this research. Drawing heavily from on the key concepts of institutional ethnography (discussed in Chapter 3), my methods align with this method of inquiry because they started with the actualities of people's embodied experiences. Building on the scholarly work in institutional ethnography – within education and other spheres of life – my study contributes to this type of research. By beginning with the lived experience of people in the everyday social world, my study investigates how texts and discourses maintain and organise ruling relations by examining how people are caught up beyond their direct experience. This chapter builds on the literature review (refer to Chapter 2) and theoretical framework (refer to Chapter 3) to outline the method used to examine how, in the context of neoliberal governance, the marketisation of education and a school facing unprecedented declining enrolments, the work of students, teachers and leaders is bound to often competing and contradictory policies, processes and discourses. The analysis of the data – presented in the following chapters – explores the influence of neoliberal governance experienced at the local level.

Chapter 5: Marketised ideals of the school – Institutional discourses and practices shaping culture, leadership and policy

5.1 Introduction

> It is a competitive market now so you have to be looking at what are you offering. You can't just go on tokens these days, you know. Building boys for tomorrow, what are you building? Parents are quite critical now and want to know exactly what their son is going to get. What's the value add? And will compare, you know, product 1 with product 2. So there has to be a sense of what will be the outcome. What do we want to see at the end? What is a graduate going to look like? What skills will they have? What abilities will they have? (Paul, School Leader, Interview, 2017)

The aim of this first findings chapter is to introduce the school site with attention to institutional discourses and practices promoted by leadership drawing upon state and national policies. The focus is on understanding how Christian Brothers College (CBC) connects to, and is influenced by, a wider network of neoliberal discourses in education while responding to a volatile local school market. As such, this chapter is important in setting the context for the subsequent data chapters as it establishes institutional imperatives, discourses and ideals coordinating the daily experience of teachers and students.

Data for analysis is derived primarily from an interview with executive school leader Paul, who discussed the competing demands and institutional imperatives of the school in the wake of declining enrolments. Paul's formal position within the institutional hierarchy of the school means he has considerable influence over the daily running of the school but also is heavily involved in steering its strategic direction. Thus Paul serves as an appropriate entry into the data as his role requires him to respond to the political, economic and educational influences outside the gates of CBC and, to some degree, to manage the effect they have inside. The secondary data set is the institutional texts I draw upon, and the third is my ethnographic observations. By beginning with the standpoint of a leader, I am able to place the institutional priorities and ideals of the school into a temporal context. However, in considering my own subjectivity, I draw on further data in the form of Australian Curriculum policy, student

enrolment data, NAPLAN results, journal entries, the school's strategic direction document, and the Edmund Rice Education Australia Governance Statement to assist me to link 'local happenings into extralocal ruling relations' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 9).

The chapter contains three separate sections which work towards the analytic focus. Section 5.2 is the largest section and explores the impact of *school choice* on CBC in a context of unprecedented declining enrolment numbers. Subsequently, this section explores the school's intensification of marketing strategies and generation of promotional materials in an effort to lure potential clients. I first explore the school's annual celebration of Year 12 achievement to promote itself as a place of educational advantage, while also fostering higher education aspirations within students and privileging a certain type of CBC masculinity. I then explicate the partnership between CBC and local universities, describing an institutional circuit that begins with the school and ends with university, to further evince the Australian government agenda of widening participation in higher education. Finally, I describe non-academic marketing stratagems employed by the school that work to promote a CBC idealisation of school masculinity designed as a point of different in the single-sex school market.

Section 5.3 explicates the school's response to the competing and mixed messages of the Australian Curriculum. Firstly, through the institutional imperative to provide students with '21st-century pedagogy', I illustrate how Paul speaks through a vernacular which echoes Australian educational policy. While this subsection provides insight into what the pedagogic direction of the school is, it also evinces how educational policy discourse can frame leaders' perceptions of teachers' and students' aspirations. Secondly, and in some ways jarring with the notion of 21st-century education, I describe how the school's emphasis on literacy stems from underperforming NAPLAN results. In doing so, I demonstrate the implications of the high-stakes nature of national testing for teacher professional development, as CBC seeks to bolster results and secure its position in the market. Thus I argue the imperative for CBC to be on the frontier of innovative educational practice, while also producing high-performing test results, is beneficial in bolstering its position in the local school markets to lure enrolments.

Section 5.4 introduces the values of CBC, which serve to promote the school as a place to develop morally virtuous students. However, by mapping these values to the school's national governing body, I illustrate how the school is governed by the national entity of the Edmund Rice Education Australian (EREA) network, which has implications for power relations and

leadership autonomy. Through examining the various correlations between the values of CBC and the EREA, I provide some historical context on the origins of the school. This section is important in setting up the context of my study, as the school values serve to discursively coordinate students' and teachers' everyday work within the school and it thus has relevance to subsequent data chapters.

5.2 School choice, declining numbers and marketing stratagems

My intention here is to explore the position of CBC within the school market generated by school choice, which then provides context to the significant impression management and advertising campaigns the school engages with. The discourse of school choice in Australia requires schools to open themselves up to judgement from potential clientele through the use of sophisticated and strategic marketing and promotional materials (Butler, 2015; Morgan & Blackmore, 2013; Windle, 2015). Promotional materials, as one part of the decision-making process, allow parents the opportunity to compare school achievements, philosophies and facilities to decide which environment is best for their child. In reality though, access to CBC is largely dependent on the parents' ability to pay the fees. Thus, a central criticism of school choice is the disparities in participation, as it is 'more applicable to the privileged, who have the necessary social and material capital to accumulate resources that allow life-choices' (McDonald, Pini, & Mayes, 2012, p. 16). In short, not all consumers have equal access to the necessary capital.

Adding further complexity, school choice is actually both advantageous and disadvantageous for CBC. On one hand, parental choice made possible by government funding means the potential clientele – who can afford it – can choose CBC over others. On the other, this creates competitive markets and means other schools are competing for the same students. In the context of Australian schooling today, the future of any private school is increasingly contingent on securing enrolments of families who can afford private schooling. By mapping concerns shared by executive leader Paul in relation to the contemporary context of declining enrolments, I demonstrate how the school has become more business-like and acquiescent to business interests (Lingard, Sellar, Hogan, & Thompson, 2017) through the employment of marketing and impression management strategies. This shift aligns with New Public Management as it involves the enactment of managerial regimes modelled on the private sector, manifesting in 'recognisable and traceable sequences of institutional action' (Griffith & Smith,

2014, p. 12). This opening section contextualises the subsequent two sections of this chapter as it positions the constraints schools experience, their institutional identity and how the image they portray in the market influences the teaching and learning.

5.2.1 The context of falling enrolments

Within an Australian context, the privatisation of education is most apparent in the popularity of school choice and the large portion of students attending private schools (Hogan & Thompson 2017; Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2016; Lingard et al., 2017). Within increased neoliberal governance, the facilitation of school choice is largely due to the weakening and removal of regulations regarding school enrolment, the correlation between school funding and enrolments, and encouragement of choice and movement among and within school systems (Ball & Youdell, 2009; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), over 34.3% of Australian school children are educated in non-government schools. More specifically 19.7% are enrolled in Catholic schools and 14.6% are enrolled in the independent school sector. However, as I will demonstrate, the private Catholic sector has fallen into difficult times.

Christian Brothers College is a private Catholic school and, in discussing its future, executive leadership member Paul quickly pointed out:

> It needs to be seen as a school that's progressive and is challenging students. If it's not challenging students, students will go elsewhere. We are in a different market now and parents will use virtual classrooms[14] to have a look and make choices. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

There is an institutional imperative to lure enrolments for any school. Private schools, while receiving government funding per student, depend on parents who can afford fees (refer to Section 2.4.1). Thus, it is not surprising that Paul spoke of the school's future with a managerial discourse emulating a businessperson who understands that if a product and experience does not resonate with the customer they 'will go elsewhere'. Within the context of CBC, the neoliberal dogma of 'market' and 'choice' have become increasingly pertinent considering

[14] In the context of this interview, I infer Paul means *virtual school tours*. Virtual school tours are commonly found on school websites, allowing a site visitor to view various spaces digitally. CBC's website offers a virtual school tour.

recent trends in Australian Catholic school enrolment numbers. Historically speaking, since the 1970s, the privatisation of education has been advantageous for private schools – both Catholic and independent – as student numbers have continually risen (Endekov, 2019). However during the period of my research (2014 to 2018), enrolment numbers across Australia in Catholic schools fell, while the number of students attending government and independent schools continued to grow (refer to Table 4 below).

Table 4: Australian school enrolments by sector, 2014 to 2018

Year	School type	Enrolments (secondary)	Enrolments (% in each sector)
2014	Government	900,741	59.40%
	Catholic	343,347	22.60%
	Independent	273,634	18.00%
	TOTAL	1,517,722	100.00%
2015	Government	948,177	59.20%
	Catholic	361,273	22.50%
	Independent	292,781	18.30%
	TOTAL	1,602,231*	100.00%
2016	Government	952,657	59.10%
	Catholic	361,952	22.50%
	Independent	296,384	18.40%
	TOTAL	1,610,992	100.40%
2017	Government	962,613	59.20%
	Catholic	360,956	22.20%
	Independent	302,134	18.60%
	TOTAL	1,625,703	100.00%
2018	Government	973,660	59.40%
	Catholic	360,143	21.90%
	Independent	307,590	18.70%
	TOTAL	1,641,394	100.00%

Note: The rise in numbers from 2014 to 2015 is attributed to many states transitioning Year 7 into secondary schooling

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

During the period 2014 to 2018, within South Australia, Catholic school enrolments (primary and secondary combined) plunged by 3.8% from its peak of 48,557 to 46,806 (Bowling, 2019). There is no definitive reason or general consensus as to why the Catholic system is

experiencing a decline in enrolments.[15] The National Catholic Education Commission (2017) attributes the fall to concerns regarding increased fees and economic challenges. However, Baker (2019) attributes the enrolment drop to increasing confidence in public schools due to the *My School* website, greater secularism in the community and the fall-out from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

This downward trend in enrolments contributed significantly to how CBC conducted itself. The declining enrolment numbers over the period of my study – according to the *My School* website (ACARA, 2019) – are shown in Table 5. In neoliberal terms, this brings forth notions of risk to preserve the institution in line with market demands.

Table 5: Christian Brothers College enrolments, 2014 to 2018

Year	Enrolments
2014	1209
2015	1180
2016	1118
2017	1059
2018	1020

As a member of the staff at CBC during this period, I did not witness a mass exodus of students. While commonly at the end of every year some students would leave for family or personal reasons, the overall and general gradual decline in numbers was largely attributed to the school not replenishing numbers in the middle years. For example, in 2014, the senior campus (Years 7 to 12) educated approximately 900 students, meaning approximately 150 students per year level. As a Year 12 cohort of 150 students graduated, the overall school numbers began to decline due to the school being unable to replenish the numbers in Years 7 and 8 where ordinarily new intake occurred. As each year went by, large cohorts of Year 12 students were graduating and leaving, but the numbers of enrolments beginning in Years 7 and 8 was less than expected. Consequently, as each year went by, year-level cohorts were getting smaller, explaining the overall dwindling in numbers. For the future of the school, this will have an

[15] At the time of writing, Catholic Education South Australia issued a statement 'Enrolments are on the rise' (Brinkworth, 2019); however these numbers are for primary schools only.

elongated effect. Even if the school were to begin attracting 150 new students in Years 7 or 8, it will take several years to return to its numbers of 2014 until the smaller cohorts from this period graduate.

Declining enrolments illustrate the ugly side of *school choice* as market systems where parents are cast as consumers has significant implications for how schools function today. For CBC, with many other Catholic schools during this period, *losing* students is unprecedented and can signal a shift in parent satisfaction, affordability and connection with Catholic values. School leaders are not only expected to lead the school; they are expected to market the school and ensure not only its prestige but its viability (Blackmore, 2004; Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004). Within this pressurised situation, many schools have found it critical to intensify their marketing strategies.

5.2.2 Selling the school: The intensification of marketing strategies

Non-government schools in Australia, both Catholic and independent, were engaging in marketing campaigns long before their school numbers were threatened. During the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s, the publication of recipe or 'how to' texts (Davies & Ellison, 1991; Kotler & Fox, 1985; Stott & Parr, 1991) regarding education marketing, and attention from advertising agencies who have come to specialise in the area of school promotion (Vining, 1995), evince the degree to which marketing strategies had been assimilated into educational practice globally. During the period of my study, CBC intensified its commitment to advertisement and promotion to bolster its presence within the school market. Considering marketing materials provides insight into how the school communicates its ethos and ideals (Mills, 2004; Saltmarsh, 2007, 2008). My intention here is to tentatively introduce the idealisation of student subjectivities at CBC in relation to learning and masculinity. More specifically, Section 5.2.2.1 describes some of the promotional material in relation to Year 12 achievement and post-schooling study. I argue such material serves a dual purpose, promoting the school as a place of academic excellence while also encouraging students to aspire to higher education. Section 5.2.2.2 extends the work of Section 5.2.2.1 by exploring the relationship CBC holds with local universities. Here I argue this relationship is an extension of the Australian Government's educational policy agenda emphasising higher education in order to upskill young people to meet the needs of knowledge-based economies. Section 5.2.2.3 describes the proliferation of CBC materials designed to promote the school as place to develop high-status social capital and a vehicle for producing idealised masculinities that are

simultaneously competitive and morally virtuous. The exploration of masculinities is only preliminary here; however this serves to contextualise the data presented in Chapter 8.

5.2.2.1 Promoting the academic excellence of Year 12s

School achievement data is regularly seen as a significant extension of school marketing strategies and engagement within the competitive school market (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004; Symes, 1998). Importantly, a great deal of promotional materials emphasise the high academic achievement of students, suggesting the school thereby offers 'future students positional advantage over their peers' (McDonald et al., 2012, p. 5). The promotion of academic results is often complemented by university entry statistics, thus evincing a discourse promoting the accrual of academic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988) and the expectation of pursuing higher education (refer to Section 5.2.2.2). As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, in discussing school results, executive school leader Paul commodified education as a product competing within a market:

> It is a competitive market now so you have to be looking at what are you offering. You can't just go on tokens these days you know. Building boys for tomorrow, what are you building? Parents are quite critical now and want to know exactly what their son is going to get. What's the value add? And will compare, you know, product 1 with product 2. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Paul went on to refer to the 'outcomes' of Year 12 results, career pathways and university offers. For parents, comparing 'product 1 with product 2' is a relatively simple exercise. At the end of every academic year in South Australia, the release of Year 12 results leads to a proliferation of school promotional materials in the form of articles in newspapers, postings on social media websites, and radio commercials. This publicising of school achievement illustrates how such texts participate in 'the making of ideology, of knowledge and of culture' (Smith, 1987, p. 17). As media devotes a great deal of attention to Year 12 results and achievements, schools nationwide try to position themselves advantageously amidst the discourse. CBC is no exception here. After receiving both Year 12 results and university offers, the school engages in public impression management strategies such as:

- Promotional pamphlets that outline the success stories of students, particularly the Year 12 cohort. These materials contain a spiel from the Principal and Assistant Principal –

Teaching and Learning, providing a snapshot of the Year 12 results and always providing a positive spin.

- Social media (Facebook) posts regarding:
    - Year 12 results, particularly ATAR rankings of students who achieved in the top 10%. These posts include a picture of the student with their ATAR ranking superimposed onto the photo.
    - University offers made to the students in percentages and a breakdown of fields of study. Over the period of this study, engineering and sports/health were the most popular fields of post-schooling study for CBC graduates.

These materials demonstrate that CBC strives to communicate a culture valorising, celebrating and promoting both academic achievement (or ranking) and entry into university and desirable courses. As CBC actively creates the right public profile, it also promotes Year 12 results internally, which works to coordinate teachers' and students' work in relation to formal academic learning (Chapters 6 and 7 are dedicated to examining this area). Internal impression management activities include:

- At the beginning of every academic year:
    - The first staff meeting begins with a review of Year 12 achievement.
    - Faculty leaders are required to produce reports responding to Year 12 achievement in their designated areas with attention to improvement.
    - The Director of Teaching and Learning presents Year 12 results to the College Board.
- The school marketing team creates a *dux poster* containing a photo of every student achieving an ATAR above 90 in descending order (refer to Chapter 7 for what this looks like). These posters are required to be visible in every classroom.
- All the graduates achieving an ATAR above 90 are invited back to the school for the dux assembly, in which they are formally congratulated on stage in front of current students and staff. Images of this event are posted on the school's website and Facebook page.
- Top-performing academic students are invited to return to become paid tutors of students currently completing Year 12.

As CBC engages in academically orientated impression marketing campaigns annually, student academic performance and achievement is not only seen as important, but vital as a tool to position the school favourably within the local school markets. Pervasive neoliberal governance pressures schools to perform 'excellently to the tenets of performativity' (Lyotard, 1979, p. 83). For private schools in South Australia, this pressure is intensified by a reality in which many potential parents consider performance and results when discerning which is best for their child, as they have become savvy market consumers willing to shop around. As an institutional ethnographer, I am interested in how these events (listed above) and materials serve as ruling relations which mould students' and teachers' identities in accordance with institutional discourses of performance and achievement. In Chapters 6 and 7, I examine how CBC's institutional practices and processes coordinate teacher and student approaches to formal academic learning with a particular imperative of producing high results. Equally, as the celebration of Year 12 achievement largely centres on student acceptance into universities, I now explore the relationship between CBC and local universities, which illustrates the Australian Government's policy agenda of widening participation in higher education.

5.2.2.2 School partnerships with local universities

In this section, I illustrate how neoliberal discourses – emphasising the need to upskill students to meet the needs of knowledge-based economies – promote an ideological code within CBC that valorises academic capital and the pursuit of higher education. Therefore, this section maps an institutional circuit that exists between the school, a curriculum governing body and universities. In doing so, I draw IE scholars' analysis of how texts 'carry meanings' and 'coordinate doings' (Smith & Turner, 2014, p. 5). My intention here is to illustrate how the Australian government agenda of 'widening participation in higher education' (Blackmore et al., 2017) is one example of the neoliberal policy assemblage restructuring education, simultaneously linking schools to national economies while encouraging cross-sectoral collaborations (Thomson, 2010). Furthermore, this section builds on Section 5.2.2.1 in showing how CBC bolsters its image as a place of academic excellence couched in relation to university entry.

5.2.2.2.1 Knowledge-based economy discourses

Schools engage with neoliberal discourses of the knowledge-based economy in a range of ways (Blackmore, 2017), namely, by implementing performance goals, intensifying exposure to competition and increasing accountability measures. As further argued by Connell (2013):

> Neoliberalism has a definite view of education, understanding it as human capital formation. It is the business of forming the skills and attitudes needed by a productive work-force – productive in the precise sense of producing an ever-growing mass of profits for the market economy. (p. 104)

When discussing what CBC faces educationally, school leader Paul immediately spoke within a discourse of globalised educational policy. In considering what the students will face in the future, he suggested:

> Globalisation is the other thing for the boys. I believe that there is a sense that they live in a global world and we have got to work outside of our school. I think the dangers with our schools now are we can be insular and silos. We have got to start working collectively with other schools and in partnerships with industries and universities. That has to happen. If we don't start working together we won't be preparing the boys for what the demands are for a future world. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Paul emphasised the need for the school to engage in a wider network of relations. His reference to 'partnerships with industries and universities' suggests the educationally related decisions and direction of the school should consider other educational institutions, particularly universities. According to Ball and Youdell (2009), schools working in partnerships with universities serve as examples of active work to try to raise student aspirations. Further work in Australia by Gore, Holmes, Smith, Southgate and Albright (2015) evinces how the government[16] – acting on research that indicates that higher education aspirations develop early in secondary schooling (David, 2010) – has engaged in outreach programs within schools. In other words, these partnerships – or the necessity for them – promote the ideological code of the school valuing higher education.

5.2.2.2.2 Institutional circuits: School, SACE, SATAC and university

Just as Paul spoke of 'dangers' for the school being 'insular and silos', he spoke in a similar vein when cautioning that the school could be perceived as not preparing students for the

[16] Through the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Programme.

'future world'. He appeared to suggest the school is responsible for preparing students to fit into the economy, understand it and ultimately contribute to it ('partnerships with industries and universities. That has to happen'). This type of talk aligns with global discourse promoting the upskilling of young people in order to meet the needs of knowledge-based economies (Ball, 2012; Lingard, 2010; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Sellar & Lingard, 2014). However this is not to say he simply accepts, implements and regurgitates such discourse without tension: he also struggles with certain structural aspects as they impact on the school, like other leaders. Blackmore et al. (2017) examine school leaders' response to globalisation policy discourse and suggest that they 'struggle with government policies and guidelines that do not account for the broader social and material disparities that impact on their communities' (p. 123). For Paul, and CBC more broadly, the educational direction of the school is largely coordinated from institutions beyond the local site. Paul expanded:

> Unfortunately, we are dictated to by the universities, influenced by SACE… there is a big focus on how do we develop capabilities of our students and the CEO[17] has provided some big projects next year on this. How do we assess it? How do we know they have developed those capabilities in particular areas? And so SACE are now looking at that being part of the formalised assessment that occurs. That is a different mindset for us to be thinking about. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Paul's words here ('we are dictated to') suggest the school has little agency or choice with regards to the educational direction for the students. His references to 'assessment' and measurement allude to a structural chain of institutions, texts and processes that bind the school to both SACE and universities. This structural chain is akin to what Smith and Turner (2014) call *institutional circuits*, a term that 'locates sequences of text-coordinated action making people's actualities representable and hence actionable within the institutional frames that authorize institutional action' (p. 10). It is important to note that each link of the chain (described below) contains a myriad of texts which seek to coordinate practice and action in various forms. I do not describe nor list these texts[18] here, as my intention is to illustrate that the institutional practices at CBC are highly influenced by a wider web of ruling relations.

[17] Acronym for Catholic Education Office.
[18] Chapters 6 and 7 provide an in-depth explication of the textually mediated work of teachers and students, particularly in relation to SACE texts.

When Paul spoke of the SACE Board, he was referring simultaneously to educational policy in form of curriculum and an institution. In this context, the SACE Board is a ruling regime that, according to its website (SACE, 2019), 'is responsible for the accreditation of subjects, the recognition of learning, and the assessment of student learning that contribute to meeting the completion requirements of the South Australian Certificate of Education'.

In other words, the SACE Board provides policy and curriculum that determines what students will learn and how they will be assessed/measured in relation to that learning. While Paul did not mention this, the results that the SACE Board 'measure' are then provided[19] to the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) which, according to their website (2019):

- … assesses the academic and non-academic qualifications presented by applicants, and ranks eligible applicants in merit order for each course according to the rules and guidelines provided by the institutions [universities].
- SATAC generates offers based on the number of applicants required to fill each course, as set by the institutions, and act as a 'one-stop-shop' for enquiries about the outcomes of applications.

In short, this chain illustrates that the students of the school are measured by SACE, apply to SATAC, and hopefully are accepted by a university. From a cursory overview, it appears that the SACE board and universities possess the most power in this institutional hierarchy and in relation to the school. However this is not entirely the case. The SACE board requires schools and students to comply with its policies and – at the very least – value its certificate. While in this chain, universities appear to set all the rules as to who gets offers and for what, as I argue below, they are financially motivated to engage with high schools and promote the widening of participation of higher education.

5.2.2.2.3 Marketing the 'partnership' between school and university

Educational partnerships between schools and universities have proliferated in recent years (Kezar, 2011) and, given the government policies, this is not surprising. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the Australian Government has provided considerable funding into 'the upskill [of the]

[19] Students' SACE results are only provided if a student has made an application to SATAC.

general populace to meet the needs of knowledge-based economies' (Blackmore et al., 2017, p. 108), which has seen the widening of participation in higher education. Secondly, for universities, students or clients equate to funding; thus universities are engaged in their own market competition (Connell, 2019) similar to that of schools. It has been noted that 'two in five school leavers now enrol in higher education' (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2018), so it is logical that high schools are spaces to target to attract new and aspiring clientele. Thirdly, for schools, having students meet the eligibility requirements and enter university is an advantageous selling point allowing for the 'marketisation of performativity' (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 376). This becomes a contributing factor in how parents, students and staff come to rationalise their daily actions in regard to academic capital. Below, I describe how local universities have a presence within CBC. In doing so, I illustrate what cross-sectoral collaboration between universities and schools looks like in the everyday milieu, while further suggesting that – in engaging in such a relationship with universities – the ideological code of the school promotes higher education.

5.2.2.2.4 University in school

Through the period of my study, representatives of three of the local Adelaide universities regularly visited the school site in relation to different events on the school calendar. The following points capture the general type of work and nature of the relationship between the school and universities:

- Career Expo. Night – annually, the school hosts a career information evening and invites universities to provide display stands and speakers. The universities send a range of representatives from different faculties/schools, equipped with promotional material such as brochures and memorabilia (rubber bracelets, hats, shirts, etc.)
- Information sessions on applying for university – throughout the school calendar year, different universities book times to speak to year-level cohorts regarding application processes to their university. These presentations ordinarily last half an hour and students are provided with brochures and information packs.
- Promotional materials – at the beginning of every school year, the universities post pamphlets and posters advertising the range of university pathways and courses. This material is visible outside the Career Counsellor's office on large displays and brochure stands.

- Undergraduate tutoring programs – these programs involve university students providing tutoring to school students on school grounds, both during and after school hours. Generally, these tutoring programs form part of university course requirements for pre-service teachers. CBC has engaged with two programs of this nature:
    - Support with learning and engagement for Year 7 to 9 students
    - Career Awareness Program – students receive support with the completion of the compulsory SACE subjects Personal Learning Plan and Research Project.
- Pre-service teachers – undergraduate students completing their course requirements undertake placement throughout the year. Teachers are paid by the universities for mentoring the pre-service teachers.
- Workshops at university – classes, and at times entire cohorts, attend excursions and workshops conducted by local universities. These workshops are advertised to support school students with their schoolwork. In attending these workshops, students are provided with both educational material and promotional material from the university.
- Holiday support programs – universities invite students in Year 12 to courses offering subject preparation, revision and study guides to assist with current study.
- Headstart programs – some universities offer students the opportunity to apply for a scholarship program rewarding high-achieving students with the opportunity to study at university while still in Year 12, and having these university studies count towards their SACE and university aggregate (ATAR). During the period of my study, three CBC students engaged in this program.

This section has illustrated how higher education discourse, institutional circuits and cross-sectoral collaborations coordinate an ideological code valorising higher education. The universities are literally visible and present within the school site on a regular basis. It is important to recognise the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the school and universities here. As discussed above, the universities likely view schools as a scouting ground for potential new clients and, thus, new sources of money. So while it appears that they are invested in the globalised discourse emphasising the needs of knowledge-based economies, and this is the discourse that is promoted, the coordination between schools and universities is really a game around recruiting financial capital. For the school, involving universities in their everyday programs and events implies there is an advantage for students who possess higher education aspirations. Thus this relationship privileges a certain type of subjectivity and

constructs the notion of an ideal learner. In Chapter 7, I explicate what this coordination means for students in greater detail.

I now return to describing the promotional materials of CBC focusing primarily on how the materials position the school not only as an institution of educational advantage, but also as a place to develop high-status social capital by espousing idealised discourses of morally virtuous masculinities.

5.2.2.3 Promoting 'being brother': CBC's idealisation of school masculinity

My intention here in describing the promotional materials of CBC is two-fold. Firstly, I intend to illustrate – and extend from Section 5.2.2.1 – the school's intense competition for consumers. Secondly, in considering the promotional materials I illustrate how the school communicates an idealised masculine subjectivity prevalent in all-boys schooling by connecting it to a morally virtuous rhetoric. A feature of private school marketing materials is the effort to position schools 'in relation to the cultural edge' (Gottschall et al., 2010, p. 27). As private schooling holds connotations of the elite (Connell, 2002; Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005), many parents invest great interest in their child's opportunities to develop high-status social capital (Yang & Kayaardi, 2004) through their schooling. Parents presumably select private schools that align with their own values or appear advantageous to the aspirations they hold for their children. For private schools, celebrating brand new facilities and historic values evinces attempts to provide a point of difference within the market, and gender plays an important role here. All boys private schools in Australia carry with them a certain set of expectations around sport, traditions, old/historic buildings, a comprehensive education, and certain images of acceptable forms of masculinity. Furthermore, all-boys private schools have long been established as a vehicle for producing idealised versions of white, middle-class heterosexual masculinities (Connell, 2002). Whether intended or not, promotional materials of all-boys schools privilege certain forms of masculinity, while simultaneously subordinating others (Gottschall et al., 2010). Below are some examples of how CBC creates non-academic promotional materials and engages with marketing campaigns:

- A part-time staff member solely manages the school's social media to promote events and post carefully selected (and at times altered) images to the school's Facebook page and website. The school's social media accounts post daily, including weekend updates

of co-curricular sport results and special events students participate in outside of the school grounds (such as masses, cultural events and festivals).

- A public transport advertising campaign involves a billboard on the back of several public transport buses showing an image of three students wearing a lab coat over their uniform while looking fiercely into science equipment. The college crest and contact details are also visible, while a statement reads 'Expressions of interest for enrolment are welcome'.
- Advertisements of various sizes are placed in local newspapers. These generally emulate the public transport campaign. However the image in the newspaper will often be of a Year 12 student leader kneeling next to a reception student while both are smiling.
- Promotional material is posted to any person/s who provide details on the school website. These materials include enrolment information and forms, the college curriculum guide and a co-curricular/sporting brochure. Such promotional material is littered with images typically promoting the grandeur of buildings new and old, students sitting with arms around each other's shoulders and playing sports.
- Student Leaders[20] and student representatives attend a variety of events outside the school (such as primary school fetes, public fundraisers, etc.) and visit Catholic primary schools across the city and the metropolitan area.
- Multiple principal tours and open evenings occur throughout the year whereby prospective parents/students are provided tours from staff members around the campus grounds. Often students in full uniform accompany these tours, which lead to specific facilities such as science laboratories, the sporting hall and music rooms, which are occupied by other students conducting experiments, practices or performances.
- An advertising firm has been hired to design a school slogan.[21]

There is a theme of virility and celebrating achievement coursing through each of the CBC advertising campaigns. Consistently, potential clientele are met with images of boys engaged in either sporting or academic pursuits looking determined, or embracing each other while

[20] Student Leaders in many other schools are referred to as prefects. These students are selected as leaders by the student and leadership body and exhibit confidence in public speaking, appearance and general academic merit. They are always impeccably groomed and often rehearsed as to how to act, what to say, or what to do, before attending/assisting with events.

[21] In 2017 the proposed new slogan from the advertisement firm for CBC was *'All the privileges of an elite education, only half the price'*. Needless to say, school leaders shared with staff that this was not adopted.

smiling. In these market-driven times, all-boys schools construct discursively masculine worlds that simultaneously exhibit characteristics of competitiveness, aggressiveness and control (Harding, 2003) while also moderating these with new focus on self-management, self-reflexivity and a 'masculinity that stakes a claim to introspection and community service' (McWilliam & Brannock, 2001, p. 17). What we do not see in the CBC marketing materials are alternative forms of masculinities. There is no evidence of boys experimenting with expressing gender identities in non-normative ways (e.g. nose rings, dyed hair). Thus CBC, on a whole, remains a space in which there are conservative expectations around gender.

Extending this notion of expectations around gender, Paul branded the model of behaviour that is celebrated for its alignment with CBC values as 'being brother', seen below in his discussion of how the school should communicate its values:

> I think we have to be a bit more explicit. Some of the schools for example, we are talking about, in Brisbane Gregory Terrace they talk about the 'Terrace Gentleman'. What does that mean? So I think we have to be explicit like that now. What would it mean if we talked about being a brother? So what does that mean in the sense of how we behave? How we interact with people? How we dress? Our actions, our behaviours. So it has to be that explicit today. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

The advantages of an education at CBC that Paul spoke of allude to idealised images of masculine subjectivities through reference to 'being a brother'. When asking how 'we' – meaning the students – 'behave', 'interact' and 'dress', he was not doing so rhetorically, rather referring to a set of explicit rules and expectations of the school designed to coordinate students towards the ideal CBC subjectivity. When Paul spoke of being 'explicit', he implied CBC, as an all-boys school, is able to provide boys with a certain code of intellectual, moral and social development. In other words, CBC has an idealised student masculine subjectivity that extends from the school's values and identity – but this is just an ideal. Institutional ethnography urges us to consider the overlaps and disjunctures between individual identities and institutional identities. As Smith (2005) posits, 'how people become caught up in, and how our lives become organized by, the institutional foci of the ruling relations' is 'mediated by institutionally designed realities that organize relations' (p. 27) that objectify and assign subject positions. Therefore in Chapter 8, drawing on interview data from students and institutional texts, I

analyse how the school works to coordinate student subjectivity towards its idealism in the form of the Student Leader/prefect.

The intention of Section 5.2.2. has been to illustrate how CBC – in a context of declining enrolment numbers – is drawn to engage, or intensify, its marketing strategies to be competitive within the tightening Catholic all-boys school market. An argument could be made that in its competition for students – and thus money – it has intensified its promotion of a historic conception of masculine identities, one that is tied to certain masculine norms (Connell, 2002). I now give attention to CBC's response to the competing demands of educational policy, which works to contextualise the pedagogic focus of the school and further bolster itself in relation to nationwide comparisons, results, rankings and performance.

5.3 Speaking the mixed message systems of Australian educational policy

Under neoliberal governance, school leaders and teachers today are bound to external regimes of accountability and experience a new pressure to compete within marketised environments (Anderson & Cohen, 2015). In this section I illustrate how my discussion with executive leader Paul on educational policy mirrored national discourses prevalent within the Australian curriculum and neoliberalism. Paul spoke of 'contemporary pedagogy' and preparing learners for a globalised world, but also argued for the need to improve basic literacy skills. These mixed messages introduce the competing demands and message systems of Australian curriculum policy more widely. On one hand, Australian curriculum policy evinces a shift towards soft skills with the intention to deliver citizens ready for the demands of globalisation. On the other, the heavy audit culture emphasising performance and testing appears to mediate this direction. For the purposes of my study, this 'type of talk' (Smith, 1999) assists in tracing Paul's leadership – in relation to learning – to neoliberal discourses. This section has two separate, but interrelated, subsections. Section 5.3.1 maps Paul's language of 'contemporary pedagogy' to the Australian Curriculum imperative of preparing learners for 21st-century industries. Thus through the institutionalised lens of educational policy, we see how a leader dismisses local teacher knowledge and expertise in effort to meet curriculum objectives. Section 5.3.2 illustrates how the Australian Curriculum cultivates a competitive fervour of standards and competition through NAPLAN results. In mapping Paul's priority of bolstering 'literacy' to CBC's NAPLAN results and strategic direction document, I demonstrate how the

professional development landscape of teachers, and by extension the learning experience of students, is heavily influenced by performances in national testing.

5.3.1 Preparing learners for 21st-century economies

Australian educational policy is a complex message system of what the government values and believes young people need for the future. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Australian Curriculum was founded upon the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) and its 'Goals for Young Australians' reflect a global orientation. The Australian Curriculum evinces its response to globalisation through the inclusion of general capabilities attempting to conceptualise parts of the curriculum as preparing young people for the rapidly evolving world (Lingard, 2010). In discussing educational policy, Paul clearly articulates the imperative to be future orientated, forward thinking and innovative. In short, he sees one of CBC's educational priorities as follows:

> We use this term 21st Century education. What does this mean? It means that we really have to develop the capabilities that will be required for our boys to graduate today. It is not just about having knowledge; it is about applying knowledge in a way that problem solves. It is about working collectively together. It is about being innovative. It is about being creative. It is about solving problems in a way they have not done before … it is about preparing the boys for what the demands are for a future world. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

It is striking how Paul's talk of education is saturated with discourse paralleling the Australian Curriculum's capabilities.[22] According to the Australian Curriculum website (ACARA, 2019a) 'the general capabilities play a significant role … in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century'. In considering Bakhtin's (1981) assertion that 'words are not empty, they carry meaning that are overpopulated with the intentions of others' (p. 434), we can see that Paul's view on '21st-century education' arguably privileges the dispositions and soft skills necessary for human capital formation within the economy (Connell, 2013). For Paul, this presents a challenge within the classroom, as he explained:

[22] There are seven general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding.

> And the big challenge I think is probably for teachers and their pedagogy and to think differently about how they actually present that information. How do they get that across and still access the kids in an effective way and looking at what learning growth happens? (Paul, Interview, 2017)

It is interesting how Paul gives authority to the curriculum over the localised knowledge and experience of the teachers. He operates from the default position that teachers are not *thinking* the right way if their pedagogy fails to align with curriculum; thus he offers 'contemporary pedagogical approaches' as a remedy. Importantly, Paul's experience as only he can know and speak of it (Campbell, 2006; Smith, 2006) gives us access to traces of socially organised knowledge that coordinates his consciousness and orchestrates his experiences (Bisaillon & Rankin, 2013). In other words, what Paul knows as valuable pedagogy contains large traces of what the Australian Curriculum suggests, and interestingly he denounces any pedagogy that does not fit within its parameters. The points below contain a series of small excerpts from my wider interview with Paul when he discussed his vision for pedagogy at CBC. To illustrate how he spoke with traces of the Australian Curriculum, I have used bold for terms found in the Australian Curriculum website. Drawing on excerpts from my interview with Paul, his pedagogical vision for CBC includes:

- '**integrate** all their sciences and maths together as one aspect. Doing your HASS and arts and putting them altogether as well.'
- '**STEM** has come on board but we have got to think about what that means. Is that integrated within the curriculum? Is that project-based work?'
- 'every class at CBC will have **creativity**, will have i**nnovation**, will have **group work**. How we do it within each faculty is up to them or how they integrate that.'
- '**working collaboratively** together'
- 'do **investigative** work'
- 'It is not just about having knowledge; it is about **applying knowledge** in a way that **problem solves**.' (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Paul spoke of a version of '21st-century education' as a way to unshackle teaching and learning from the orthodoxy of traditional pedagogy. In one part of the interview he lamented that 'all of a sudden in Year 7 there is textbooks, and they have to finish a chapter. Now we have to

rethink how we operate.' In discussing teaching and learning, Paul does not consider either the local knowledge of teachers or the aspirations of students. He privileges the Australian Curriculum and, in many ways, lets the policy vision determine his aspirations for students. This view on learning creates tension for students and teachers in the classroom, thus I will return to it in Chapters 6 (teachers) and 7 (students) when exploring formal academic learning. However, in the context of this chapter, the imperative for CBC to be seen as educationally cutting edge and creating soft skills evinces neoliberal discourses – emphasising the need to upskill students to meet the needs of knowledge-based economies – and works to promote an ideological code within the school valorising higher education. Furthermore, the need for *contemporary pedagogy* can serve as promotional material. Throughout the promotional material listed in Section 5.2.2, images of contemporary learning spaces with state of art screens, break-out areas between classrooms, glass walls and newly renovated science laboratories allude to the school being a place of contemporary educational practice. However considering Paul's pedagogical priorities here, he suggested that the reality of how these spaces are used is not such a selling point. Paul suggested that teachers primarily provide a traditional 'textbook' pedagogy and, while this does not – in his view – prepare students for 21st-century industries, it would also undermine how the school promotes itself as a place of contemporary and cutting-edge education.

Through this section I have shown Paul's pedagogical agenda as an extension of discourse littered within the Australian Curriculum. I now introduce the conflicting messages of the Australian Curriculum as Paul is equally concerned with students' performance in high-stakes testing.

5.3.2 NAPLAN and competition: The need to address literacy and improve performance in high-stakes testing

The Australian Curriculum, as a policy, is designed around competing educational agendas such as accountability and competitiveness. It also responds to the very real need to prepare young people for a future of rapid technological and global change (capabilities) (Lingard & McGregor, 2014). However, in what is described as a 'global panopticism' (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013), testing has become a means of 'steering both national and sub-national policy-making, and the work of schools more generally' (Hardy, 2019, p. 502). Thus, NAPLAN testing in Australian schools has multiple effects and operates at multiple levels.

Testing does not only produce data, but it contributes to certain beliefs about the value of education.

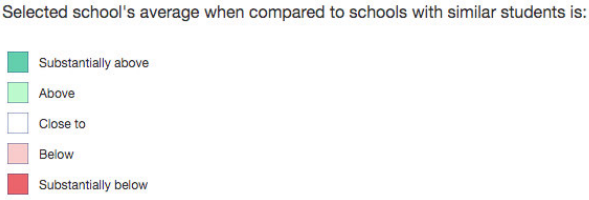
In schools, Weiss (2012) highlights that data from testing can be used for improvement and accountability. In this section, I begin by exploring how Paul calls for improvement in literacy, which I then trace to CBC's underperformance in literacy NAPLAN testing. My intention is then to illustrate the coordinative power of curriculum made possible by testing regimes through examining the direct correlation between student achievement data and the work of teachers. In doing so, I show how the school is accountable to formal nation-wide testing regimes, particularly considering the publicly available nature of these results through the *My School* website. While Paul did not refer to NAPLAN tests directly, in discussing what is pressing educationally outside of 'contemporary pedagogy', he argued:

> Well obviously the literacy is still important. We must develop the literacy. I have got some real concerns that we are getting more and more boys coming through that don't have high literacy ability. So that has to be a priority one. Literacy is everything and that needs to be integrated in all aspects of learning, not just in English as well. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

As Paul shared concerns about 'boys coming through that don't have high literacy ability', a specific pool of data was informing his opinion. Over the period of my study, CBC consistently performed poorly in literacy NAPLAN testing in comparison to other schools. In Figure 5, I have captured the literacy results of the school from 2014 to 2017.[23]

[23] I did not include 2018 because it was after my interview with Paul.

Colour key



2014

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar
Year 3	441	414	432	428
Year 5	503	462	496	492
Year 7	543	492	546	537
Year 9	567	535	577	570

2015

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar
Year 3	413	413	432	432
Year 5	520	467	517	511
Year 7	549	495	528	524
Year 9	570	540	577	558

2016

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar
Year 3	434	417	425	433
Year 5	508	474	503	513
Year 7	547	518	542	534
Year 9	579	539	581	565

2017

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar
Year 3	457	413	426	430
Year 5	535	470	497	514
Year 7	556	509	554	543
Year 9	575	539	566	563

Figure 5: CBC's NAPLAN literacy results from 2014 to 2017

The significance and ramifications of these data lie in their publicly available nature. I was able to retrieve this data easily from the *My School* website, meaning potential parents are able to access the same data. As seen here, student achievement data can be condemning and problematic for schools as the red suggests CBC is underperforming in almost all aspects of the NAPLAN literacy tests. Sellar and Lingard (2013) argue the NAPLAN literacy and

numeracy tests quickly became high-stakes measures for systems and schools, thus creating 'winners' or 'losers' in the commodified game of neoliberal schooling (Youdell, 2006). In relation to CBC, it is important to recognise that the NAPLAN results (refer to Figure 5 above), and their publicly available nature, are an extension of mandatory national educational policy within Australia. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) oversees both the national curriculum and testing. ACARA's creation of the *My School* website greatly contributes to – and promotes – the competitive school market by listing schools' NAPLAN results and comparing them – with colour – against national averages and data drawn from sixty *statistically similar schools.*[24]

Considering the dense splattering of red in Figure 5, indicating the school's average is *below* schools with similar students, it is easy to see how CBC – a school already engaging in impression-management strategies and suffering enrolment decline – would identify literacy as Paul puts it – 'priority one'. However, Paul understated the school's response to literacy in his interview. The CBC strategic plan[25] document states, under Strategic Direction 2: Educational Excellence and Equity:

> 2.4 Continue to develop best practice in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy, ensuring data analysis, monitoring student progress and informing targeted intervention, promote for all students a strong foundation for learning.

This strategic direction largely correlates with what NAPLAN suggests are the benefits of such testing which is to provide school systems and the government 'valuable data to support good teaching and learning, and school improvement' (ACARA, 2019a). In this context, I argue NAPLAN serves as what in institutional ethnography is called a *boss text* (Bisaillon, 2012; Smith & Turner, 2014). As Bisaillon (2012) explains, a *boss text* is

> a text or set of texts that supplies the context for what we can see, hear, and know. There are subsidiary documents that come into being and are organised under these, which are positioned at the top of the hierarchy of texts. (p. 610)

[24] Statistically similar schools is based on socio-economic status.
[25] This document is available on the school website.

This it is not surprising that, throughout the period of my study, poor NAPLAN performances influenced the focus of teacher professional development. Specifically, teaching staff were required to engage with or complete:

- The Writing Project – this was an intense professional development experience led by an external consultant with five phases:
    - *Phase 1*: During Term 1 of 2017, teaching staff were required to attend 10 one-hour sessions after school with an external consultant. Through this period, teaching staff completed a course covering topics such as grammar, word choices, modality and text types,
    - *Phase 2:* During Terms 2 and 3 of 2017, teaching staff were required to attend a whole-day session with an external consultant. In addition, staff meeting time was allocated to apply learning from Phase 1.
    - *Phase 3:* During Term 4 of 2017, all faculty meetings and three whole-staff meetings would be dedicated to mapping literacy within teacher programs.
    - *Phase 4:* During 2018, it was proposed that all teaching staff would engage in further professional development regarding levelling (meaning staff mapping student writing samples against NAPLAN assessment standards)
    - *Phase 5:* For 2018 and beyond, school-wide maintenance was planned and induction of new staff into the program.
- English and mathematics teachers in the middle school were required to provide statements and curriculum maps to faculty heads on how they were addressing the individual NAPLAN results of students in their class.
- Staff meetings were allocated to analysing NAPLAN data and trends (this would happen around the time of NALAN results release – late Term 3/early Term 4).
- A teacher was provided additional release time to work with students identified as 'Performing below national benchmarks' in literacy. Year 9 students working below national benchmarks were prioritised as they were about to enter senior schooling (Years 10 to 12).
- Literacy coaches were employed at both the Senior and Junior Campus to work with teachers to develop targeted literacy teaching pedagogies.

In considering how Paul's actions are structured by NAPLAN, we see how the leadership responsibilities at CBC – as a school situated within a wider network of neoliberal ruling relations – are influenced by a globalised education policy discourse promoting capabilities and competition. The curriculum, and measurement of student achievement, creates pressure for the school to act and respond in a particular way. Importantly, largely due to the public way in which this data is now available, it also intensifies competition between schools, which is problematic for CBC as it is underperforming. However these pressures are not limited to systems and schools, but have material effects in the daily lives of students and teachers (Lingard, Thompson, & Sellar, 2016). As will be shown in Chapters 6 and 7, formal academic learning is largely seen to focus on performance and achievement rather than mastering disciplinary knowledge and acquiring new skills.

Thus far I have devoted a great deal of attention to examining how CBC is caught up in educational quasi-markets and Australian educational policy. In doing so, I intended to illustrate how the school's promotional materials promote the school as a place of educational advantage for potential clients. However, in Section 5.2.2.3, I introduced the notion of the school promoting an idealised version of masculinity through such materials. Such idealisation can be inferred from the values the school promotes (faith, excellence, community and compassion), which I will explore more thoroughly in Chapter 8. My intention in the final section of this chapter is to illustrate how the values of CBC extend from its governing body – Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) – and how 'social relations are mapped and organised by extra-local ruling relations' (Kerr, 2006, p. 34). Interestingly, through the school's history and position within the EREA, this section provides a counter-narrative to neoliberalism and its promotion of the decentralisation of schools.

5.4 School values and heritage: A counternarrative to the decentralisation of schools in the era of New Public Management

This section attends to how CBC and its governing body provide a counter-narrative to the more prevalent New Public Management (NPM) pandemic of administrative decentralisation and bounded autonomy. Discourses of NPM and neoliberal governance hold significant implications for the conduct of school leadership teams, where behaviours and actions are shaped by government regulations. However, my intention here is not to suggest the school is

engaged in resistance to NPM or neoliberal discourse,[26] but rather to illustrate how the school leadership structure and ethos is bound to a centralised body that ultimately has complete power over the school's strategic decisions, appointment of executive leaders and control of finances. In institutional ethnography, connection is key and interconnectedness is paramount (Stahl, 2017a).

Furthermore, ruling relations themselves involve the 'ongoing representation of the local actualities of our worlds in the standardized and general forms of knowledge that enter them into the relations of ruling' where forms of 'consciousness are created that are properties or organisation or discourse rather than of individual subjects' (Smith, 2005, p. 3). following Smith's focus here, this section examines school leaders and the school values as forms of consciousness extending from the centralised body of the EREA network. Thus, this section explores how a certain type of shared language and discourse make visible hierarchies of power that exist within and beyond the school site. Additionally, this section introduces CBC's value system, which serves as a point of context throughout the subsequent data chapters 6, 7 and 8.

5.4.1 New Public Management and de/centralisation

There has been a great deal of scholarly work on the shift towards managerialism – or NPM – in public schooling (Apple, 2004b; Au, 2011; Ball, 2001, 2016b; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996) evincing a shift from a rule-governed, administrative, bureaucratic management to an outcome-based, entrepreneurial, corporate model of management. This shift has seen a transfer of common ideas and practices from the business sector (Bottery, 1996; Hood, 1991; Ward, 2011) to education systems and schools. To name only a few (I have explored some already), these include: the introduction of markets/quasi-markets to create competition; the heavy emphasis on standards and measures of performance; the emphasis on outcomes and data; standardisation; administrative decentralisation; and closing of low-performing organisations/schools. I argue that private Catholic schools in Australia are just as susceptible to the vast majority of these shifts. Earlier in this chapter I examined the impact of competitive school quasi-markets on CBC and explored how educational policy discourse necessitates improving school learning outcomes and data to lure enrolments.

[26] There has been a great deal of scholarly work regarding the theorisation of resistance to NMP and neoliberal governance within public schools. Within the scholarly work, possibilities for resistance include *critical vigilance* (Ball, 2015; Ball & Olmedo, 2013), *counter-discourses* (Fairclough, 1992; Hass, Fichman, & Brewer, 2014; Lakeoff, 2008) and *counter-conduct and reappropriation* (Bushnell, 2003; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Niesche, 2010).

In Chapters 6 and 7, I illustrate the coordination of teachers' and students' work around formal academic learning that centres on standards and performance. While outside the purview of this study, but evidence of a reality whereby Australian private schools are susceptible to closure, in 2019 the congregational leader of Presentation Sisters Victoria announced one of Victoria's oldest Catholic girls' schools was closing down.[27] In the context of neoliberal governance and managerialism, Catholic schools are entangled in the same web as their public and independent system counterparts.

However, one point of difference for CBC is the centralisation of administration. Throughout my interview with school leader Paul, he spoke of CBC as an institution with its own history, values and traditions. However, he also bound such talk of the school heavily to the philosophies of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), which is a national governing body of Christian Brothers schools. In discussing the values of the school, executive school leader Paul shared:

> I think as being important in the school are our school values. Faith, excellence, community and compassion are something like hooks you can hang things on. They really come out of, I believe, the virtues of Edmund Rice and if we think about what is Ricean in education … (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Reflecting on the role of Edmund Rice in structuring everyday actions, Paul illustrated two important features of the role of the CBC values in relation to coordination and institutional identity.

Firstly, the values of CBC are more than a statement. The values promote an ideological code and act as an institutional form of surveillance. For example, students are recognised and awarded in assembly ceremonies for acts of 'faith, excellence, community and compassion'. Additionally, when teachers apply to attend professional development they must indicate which of these values their development correlates to. Paul's suggestion that the values are 'like hooks

[27] In an interview with ABC News, the Congregational Leader announced: 'Comprehensive reviews of the college in both 2002 and 2018 indicate that the number of students intending to enrol in the college in the next decade are unlikely to recover to the level needed to resource a successful Catholic secondary college in the 21st century.'

you can hang things on' reflects the fact that how people work, activate certain texts (certificates and applications), and behave in the school are regularly compared to these values. While not an eminent point of exploration in this chapter, I introduce the values firstly as a point of context for chapters 6 and 7. In the subsequent data chapters, the school's values act as a form of institutional discourse which the student participants measure their formal and informal identities against.

Secondly, and the focus of this section, Paul's reference to the 'virtues of Edmund Rice' illustrates how the local site of the school is bound to a national institutional identity. Smith (2006) reminds us that institutional ethnographic practice enables us 'to reach beyond the locally observable and discoverable into the translocal social relations and organisational that permeates and control the local' (p. 65), it is a way to illuminate how the coordination of people is 'hooked up' (Smith, 1990). It is important to first offer some historical context here to illustrate how CBC became part of the centralised EREA. I will then return to mapping the values of CBC to the EREA.

5.4.2 History of EREA and CBC

The Congregation of Christian Brothers, more commonly known as Christian Brothers, is a worldwide religious community within the Catholic Church founded by the beatified Edmund Rice. The work of the Christian Brothers is historically and globally renowned for the evangelisation and education of young people, particularly boys.[28] For over a century, the Christian Brothers' mission spread throughout the world. In Australia, the first Christian Brothers arrived in Sydney in 1843. By 1900 there were 826 brothers, and by 1965 there were nearly 4000. These brothers helped found over 50 schools in the Christian Brothers tradition nationwide. However, with the aging and declining number of Christian Brothers, 2007 saw the brothers entrust their mission in schools to the newly formed governing and administrative structure which is Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA).

As the Christian Brothers founded CBC in 1878, the school was led by serving Christian Brothers for 128 years. While one might argue, historically speaking, the school was centralised to the Congregation of the Christian Brothers, each Christian Brothers' school

[28] Of the 51 schools governed nationwide by the EREA, 35 of them are single-sex (boys). There are no all-girls schools governed by EREA.

nationwide largely operated as an independent school. Nationally, Christian Brothers' schools were not systemic to the archdiocese of any state, meaning the local Catholic Education Offices had no authority. This non-systemic relationship is due to the fact the Christian Brothers are a congregation in their own right within the church; therefore they are directly responsible to the Vatican. In contrast, local parish and Catholic schools are owned by the archdiocese of that area, meaning the archbishop serves as the conduit between the community and the Vatican. This provided Christian Brothers schools with a certain level of autonomy. While every Christian Brothers school in the nation began with the leadership of Christian Brothers, arguably the understanding, perception and reading of the Edmund Rice philosophy was different for the founding individual/s of each school. The cultural artefacts[29] one might find within any of the Christian Brothers schools (for example the uniform, mottoes, traditional ceremonies) were an extension of the political and individual disposition of the people establishing the school at that time. A founding Christian Brother in Sydney might have had different philosophies or values than a founding brother in Adelaide or Melbourne. And of course, over the 150-plus years, each school would have transformed its institutional identity in response to its community, leaders, location and politics, meaning no two schools under the umbrella of Christian Brothers, now EREA, share the exact same identity.

5.4.3 Shared values: Centralisation of CBC

On a personal level, I remember attending CBC between 1997 and 2001 as a student and engaging in many of the traditional ceremonies current students do today such as college birthday masses, senior formals, graduations and so on. However, in returning as a teacher, one particular marker of change – besides the obvious that comes from being away from the school for 14 years such as people, students and building upgrades – was the prevalence of the four values: *faith, excellence, community* and *compassion*. During my time as a student, the school did not promote values per se; rather it was simply a Latin motto still present on the school crest. The college values were introduced in 2008 and evince the immediate influence of the EREA on the school's institutional identity. Further to this, due to the retirement of the outgoing Christian Brother principal, 2008 also marked the first time a lay principal was appointed by the EREA to lead the school.[30] Thus it is not surprising that executive school

[29] I recognise that most Westernised schooling, irrespective of whether it is public, Catholic or independent, shares similar cultural artefacts like the ones mentioned above.
[30] Prior to 2008, the College Board managed the appointment of principals of CBC.

leader Paul, who was similarly appointed by the EREA in 2008, connected the values of CBC to the EREA touchstones in discussing what marks CBC as a unique school:

> So a sense of faith, which is our presence. Our sense of excellence, which is liberation, I see that. That sense of compassion, which is obviously compassion. That sense of community, that sense of presence and who we are in the world. The EREA touchstones, I think, have added another set of pillars as well. In terms of, and they fit nicely with ours as well but in a sense of, you know that gospel spirituality. The liberating education, which I think is a really important one, which I think is probably the number one touchstone out of all of them. (Paul, Interview, 2017)

Paul spoke of the school's institutional identity in independent terms ('they fit nicely with ours') but acknowledged its congruity, or conformity, with the EREA's touchstones. Corresponding with Paul's words, the school website visually maps its own values against the EREA touchstones (seen below in Figure 6 – next page).



Figure 6: Screenshot from CBC website bridging college values and EREA touchstones

Note: The values in the green boxes are from the EREA; the headings in bold are the school values.

The EREA is the governing body of all Christian Brothers schools, including CBC, and works with the purpose to 'own, govern, manage and conduct these ministries (meaning schools)' (EREA, 2019). While on a local level, school leaders like Paul possess the most institutional power in relation to other school members, for example he has great influence over recruitment

and performance management of staff and students, it is important to recognise that the agency of leaders at CBC is bound to institutional imperatives set forth by the EREA. In an effort to locate Paul and other CBC executive leaders in the national web of EREA ruling relations, I have created a map (see Figure 7 below) drawing on the *Edmund Rice Education Australia Governance Statement* (EREA, 2019).

EREA Council

The members of the Council of EREA are the governing body of EREA under canon law and they are also the members of the body corporate known as Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia under civil law. The members of the EREA Council are appointed by the Congregation Leader of the Christian Brothers. The EREA Council appoints the EREA Board and delegates to it certain responsibilities related to the management and strategic direction of EREA. The EREA Council (as canonical stewards):

- Ensures the Identity of EREA as
  - Catholic, and
  - An expression of the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice
- Relates on behalf of EREA to church authorities
- Approves the establishment or termination of an apostolic work of EREA.

The EREA Council (as civil stewards):

- Is the proprietor of the schools
- Approves the acquisition or alienation of the resources of EREA (according to the Constitution).

EREA Board

- Sets the strategic directions for EREA
- Sets the operational policy framework;
- Oversees the financial well-being of EREA and each of the schools;
- Oversees the management of EREA.

The Executive Director

The EREA Executive Director provides day-to-day leadership and management of the operation of all EREA schools. The Executive Director implements the strategy and policy approved by the EREA Board, articulates the vision and mission of EREA and provides leadership which empowers others to bring the EREA Charter to life. The Executive Director appoints staff to fulfil the leadership, management and operational structures of EREA and ensures the provision of appropriate faith formation and spiritual development of all staff. The Executive Director ensures the sustainability, growth and development of EREA while complying with statutory obligations.

Schools

The Executive Director delegates the day-to-day operation of EREA schools to principals/school executives and certain other responsibilities to school boards.

Figure 7: Map of EREA governance in relation to Christian Brothers College

Figure 7 suggests that the position of any person within a social and institutional hierarchy largely depends on what map you are looking at. Within the situational site of the school, executive leaders at CBC – in at least a formal capacity – sit atop the hierarchy. Their power is most evident in how they coordinate and oversee the daily life of the school.[31] Additionally, their power is visible in how others interact and engage in their presence. Often when executive members of leadership such as the principal or deputy principal walk into a classroom, teachers quickly stand up from behind their desks and look busy while a wave of silence sweeps over the students. However, within a national context, the executive leaders of CBC are delegated 'the day-to-day operation' by the Executive Director of the EREA. As seen in Figure 7 above, school executive leaders sit at the bottom of the chain.

Within EREA schools, major decisions made by the principal or school executive, such as the strategic direction of the school, budgets and infrastructure projects, or simply who is eligible to enrol at the school, must be approved by the EREA. So it is not surprising that the most powerful individuals within CBC, being the executive leadership, espouse values closely connected to the EREA. I am not suggesting the values of the college (faith, excellence, community and compassion), or the touchstones of the EREA to which they are linked (gospel spirituality, inclusive community, liberating education, and justice and solidarity) are exclusionary or anti-democratic. Rather for the purposes of this study, I see them as centralised extensions of the school's governing body and as illustrations of Smith's (1987) notion of ruling relations, in which coordination 'hook[s people] into the social relations of the economy and of ruling institutions' (p. 40). The touchstones of the EREA are visible in every EREA school nationwide – or on their websites at the very least. Therefore the EREA serves as a ruling institution in the context of this study. While each EREA school may have its own way of implementing and promoting the EREA touchstones, by and large, they are similar. Against the grain of decentralisation trends in public schooling, one of the most notable examples of ruling relations coordinating CBC can be attributed to centralisation.

[31] It is unnecessary here to list every role and responsibility; however to provide some idea of what the EREA expects of its leaders, refer to Appendix G for the Position Information Document for the position of Deputy Principal at CBC. This is an EREA document.

5.5 Conclusion

In times of neoliberal governance, there are important insights to be gained from how schools engage in marketing strategies and these can include what a school values; dominant local, translocal and temporal politics; and circulating educational trends to name a few. In the twenty-first century, dominant ruling relations within education extend from neoliberal governance, particularly discourses of competition, privatisation and school choice (Lingard & Sellar, 2013; McDonald et al., 2012; Mills, 2004). Consequently, the reworking of schools is reflected in their commitment to entrepreneurism, competitiveness and becoming more 'business-like' (Cribb & Ball, 2005; Lingard et al., 2017). Under neoliberal incitements, the shaping of all-boy private schools as educational institutions demands students perform subjectivities vested in what is considered individualised learning and competitive behaviour (Reay & William, 1999) while also being emotionally intelligent, introspective and engaged in community service (McWilliam & Brannock, 2001; Meadmore & McWilliam, 2001).

In order to explicate ruling relations coordinating the daily experience at CBC for teachers and students, which Chapters 6, 7 and 8 attempt to do, it is important to establish context. Through an interview with an executive school leader, this chapter has described how the school responds to the context of declining enrolments with marketing campaigns, negotiates dominant – and often competing – discourses around teaching and learning in relation to educational policy, while also promoting the values of the institution. Throughout the remainder of this thesis, each section of this chapter will be referred to to supply context for the actions of individuals within the institution. This chapter introduced the institutional imperative of producing students that are both academically successful and embody the school's values. While this imperative comes from the leadership team, in the next chapter, I explore what this means for the coordination of teachers' work.

Chapter 6: Enacting external and internal policy – Teachers' work in tension

6.1 Introduction

The analytic focus of this chapter is to illustrate how the work of teachers is coordinated by both external and internal educational policies which structure formal academic learning. In the previous chapter, through interview data from an executive member of the leadership team, I examined the marriage between declining academic performance and student enrolments at Christian Brothers College (CBC). Arguably, the school's direction in regard to teaching and learning draws from a managerial logic that assumes improvement in students' academic results will equate to improvement in enrolments. Thus, this chapter explicates how the work of teachers is geared towards improving the perceived underperformance of students through a narrow performative and competitive culture of high accountability and compliance, all the while adopting gendered discourses that draw on essentialist assumptions about gender and boys' schooling.

The data analysed in this chapter is drawn primarily from interviews with three teachers at CBC. Each teacher was interviewed once for approximately an hour. I invited the teachers to talk about their work as it happens every day. However, due to the semi-structured nature of these interviews, I aimed to draw out a description of each individual practice regarding both the formal and informal aspects of their work. To locate the work of teachers within the wider context of the study, I map the teachers' description of work to institutional texts that are both external and internal (or translocal and local) in nature. As I am located in the study as both researcher and practitioner, I also draw on my personal journal as a source of data to provide context. Furthermore, I draw on a wide body of scholarly research to help explain how the work of teachers is caught up in wider networks of ruling relations.

Within the pervasive context of neoliberalism, Connell (2009) suggests our understanding of teachers has moved towards a 'competent teacher model' in which teacher effectiveness is considered measurable in line with a wider 'audit culture'. The modern notion of the work of a teacher deviates substantially from past iterations associated with progressive education (McLeod, 2014, 2016) and can be linked to a rise in national testing in Australia as well as

pathologisation in the media (Mockler, 2013, 2018). Furthermore, Connell (2009) warns against research which:

> Treats schools and teachers as bearers of variables (attitudes, qualifications, strong leadership, etc.) to be correlated with pupil outcomes, measured on standardized tests. This [gives] an education interpretation to the managerialist idea – derived from the muddled discourse of 'excellence' in corporate management – that there is always a 'best practice' that can be instituted and audited from above. (p. 217).

With this in mind, this part of the institutional ethnography draws on data to demonstrate how teachers experience moments of disjuncture between their personal values and facets of the school institution, and speak through discourses related to standardisation, marketisation and accountability. Importantly, schools are workplaces and teaching is a form of work (Smyth, 2001, p. 4). There has been a great deal of scholarly work written about teachers' work in times of change (Apple, 2005; Goodson, 2008; Hargreaves, 1994; Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004; Spina, 2017b). Stacey (2020) writes that in Australia 'a focus on teachers has been evident across both policy and research' and 'a policy focus on teacher quality, or the quality of teaching, needs critical consideration' (p. 14). Therefore, through the lens of institutional ethnography, this chapter draws on Smith's (2005) generous conception of work to include:

> Anything done by people that takes time and effort, that they mean to do, that is done under definite conditions and with whatever means and tools, and that they may have to think about. It means much more than what is done on the job. (pp. 151–152)

Considering this definition, this chapter includes the work of teachers that is paid and not paid and demonstrates the ways in which they are deeply reflective around their sense of professionalism and compassion. However, as institutional ethnography draws on informants' 'experiential knowledge' of their work, which includes how they think, plan and feel (McCoy, 2006; Rankin, 2017a, 2017b; Russell & Reid, 2019), an open conception of work is intentional as it 'keeps you in touch with what people need to do their work as well as what they are doing' (Smith, 2005, p. 154). By no means is this chapter exhaustive in capturing the enormity or entirety of teachers' work; rather the chapter aims to accomplish two things: to further contextualise the nature of students' formal academic learning, which will be explored in Chapter 7; and to begin to unpack how the global neoliberal policy phenomenon is experienced

at the school level. To do this, this chapter contains three sections designed to illustrate the coordination of teachers' work to ensure and bolster student academic achievement.

Section 6.2 begins by exploring the standardisation of CBC teachers' work as they implement an external catalogue of curriculum policies from the SACE Board. This section illustrates the textually mediated nature of their work and how the implementation of external policies in local sites can intensify emotions and workloads. As the teachers describe the exhausting nature of their work, I illustrate the high-stakes nature of teaching in neoliberal times, where ironically, teaching is more about meeting policy demands and standards than it is about learning. This section ends by drawing together the teachers' experiences and detailing influential texts standardising their work and making it accountable to external institutions.

Considering the school promotes itself as an institution specialised in 'focusing on the specific learning needs of boys' (school website, 2019), Section 6.3 illustrates how teachers speak through a gendered discourse when considering curriculum policy, pedagogy and their students. This section explores the gendering of policy enactment at a local level and maps the work of teachers to prevailing discourses of boys in schooling promoted internally (through mandated staff professional development) and externally (through media and government reports addressing boys' underperformance in schooling).

Finally, Section 6.4 explores the intensification of teachers' work with reference to one example, an internally created school policy designed to address the problem of students failing to submit work. The example helps demonstrate how the institutional preoccupation with bolstering results and ensuring every student of the school successfully achieves their high school certificate significantly influences the relationship between teachers, students and school leaders. This section further illustrates how policies can dismiss the autonomy, experience and ability of teachers.

6.2 Teachers implementing external curriculum policy: SACE

This first section traces the coordination of teachers' work around formal academic learning by external curriculum policy. I draw on interview data from three CBC teachers who – in describing how they prepare to teach lessons – illustrate the textually mediated and coordinated nature of such work. The teachers' discussion of curriculum here specifically relates to the

South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) policies – the local version of the high school certificate. For all teachers implementing SACE, the textually mediated nature of formal academic learning begins prior to students entering the classroom as the teacher frames units of work and lessons around curriculum content and tasks. This type of work involves interpretation of the state-mandated curriculum (Ball, 2015; Nichols & Griffith, 2009). Within the global and neoliberal policy ensemble, 'large scale assessments are increasingly tied to accountability mechanisms' (Spina, 2017a, p. 14) and this section explicates accountability through teachers' accounts of standardisation and surveillance through curriculum policies, as seen in other recent scholarship (Stacey, 2020). It is important to note that texts can only have power when read and acted on, meaning 'texts must be recognised as "occurrences" at the moment of reading that enter into the reader's next doings or "responses"' (Smith & Turner, 2014, p. 9). As this section will show, teachers through their talk, writing and planning around formal academic learning, take up curriculum policy in a course of action. As such, texts are seen to 'unleash' sequences of events and control the everyday lives of teachers (Smith, 2001, p. 160), tying their work into a matrix of relations extending beyond the local. This section is broken up into two components. Firstly, drawing on interview data, I describe the different experiences of three teachers of implementing curriculum policy and I explicate the standardised nature of their work. Secondly, I illustrate through five stages how the work of teachers is mediated by a range of external texts and processes within an institutional circuit created by the SACE Board.

6.2.1 Teacher tales: Standards, processes and surveillance

The SACE Board in South Australia is an example of an external form of power, which – through policies and processes – coordinates and standardises the work of teachers. Introduced in Section 2.3.3 and detailed further in this chapter (Section 6.2.2), the SACE Board annually undertakes a 'quality assurance cycle' in which all teachers must submit their work programs and student work samples to the SACE Board for moderation to assure 'interpretation of the performance standards' (SACE, 2019) is correct. Consequently, the teacher participants I spoke with had experiences with such accountability measures which undermined their capacity to design and develop curricula appropriate to the needs of students (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2004; Power 1997). This highlights another dimension of the 'competent teacher model' (Connell, 2009), where a great deal of their energy is focused on compliance and process as opposed to teaching and learning.

Eliza is an experienced English teacher of 15 years and has taught at CBC for two years. In my interview with her, her discussion of curriculum standards illustrated the influence of external forms of accountability on her work. Ironically, this shift toward curriculum standards takes her work away from designing pedagogy tailored to the content and knowledge of the subject, being Essential English.[32] When asked about a subject she teaches and the necessary planning, she shared:

> SACE mandates that subject. I went to a SACE clarifying forum about Essential English. It was the first time I had taught it. I spoke to my colleague Peter [pseudonym] in regard to it and I looked at all the documents that were online to assist teachers. I felt quite overwhelmed; I did not know how to mark it, to be honest. I had to go look for exemplars and even throughout the year I was worried that maybe I was marking either too hard or too easy because I had taught mainstream English and that was one of my concerns. (Eliza, Teacher Interview, 2017)

The overlap between Eliza's autonomy and the institutional obligation to understand the standards illustrates how her labour as a teacher is caught up *in* and organised *by* the institutional foci of ruling relations (Smith, 2005; Stahl, 2017a). Eliza's starting point for designing learning in the classroom was seeking an understanding of what the curriculum authoritative body demands in relation to assessment. To ensure her interpretation of the policy documents aligned with state standards, she attended a conference referred to as a 'clarifying forum', as the Essential English curriculum is different to 'mainstream English'. She invested personal time (looking for exemplars 'throughout the year') and professional time into understanding the curriculum standards. Furthermore Eliza, despite her experience, was 'overwhelmed' by the idea she would not comply with the SACE standards as she understands they are bound to an accountability regime (Ball, 2003).

Nichols and Griffith (2009), in discussing texts created to govern schooling, explain they 'can only do so when they are taken up by people in their everyday work. Texts require someone who is able to actualize them as instructions for action' (p. 241). In our dialogue, Eliza did not question the standards; instead, her tension lay in ensuring she understood them. Therefore this

[32] The SACE offers three levels of English courses in Year 12. Essential English is a diluted version of the other English courses and is designed to be more skill-based and to engage with community-based texts.

starting point is likely to have pedagogic implications for how she operates and engages with students in the classroom. Institutional ethnographies of education, such as those undertaken by Comber (2012) and Spina (2017a), identify and track the relationship between translocal discourses and organisations in the form of NAPLAN testing and the actualities of teacher's lives and pedagogy in schools. While both studies evince 'the discursive erosion of teacher autonomy' (Comber, 2012, p. 130) with attention to literacy tests, Eliza's imperative to meet curriculum standards illustrates a similar sort of 'erosion' as her work moves away from knowledges concerning the subject or students and towards state standards. Eliza's feeling that she must meet standards exactly further illustrates the shift in education systems towards a managerial model (Ward, 2011). In discussing the implications of neoliberalism for education, Davies (2007) explains 'the neoliberal management technologies that were installed included increased exposure to competition, increased accountability measures and the implementation of performance goals' (p. 254). Curriculum policy requires standardisation of some sort to create measurable and comparable markets, and mandated assessment standards are one such means.

Where Eliza emphasised curriculum standards, Mark, a senior psychology and middle school science teacher who has taught at CBC for four years, begins his lesson planning for formal academic learning by drawing on a broader range of texts:

> Well as far as Year 12 goes there is the subject outline. So you start with subject outline, and there is a textbook for Year 12, which is not great but it is probably better than a lot of courses have got. So you look at the textbook, you look at the subject outline, you find bits of the textbook you want to use, you adapt that to be able to be used in the classroom. I don't actually use the textbook in the classroom, it is more that you use that information and then you put it into something that is digestible for students and hopefully somewhat entertaining. (Mark, Interview, 2017)

To clarify, Mark was talking about two different, but connected, texts. Firstly, the SACE policy ('subject outline') refers to the curriculum standards and course outline designed to standardise the subject across the state – a similar type of document to the one Eliza discussed. Secondly, the textbook, which is not formally endorsed by the SACE Board, broadens the scope of his work. In other words, Mark's work activates curriculum policy by finding resources and materials that align to the subject outline set by SACE. Mark acts as an academic filter, whereby

he surveys resource materials to determine what aspects of the policy (outline) and textbook are 'digestible' for students. As Mark describes his approach, we see how the work of teachers today appears to require investing time in deciphering the intent of curriculum policy and drawing on multiple resources to meet its standards. In research policy and its effects on the work of teachers, Ball (1993) posits:

> policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, off-set against other expectations. All of this involves creative social action not robotic reactivity. Thus, the enactment of text relies on things like commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations, cooperation and (importantly) intertextual compatibility. (pp. 12–13)

Therefore, while some argue that the agency of the teacher is becoming endangered (Ball, 2003; Anderson & Cohen, 2015), what we see in the work of both Eliza and Mark is agency recast or co-opted according to powerful policy initiatives. A great deal of Mark's professional work lies in meeting conditions set forth by the SACE board, as he discussed below when outlining a particular task that was assessed externally:

> Well obviously, the guidelines are what SACE give us but again you don't give that to the students because: for one thing you are not meant to for the investigations, that's very much a no-no thing. There is an excellent guide that was created a few years ago by I think (name omitted) who worked at (omitted) and who worked at (omitted) and wrote a brilliant guide that I use mostly because, sure I could make my own, but I don't think it would be much better. I take her guide, then I give them additional things to that. So I give them some past students' work, obviously not identified, and usually it is for a different assignment. So you do two investigations in Year 12 and there are about 12 different ones that you choose from. Everybody does the same one. But the idea is that if you give them one from last year and you say here is an example of a student that got an A, here is an example of a student who got a B, here is an example of a student who got a C. You go through those and you pick out why they got this. (Mark, Interview, 2017)

The SACE guidelines are the starting point for much of Mark's work as a teacher. They

illustrate that the role of texts in institutions is central 'to making people accountable for particular processes and for activating the kinds of work that this involves' (Kerkham & Nixon, 2014, p. 344).

Firstly, Mark taps into a network of psychology teachers across the state in order to alleviate the demands of his work. As Mark discusses, teachers are required to produce subsidiary guides to assist in implementing a curriculum outline. DeVault (2006) writes that institutional ethnographers 'follow texts in order to explore and analyse the social relations that connect people across the myriad sites of action in contemporary societies (p. 7). As is the case here, despite being trained and experienced in certain fields of study (such as psychology), teachers must exhaust effort to understand and meet the requirements of policy, and then engage in further work to create accessible texts for students. Furthermore, in speaking of the teacher who created a 'brilliant guide', he established her credibility as a resource maker through the schools she has worked in rather than her contributions to – or knowledge of – psychology. While the names of the schools Mark lists are omitted, both were elite, which carries a superiority in education (Gottschall et al., 2010; Kenway & Koh, 2015). While I am not suggesting the teacher Mark spoke of is not highly gifted, I focus on how he spoke of her results and achievements. When asked about her credibility, he explained she consistently 'gets three-quarters of her class Merits'.[33] Mark's words here valorise high results – which can only come from meeting curriculum standards – while also suggesting in some part an effort to emulate elite-school counterparts. While CBC is a private school, as introduced in Section 4.2, its Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage value is considerably lower than its elite counterparts. Furthermore, Mark's work with teachers from other schools also illustrates the complexity and paradox of standardisation. On one hand, teachers create local networks and communities to support one another and share resources so that they can understand and implement an external curriculum. On the other hand, they are doing so to bolster the performance of their students which, in the context of school markets, works to position them advantageously in ranking (or against one another).

The second type of work Mark explained involves understanding how to *read* curriculum policy. He suggests SACE policies are designed for teachers only and that sharing the guidelines with students is 'very much a no-no thing'. In other words, there are restrictions

[33] A SACE Merit is awarded to the top 1% to 1.5% (varies across the SACE subjects) of students.

placed on who can activate texts. Teachers of SACE tasks like the one Mark discusses must articulate curriculum standards and expectations with students, but not directly share what these are. To assist in this balancing act, he employs a colleague's guide that provides students with exemplars representative of different grade bands. Mark does this to help students understand the standards and, in doing so, reiterates the importance of achievement. McCoy (1995) reminds us that reading texts involves a special kind of conversation in which a text's 'activation by a reader inserts the text's message into the local setting and the sequence of action in which it is read' (Smith, 2005, p. 105). In Figure 8 (below), I have illustrated the textual sequence Mark spoke of as an example of how the work of teachers is experienced within our policy climate today.

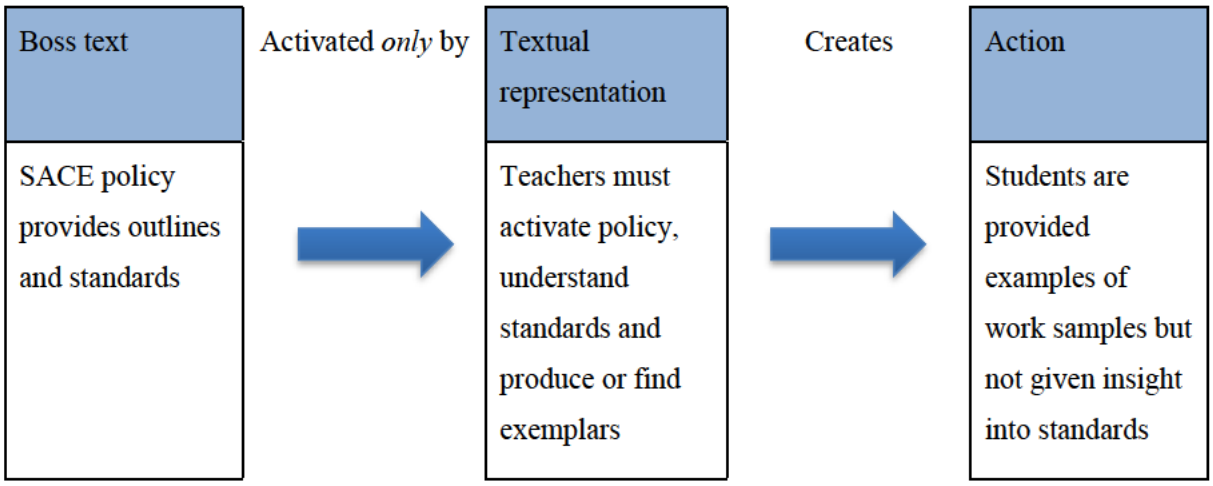


Figure 8: Textual sequence of teachers' work

While Mark is afforded power in relation to students by knowing the guidelines, he is simultaneously limited by the policy, as he is not able to share it. In other words, the policy determines what he can do, what students can know, and how they must act in relation to one another around formal academic learning. Consequently, Mark provides students with examples of other students' work (from previous years) as benchmarks for students to reach. These exemplars are textual representations of SACE policy designed to frame the institutionally mandated course of action (Smith & Turner, 2014). In this coordinated situation, the ruling relations of the curriculum appear to coordinate students towards a process of reproduction more than anything else. Logically, a student wishing to achieve an 'A' grade is

more likely to emulate the 'A' exemplar, yet is powerless to discover exactly what makes it that quality. It is important to acknowledge that Mark's work with SACE policy is somewhat of an outlier, as in many other subjects sharing standards and policy documents with students is allowed. However, Mark's account of preparing to teach illustrates the complexity of education policy and the nuances that different areas or sections within a wider 'boss text' or curriculum can hold. Considering both Eliza and Mark's descriptions, teachers are obligated to heavily familiarise themselves with the intricacies of curriculum policy in order to meet its requirements. Importantly, the requirement that teachers meet curriculum standards extends from external processes of moderation conducted by the SACE Board.

I now draw from an interview with Joseph, a Sports Science teacher, who has worked at CBC for five years. In considering the power of texts in relation to institutional identities, Joseph openly shares with his students that his discretion as a teacher to assess student's work is 'moderated' by the SACE Board. According to the SACE Board (2018) website, a powerful institutional text that coordinates action,

> Moderation of student work confirms your [teacher's] interpretation of the performance standards before your students receive their final subject grades. During moderation, samples of student work are reviewed to ensure that your assessment decisions are consistent with the performance standards for the subject.

The process the SACE Board outlines clearly shapes how Joseph approaches his work in the classroom:

> Lee: Do you share these documents from SACE with your boys?
>
> Joseph: Yes, I do.
>
> Lee: Cool. What is the purpose in doing that?
>
> Joseph: To give them an understanding about what, it is not just me, marking their work. There is a second pair of eyes, I guess would be a way to put it, that looks over it for one, their school assessment is to check that I have marked correctly. Also for the external to check that I have, to let them know what I think it is, is different to what SACE thinks it is. The big one is the Chief Assessor's report. They read that. I basically simplify it for them so it is easier for them to read. (Joseph, Interview, 2017)

Joseph's personification of the SACE Board as having a 'pair of eyes' and 'think[ing]' demonstrates that teachers' work happens within a context of surveillance and accountability (Ball, 2003; McCallum, 2016; Ozga, 2009; Spina, 2017a). As a consequence, Joseph's approach to working with students shifts the traditional teacher–student hierarchy from one where the teacher is seen as the source and assessor of knowledge to a model in which the teacher and students work together to produce work samples that meet curriculum standards and should pass the moderation process. Drawing on Nichols and Griffith's (2009) understanding of New Public Management, the process of moderation by the SACE Board evinces an audit culture in which 'the approach to governing … intended to improve the quality of the service provision' is 'adopted from private sector management strategies, the focus [being] on increased, improved performance and results' (p. 243). The annual moderation processes of SACE illustrate 'external assessment of the extent to which policy objectives are realized and how resources have been used' (Aucoin, 1998, p. 15). In other words, SACE moderation ensures curriculum policy is implemented consistently across the state.

Arguably, such external forms of accountability significantly change the work of teachers and narrow teachers' professional discretion while intensifying the expectations around their job performance. Unlike Mark, Joseph is able to share the educational policies with students. However, Eliza, Mark and Joseph, who teach English, Psychology and Sport Science respectively, all begin by ascertaining the demands of educational policy before considering the nature of their subjects or the needs and interests of their students. Therefore, in considering how the institution works, we understand that much of the processes of teaching and learning at CBC are governed by accountability and management technologies.

6.2.2 Mapping work: Five textually mediated stages of teachers' work

The experiences and work shared by the three teachers above illustrate how their work is coordinated by policy, as curriculum documents are the first port of call as opposed to focusing on student well-being and progress. Despite the fact that Eliza, Mark and Joseph work in different faculties, their individual performances are similarly steered towards measures of productivity, imperatives of quality, and moments of inspection (Ball, 2003). This reveals how in teachers' work 'sequences of text-coordinated action [can make] people's actualities representable and hence actionable within the institutional frames that authorise institutional action (Smith & Turner, 2014, p. 10). Below, I represent the textually mediated nature of

teachers' work when implementing SACE curriculum policy through mapping five stages. In the mapping I address the role of SACE and the role of the school, showing where the power lies to coordinate actions. I use the subject English as an example. This mapping illustrates some of the ways in which external curriculum policy is activated and coordinates teachers' work at the local level.

6.2.2.1 Stage 1: Subject outline

The first recommended stage for teaching a SACE subject is to read the subject outline. Irrespective of the subject, every SACE outline contains a similar internal structure: *Introduction, Learning Scope and Requirements, Assessment Scope and Requirements* and *Subject Materials*. The most important component for teachers is ensuring they understand the Learning Scope and Requirements and Assessment Scope and Requirements as these two sections are externally moderated and reviewed by the SACE Board (explained below in Stage 5). Figure 9 below captures the uniformity of how these documents are presented to teachers, as the only variation between learning areas is the title of the subject. In effect, the uniformity sends a message that, irrespective of what subject is being taught, the authority and processes are consistent across the board.

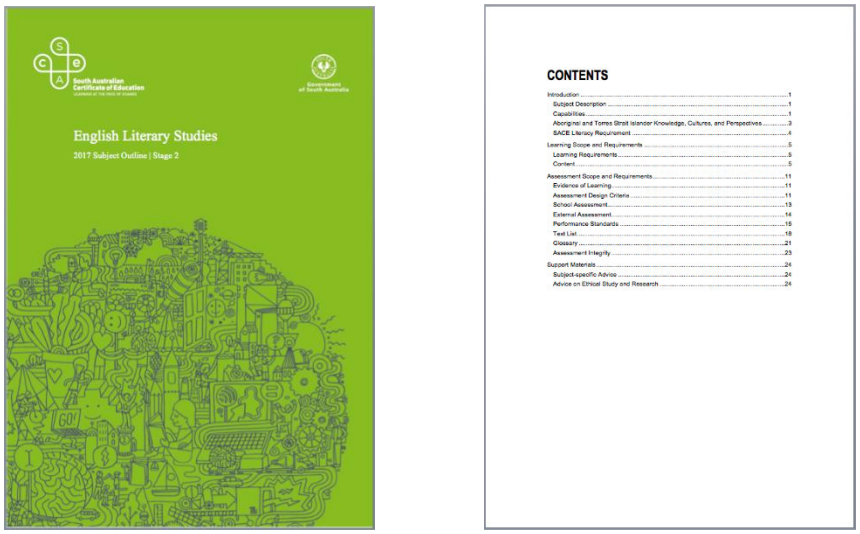


Figure 9: SACE subject outline and contents page

6.2.2.2 Stage 2: Preparing a Learning Assessment Plan (LAP)

Before teachers can begin teaching their courses, they are required by SACE to map their intentions regarding meeting the requirements of the subject outline. This preparation work is complex and requires teachers to engage in different types of work.

Firstly, in reviewing the Learning Scope and Requirements, teachers must ensure they cover any compulsory features. For example, the English Literary Studies subject outline states: 'The shared studies must include the work of at least one Australian author' (SACE, 2017, p. 7). Each course has its own set of requirements but it is important to note the Learning Scope and Requirements are not represented in the Assessment Scope and Requirements. This means that if a teacher overlooks a particular requirement – as the assessment standards do not address specific requirements – their course may not be confirmed during the moderation process, which will compromise teachers' grades submitted to the SACE Board.

The second type of work in this stage requires teachers to ensure their courses meet the Assessment Scope and Requirements. Each subject has five to ten performance standards.[34] Teachers are to design assessment tasks that provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and understanding in relation to the performance standards at least once. There are also limitations placed on the assessment conditions. For example, a particular folio may have a word limit or require a particular type of assessment (e.g. report, essay, test).

Finally, once teachers have considered both the Learning Scope and Requirements and Assessment Scope and Requirements, they are required to complete a standardised Assessment Overview sheet (seen below in Figure 10) that captures the details of the assessment, their connection to the performance standards, and the conditions to which they will be assessed.

[34] The performance standards describe five levels of achievement, A to E. Teachers and assessors use the performance standards to decide how well a student has demonstrated his or her learning. Each grade corresponds to a level of the performance standards and they are designed to inform decisions about the quality of learning.

Stage 2 English Literary Studies

Assessment Overview

The table below provides details of the planned tasks and shows where students have the opportunity to provide evidence for each of the specific features of all of the assessment design criteria.

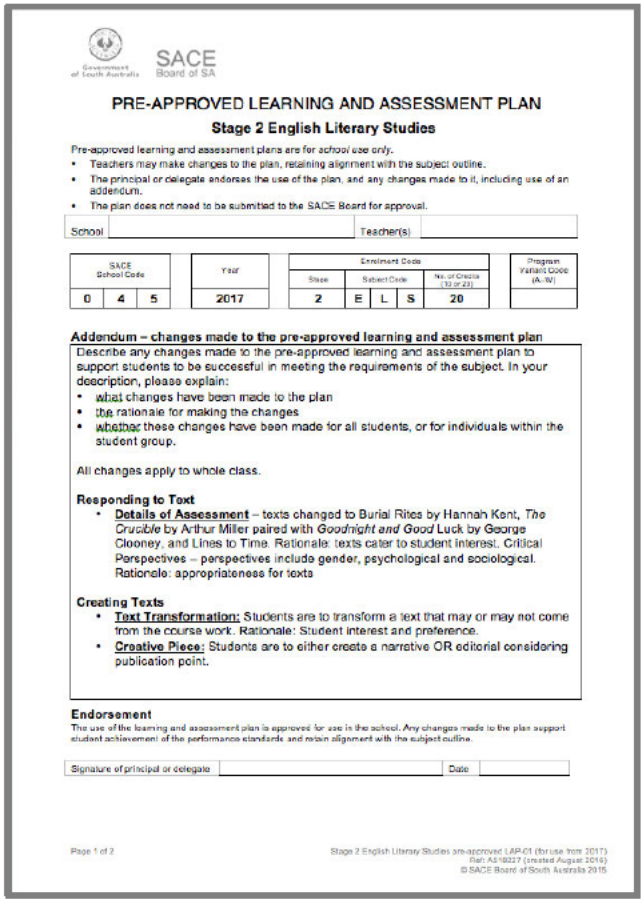
Assessment Type and Weighting	Details of assessment Course title: Aspiration and Regret	Assessment Design Criteria K & U	 An	 Ap	Assessment conditions (e.g. task type, word length, time allocated, supervision)
Responding to texts Weighting 50%	Three responses to the following texts • *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent • *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller paired with *Goodnight and Good* Luck by George Clooney • *Lines to Time* – A senior poetry anthology. At least one of the poets must be chosen from the poets list found on the Text List	1,2 1,2, 1,2,3	1,2 1,2,3 1,2,3	1,2,3 2,3 2,3	1. Response to shared prose text (1,000 words) 2. Response to the shared play and film (1,500 words) 3. Comparative Analysis of two pairs of poems (1,000 words)
	Critical Perspectives Task • Ethan and Joel Coen's *O Brother, Where Art thou?* Or Other Shared text interpreted from two of the following perspectives: Gender, Marxist, Historical, Race	1,2	1,2,4	1,3	One response of 1,500 words analysing: 1. Text interpreted from wither gender, Marxist, historical or race perspective.
Creating texts Weighting 20%	Two created texts • Students choose from a wide range of texts and textual forms covering both shared and independent texts to allow for opportunity for student choice. • A written narrative or persuasive piece based on any theme or issue.	1,2 1,2	1,2,3	1,2 1,3	1. one transformative text linked to another text, with a writer's statement (1500 words, or 9 minutes, or equivalent in multimodal form) 2. Narrative **or** persuasive body of writing (1000 words)
Text Study - Comparative text study - Critical reading Weighting 30%	Comparative text study • This response is a critical essay, in which the two texts are discussed in relation to each other. Students frame their own question and develop their response during the year, and submit the completed response for external assessment. Critical reading • A critical reading of one or more short texts, which may be in a variety of forms (e.g. prose, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, texts with graphic or visual elements, or excerpts from film or soundtracks).	1,2,3 1,2,3	1,2,3 1,2,3	1,2,3 1,2	1. A comparative text study that compares one of the texts studied in the shared studies with another text individually chosen by the student, in a response of a maximum of 1500 words. 2. A 90-minute examination developed by the SACE Board

Figure 10: SACE Learning Assessment Plan

The Learning Assessment Plan (Figure 10) drives teachers' work throughout the year when they are implementing and teaching the course. Furthermore, teachers are first required to submit their LAPs to the SACE coordinator of the school for approval and finally the SACE Board at the end of the year for moderation.

6.2.2.3 Stage 3: Teaching, modifying, task sheets and marking

The third stage of teaching a SACE subject involves delivering the course to students. Considering the LAP from Stage 2 (Figure 10), it is clear that the work of teachers is already heavily coordinated and restricted. However, teachers are allowed some flexibility should the direction of the course change path or a student require special provisions. However it is worth noting that all changes to the original LAP must still meet both the Learning Scope and Requirements and the Assessment Scope and Requirements. Should a teacher modify their course, they are required to complete an addendum form (see Figure 11).



SACE Board of SA

PRE-APPROVED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PLAN

Stage 2 English Literary Studies

Pre-approved learning and assessment plans are for school use only.

- Teachers may make changes to the plan, retaining alignment with the subject outline.
- The principal or delegate endorses the use of the plan, and any changes made to it, including use of an addendum.
- The plan does not need to be submitted to the SACE Board for approval.

School | Teacher(s)

SACE School Code	Year	Enrolment Code: Stage	Subject Code	No. of Credits (10 or 20)	Program Variant Code (A–W)
045	2017	2	ELS	20	

Addendum – changes made to the pre-approved learning and assessment plan

Describe any changes made to the pre-approved learning and assessment plan to support students to be successful in meeting the requirements of the subject. In your description, please explain:

- what changes have been made to the plan
- the rationale for making the changes
- whether these changes have been made for all students, or for individuals within the student group.

All changes apply to whole class.

Responding to Text

- **Details of Assessment** – texts changed to Burial Rites by Hannah Kent, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller paired with *Goodnight and Good* Luck by George Clooney, and Lines to Time. Rationale: texts cater to student interest. Critical Perspectives – perspectives include gender, psychological and sociological. Rationale: appropriateness for texts

Creating Texts

- **Text Transformation:** Students are to transform a text that may or may not come from the course work. Rationale: Student interest and preference.
- **Creative Piece:** Students are to either create a narrative OR editorial considering publication point.

Endorsement

The use of the learning and assessment plan is approved for use in the school. Any changes made to the plan support student achievement of the performance standards and retain alignment with the subject outline.

Signature of principal or delegate | Date

Page 1 of 2

Stage 2 English Literary Studies pre-approved LAP-01 (for use from 2017)
Ref: A616027 (created August 2016)
© SACE Board of South Australia 2016

Figure 11: SACE addendum form

As seen in Figure 11, teachers wanting to make addendums to a LAP must clearly outline the changes, provide a rationale, and explain whom the changes impact. The principal or the principal's delegate (usually the SACE coordinator) must endorse the changes to the course with a signature. While at CBC, the principal or principal's delegate does not question teachers' addendums, it is worth noting that should such addendums result in the changing of teachers' grades, the teacher risks damage to their professional reputation and they might lose the right to teach Year 12 courses the following year.

Throughout the course of the academic year, teachers assess students' work against the performance standards according to the assessment tasks outlined in their LAP. In doing so, teachers are also required to produce a task sheet for each assessment item (example below in Figure 12) that clearly outlines the *purpose*, *description of task*, *assessment conditions* and *performance standard rubric* (extracted from the SACE subject outline).

Stage 2 English Literary Studies 2017

Assessment Type	Responding to Texts: Single Text (Prose) Essay Response	Achievement
Student Name		
SACE Number:		

Assessor Comments:

Purpose

To discuss and analyze key aspects of a novel.

Description of Task

After discussing and analyzing Hannah Kent's *Burial Rites* as a class, you are to select **one** of the questions below and respond in essay form:

- Show how Kent's *Burial Rites* uses setting in a range of ways to explore ideas.
- How does Kent's *Burial Rites* explore the idea that a sense of duty can be a source of conflict?
- Show how Kent's *Burial Rites* explores **one** of the following ideas:
  - Dependence
  - Alienation or isolation
  - Destiny or Fate
  - Death
  - Hopelessness

Assessment Conditions

The essay should contain textual references to help reinforce your answer and work towards a total of 1000 words.

Assessment Design Criteria

Knowledge and Understanding
The specific features are as follows:
KU1 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.
KU2 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.

Analysis
The specific features are as follows:
An1 Analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.
An2 Analysis and evaluation of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.

Application
The specific features are as follows:
Ap1 Use of conventions, and stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.
Ap2 Use of evidence from texts to develop, support and justify responses.
Ap3 Use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression appropriate for purpose and audience.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 English Literary Studies

	Knowledge and Understanding	Analysis	Application
A	Detailed knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts. Thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas. Detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types.	Perceptive analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values. Perceptive analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts. Perceptive analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks. Perceptive analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.	Sophisticated use of a wide range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task. Detailed and appropriate ~~use of evidence from texts to develop~~, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated fluently in discussion. Use of precise and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose.
B	Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in most texts. Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas. Knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types.	Clear analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values. Clear analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts. Clear analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks. Clear analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.	Use of a range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task. Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated in discussion. Mostly accurate and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose.
C	Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts. Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas. Knowledge and understanding of some of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.	Some analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values. Description, with some analysis and evaluation, of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts. Description, with some analysis, of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks. Some analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.	Competent use of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task. Competent ~~use of evidence from texts to develop~~, support, and justify responses, with some use of textual references in discussion. Generally fluent and clear expression, which is mostly appropriate for audience and purpose.
D	Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which ideas and values are represented in texts. Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas. Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a few of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.	Description of the ideas and values represented in texts. Description of some ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts. Some description of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks. Recognition of some ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.	Use of some language features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way. Some use of evidence from texts to develop, ~~support,~~ and attempt to justify responses, with use of a narrow range of textual references. Occasionally clear expression, which is appropriate for some audiences and purposes.
E	Simplistic knowledge and very restricted understanding of the way in which an idea or a value is represented in a text. Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of a restricted range of stylistic features used by authors. Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of different text types and conventions.	Reference to an idea or value represented in a text. Limited description of a way in which a stylistic feature is used to influence the reading of a text. Simplistic description of a connection between texts in a comparative task. Reference to a critical perspective.	Attempted use of some language features to create texts that attempt to address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way. Restricted use of evidence from texts to develop and support a simple response, with minimal textual references. Emerging development of control of expression.

Figure 12: Task sheet to coordinate students' work

Task design is vital here, in that should a teacher design a task that does not proficiently meet the performance standards, or at least provide students scope to perform in the 'A' band, their grades may be changed at moderation. Drawing on English as an example, if the teacher

designed a task requiring students to respond to a text in simple report style, a students' capacity is limited as a report is predominantly *description*. To demonstrate this, in Table 6 I have mapped one performance standard from the English Literary Studies course to the grade band and highlighted the vital verbs. In doing so, I illustrate how important task design is as, quite possibly, students' ability to achieve in the A or B band may be removed before they even begin the task.

Table 6: Example of one performance standard of Stage 2 English Literary Studies

Grade band	SACE performance standard
A	**Perceptive** analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.
B	**Clear** analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.
C	**Description, with some analysis** and evaluation, of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.
D	**Description** of some ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.
E	**Limited** description of a way in which a stylistic feature is used to influence the reading of a text.

Table 6, accompanied with the preceding example, illustrates how teachers must also carefully pay attention to the adverbs and verbs framing each performance standard – within the rubric – when designing a task. The task sheets are also submitted to the SACE board at the end of the year as part of the moderation process. Importantly, the task sheet frames how the teacher views students' responses to tasks. In assessing students' work, teachers are required to indicate (by highlighting on the rubric) the grade band for each performance standard. From this exercise, teachers must produce an overall grade for the assessment (ranging from A+ to E-) as most tasks draw on several performance standards. Teachers are required to repeat this process for every assessment item throughout the year.

6.2.2.4 Stage 4: Preparing for moderation

At the end of the academic year, teachers must prepare for the SACE moderation process. This process involves teachers meticulously preparing portfolios of work that combine the LAP, task sheets and examples of students' work from each grade band. While at the time of writing,

the SACE Board has transitioned to electronic submission of moderation materials, during the time period of this study teachers were required to submit hard copy moderation samples. The process of preparation was physically laborious as teachers were required to print, bundle and package materials into white plastic bags ready for a courier to collect on the due date. To illustrate the amount of packaging and labelling required, Figure 13 below is a moderation checklist supplied by the SACE Board to teachers.

Please package the following materials:

Student samples	
All assessment tasks for each assessment type for each student selected for moderation	
All A+ student samples for each assessment type	
Individual or group evidence, electronic (such as video or audio) clearly labelled and student identified	
Form 27: Variations – Moderation Materials (VMM) completed, to alert the moderation panel to variations, such as missing student materials, a breach of rules, or special provisions (if applicable)	
Teacher materials [task sheets]	
Learning and assessment plan	
Assessment tasks	

Figure 13: SACE moderation checklist

It is important to bear in mind that each of the eight checklist items above represents a wider catalogue of tasks. For example, packaging *student samples* involves teachers selecting a student sample to represent the entire grade band. This means that if in the class there were three students on a B+ for a particular folio, only one sample would go in. However, for that one sample, teachers must collate all the pieces (assessment items) of work that make the folio grade. Therefore, throughout the year, teachers must hold on to all students' work to ensure they have a complete portfolio at the end of the year. Once a teacher begins preparing the student samples for moderation, the process often involves teachers revisiting all their marked work, as a grade change to that folio would impact all the other students on the same grade (explained below in Stage 5). Further to this, teachers revisit every aspect of their coursework

and planning in this preparation for the moderation process. If for example, the Learning and Assessment Plan does not match the assessment tasks, or a task is accidentally omitted, teachers' work and results cannot be confirmed, meaning grades are changed, to which there is no avenue for protest. Once moderation samples are sent, teachers must anxiously wait until result day.

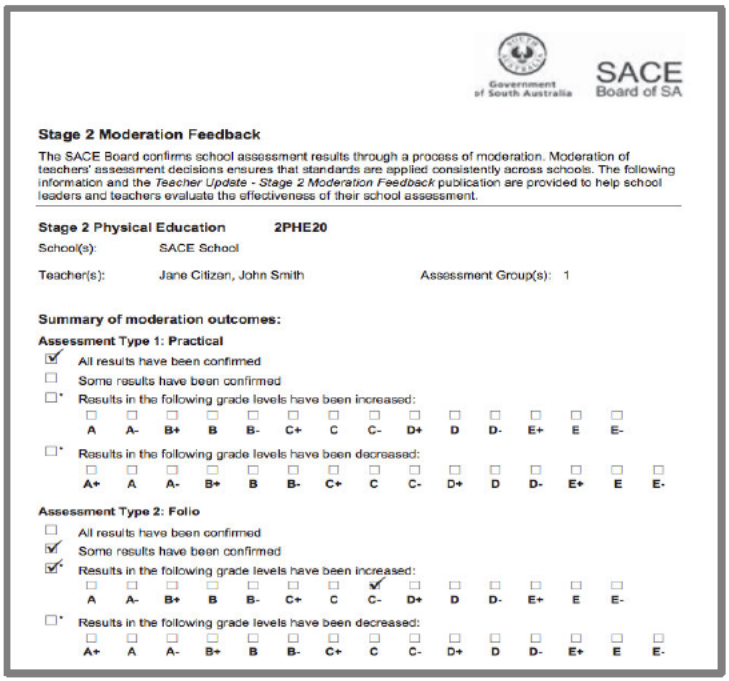
6.2.2.5 Stage 5: Results

Teachers learn how their students have performed, and whether their work samples have survived the moderation process, on the same day Year 12 results are revealed to students state-wide. Results are made available to teachers, and the school's leadership team, in the form of an electronic report titled *Results Sheet* that is downloaded from a private SACE portal page which requires a log-in. For an example of what the Results Sheet looks like see Figure 14.

		Skills and Applications Tasks %				Report 20%				Total School Assessment 70%			
Name	Reg Number	Sch Grade	Mod Grade	Sch Num Value	Mod Num Value	Sch Grade	Mod Grade	Sch Num Value	Mod Num Value	Sch Grade	Mod Grade	Sch Num Value	Mod Num Value
Student One	Y94973T	B-	C	10	8	B+	B+	12	12	B	C+	10.6	9.1
Student Two	M25032H	A+	A+	15	15	A+	A+	15	15	A+	A+	15.0	15.0
Student Three	J68168E	A-	A-	13	13	B-	B-	10	10	B+	B+	12.1	12.1
Student Four	Q79515L	B-	C	10	8	B-	B-	10	10	B-	C+	10.0	8.6
Student Five	L45863G	B	B	11	11	B-	B-	10	10	B	B	10.7	10.7
Student Six	B71671W	C+	C	9	8	C+	C-	9	7	C+	C	9.0	7.7
Student Seven	Y07970T	B	B	11	11	B-	B-	10	10	B	B	10.7	10.7
Student Eight	W98909R	B+	B+	12	12	B	B	11	11	B+	B+	11.7	11.7
Student Nine	C37116X	B+	B+	12	12	B+	B+	12	12	B+	B+	12.0	12.0

Figure 14: Example of SACE Results Sheet

As seen in the red boxes in Figure 14, teachers learn whether their samples have been confirmed if the school grade matches the moderation grade. For example, Student Four's B- has been moderated down to a C. Consequently, so has Student One's. For teachers who experience moderation changes to their grades, the SACE Board provides limited feedback only in two core areas: how the performance standards were interpreted and applied, and task design and adherence to the subject outline. The feedback comes in the form of a report titled *Stage 2 Moderation Feedback* (see Figure 15 below).



Government of South Australia

SACE Board of SA

Stage 2 Moderation Feedback

The SACE Board confirms school assessment results through a process of moderation. Moderation of teachers' assessment decisions ensures that standards are applied consistently across schools. The following information and the *Teacher Update - Stage 2 Moderation Feedback* publication are provided to help school leaders and teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their school assessment.

Stage 2 Physical Education **2PHE20**

School(s): SACE School

Teacher(s): Jane Citizen, John Smith Assessment Group(s): 1

Summary of moderation outcomes:

Assessment Type 1: Practical

☑ All results have been confirmed

☐ Some results have been confirmed

☐* Results in the following grade levels have been increased:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E+	E	E-
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

☐* Results in the following grade levels have been decreased:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E+	E	E-
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Assessment Type 2: Folio

☐ All results have been confirmed

☑ Some results have been confirmed

☑ Results in the following grade levels have been increased:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E+	E	E-
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

☐* Results in the following grade levels have been decreased:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E+	E	E-
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 15: SACE Stage 2 Moderation Feedback

The five-stage process described above illustrates the immensely textual nature of teachers' work in today's educational policy climate. In implementing SACE curriculum policies we see the privileging of a 'competent teacher model' through an intense 'audit culture' (Connell, 2009). The anecdotes shared by Eliza, Mark and Joseph reveal that the effect of these policies and processes is to control and discipline what teachers do in their work, which evinces how 'local accountability work is mediated textually' (Nichols & Griffith, 2009, p. 244), as the accountability discourse inherent in these texts and processes 'translates the actual into the institutional' (Smith, 2005, p. 313). Heightening teachers' sense of accountability is the high-stakes nature of SACE results which, we assume, has implications for how they perform their role as a teacher. In Chapter 5 I illustrated how the school places considerable emphasis on academic achievement, particularly that of Year 12s, to bolster its position within the local school market. Furthermore, students rely on their teachers to understand and navigate the policy ensemble of SACE accurately. The results released by the SACE Board are used to derive an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) and this is important to students with university aspirations. If a teacher experiences considerable downward shift in their grades, the students' overall rankings are potentially reduced which creates pressures which, in turn, structure institutional practices. Despite the potential reputational damage SACE moderation changes can bring to teachers, generally speaking, teachers care profoundly for their students and their ambitions. While the SACE policies explored here illustrate the standardisation of

teacher work, the implementation of these policies happens within a local context and therefore involves people. In the next section, I examine how teachers draw from gendered discourses about boys as learners in an effort to engage and bolster students' academic performance.

6.3 A gendered reading of curriculum: Planning to teach boys

This section explicates how teachers draw on essentialist assumptions about boys as learners when implementing curriculum policy. The very nature of identifying CBC as 'boys only' or 'a boys' school' means 'gender is inherently foregrounded' (Hickey & Mooney, 2017, p. 245). With consideration of historical and global changes in education, Epstein et al. (1998) argue a 'boys will be boys' discourse has fashioned pedagogical changes in classrooms in light of 'moral panic concerning boys' "underachievement"' globally (p. 187). I recognise that the debates and discourses pertaining to boys and schooling is a scholarly body of work in its own right (see Francis, 2006; Lingard et al., 2009; Mills, 2001, 2003; Mills et al., 2004, 2007; Swain, 2006b) and is fuelled by competing texts – and positions – on boys and masculinity. As this study is an institutional ethnography and language is central to the analysis of discourse that frames institutions (Stahl, 2017a), my intention here is to map the rhetoric that 'feeds into many of teachers' taken for granted assumptions, that is, boys require more time in class, require more discipline, are behaviour problems, are poor at expressing their emotions, are not good at reading, etc.' (Lingard, 2003, p. 43). I first discuss how my teacher participants adopt assumptions about boys' as learners, then I discuss how these teacher assumptions play out in the classroom with regard to teacher practice.

6.3.1 Teachers' assumptions about boys

A gendered style to schooling is not surprising considering CBC works under an institutional logic that assumes boys-only schooling is seen as advantageous and different. The college website has a page dedicated to answering the question 'Why all-boys education?' in which it explains: 'The school can focus on offering an engaging curriculum, specifically developed and tailored for the ways boys think and learn. This then helps boys to build their confidence and pride in their abilities, and to thrive academically' (school website, 2017). Furthermore, one of CBC's *Seven Strategic Directions*, a mission document which the principal's endorsement calls 'an unapologetic and unambiguous commitment', is dedicated to 'A journey from Boy to Man'. Here, we see CBC promoting an ideal connected to boys' learning, which is problematic because it operates on common-sense assumptions and understandings about gender and boys' schooling (Mills et al., 2007).

Gottschall et al. (2010) argue, and express concern, that such institutional logic in all-boys private schools 'contribute[s] to discourses that construct private schooling as the model for educational "excellence" and "quality"' and become 'a vehicle for re/producing idealised versions of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities' (p. 19). The style of schooling has implications for curriculum but this is largely left to teacher discretion. A prevalent feature throughout the teacher interviews the gendered discourse teachers spoke in relation to their work as teachers. Beginning with Eliza, we see that the selection of texts for her English class is based on gendered assumptions about student efficacy:

> Instead of choosing one specific pre-approved text because we were a single-sex school not a co-ed school I chose ones that I thought the boys would be more interested in. I actually avoided any extensive reading because I knew the cohort was students who did not enjoy reading and the kind of students who never completed reading a novel in Year 10 or Year 11 and so the idea was completion and getting them over the line. I guess there was an acknowledgment by me, whether it be wrong or right, not to be aspirational for these students. It was a functionary thing about getting them through Year 12. (Eliza, Interview, 2017)

Eliza's gendered reading of the curriculum policy is an important starting point. As Paechter (2007) argues, the academic curriculum is highly salient to the construction of masculine identities. By suggesting the prescribed text list of the curriculum requires a filtering of appropriate subject material so that 'the boys would be more interested', we see what Alloway et al. (2002) refer to as the 'organisational structure and symbolism of school' where 'teachers play [a role] in sustaining gender relationships, and the role of the curriculum in reinforcing gender stereotypes' (p. 37). Such assumptions and professional practices are problematic as they involve 'shaping' students towards generalised assumptions and stereotypes concerning gender (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Wider research (Collins et al., 2000; Teese et al., 1995; Martino 1995) documents the distinctly different ways assumptions about masculinity and femininity have gendered the curriculum, and these 'gendered perceptions have been particularly unfortunate for both boys and girls' (Alloway et al., 2002, p. 38).

These assumptions are reflected in Eliza's generalisations about her students, how she 'knew the cohort was students who did not enjoy reading and the kind of students who never

completed reading a novel in Year 10 or Year 11'. Eliza was inadvertently reasserting gendered literary practices by authorising and privileging student access to some texts over others, based on 'we were a single-sex school not a co-ed school', which can be read as a deficit discourse (Comber & Kamler, 2004). Furthermore, an argument could be made that Eliza is simultaneously negotiating two dominant discourses in relation to CBC's institutional identity. Firstly, the school's position on boys' learning echoes the powerful discourse in Australia that boys naturally learn in a particular way and that literacy underachievement is somewhat normal (Martino, 2003; Weaver-Hightower, 2008). Secondly, the discourse of achievement also shapes Eliza's work as her decision is also 'a functionary thing about getting them through'. Institutional ethnography focuses on the everyday practices within an institution (Smith, 1987, 2005), and Eliza's experiences and decisions are important in understanding how dominant discourses can thread their way into the formal academic learning of the student participants.

6.3.2 Teachers' approaches to teaching boys

I will now simultaneously explore how gender influences Mark and Joseph's approaches to planning, as they both draw on strategies congruous with the deficit boys' discourse in order to engage boys' interests and work with their perceived strengths (Epstein et al., 1998). Mark tries to appeal to his students' interests by creating a situation where the curriculum is 'the enemy' and he, as the teacher, is on their team. In a discussion of whether to teach the requirements of the curriculum or the content of his subject, Mark described that he negotiates both in relation to each another. For him, letting students know he is on their side becomes a tactical ploy to garner trust:

Mark: They think that we are on the inside and that we have seen the exam, some of them think we write the exam. But no, when you tell them they are going to see the exam before we do, that really sort of takes them aback. And also I always tell them that on day one because it helps that 'us and them' mentality. So you make the 'them' SACE and it sort of puts you on the same side as the students. Which is so hard to do throughout high school.

Lee: Absolutely.

Mark: They have always been. The 'them' has always been the school, always been the institution, always been the teachers. If you can shift the 'them' to be SACE, which is, you know, a convenient enemy, then all of a sudden

you are working with the student and it's like, OK guys, it's us against SACE. (Mark, Teacher Interview, 2017)

Mark's comments are revealing about how he motivates students. Mark is transparent about the limitations of his power as a teacher by sharing with students they 'are going to see the exam before [teachers] do'. There is nothing particularly gendered about this statement; however, this confession of powerlessness enables him to align himself with the students as a ploy to facilitate the maintenance of discipline and control. Scholarly work has shown male teachers draw on gender relations, such as aligning themselves with male student subcultures, in order to get them 'on side' (Jackson, 2010; Skelton, 2001). Mark is compelled by pressure to improve exam results and perceives that students view him – as part of the school institution – in oppositional terms, so he strives to alter this perception of students. Mark's objective to win over disaffected students is evident in his emphasising of similarity ('a convenient enemy') and downplaying of difference (Smith, 2007).

In contrast to Mark, Joseph negotiates his curriculum for the students entirely around their strengths and interests. While Joseph begins by explaining the mandatory requirements of the curriculum, he demonstrates how his pedagogy and approach to meeting the curriculum is heavily influenced by student interest and performance:

Lee: So what are you talking about there?

Joseph: So the two assessment types we do. Investigations includes issue investigation, which is when students have to pick one topic and look at least two sides to it. A practical investigation which is basically your lab work. But the beauty of about scientific studies, in Sport Science the lab work does not have to be literally in a lab, it can be out on the sports field. Some of the testing and hypothesis have an aim, we can do that. How I structure the assignments is basically set about what the students will enjoy. Before the assignments we start on the topics they are going to study themselves.

Lee: How do you determine what the students are going to enjoy?

Joseph: I give them, what do you call it, a checklist of, ask them questions about what topics they have enjoyed from Year 11 to Year 12. Or just generally what about Sports Science enticed them to that role and then I collate all

> that information and then link it up with this link, you know what links with what topics that we can do and we move on with those. Sorry, back in regards to assessments. Once we have got that up, we choose which topic, you know I can change on the fly the assessments, mine are always set the same, I really look at how, you know all the formative stuff I end up doing that if the students are doing really well I might choose that topic to do our major practical investigation. (Joseph, Teacher Interview, 2017)

In both Mark and Joseph's accounts, we see an amalgamation of discourses and pressures shaping their professional work. Mark represents himself as inciting his students 'towards becoming a competitive, goal-fixated winner in school' (Jackson, 1998, p. 91), whereby he employs strategies to foster a climate in which teachers are 'on the same side as the students' (Mark, Teacher Interview, 2017). Whereas Joseph actively tailors his courses around boys' interests by providing 'a checklist [asking] them questions about what topics they have enjoyed' (Joseph, Teacher Interview, 2017). Joseph's approach is based on an assumption that some boys are not interested to start with (Francis & Skeleton, 2005); thus exploring what 'enticed' them to select the subject in the first place is an important tactic to spur interest. In both examples, we see what Smith (2005) calls the 'institutional speech genres and discourse' (p. 180) coordinating the everyday practice of the teachers.

Interwoven with discourses of gender and achievement, the teachers I spoke with at CBC shared specific tactics and ploys in designing curriculum and pedagogy which echo solutions to the 'boys will be boys' discourse that shifts 'classroom practice in order to engage boys' interests more strongly and to work with their perceived strengths and to correct their perceived weaknesses' (Epstein et al., 1998, p. 9). Historically, this gendering of curriculum has been supported in federal policy. In Australia, the 2002 *Boys: Getting it right* report produced by the Australian federal Parliament's Standing Committee on Education and Training evinces a right-wing agenda in educational policy concerned with gender (Lingard, 2003; Lingard, Martino, Mills, & Bahr, 2002; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Mills, 2003; Mills et al., 2004).

Weaver-Hightower (2008) in *The politics of policy in boys' education* argues that, while the report is technically not a policy, it has effectively functioned as one by coordinating the actions of educators with a specific narrow ideology in mind. Weaver-Hightower (2008) focuses on

the ‘micro-ecologies’ of two beneficiary schools of the Australian government’s outlay for boys’ educational initiatives, in which he argues ‘while teachers are responsive to local issues and their boys, teachers “reading” of policy is rarely direct but is mediated by either the views of the administration or by popular rhetorical texts’ (p. 77). Furthering Weaver-Hightower’s scholarship, Martino (2014) draws attention to how media-generated discourses on boys influence the direction of policy making in education, ‘in spite of the lack of evidence to support these claims’ (p. 30). This in turn results in a recommended panacea spearheaded by the likes of psychologist Biddulph. This panacea is the implementation of pedagogies and approaches more suited to boys’ learning styles such as short manageable tasks, competition, catering to their interests, positive rapport between teachers and students, and tactile learning opportunities (Biddulph, 1994, 1997, 2004).

Both Mark and Joseph spoke of these very approaches in relation to their own subjects. As seen earlier in this chapter, such teaching strategies designed for boys are proudly advertised as a CBC specialty. So we come to understand that Mark and Joseph, as teachers within an all-boys school, are institutionally ‘held responsible for continually adjusting methods in order to tap boys’ capacities and ensure they remain optimally engaged’ (Hodgetts, 2010, p. 36). Like all teaching staff at CBC, much of Mark and Joseph’s professional development throughout the year has involved workshops focusing on how to cater to boys’ learning styles.[35] Therefore, Mark’s competitive rhetoric, where SACE is ‘a convenient enemy’ and ‘it’s like, OK guys, it’s us against SACE’, or Joseph’s structuring of assignments around the boys’ interests and sports, both illustrate how ‘teacher knowledge about gender and schooling are based on problematic normalizing assumptions about boys as a group, which emphasize that boys are predisposed to behaving, thinking and learning in particular ways’ (Martino, Lingard, & Mills, 2004, p. 436). In this intersection between policy texts – specifically the teachers’ implementation of curriculum – and teacher rhetoric, we see how Mark and Joseph’s work is coordinated by CBC’s subscription to a dominant boys’ discourse and assumptions regarding learning.

Eliza, Mark and Joseph play significant roles in shaping students’ everyday experience of school, particularly in relation to formal academic learning. As employees of CBC, the

[35] All teachers at Christian Brothers College are required to attend the college’s professional development program. The staff interviews for my study took place at the end of the 2017 academic year. In that year alone, staff were required to attend two full-day professional development workshops with Dr Arne Rubinstein, author of *The making of men*. Interestingly, Steve Biddulph wrote the foreword to Rubinstein’s book.

teachers' talk illustrates how 'the organisational policies and procedures of the ruling apparatus are coordinated in complex ways that objectify teachers and control their everyday work from a distance' (Kerr, 2006, p. 41). The data in this section illustrate how teachers' talk is both gendered and institutionalised by external and internal forces. Externally, the teachers draw from national and mediatised debates around boys' learning. As the school draws on these external boys' discourses to validate its niche in the competitive local school market, teachers' work around formal academic learning becomes gendered. Through the standpoint of teachers, this chapter thus far has mapped how teachers' work is coordinated by external educational policy and discourses of gender in relation to formal academic learning. In the final section, I examine how an internal school policy creates tension for teachers as it makes them accountable for student work completion and achievement.

6.4 Internal policy and problems: Seven Steps to Success

As educational policy is mediated not just by individual teachers, but also by schools, it is important to understand how organisational factors affect teachers' roles. The first section of this chapter examined the work of teachers in understanding curriculum standards and policy. The second section explored how teachers draw on gendered discourses in activating these external curriculum policies. This last section explores the intensification of teachers' work by school policies designed to address the problem of students failing to submit work punctually. These school policies are, of course, influenced by state-level policy demanding a certain quantity of academic work from students as evidence of learning. For teachers, the labour of formal academic work connects to what Griffith and Smith (2014) understand to be a part of New Public Management discourses, being 'new managerial governance practices [coordinating] the work of people' and how 'organizations have increasingly adopted private-sector management techniques, such as standardized and quantitative measures of performance' (p. 5).

Ball (1993) reminds us 'when we focus analytically on one policy or one text we forget that other policies and texts are in circulation and the enactment of one may inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others' (p. 13). For CBC, getting students to complete academic work to a high standard is an important component of its marketing campaign as it is necessary in ensuring completion of the high school certificate. However, a common tension between teaching staff and leadership has been the lack of punctual work

submission from students. Teachers' work is heavily intensified by the late submission of student work. Non-negotiable and external SACE deadlines mean – when work is submitted late – there is extensive work to mark and prepare for the moderation process so students can be formally assessed. This is not an ideal system. Exacerbating matters, teachers are largely held accountable for the results of their students, particularly poor academic performance (Apple, 2005; Lingard, 2011; Power, 1997). In order for the school to position itself advantageously on the school market and use academic results as a selling point, the work of teachers in making sure students complete academic work is vital.

6.4.1 The policy context

At the time of data collection, CBC had failed in the last ten years to reach 100% high school certificate accreditation, meaning a small portion of students have not successfully completed the requirements of senior courses. In most of these cases, students have failed to achieve their SACE certificate due to failing to complete tasks and assessment items for Year 12 courses. While this failure could indicate students pushing back against the institutionalisation of their learning, or simply a case of not caring (Smyth & Hattam, 2004), there are implications for the school as its competitors annually boast of 100% completion. In an address to staff at the beginning of the year, an executive member of the leadership team stated: 'It is not unreasonable that parents paying nearly $10,000 can at least expect their son get a certificate. I understand the boys can be stubborn. But we need to be 100%' (Fieldnotes, January 2017).

The statement above was made at a time when the decline in student enrolment numbers was starting to take effect (see Chapter 5.2.1). Saltmarsh (2007) claims that 'many perceive private sector schooling as providing moral, social and academic benefits beyond those available to students in public sector' (p. 335), thus 'consumers are seen as entitled to expect something more' (p. 350). Quite clearly, the executive above shared such a view. However this statement undermines what the SACE certificate supposedly represents, that being the achievement of skills, knowledge and personal capabilities demonstrated through successful completion of a range of subjects (SACE, 2019). Furthermore, the executive's statement above commoditises formal academic learning to a mere transaction between fee-paying parents and the school. In other words, if parents are paying for an advantage of private schooling, where is the advantage if their son fails?

It is important to note that, following the release of Year 12 results, the SACE Board provide schools individualised reports in relation to student achievement data. These reports are generally exhaustive and detail the performance of every student in every class. This means, should a student fail their SACE because the requirements of a particular Year 12 course is not met, the executive team know whom the student is and whom their teacher was. According to Ball (2001), the rich 'underlife' and 'micropolitics' of individual schools means that policies can be incorporated 'for accountability reasons, rather than for reasons of pedagogic or organisational change' (p. 220). In the case here, CBC created a new internal policy to ensure students – largely through the work of teachers – achieve their high school certificate.

6.4.2 The implementation of internal policy as a solution: Teachers' struggles

At the beginning of every academic year, a compulsory staff meeting is held to discuss the results of the Year 12s from the previous year. During 2017, when the results of 2016 were discussed, the problem of students failing to submit work was acknowledged and a solution was proposed through a new school policy titled *Seven Steps to Success*. In short, the policy provides a sequential series of steps for teachers and students to follow in a bid to ensure students submit their work.

The Seven Steps to Success policy was made visible throughout the school as it was transformed into a large poster and placed in every classroom and student diary (Figure 16).

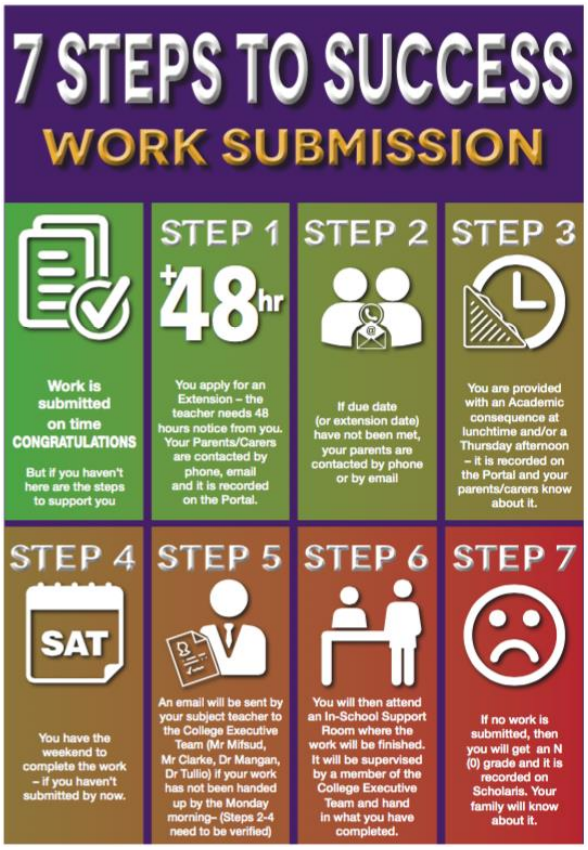


Figure 16: CBC policy – Seven Steps to Success

As a visual manifestation of policy and a powerful textual document, the Seven Steps to Success poster attempts to relay a straightforward process in relation to student's academic work, or lack thereof. Drawing on understandings of symbolic meanings of visual representations, Ball and Smith (1992) explain that 'the social world is symbolically constituted and mediated … artefacts all carry symbolic significance' and 'symbols are made sense of by reference to other symbols' (p. 4). Thus, it can be inferred that the poster design of the Seven Steps to Success captures the escalating emotional annoyance felt by staff, and executives, in regard to the problem of students failing to meet deadlines. The increasingly intense colour palette begins with bright green and the capitalised word '*CONGRATULATIONS'*. Yet, underneath the words are 'But if you haven't here are the steps to support you'. The subsequent five steps, which intensify towards red, explain that parents will be contacted, academic detentions will be issued and eventually the executive will also be informed. These steps focus on communication and process rather than actual support with learning. It is only in step 6 that a tangible example of support becomes apparent, in that students will need to attend an 'in-school support room' with a member of the executive to complete the work, or at the very least, submit what is completed thus far. Finally, if the process reaches step 7, meaning even an

executive cannot get a student to complete work, there is an unhappy emoticon and the consequences, a zero mark and 'your family will know about it', are delineated.

This Seven Steps to Success poster, as a text, works on the assumption that parents and students have a vested interest in the work being completed. The poster is displayed in classrooms as a clear demonstration of the institution trying to orchestrate a particular response and behaviour from students. However, in reality, the implementation of the policy predominantly relies on the work of teachers. Central to an institutional ethnography is the convergence and divergence between individual identities and the institutional identity, or 'how people become caught up in, and how our lives become organised by, the institutional foci of the ruling relations' and 'mediated by institutionally designed realities that organize relations' (Smith, 2005, p. 27). In introducing the Seven Steps to Success, the Assistant Principal of Learning recognised teaching staff stress levels often peak around assessment deadlines. However, while his sentiments to alleviate teacher pressure appeared genuine, the earlier 'we need to be 100%' statement by another executive lingered. Thus the introduction of the policy was met with trepidation by teaching staff. My journal entry below attempts to capture this moment:

> There is more concern than celebration. As the policy is introduced, teachers are quick to realise there are many loopholes in this process that places more emphasis on teachers and other staff before the actual students. A colleague begins with the first concern, 'the first step assumes the students ask for an extension, our problem is they don't'. Muttered grunts and heads nodding up and down suggest agreement. Relentlessly, teachers continue to express dismay at the process, and burning questions such as 'how is this fair to the kids that do the right thing?' and 'so what about a consequence other than just contacting home'. The Assistant Principal does well to mask his annoyance and explains that teachers should be monitoring student work achievement throughout the assignment completion, not just at the end. Not surprisingly, such a comment sparks even further questions and commentary, to which a science teacher notes 'so it is only at Step 7, does a student become accountable'. The Assistant Principal – Learning now resorts to a seemingly standard corporate line, 'The Seven Steps has been approved by the Executive'. He then adds on a potentially condescending statement that is along the lines that the Seven Steps is better than nothing. (Fieldnotes, January 2017)

While the policy is introduced to solve one problem, teachers are quick to point out that it is laden with issues and will in fact intensify their pursuit of student work further. Connell (2009), and others, have called attention to the problematic nature of policy regimes of accountability, where the work of teachers is quantified and beholden to logics that are insistent, inconsistent and at times incoherent. For example, in the case of Seven Steps to Success, there is a tension in how the school simultaneously adopts aspects of neoliberalism, such as engaging in stratagems to bolster academic performance, while doing so under the façade of a social justice agenda invested in care and collective responsibility. According to Sellar and Lingard (2013), such contradictions are unavoidable in the global policy field that brings new forms of performativity and accountability. More importantly, these tensions have implications for the work of teachers. Mark shared some of his concerns about Seven Steps to Success:

> Lee: So when we talk about the Seven Steps as a document or the non-negotiables. Are you saying that these as texts are not necessarily clear or they're not necessarily followed or a bit of both?
>
> Mark: A bit of both. For example, Seven Steps to Success – hold on (Walks to poster on wall in interview room). So work is submitted on time, that's not part of it. You apply for an extension, the teacher needs 48 hours' notice, etc. Now it is still not really clear as yet who is responsible for doing each of these steps. At what point does it get handed over to the Student Learning Coordinator? At what point, so if the student doesn't apply for an extension, what happens then? Does this all happen straight away? As soon as the due date is finished? So let's say it's due on a Monday afternoon. Do we go straight to academic consequence at 3.30 or do they get to the next morning? There is nothing in there about any of that. That's, I mean, I have, this is also what irritates me, is that I have systems that I have put in place in my classrooms that work. And then I am given something like this to follow and it doesn't work. All last year I had the same system. (Mark, Interview, 2017)

As Mark clearly articulated, the first problem with the Seven Steps to Success policy is that it lacks clarity in relation to process. As is the case here, a great deal of policy is entrenched and written with idealism (Ball, 2007). However, policy in practice, as Malen and Knapp (1997) posit, is subject to organisational (e.g. established structures, habits and routines) and political perspectives. Mark's subjectivity is torn between the institutional and the personal. On one

hand, in complying with the Seven Steps to Success policy, he is likely to experience less scrutiny from executives should a student fail his course or perform poorly due to missing work. In short, if he plays by the rules of the school there is a level of insurance in doing so. On the other hand, his professional experience as an educator within the school, one that has 'systems … in place in [his] classrooms that work', goes largely ignored. Already, as seen above in Section 6.2.1, Mark's 'autonomy' as to what he can teach is heavily coordinated by SACE policy. Not only does he experience prescription of what he can teach, now even his implementation of these curriculum policies is coordinated by internal policies. Keddie, Mills and Pendergast (2011) illustrate how 'performative and competitive schooling cultures of high accountability and compliance suggest an undermining and mistrust of teachers and their practice and denial of a teacher agency' (p. 76). Mark's agitation ('this is also what irritates me') not only extends from how policies are conceived and implemented in the school, but how they become central 'to making people accountable for particular processes and for activating the kinds of work that this involves' (Kerkham & Nixon, 2014, p. 344). Or, as Ball (2003) argues, 'where professional judgement and beliefs are subordinated to output compliance, the value of the person is eradicated' (p. 224).

The Seven Steps to Success policy also has a symbolic dimension, as it 'sends signals and creates symbols that serve important functions and where the focus is on the "messages" and "meanings" of policy' (Malen & Knapp, 1997, p. 430). As the policy is solely focused on assuring work completion, it narrows the framework around what formal academic learning is – and how it is valued – at the school. There is no mention of developing students' work habits or skills in managing time, let alone academic penalties such as grade reduction for the period the work is overdue to at least provide students who meet deadliness some imperative to do so. Rather, producing work is the central tenet of the Seven Steps to Success. However, as teacher Eliza criticised, the Seven Steps to Success presents equity issues as its primary function and rests in enhancing the academic performance of underachievers.

> I think that is one of the biggest issues. Our Seven Steps to Success reward those kids who have failure, sorry, an unwillingness to do the work. Some of them say take me to the Seven Steps because someone will, in effect, do my assignment for me. I think we are very pastoral at this school but at the cost of the masses. (Eliza, Interview, 2017)

Eliza's disaffection towards the school's Seven Steps to Success policy is not surprising as her professionalism, capabilities and autonomy is lost. Considering the policy is published in the school diary and planted on posters in classrooms, the Seven Steps to Success shifts the power dynamics between teachers and students. A teacher must follow the process that limits their agency, while ironically advantaging students who do not follow teachers' instructions. Students who do not do their work in a timely manner gain an advantage over their peers, not only in the extension of a deadline, but by receiving individualised support from an executive to ensure its completion. In terms of exploring how the institution coordinates actors and influences professional values, Eliza's sense of inequity is clearly grounded in experience of working with students who do and do not abide by the system yet experience similar academic outcomes. My interest here lies in how restrictions on the way Eliza can respond to students connect to 'the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their intersections' (Smith, 2005, p. 29). McGregor and Mills (2014) argue the current educational policy context is challenging for teachers who are 'constrained by state demands to conform to macro-policies of measurement and accountability' (p. 4), and in mapping the Seven Steps to Success to these external policies, we see the double-pronged nature of teachers' constraint at CBC, which I now explore.

Firstly, Eliza's autonomy as an English teacher is restricted to standards that create anxiety (refer to Section 5.2.1). However, these policy texts are implemented in a 'context', which according to Braun, Ball, Maguire and Hoskins (2011), 'is an active force, it is not just a backdrop against which schools have to operate, it initiates dynamic policy processes and choices and is continuously constructed and developed both from within and externally in relation to policy imperatives and expectations' (p. 590). Therefore secondly, the value of Eliza's professionalism is diminished in the context of the wider school preoccupation with ensuring students pass or, framed differently, fulfil the requirements of SACE. Returning to Braun, Ball, Maguire and Hoskins' (2011) notion of policy as being in continuous construction, I argue teachers' subjectivity will always be restricted within a neoliberal and managerial discourse and context as results can always be improved and a school's position within the market can always be higher and/or is always under threat from other schools.

Keddie (2013) illustrates how similar contextual dimensions contribute to schools' capacities to 'forge a worthy school identity within the current hyper-accountable and competitive environment where academic achievement (along increasingly narrow and conservative lines)

and maintaining standards in relation to this achievement are utmost priorities' (p. 750). While Keddie's study focuses on a high-performing academic school in London, her work provokes thinking about the alignment between a school's 'embracing of the external demands of the performative audit culture and its situated and professional dimensions' (2013, p. 764). As I have shown here, schools can embrace such demands by coordinating the work of students and teachers. As for Eliza, her professional and personal values are challenged and displaced within the climate of accountability and regulation which a policy like Seven Steps to Success creates.

Stahl (2017a) explains that 'in institutions, texts, structured by discourses, become activated; they coordinate practices and are pivotal for understanding the relationship between meaning and institutional practices in which people participate' (p. 76). CBC's Seven Steps to Success is more than a school policy ensuring students complete work. It is a tool designed to ensure a certain type of success, one recognised by the external SACE curriculum body that in turn locates CBC – through the achievement data it generates – advantageously within the local school market. Yet while the policy is designed for students, it depends on, and generates greater work for, teachers. Arguably, the undertone to the Seven Steps to Success is that teachers should do more than provide a platform for students to perform academically and to achieve; they should to some degree ensure it.

6.5 Conclusion

Teachers' work is as complex as it is organised. The purpose of this chapter has been to trace key policy texts, both external and internal, that mediate and shape teachers' work within CBC. In doing so, this chapter has sought to show how teachers are constituted according to institutional processes of standardisation, accountability and surveillance, geared towards improving students' academic performance. I began by describing the complex and bureaucratic nature of teachers' work when implementing external SACE curriculum policies. This kind of work involves reading, mapping, cross-checking, preparing, packaging, planning, marking, re-marking and, as results day approaches, hoping.

The context of greater external accountability not only exposes teachers to an audit culture that curbs their professional judgement, but within the context of the school it is vital as it holds the proverbial key to promotional student achievement data in the form of Year 12 results. Considering an institutional feature of the school is that it is all-boys, I then explicated how

teachers come to be caught up in gendered discourses when teaching their students. By exploring how teachers' specific knowledge about gender informed their pedagogy, I illustrated how the school coordinates teachers to address boys' educational needs as an extension of its institutional identity and niche in the school market. Finally, I mapped the intensification of teachers' work due to an internally created school policy designed to address the problem of students failing to submit work. This final section illustrated how the school places greater emphasis on ensuring students reach certain academic benchmarks – made possible by completing work – than on the professional discretion and autonomy of teachers. Throughout this chapter, I drew on a range of external and internal texts to show how teachers' work 'depends heavily on the various uses of texts to coordinate, order, provide continuity, monitor and organise relations between different segments, phases and leaves of organisational courses of action' (Smith, 2006, p. 175). Therefore this chapter is significant in the context of my study as it helps shape understanding of how external factors – such as policies – can seep into the classroom through the work of teachers. In the following chapter, I explicate the coordination of formal academic learning from the standpoint of students.

Chapter 7: Commodified classrooms – Coordinating students' formal academic learning

7.1 Introduction

> No matter how heterogeneous their backgrounds or how differently their cultural destinies would have been played out without the unnatural social atmosphere of the school, it is within the constraints of this institution that young people negotiate their identities. (Willis, 2006, p. 519)

Within educational and ethnographic research, the examination of young people's experience of the classroom is predominantly taken from an institutional or educator's perspective (Sefton-Green, 2006). As an institutional ethnographer, my focus in this chapter is to explore how the student participants assume roles as learners within a context where constructions and controls of being learners already exist and are institutionally validated. Perry (2002) asserts that school norms, practices and expectations provide insight into the key symbolic materials which students draw on to make sense of their experience of school. Thus this chapter delineates how the student participants of my study are embedded into a competitive institutional discourse that 'teaches [them] to respect results, not principles' (Newman, 1984, g. 158) and are coaxed towards a model of 'good, compliant pupils who would not challenge authority' and are 'naturally hard-working, high achieving pupils' (Archer & Francis, 2007, p. 47). However, with a focus on tensions, I also analyse the ways in which the participants' personal values, style and views often contest discursive formations of what learning and learners should look like within Christian Brothers College (CBC). Therefore, in thinking relationally concerning identities and the institution, the classroom can be theorised as a site where institutional and national discourses, policy enactment, market pressures and student identities converge.

By no means do I claim that this chapter represents or captures the entirety of formal learning academic situations at the school. Rather, it contributes to the wider institutional ethnographic design of this study, in that I show particular that constructions and discourses are promoted as fundamental to academic success, and that by extension these are an important part of the institution's self-promotion of as a successful all-boys' institution. Drawing upon an institutional ethnographic approach, I explore how power and relationships are constructed around CBC's ideals for formal academic learning. Particular attention is paid to the way in

which institutional discourses, centred largely on competition and performance, negotiate, shape and maintain particular hierarchies of learning subjectivities. The chapter is broken into four sections.

In Section 7.2, I begin this chapter by using empirical data to describe the classroom as a textually mediated space. The classroom is an important site in which particular representations of the ideal CBC student are encoded, enacted and embedded through visual cues, interior design of class spaces and teacher talk. While brief, this section illustrates one way that texts enter the lives of students.

Section 7.3 explicates a classroom-mandated text (the dux poster) which is unique to CBC classrooms. On face value, this promotional and celebratory poster recognises high-achieving graduates from the previous year. However, my analytic focus is tracing how the text actively works in fashioning and promoting a particular type of learner identity. Through interview data with student participants, I trace how the dux poster connects to discursive practices, events and other texts, which students' learner identities either subscribe to or resist.

Fundamental to my research is recognising how the participants of my study are part of a larger eco-system of policy, politics and decisions. Through Section 7.4, I draw on student participant interview data, work samples and other institutional texts to examine how the work of formal academic learning is monitored, textually mediated and regulatory in nature. In Chapter 6, I detailed the tightly controlled nature of teachers' work in implementing curriculum policy to illustrate the intersection between translocal curriculum bodies and the daily life of the school. This section extends that work by examining how educational policy can orchestrate the experience of school for students.

Finally, Section 7.5 provides two vignettes of student participants. These vignettes provide intimate examples of the complexity of formal academic work and the relationship this has to learner identities at school. Through these vignettes, the student participants' formal academic learning is seen as a subjectivity framed by struggle, where competing demands and expectations of the school are weighed against personal ambition and values of education.

7.2 Coordinated classrooms

In relation to students' formal academic learning, we cannot view classrooms as the total institution, but as representative of institutional values. Classrooms can be conceptualised as fluid trans-educational entities with permeable boundaries. As sites of power negotiation, many material things move through classrooms: students, teachers, resources, paperwork, information, visitors and so on. Therefore classroom activity proves helpful in studying classrooms where people meet and opens a broader landscape to understand the social relations shaping the work of people that takes place in them. Thus a classroom is a space that 'must be seen as a social construction. As such, space is involved in the production and reproduction of social relationships, and is linked to political struggles of inclusion and exclusion' (Morgan, 2000, p. 273).

I recognise that space is always open to interpretation and contestation by different individuals or groups (Creswell, 1996; Keith & Pile, 1993; Sibley, 1995). In this section, I briefly describing the physical nature of classrooms that students enter to engage with formal academic learning, in order to illustrate how space is tied up with other axes of ruling relations such as institutional identity, performativity and marketability.

7.2.1 Classroom spaces as message systems

Within CBC, no two classrooms are the same. In fact, each room varies greatly in terms of aesthetics, furniture and technology. On one side of the campus lie drab, stained yellow demountable rooms filled with 25-year-old furniture still bearing the sketching of '*Silvi waz here 96'*. These demountable rooms sit next to a 140-year-old building that is proudly heritage listed. The heritage buildings house the offices of the executive members of the college, being the Principal, Business Manager, and Human Resource Manager, whereas the demountable rooms are primary sites of learning for senior students in Years 11 and 12. In these older classrooms, either single or double rectangular desks are lined in rows, facing the whiteboard, and all furniture remains firmly fixed to the ground. However, on the other side of the campus, freshly painted, glass-walled spaces with interactive and oversized plasma screens and break-out areas containing brightly coloured leather couches suggest modernisation and innovation. These spaces are proudly used for tours and are featured on the college website and in promotional catalogues. In regard to the relationship between pedagogy and space (Walker, Brooks, & Baepler, 2011), these modern classrooms are physically composed in order to force

group work and movement with large round tables, wheeled furniture and the absence of teacher desks and whiteboards. It is as if such learning spaces were designed to rebuke traditional pedagogy such as desks in lines and whiteboards.

As a result of this architectural disparity, students at CBC face a cacophony of environments in their classroom experience. However, there are some consistent elements mandated by the school leadership team. In each room, posters of behavioural policies, student achievement and college values are featured on each wall and their visibility is a requirement. With regards to how a classroom is used, teachers are afforded a level of professional autonomy and are not required to justify or explain their particular furniture set-up. On the other hand, at the beginning of the academic year before students arrive, teachers are provided with a 'room set-up' checklist (Figure 17) containing a series of 'required items' expected to be clearly visible in each classroom. When considering these 'required items', it becomes apparent that CBC classrooms are message systems to both students and teachers.

Required Items	Present
Sufficient desks and chairs (30)	
Crucifix	
Prayer Table/Resources	
EREA Touchstones	
Clock	
Emergency Evacuation procedures/Lock down procedures	
Rubbish Bin	
Lesson Times	
College song poster	
College values poster	
Non-Negotiables poster	
Acknowledgment of Country poster	
College Theme poster	
Brother poster	
Dux Poster	
Student Leadership Poster	
Cleaning materials	
Room set up and cleared of all old materials/posters	
Any maintenance issues reported	

Tutor or Teacher setting up room: _____

Room checked by: _____

Figure 17: Room set-up checklist sent to staff

The presence of posters communicating and promoting various features of school life is not a cultural norm that just happens; rather classroom preparation is a regulated expectation of the executive leadership team. Teachers are provided with time during the lead-in week to prepare their classrooms by collecting the required materials (Figure 17) and ensuring they are visible. In an email to all staff, an executive states: 'Leadership will be checking rooms on Friday afternoon before students return to ensure all classrooms are ready. Please ensure a member of leadership checks your room and complete the room set up checklist before leaving' (Email to staff, 2017).

The email reveals that classroom spaces are bound to norms and values before students even arrive. The description of classroom spaces and the posters or *required items* is an important first step in recognising how ruling relations come to coordinate space. These 'discursive artifacts and activities that make up, reflect, and carry' (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 597) CBC representations of knowledge show how power (Bernstein, 2000) permeates everyday spaces. For example, the posters – particularly the dux poster – are distinct message systems about what the school values regarding student subjectivity (I explicate this further below in Section 7.3). In considering the textually coordinated and mediated nature of classrooms, we see 'social relations [are] based on texts [that can] transform the local particularities of people, place, and time into standardized, generalized, and especially, translocal forms' (Smith, 2005, p. 101). Before students even arrive at school, the symbolic act of having a member of leadership sign off on classrooms unveils a managerial approach to regulating school spaces. So when a student enters a classroom – irrespective of the teacher, subject or activity taking place – the space is laden with message systems designed to coordinate both their subjectivity and their experience.

As a member of the institution – as both alumnus and staff member – I have come to understand that classrooms vary for a wide range of reasons, including teachers, class dynamics, and the nature and requirements of the subjects. Everyday classroom décor and organisation tells us there are many mechanisms that help sustain shared meanings and beliefs in the work, purpose and task of doing school. Drawing on Smith's approach to institutional ethnography, I focus here on the 'notion of the everyday world' (Smith, 1987, p. 106). Such an approach forces me to question normative understandings and practices as I begin to comprehend how CBC orchestrates the students towards particular subjectivities. In order to foster this analytical thinking, I will attempt to 'uncover the macro foundations of a microsociology' (Burawoy, Burton, Ferguson, Fox, & Gamson, 1991, p. 282) which may extend not only from micro to

macro but also ‘from local to extralocal, from processes to forces’ (Burawoy, Blum, George, Gille, & Thayer, 2000, p. 29). When discussing the relationship between texts and institutional discourse, Smith (2005) explains institutional ethnography is ‘concerned with discovering dimensions of institutional relations that are at work in the local setting’ (p. 104). Therefore, in more detail, I will now explicate how the dux poster – a required item in every classroom – is designed to foster a student’s attitude and approach to formal academic classrooms throughout CBC.

7.3 Institutional ethos around formal academic learning: The dux poster

The purpose of the analysis in this section is to describe the ways in which CBC, as an institution, orientates students towards a ‘good student’ discourse centred on academic achievement. This section begins by explicating the school’s creation of a promotional poster valorising Year 12 achievement and emphasising ATAR rankings. It then illustrates how the poster as a text connects to academic ceremonies designed to coordinate student subjectivities. Through the standpoint of students, this section then illustrates how students’ identities as learners can subscribe to, resist and challenge institutional discourses.

7.3.1 Method for visual analysis

As this section analyses a visual text, it is important I bear in mind that the ‘discursive role (of visual artifacts in schools) is under researched’ (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 599) and thus under-theorised. However my intention here is to capture how CBC communicates its purposes, goals, values and identities, which is ‘central to making people accountable for particular processes and for activating the kinds of work that this involves’ (Kerkham & Nixon, 2014, p. 344). Koh (2009, p. 284) suggests ‘visual design in education policy documents and materials is significant because it is situated and intertwined in the complex interplay of institutional constraints, ideological underpinnings, political assumptions and priorities’. With this in mind, I explore the complexity of dealing with this type of data and heed advice from Emmison (2004, p. 249), who suggests visual evidence must be combined with ‘a powerful theoretical imagination if it is to move beyond the representational/ informational form’.

As a researcher and teacher at the school site, I had to be reflexively aware of Ball and Smith’s (1992, p. 18) assertion that ‘the sense viewers make of [posters, images] depends upon cultural assumptions, personal knowledge, and the context in which the picture is presented’. My own assumptions, formed through long-term association with the institution in a variety of different

roles, needed to be unearthed. Therefore as an institutional ethnographer, my reading of the posters was mediated by my own experiences (past and present) and my research aims, with a particular focus on institutional discourses, and led by the student participants' discussion of these. As I studied the text, thinking about it as a separate document and relationally in line with the rest of the data, my intention was to elucidate how the performativity discourse (Ball, 2003; Francis, 2006) was enacted through visual means.

7.3.2 Dux posters

At CBC, the dux, defined as the top academically performing pupil in the Year 12 cohort, is a position and symbol of academic hegemony. Every year, CBC reminds students and staff that all formal academic learning is a measured and competitive endeavour. This reminder takes form in the dux poster. When asked about the poster, Paul, who is a member of the executive team, explained it is an important part of communicating expectations and benchmarks:

> Also there is a strong sense, I believe of visual texts here at the school and we use that quite effectively. What's our expectations? This really reflects, in terms of boys' learning and what they see, what the expectations are, setting benchmarks is really important in the context of the school. (Interview, Paul, 2017)

The dux poster illustrates one tactic of the CBC leadership team in propagating an academic performativity, specifically in regard to high school certificate achievement. Seen in Figure 18 below, the dux Poster avoids ambiguity or subtlety with regard to setting academic benchmarks. It contains medium-close up shots of the previous year's Year 12 students who achieved an ATAR of 90 or above. The named photos are arranged in descending order, with the dux, the top-performing Year 12 student, occupying the largest photo in the top left-hand corner, followed by the proxime accessit, being the student who achieved the second-highest ATAR, and then the following eighteen highest achievers. Under each photo is the student's ATAR.

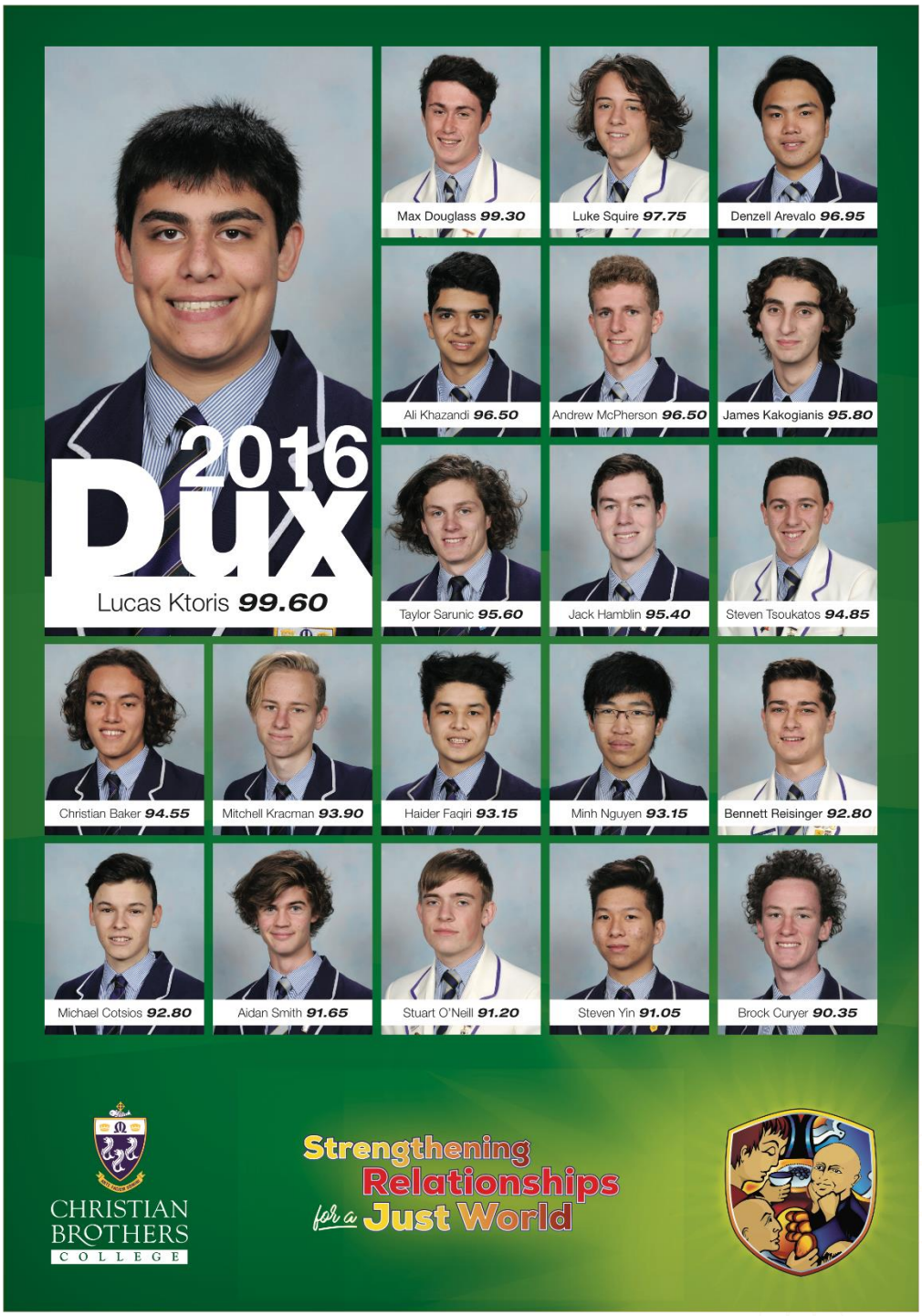


Figure 18: The CBC dux poster

As a text, the dux poster appears to suggest a successful student, or at least one worthy of recognition, is one who outperforms his peers and achieves an ATAR of 90+. All students at CBC, in every classroom, are faced by the previous year's top-scoring alumni and their scores. Therefore, arguably, the dux poster embeds a fixed 'moral representation' (Maguire et al., 2011) of academic performativity at CBC. This representation celebrates achievement. The

symbolic and material display of alumni, with ATAR rankings, promotes a learner identity which is measurable and comparable to one's peers. While as a text, the poster does not instigate a series of processes – nor demand a particular response from readers – it does connect to other school ceremonies and traditions promoting a performativity discourse and privileging a certain ideal student subjectivity. Thus the dux poster allows me to problematise what Smith (1990) refers to as the 'everyday' and is useful knowledge for 'people whose everyday activities are being organised against their own interests' (p. 11). The dux poster, as a text, is a symbolic manifestation of the institutional ethos (Ball, 2003), which works to coordinate CBC learner subjectivities towards a fixed representation or desired ATAR achievement. As an institutional ethnographer, my focus is on how 'texts insert institutional interests and relevancies into local settings where they are taken up and activated by local participants' (Stahl, 2017a, p. 115). It is first important to recognise the dux poster intends to represent academic goal posts towards which all students at the college are supposed to strive.

One of CBC's core values is *excellence* and academic achievement serves as one of the core pillars on which this value stands. The posters are firmly fixed to the walls of each classroom before students begin the year, and four weeks into every academic year the school holds 'the dux assembly' where all the successful alumni from the previous year (who occupy the dux poster) are invited to the school. In this event, the top-performing Year 12 students of the previous year are called to the stage in front of the entire student body and valorised by the executive for their achievement. In this ceremony, the dux is given a certificate, a textual representation of institutionally validated achievement, has his individual subject achievements projected on a large screen, and gives a speech. Interestingly, the ceremony only acknowledges students with a 90+ ATAR, and other forms of achievements in the form of winning apprenticeships, acceptance into the military or achieving entry to university courses with an ATAR requirement below 90 are only lightly acknowledged in the Principal's address.

The dux ceremony highlights the symbolic currency at CBC and what it means to be one of the top-performing academic students. Therefore, the posters fit within a wider narrative of the academic lives of students and emblematically reinforce a performativity discourse. In terms of how power works in the institution, the dux poster arguably reduces the individual narrative of a student to a photo and number, thus conveying Smith's assertion that

> the practice of ruling involves the ongoing representation of the local actualities of our worlds in the standardized and general forms of knowledge that enter them into the relations of ruling … Forms of consciousness are created that are properties of organization or discourse rather than of individual subjects. (1987, p. 3)

7.3.3 Students' response to the dux poster

For the students attending CBC, the dux poster is a constant reminder – present in every classroom – that the school values academic achievement. As an institutional ethnographer, it is in how students consider the poster that the coordination of power can be traced (Nichols & Griffith, 2009). Earlier, when Paul spoke of 'expectations' that become 'our' (the college's) benchmarks, he assumed students value academic achievement. However, I am working with the assumption that the student participants are the 'expert knowers' (Rankin, 2017a, p. 5) of their lives; thus my focus here is to explore and trace how students are socially organised to see themselves through the lens of a competitive and performativity discourse. Students read these texts differently depending on personal ambition or experience with the alumni which make the poster. For some of the student participants, the presence of the posters is seen as a tactical ploy for motivation and advertisement. When discussing the dux poster, student Peter explained:

> Lee: So, so you're describing the dux?
>
> Peter: The dux yes, and I believe that, so I think this, this poster right here is (pointing to dux poster), is there to for students, I think it's also for, this I think that is for students to show them that, if this person can do it, you can do it.
>
> Lee: Oh, so that's the purpose?
>
> Peter: I think it has two purposes. So it's like, this person can do it you can do it, aim high, try to get the best and also to show the parents if you send your son to this school he can be one of the dux and have a good ATAR and all that stuff. (Peter, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Interestingly, Peter perceptively referred to a wider audience than just the immediate students within the classroom. For him, the measure of success of the school and a student is a 'good ATAR' and these texts remind students to 'aim high'. However, Peter does not subscribe to what he believes is the poster's intentions; he constructs aspects of his identity in contrast to

what is being recommended by the school. When asked about the impact of these posters on his approach to schooling, I was met with an abrupt 'They don't'. In short, the expectations or benchmarks of the school lack connection to the personal ambition or priority of the student. The existence of these posters contributes to Peter's identity formation as he resists them. However, in contrast, for another student I spoke with named Cody, the dux poster shapes his academic ambition to some degree, particularly in relation to his peers.

Cody: Well, the first poster here of a dux is from last year. There's a lot of familiar faces on here, I knew a lot of the Year 12s from last year. I guess it's more of an encouraging thing for other students, so the Year 12s from 2016 and the Year 12s from 2017 would see these posters and they'd think, oh yeah, I want to see my face on this poster, so I guess it's a bit of an encouraging thing. It's a bit of a tool that CBC use to encourage the students I guess.

Lee: Have those posters shaped the way you think about how you behave at school or do things?

Cody: Oh, not so much behaviour wise, but I feel like the dux one really resonates with me since I feel like I would like to be on one of these posters someday.

Lee: Why?

Cody: I feel like that'd be a very proud moment, I'd feel very proud if I get my face up here; I guess it's more of something that you could brag about, that's something you could be proud of and I guess it would be a bit of a competition with your friends as well.

Lee: So this is about, so you're looking at the dux poster and you'd like to be on that, so that's essentially the top performing students in Year twelve.

Cody: Academic wise, yeah.

Lee: All right and you're motivated, so why would you be proud?

Cody: Definitely to see all the other students, just how I'm looking up to the Dux from this year hopefully other students could look up to me and be like I want to be like him, I want to get a great ATAR stuff like that I guess. (Cody, Interview 3, 2017)

In terms of shaping one's application towards academic study, Cody views the Dux poster as a form of symbolic social capital within the school. There is a positive tone to which Cody describes the 'encouraging' effect these posters hold. Importantly, he subtly references the competitive nature of academia in the classroom ('it would be a bit of a competition with your friends as well'). While he admires some of the alumni on the posters, he also aspires to become on so that 'hopefully other students could look up to me'. In this light, the Dux poster, placed in the classroom, has the desired effect that executive member Paul initially suggests with regards to setting the benchmark. Cody, as a student member of the institution, desires to become something the institution is validating and promoting as important. The Dux poster is also used to represent and produce a good student model when referred to by staff. Callum, another student, shares that 'some teachers point to them and talk about how good they were' (Interview 3, 2017), referring to the students on the posters, thus expanding as to how this text is activated by different actors within the school setting (Smith, 2005). When asked what he thinks teachers meant by 'good', another student Callum explains:

> Callum: You know. They do what the teacher says and get high marks all the time. I don't even know half of them. I think some use to hang out in the library or something, but teachers love them probably because they made their life easy. I think teachers think the only way to be good is to do your work and behave.
>
> Lee: Do you think this is true?
>
> Callum: What do you mean?
>
> Lee: About work and behavior?
>
> Callum: Not really. Well, maybe most of the time. But it depends. I get good grades when I want to but there are other students who muck around and also get good grades. (Callum, Interview 3, 2017)

Callum's observations illustrate how – through his interactions with teachers – the perception of the school's ideal student subjectivity is one who is compliant ('do what the teacher says') and academically successful ('get high marks all the time'). Thus being a 'good' student is exclusionary and selective within the institutional frame of the school as only certain versions of a student are celebrated and recognized. Schools, in neoliberal times, have been altered and reconfigured through policy agendas (Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins, 2011; Lingard, 2010; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Singh, Thomas and Harris, 2013; Stahl, 2017) to produce highly

individualized subjects who are ‘sufficiently flexible to maximize the opportunities available to her/him, and any failure resides in the individual’ (Francis, 2006, pg. 191). Maguire et al. (2011) examine the representation and production of the ‘good student’ in English schools as one who is well behaved and academically successful, arguing students are ‘encoded, enacted and embedded in a vast range of visual cues and prompts that all schools produce’ (pg. 600). In effect, Callum describes how students at CBC are caught up in a complex web of discourses in which they are incited to perform the good student model. However, while students at CBC are expected to be a certain type of student, it is important to remember they are cosseted due to market pressures.

In Chapter 6 of this thesis, I explicated the work of teachers who are pressured to ensure all students succeed in order to bolster the school’s marketability. In Section 5.4 of Chapter 5, I illustrated how the school leadership team implemented a policy designed to ensure all students succeed, to which some teachers vexed about disengaged students gaining extra-support and time to ensure academic success despite necessarily wanting it. Thus there is an apparent disjuncture between the ‘good student’ idealism/discourse and the reality of the everyday in the school (‘other students who muck around and also get good grades’) that is not lost on students. It is important to remember that the Dux poster is comprised of former students who attended the school less than a year ago. Considering the preconception that a good academic student is generally compliant and respectful to school figures (Archer and & Francis, 2007), some of my participants suggested many of the alumni did not exhibit such ideal behaviours when at school despite their academic success. Student Oliver shared a feeling of disjuncture when seeing an alumnus’s achievement that conflicts with his initial preconceptions of that alumnus’s appearance. In his concise way, Oliver stated:

Lee:	Do these posters mean anything to you; do you pay attention to them, do they?
Oliver:	Oh nah, I see them, when I look at them and be like, oh gees, that guy’s got a good score, and just some unexpected people you would imagine seeing in there.
Lee:	What do you mean by that?
Oliver:	So like you see these people in the … that you saw, and then you see them on the poster and be like, oh wow, this guy got the dux award of the year, you know what I mean.

Lee: Yeah so it's someone that you wouldn't think–

Oliver: You wouldn't expect to be on there.

Lee: So what makes you expect somebody to be on a dux poster compared to not?

Oliver: Someone smart.

Lee: So how do you know if someone's smart?

Oliver: You don't … look at their appearance. (Oliver, Student Interview 3, 2017)

When Oliver referred to appearance, he was not referring to the crafted images on the poster. In the dux poster, the photos of each student are professionally taken, staged carefully, from uniform and hair to posture and even the smile. There is uniformity to the school photos that represent CBC's ideal aesthetic. Yet when discussing individuals on the dux poster (Figure 18 above), he recollects times where certain alumni, as students, were often 'doing stupid stuff' like 'wrestling in the library' or 'being yelled at by a teacher'. Even though Oliver was not in the same classes as the alumni, when reading the dux poster, he presumes academic achievement is connected to a particularly compliant type of student performance. Arguably, there is a tension between Oliver's reality and the institution's ideal. Gottschall et al. (2010) explore how certain types of texts contribute to discourses that construct private schooling as the model for educational 'excellence' (p. 19), particularly within private boys' schooling as 'a vehicle for re/producing idealized versions of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities' (p. 19). The dux poster, in marketability terms, is replete with signifiers, using images of students and scores that promote the school's educational commodities to current students as well as potential ones.

Synott and Symes' (1995) notion of schools' 'symbolic architecture' – as materials that construct and maintain institutional identities – assists in understanding how the promotion and celebration of alumni achievement is an important technique in organising student value systems, particularly steering them towards valuing rank, measurement and competition. At CBC, learner diversity is seldom acknowledged and the imperative of high achievement is not just for alumni. Barring the first term, each term at CBC begins with an *academic excellence* assembly to recognise current students' academic achievement. Similar to the dux assembly described earlier, these once-a-term events see the top academically performing students for each year level called to stage and presented with a certificate. Student recipients are identified

based on academic results placing them in the top 10% of their cohort. This identification process parallels how the dux poster is generated, in that only previous Year 12s reaching an ATAR of 90 or more – meaning they are in the top 10% in the country – receive acknowledgement.

While the current student recipients do not find their face on a poster like the dux and 90+ ATAR alumni of the previous year, photographs are taken of the recipients that are then posted on the school's Facebook page and newsletters. For CBC, academic *excellence* and achievement is essential to its identity as an institution suffering comparatively underperforming results and declining enrolments. Saltmarsh's (2007) observation that boys' schools 'have responded to the increasingly marketized educational climate through a range of representation strategies that marks them out as desirable entities' (p. 337) becomes apparent. In terms of the ruling relations, there is currency in student academic achievement for CBC as an institution both inside and outside the school gates. Strong academic results are marketable externally, while also promoting 'benchmarks' internally. However, what is not discussed at ceremonies such as the dux or academic excellence assemblies is the approach students take towards their learning, only the final result. Considering some of the student participants' insights that some of the academic high achievers often break school rules, the focus on grades and scores by the school highlights the disjuncture between what is promoted and what actually happens.

With attention to how CBC valorises student academic achievement, this section has illustrated how students, past and present, are positioned and discursively constituted as marketable subjects by the school. As my analysis has shown, the dux posters connect to a range of events and discourses emphasising academic achievement. This discussion serves as an important prelude to the next section, where I examine the coordination of students' work in the classroom.

7.4 Students defining and doing formal academic learning

Thus far, I have described CBC's attempt to coordinate the student body through policy and promotional artefacts emphasising academic competition and performance. I will now explicate the nature of formal academic work within the classrooms by describing what students call 'doing subjects', meaning doing formal academic learning. The data indicate

formal academic learning exists in a discourse whereby learning and learner identity is largely defined by measurement.

Sociologists and psycho-social scholars have used a variety of frameworks to study learner identities (Archer, 2003; Reay, 2005; Roseneil, 2006; Shaw, 1995). In recent scholarship, there has been an emphasis on theorising learner identities as fluid and responsive to the institution. In defining the term learner identity, I draw from the work of Reay (2010) and Youdell (2006) to provide a more contemporary understanding its shifting and fluid nature. Reay (2010) encourages a move in educational research 'towards more contingent, hybrid and fluid understandings of identity' (p. 277) and encourages researchers to look at the process of identity formation for 'how identity shifts and changes in different contexts, spaces and times' (p. 278). In order to better understand this process, Youdell (2006) suggests categories such as 'race, ethnicity, disability, class, gender, sexuality become meaningful through interaction with other categories, and that these 'constellations of categorizations' may be seen as shifting and non-necessary. Students are constituted through constellations, particularly through 'dichotomies of good/bad students and acceptable/unacceptable and even ideal/impossible learners' (p. 30).

Throughout my research, it was clear that there was nothing fixed about the student participants' identities. Often, the participants would seemingly contradict themselves or would suggest they approach situations in a myriad of ways. For example, many students spoke of a tension between academic achievement and popularity with peers at school, yet shared that high academic achievement was valued within their peer subcultures and provided some level of status. Francis, Skelton and Read (2010) examine classroom subjectivities with attention to students' practices around gender and academic achievement. Their study findings 'belie the notion that high-achieving pupils necessarily jeopardise their social standing with classmates' (p. 317) and help to understand how students may project an identity of effortlessness when doing schoolwork, while simultaneously masking the hard work they do when not in the presence of their peers. While the work of Francis et al. (2010) took place in London, they help illuminate dichotomies heightened in neoliberal education contexts more broadly, those of 'success' and 'failure', achievement and underachievement, good and bad behaviour and so on. In relation to my study, as an institutional ethnographer exploring how the ruling relations and power orchestrate students' daily lives, the fluid definitions drawn from the interviews become helpful in tracing the active work of identity formation in schools that 'always occurs

under socially given conditions which include structures of power and social relations, institutional constraints and possibilities but also available cultural repertoires' (Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p. 116). My intention here is to first describe the socially constructed conditions of the classroom, and later, explicate how these conditions influence the identity work of students.

7.4.1 The work of 'doing subjects'

Within CBC classrooms, academic work and learning is coordinated and begins with specific texts, local and translocal. Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) discuss 'a pervasive discourse of levels' as 'a kind of meta-language, a whole way of talking about the self' (p. 127) when observing a class of 13-year-olds in the United Kingdom. They observe how 'the class was immediately plunged into the demanding task of turning the abstract principles of progression into the explicit and practical language of levels' (p. 130). Similarly, through lesson observations and interviews, I became intrigued by the sheer amount of teacher instruction and student questioning which would emphasise the relationship between pedagogic activity and assessment tasks. As discussed earlier, CBC has an imperative to ensure students achieve high results and complete tasks. With this in mind, formal academic learning at times appears to become a process of understanding the labour necessary to score highly and complete tasks rather than developing thinking and understanding of concepts a particular subject demands. When discussing the structure of lessons and course work, Callum explained:

> Generally it's all tied into the actual assignment that's being assessed, even if it isn't one that's being assessed. So it is, it is always recommended to do whatever the teacher gives you, as in you can take things from that and learn from it. So I think it would boost the grade if you did all your work that was given to you. (Callum, Student Interview 1, 2017)

Similar to Livingstone and Sefton-Green's observation of the levelling system in the United Kingdom, a discourse of assessment and grades shapes the lessons at this school site. In other words, the ruling relations shape my participants' experience of learning designed around demonstrating competence and mastery of the curriculum. Callum perceives the purpose of classroom experiences as largely the work of 'being assessed'. Furthermore, he alluded to the imperative of compliance ('it is always recommended to do whatever the teacher gives you') as this may benefit his achievement of a grade. The largely prescriptive nature of academic

schoolwork at CBC is introduced here. When I began asking the student participants about what formal academic learning looked like, I was met with rather narrow descriptions. Anthony (Interview 1) explained it looks 'Like sheets with assignments on it, textbooks, yeah', followed by 'like questions there, answer it, do some research about it'. Cody expanded the description, delineating how formal academic learning varies depending on the subject and the labour involved:

> English, there's a lot of – well English, there's a lot of writing, there's a lot of laptop work, and there's a lot of – on the smartboard, Mrs – our teacher always brings it up and blows it up for us, but on maths it's much more – I say interactive, because like there's on the board, and then he gets the class involved, asks the class questions, so the class is paying attention, so it's a much more interactive class. But then again, English can also be interactive when teachers, say, ask for something, and like, so they bring the classroom as well, but I feel like maths, you're using the class much more so. Say if there's a problem on the board, the teacher will ask the students more often, so the students have to interact. (Cody, Interview 1, 2017)

Cody illustrated the top-down nature of his experience of learning in the classroom. He perceives the teacher to drive learning and there is nothing really interactive in the description he offers as the direction of learning or pedagogic activity is seemingly never influenced by students. Rather his understanding of interaction is a framed conversation or responses to the content of a 'problem on the board'. Additionally, through describing the subject Food Tech, Cody showed that, while the labour of schoolwork varies, it is still highly coordinated but it can be resisted:

> Well Food Tech, it can either go two ways. So, there's two components of Food Tech; there's either practical or theory. So, practical is where we're in the kitchen and we're actually cooking our dishes. So, that's just a lot of – that's like very hands-on that interaction, students like, I feel like a lot of people really like practical, because that's something to do, and they enjoy it much more than just sitting at a desk and doing class work for them. For example, in theory, you usually have assignments and you have to do your theory assignments, which a lot of people, they do well in the prac, but then for theory they don't do the theory, so that's a very common theme in Food Tech. (Cody, Interview 1, 2017)

A theme of Cody's descriptions of schoolwork is the heavily policed and task-orientated nature of it. On the surface, it appears there is little scope for inquiry or investigation. While these descriptions appear to suggest students have minimal input into the direction of the classroom, Cody did introduce one way in which students push back by suggesting they choose what tasks they engage with, as seen in Food Tech, where some 'do well in the prac, but then for theory they don't do the theory'. This resistance is important in showing how students – as subjects – work at the intersection of multiple identities framed by competing values, orders and institutional processes. In contemporary schooling, classroom practices are seen as a regulatory mechanism in which students are 'thought to organize their actions and decisions through optimizing preferences in a reflexive, consistent and predictable fashion and who therefore share the capacity to maximize the utility of their decisions in a rationally self-interested way' (Wilkins, 2012a, p. 768). However, whether it is due to capability or inclination, many CBC students are anything but consistent and predictable in their approach to schooling.

For CBC, which is compelled to perform in ways that are attentive to market concepts of supply and demand, failing or resisting students are a problem. In Chapter 5, an executive outlined the imperative of promoting CBC as an institution of academic excellence as parents are not afraid to 'compare … product 1 with product 2' (Paul, Interview, 2017). Therefore one strategy to stifle the decline in enrolments was to bolster the school's academic achievement profile. In Section 6.4, I mapped teachers' vexation at a situation whereby disengaged – thus under-performing – students are cosseted towards academic success through school-designed policy and processes. My work here illustrates how in contemporary neoliberal schooling, the audit culture – created by policies and discourses of commodification, performativity and economisation – means schools like CBC face a paradox. On one hand, the school operates within a policy climate that conceptualises students as autonomous and responsibilised users of educational services; therefore successful academic achievement data allows the school to promote itself as an institution capable of producing such students. However, in reality for CBC, some students appear to have less interest in academic results than the school's efforts to ensure them. Thus there is an underlying tension between the institution and the agency of the student, which means ruling relations only have power when taken up by the individual.

As the school engages in stratagems to promote itself as a place of educational advantage, it needs academic results to back such claims. So it is not surprising that all students are afforded

limited autonomy in relation to their learning as, in many ways, learning is not the objective of the institution, rather results. So despite student push-back or resistance to tasks, the school provides a range of institutional processes to ensure they still achieve to some degree. This safeguard comes primarily through the heavily audited nature of schooling, which is apparent through the descriptions of controls and measures littering the student participants' accounts of learning. In the next section, I trace how students are bound to a rigid audited system designed to monitor every stage of their schoolwork to ensure completion and achievement.

7.4.2 The task sheet as a regulatory frame

As shown in Chapter 6, a common feature of teacher classroom preparation work is the imperative of understanding and designing tasks that meet achievement standards set by the governing curriculum. Considering the work of students at the school, I draw from Smith's (2005) conception of regulatory frames as a general term for the wide conceptualisations, policies and plans that operate at a general level to structure the institutional action and reality coordinating students' work at the local level. In this section, I explore in greater detail how CBC embeds a 'regulatory text' (Smith, 2005) – the task sheet – to ensure students' experience of schoolwork remains fixed to the ruling relations of the curriculum. Task sheets were introduced in Section 6.2.2 as part of the work of teachers. Below in Figure 19, I have reused an image to reiterate what these look like (refer to Figure 12 in Chapter 6 for an enlarged version). However in this section, I explore how task sheets serve to coordinate schoolwork for students in fixed and measurable terms.

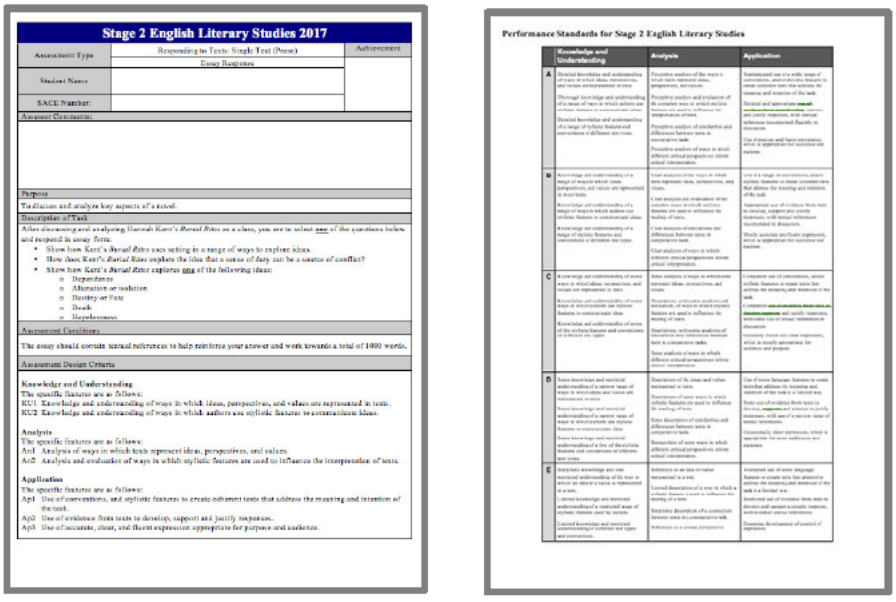


Figure 19: Task sheet to coordinate students' work

When describing how schoolwork begins, student Adon established that the task sheet is an important component in determining his course of action:

Adon: Ah well, when you get an assignment sheet it has what you need to outline, what you need to have included in the assignment and what shouldn't be included in the assignment. Sometimes you see that, also most of the time you might see a rubric on there to help you understand how to achieve to get a higher mark.

Lee: So this idea of an assignment sheet – can you talk me through what's – so you've said that it's – what does it have on it again?

Adon: It has what you need to – what the assignment is. What you will be completing throughout the assignment. You'll have individual steps on how to complete those parts of the assignment. It will have – it will have – it will go into detail as to what you need to complete. So say if you're doing – I don't know, a persuasive text it will say intro and then it will either explain how to do an intro, what needs to be included in the intro and then it will have your paragraph one, 2 and 3 and it will tell you what needs to be – and those … in the conclusion, it will tell you what needs to be in the conclusion.

Lee: Would you say those task sheets are used in most subjects?

Adon: I'd say so, yes.

Lee: What happens if you don't follow the steps?

Adon: It hampers you from getting a higher grade.

Lee: You mentioned before the assessment rubrics so what is an assessment rubric? What's your understanding of it?

Adon: A rubric is a table of an A band, B band, C band, D band and an E band and there'll be different sections of the assignments. So there will be say for one of the – pardon me – what one of the rows will have say for instance your punctuation and your spelling.

Lee: So this is for?

Adon: An English assignment I'd say.

Lee: Yeah.

> Adon: And it will say an A band, it will say all either a no spelling or grammatical errors. A B band will be very minor grammatical errors and no spelling errors. Or a C would be slight grammatical and spelling errors and then from there it just continues to go down to an E. (Adon, Interview 3, 2017)

Adon, like many of the other participants, could articulate the requirements of the task sheet and discuss how performance is measured by its rubric or assessment criteria. Interestingly, he seldom spoke of the peripheral context shaping the origins of the assessment task sheet, meaning the unit of work, idea or concept/s underpinning the learning and task sheet. With this in mind, as discussed earlier, we can assume Adon sees schoolwork as a response rather than an exploration of ideas, concepts, events and so forth. Furthermore, the necessity to understand the requirements of the task and criteria for assessment takes precedence.

Barring tests, all assessment items at CBC are presented to students on a standardised task sheet template (Figure 19 above). These texts are an important part of communicating what is required of the student in order to demonstrate success and illustrate how 'people's use of texts gives ruling relations a material form that institutional ethnographers can use to investigate social organisation' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 2). From a glance, the task sheet template contains two pages constructed by a series of boxes. On the first page, the requirements of the assessment task are introduced via headings outlining the *purpose*, *description of task*, *assessment conditions* and *assessment design criteria*. On the second page, the achievement standards (ACARA) or performance standards (SACE) are presented in the form of a rubric; and at the bottom there is a table for 'Feedback/Comments' and a space for 'Achievement'.

While the template is unique to CBC, the nature of a task sheet is highly interlocking and 'performs at the key juncture between local settings of people's everyday worlds and the ruling relations' (Smith, 2005, p. 72). The subheadings serve as interlocking regulatory frames (Smith, 2005), in that the participant's schoolwork is governed by a series of headings, which ensures accountability to a curriculum document. The participants of my study are afforded no agency as learners in regard to how the task sheet is filled in; rather they must rely on the interpretation or reading of governing curriculum policies by their teacher. Thus, the creation of a task sheet involves 'activation' (Smith, 2005) of key curriculum policy texts by the teacher before reaching the student (this was outlined in Chapter 6). In order to delineate the

coordinating aspects of the task sheet, I will now expand on each heading and then follow this with a discussion of the interlocking nature of such a document.

Purpose: Students are first met with a nominalised and impersonal statement regarding the purpose of the task. Commonly, the task card starts with 'To' and is followed by verbs drawn from curriculum documents such as *discuss, analyse, investigate, report,* etc., which is then followed by a statement related to the unit of work the student is completing with the teacher. For example, the purpose statement for an English assignment may read: 'To discuss and analyse how authors use film techniques to evoke a theme'.

Description of task: In this section, students are provided with a clear set of instructions, which systematically detail the exact requirements of the task. Some examples of the descriptions shared by the participants of my study include: 'respond in essay form to the following question …' and 'provide a report on the impact of long-shore drift on metropolitan coastlines'. Additionally, and importantly for students wishing to meet the achievement standards of the task sheet, these descriptions are followed by a series of steps or requirements regarding the structure and presentation of the student response. Adon alluded to this earlier. For example, the essay must contain an *introduction, three separate paragraphs* and *conclusion*, or the geography report must contain sections such as *introduction, research, findings* and *recommendations*

Assessment conditions: When completing the assessment item, students must work within specific parameters, such as 'a written essay working towards 800 words' or 'an oral presentation of no more than 5 minutes'. Importantly, if students breach these conditions, for example respond over the word limit, their performance is penalised.

Assessment design criteria: The achievement or performance standards being used to assess the student's response to the task are copied and pasted under this section. Due to the nominalised nature in which the curriculum is written, particularly the standards, some teachers add additional information next to each standard, providing commentary on what it means for the assignment. When doing this, teachers impose their

interpretation or reading of the curriculum in an effort to make the document more accessible to the students.

In many ways, the task sheet is the bridging text between the work of the teachers and students. But it also is structured by state and national curriculum when interpreted by the teachers. Therefore when considering the components of the task sheet outlined above, curriculum policy is represented, interpreted and translated by teachers to coordinate student responses and performance. However, it is important to recognise the cyclic nature of the task sheet, which, in effect, ensures the ruling relations of the curriculum policy remain intact. The task sheet requires students to produce another text, ordinarily outlined by the *description of task*, which is then returned to the teacher for assessment against curriculum assessment standards. In a bid to map the ruling practices and relations of my participants' learning experiences, Figure 20 (below) tracks the cyclic nature I refer to here.

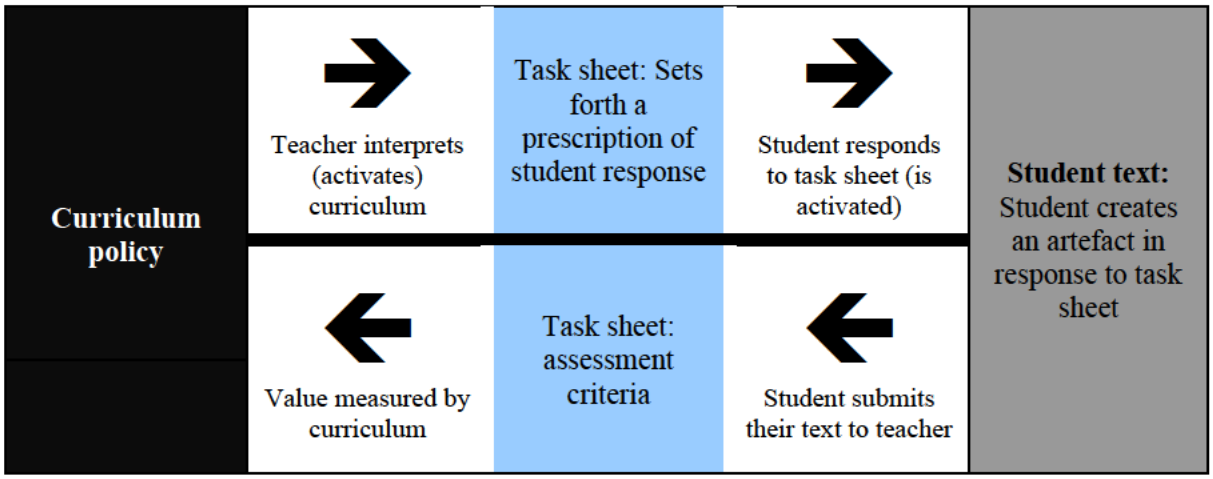


Figure 20: Mapping the use of the task sheet

With Figure 20 in mind, the interlocking nature of schoolwork for the participants of my study is seen in a more material way (Smith & Turner, 2014). On its own, the task sheet is simply a recipe for completing a task. However, in the activation of the text within the classroom the ruling relations become traceable, particularly as many of the participants shared accounts of their perceived success or failure, relating to the task sheet.

In a school with the ambition to reach 100% high school certificate completion, teachers are required to ensure students successfully complete a quantity of assessment tasks that is

predetermined by the school and governing curriculum bodies. Consequently, the student participants described a pedagogic experience where texts, such as task sheets, frame their formal academic work in a subject and ultimately determine how they are to demonstrate learning. Observational data indicate many teachers spent a portion of lesson time justifying the significance of an activity or content in relation to assessment pieces. Often, teachers would begin a lesson with an explanation similar to 'You will need to know this because in the assignment …' or 'If you cannot demonstrate this [referring to notes on the board], there is no way you can get an A' (Fieldwork Notes, 2017). In the student participants' description and my observations, the data are 'saturated with direct and indirect references to institutional practices' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 4) emphasising work completion and assessment. The task sheet is not only a tool to communicate the requirements of an assessment task; it also coordinates students' approaches to completing it. To analyse this interaction between student and task sheet further, the next section contains two vignettes of student participants describing their schoolwork.

7.5 Student vignettes: Learner identity in relation to schoolwork

In relation to learner identities, boundaries between activities and contexts are blurred. Erstad and Sefton-Green (2013) remind us that it has 'become more challenging for young people to manage and understand the differences and similarities between the different contexts and activities they encounter, and it has become more challenging to manage their identities in and between settings' (p. 27). However, in contemporary schooling, we understand learner identity is increasingly subsumed by neoliberal agendas. Ball (2008) suggests 'our schools seem to be captured by a version of education that is intimately tied into schooling for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect of sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education' (p. 11). This competitive discourse is not surprising when considering the 'pervasive systems of educational assessment' (Broadfoot & Pollard, 2006, p. 762) enveloping education over the last 25 years.

Research suggests the amount of assessment through tests and assignments continues to grow rapidly (Broadfoot & Black, 2004; Gilbert, 1996; Hackett, 2001; Rowe & Hill, 1996). Additionally, successful academic students are likely to face over 75 tests, assignments and exams during their school careers (Smithers, 2000). Consequently, the cloud of measurement and assessment infiltrates and shapes the teacher and learner relationship and experience within

the classroom (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). These trends are prevalent (Ball & Olmedo, 2012; Ball, 2016a, 2016b) and this study focuses on how formal academic regimes within CBC privilege a certain type of learner and a certain type of subjectivity. There has been a great deal of research that identifies 'the organisational structure and symbolism of schools, the school management practices which constitute it, the part teachers play in sustaining gender relationships, and the role of curriculum in reinforcing gender stereotypes' (Alloway et al., 2002, p. 37). Thus this section is to be read in relation to the school leaders' preoccupation with high achievement (Chapter 5) and the teachers' work in curriculum implementation and gendered assumptions (Chapter 6). The following vignettes describe the work of formal academic learning from the standpoint of students, and reveal a highly orchestrated and regimented approach to learning. This approach dismisses student autonomy and further illustrates how learning is made fixed, generalisable and measurable.

Prior to one of the interviews with the participants, I asked for students to bring some examples of schoolwork to discuss. Every participant provided assignments that were connected to a task sheet. As they described the nature of completing their schoolwork, they constantly referred back to the task sheet for clarity and guidance. Importantly, the capacity for these texts to influence the participants' perception of self as learners became increasingly evident. Interestingly, these vignettes also show the important role of the teacher in the process of meeting the demands of the task. Returning to my earlier exploration of how teachers design formal academic learning opportunities for students, we saw the coordination of teachers' work through credentialist and gendered discourses (Sections 6.2 and 6.3). Importantly, the students' responses and achievement influence the teachers' conceptions of their role as educators. So it is important to understand the multifaceted nature of texts and their capacity to influence relationships and institutional hierarchies, particularly when the ruling relations of power seen in curriculum policy and school values coordinate student achievement and identities. Below, I have provided vignettes of two students, Cody and Adon, who through their description and discussion of assignment work pertaining to two different subjects unveil how their formal academic learning becomes a 'textually mediated relation' (Nichols & Griffith, 2009, p. 241).

7.5.1 Vignette 1: Cody – Losing the learning for the grade

One of Cody's favourite subjects is Physical Education. As an aspiring personal trainer, he relishes a subject whereby he can be active and 'learn how to be healthy'. As the subject connects to his interests, he enjoys discussing a range of topics from workout routines, to

dieting and even gym fashion. However, in this account, Cody's passion for the subject undermined by the compulsion to achieve a grade. When discussing an example of his schoolwork, Cody described a Physical Education assignment whereby:

> basically it was a six-question assignment. So, each question was like – so, the first question was a hundred words with just a little introduction. The second question was two hundred and fifty words, and then the third question you have to design your own fitness, like a fitness regime that you complete over a month period.

As he described the requirements of the task, he visually referred to the task sheet that sat to his side. Cody could not explain the purpose of the task. When asked if he was given a reason for doing the assignment he responded: 'Not really, just here's the assignment, go, I guess. PE theory is not really as structured.' Throughout his discussion, even though I asked at several stages, Cody could not connect the assignment to wider coursework completed in Physical Education or a clear purpose for doing it. However, he is motivated by achieving a good grade as: 'Theory is worth 30% of the grade. We only do one assignment in theory, so that means this is 30% right? That is a big deal.'

Subsequently, Cody meticulously commits to the requirements of the task sheet and understands that the parameters provided are non-negotiable. His initial response to the first question was 200 words, but he recalled the teacher explaining that the word limits must be met. Consequently, Cody spent 'a whole night making sure my answer to the first question was 100 words exactly. In fact, this is what took the longest part of doing it, making sure my word count was exact.' Another point of angst for Cody was the disjuncture between what the teacher said in class regarding the assignment and the words on the task sheet itself. With agitation in his tone, Cody expanded: 'On the sheet here it says describe five health-related components. But Mr Johns [pseudonym] said he is after more than a description, he was after a discussion, but I do not know the difference.'

The discord between teacher dialogue and task sheet compelled Cody to seek assistance from another teacher in the P.E. faculty. Cody recounted that: 'I went to ask Mr Peters [pseudonym]. He showed me how the … the rubric here makes our grade and each question comes from these boxes' (points to criteria within rubric on task sheet).

With a greater understanding of what he was being assessed for, Cody began researching the difference in terms that constructed the task sheet: 'I needed to know what *describing* is for this task and how that is different to *discussing* so when I was doing the assignment my answers would be right'.

When discussing the assignment, Cody seldom mentioned course work, content or ideas specifically related to the subject. He is driven by achieving a high grade and understands that his assignment will be measured against the task sheet, particularly the rubric. Consequently, Cody's passion for Physical Education and understanding healthy lifestyles waned in relation to the specificities of the task sheet. The more he described the nature of schoolwork, the less he referred to or drew upon his comprehensive knowledge of physical education (Fieldnotes, March 2017).

7.5.2 Discussion of Vignette 1

It is noticeable that Cody's description of formal academic learning is coordinated heavily by the instructions and requirements on the task sheet. From Cody's account here, some common institutional practices can be explored, particularly in relation to how texts coordinate his subjectivity as a learner. According to Kerkham and Nixon (2014), texts in institutions are

> central to making people accountable for particular processes and for activating the kind of work that this involves. The concept of texts (for example policy documents, tests, literacy curricula, and so on) as not being static, but rather as 'occurring' – as being 'texts in action' – helps us to understand the ways in which texts 'enter into and coordinate sequences of action' within institutions. (p. 344, quoting Smith, 2006)

Students like Cody, who, as I mentioned earlier in the chapter, shared his ambition of one day becoming a dux, focus on achievement, as they understand this is the means to the end. Cody obligingly accepts the fixed parameters of learning tasks as gospel; even to the point that he spends hours ensuring his word counts are exact. Cody appears to only measure himself as a successful learner through the technologies of the institution, particularly grades and meeting the requirements of assessments. What becomes apparent through Cody's story though is the multifaceted nature of texts and their capacity to influence action. Cody's experience, as it was recounted to me, shows how texts become actualised 'as instructions for action' (Nichols &

Griffith, 2006, p. 241) through a convoluted process where misunderstanding and miscommunication will inadvertently lead to other actions.

The disjuncture between what Cody's teacher said in class regarding the assignment and what the words read on the task sheet resulted in him seeking assistance from another teacher and thoroughly scrutinising the assessment guidelines. Cody appeared torn between two forms of power within the school, a tension between the teacher and the task sheet. Cody does not question either, rather he seeks ways to appease both. In this light, we see the technology of the task sheet coordinated Cody's action and understanding of what was worth learning. The emphasis of what was to be learnt in Physical Education moved completely away from the subject matter, which Cody enjoys, towards understanding the intricacies of assessment terminology, bringing Cody angst. It is important to remember Cody's efficacy is an important factor that in fact affords the task sheet the power to coordinate his action. Thus, it is pertinent to trace Cody's ambition and story here within the wider ruling relations of CBC. Drawing on Stahl's (2017a) assertion that 'institutional texts, as cultural practices, are manifestations of the institutional ethos and their language coordinates subjectivities' (p. 78), much of this chapter has explored how CBC valorises only studious and high-achieving learners through posters, teachers' comments and assemblies. So when Cody is confronted with a theory assignment in Physical Education, which appears to have little purpose in relation to what he has been learning ('just here's the assignment, go, I guess'), his immediate thought is achievement ('theory is worth 30% of the grade. We only do one assignment in theory, so that means this is 30% right? That is a big deal'). In this scenario, despite the tensions and angst, Cody's subjectivity as a learner is coordinated by his subscription to his school's ethos and discourse regarding formal academic learning.

7.5.3 Vignette 2: Adon – 'My writing does not sound like me'

Adon's story is a tale of self-worth in relation to achievement; however it comes at the cost of his personal voice in writing. Before he began discussing assignments in the interview, he was keen to share that he now approaches schoolwork with greater determination to achieve. When asked about what sparked the change he shared: 'I know I was always scared of seeing my report. I was, oh, reports are coming, this will be interesting and then – I just got sick of seeing it.'

Adon's perception of himself as a learner was 'it was almost like you are a failure'. While the report card is another important regulatory text of school, in Adon's story, it served as a catalyst to ensure he followed schoolwork-related tasks more diligently. In this case, Adon shared feeling successful in English, where he finished writing an essay response to *The lord of the flies* and felt he 'got a really good understanding of the task'. Unlike Cody's account of Physical Education (above), Adon shared of 'a lot of build-up' in course work towards the essay in the form of chapter reviews and classroom discussion. Thus, when the essay task was presented, he felt comfortable in applying the content of the classwork to the assignment. The nature of the task sheet for the essay was comforting for Adon, who had recently decided that he wants to be measured a success at school. When asked why he felt successful, he explained:

> just the fact that there's a process. That I'm not just writing stuff wherever it needs to be because then – when I do my steps I kind of feel like I can tick things off like a mental check list and sort of I go, oh, I've got this for this paragraph, I've got this for this paragraph and this for this paragraph. I can tick the whole section off.

The coordinative features of the task sheet obviously provide scaffolding and support, bolstering his confidence and self-worth as a learner. However, at the very end of this interview he shared the following about his writing: 'Yeah, I've made it sound like it's not me, it's talking just about the actual text itself'.

By following the prescriptive nature of the task sheet, and guided by his teacher, Adon celebrated the fact that his writing does not resemble himself. When asked how a student cannot sound like themselves, Adon explained that some teachers 'draft' work, 'making sure that everything is where it needs to be, everything is how it needs to be and if there's anything that needs to be included or taken out'. In this situation, student work is checked by the teacher who ensures the requirements are met, but in the process, removes the student's voice to the point he does not recognise it. Adon, who relished the fact he achieved an A for the essay, came to understand that success in school requires him to follow a process and think within the boxes of the task sheet (Fieldnotes, March 2017).

7.5.4 Discussion of Vignette 2

Adon initially suggested that he was not a student who had subscribed to the school's value systems regarding formal academic learning, seen in the fact he celebrated a change towards

becoming more studious. As a student in Year 10, it is important to note he is approaching the final years of schooling as a student. The awareness of how he will be measured is somewhat unavoidable as Year 10s are inducted into the requirements of the high school certificate through orientation sessions, career planning and information evenings. Arguably, Adon is coordinated by neoliberal agendas here, understanding 'it is the duty of the individual to be sufficiently flexible to maximize the opportunities available to her/him, and any failure resides in the individual rather than in the socio-economic structures' (Francis, 2006, p. 191). We see this when Adon lamented about receiving his report cards, 'it was almost like you are a failure'. Importantly, the report cards are another example of how institutional texts 'create a textual reality that is sustained through the actions they coordinate and the concepts they legitimize' (Nichols & Griffith, 2009, p. 245). Therefore, in Adon's school reality texts were telling him that he was a failure, so he turned to the other forms of institutional texts in a bid to change.

More importantly, whatever Adon's identity as a learner was prior to his change in approach was in fact a 'failure' within the institutional logic of the school. We have seen throughout this chapter that CBC promotes an ideal regarding formal academic learning that centres on achievement and excellence, and Adon provided a personal anecdote of the personal consequence involved in not adhering to or meeting the school's ideal. Adon's subjectivity in this vignette is an important point to explore to unearth some of the power relations at play. Considering subjectivity, Ball (2016b) suggests 'the crucial point is that subjectivity is the point of contact between self and power' (p. 1131). Furthermore, Mills (2003) offers the individual is the site of power, where it is enacted or resisted/refused. A crucial point of contact for Adon was the report card, whereby the institution identifies him as a failure. Adon does not resist or refuse this logic: for him, his report card is one of the only forms of measurement he has of himself as a learner, thus we see texts influencing how identities are 'constructed, reproduced, established, mediated, changed or challenged' (Coffey, 1999, p. 4) within the school. Interestingly, we see Adon celebrate his new-found subscription to the institution's logic regarding learning and how to do learning. To ensure he does not identify as a failure anymore, Adon, through enacting task sheets, embeds his work as a learner into the institutional circuits 'producing a textual representation conforming to an authoritative or 'boss text' (Griffith & Smith, 2014, p. 13). Adon actions the task sheet like a checklist and engages with another form of institutional power in the teacher through drafts, resulting in a situation whereby 'I've made it [schoolwork] sound like it's not me'. His commitment to 'to meet the demands of the institution [and] embody its ideal learner identity' (Stahl, 2017a, p. 46; cf. Youdell 2006)

arguably rids him of personal voice and fails to acknowledge other strengths he may have. In institutional ethnography, texts serve as forms of coordination of action and we see, in Adon's case, how this also coordinates subjectivities (Smith, 2005) towards the institution's ideals regarding formal academic learning.

7.6 Conclusion

The description of students' work around formal academic learning is critical to my thesis. It offers insights into the multidimensional aspects of how students' schooling life is organised through institutional discourses and priorities, teachers, task sheets and peers. CBC, like all Australian schools, works within a competitive economic climate whereby 'the processes of education are framed in neo-liberal language' (Davies & Saltmarsh, 2007, p. 4). Yet, there is little scholarly work unpacking how this policy phenomenon shapes the experience of students at the school level (Spina, 2017a). Institutional ethnography helps understand how ruling relations coordinate the work that happens at the local level. Thus the identity of students at CBC as learners is context sensitive and largely works towards commodification. They attend a school that sees academic achievement as a way to temper declining enrolments. Students enter classrooms that promote academic excellence in posters and attend assemblies celebrating high academic achievers. All the while, they work with teachers who tailor learning towards curriculum standards and feel pressure from school leaders to produce high results. Consequently, students experience a narrow range of educational opportunities confined to prescriptive task sheets. Yet ironically, students' academic achievement within the neoliberal paradigm supposedly evinces self-regulatory behaviour that is sufficiently flexible to maximise the opportunities that are made available (Francis, 2006). But in private schools, which depend on student numbers, student results as equally important to the institution as they are to students, which sets all involved on a course of action. High results suggest advantage and make a school more attractive to potential clientele; thus it is not surprising to see the heavily orchestrated architecture of texts, processes and ceremonies employed by the school to try to ensure academic success.

Chapter 8: Institutionalised and informal student identities – Tensions and performativities

8.1 Introduction

Boys perform a range of masculine identities as they negotiate various social situations. Within the context of school, diversity lies not just between settings but also within settings, meaning different masculinities are produced through performances that draw on a variety of cultural resources available in each setting (Connell 2000; Frosh et al., 2002; Swain 2006a). In the previous chapter, I examined the work of students in relation to their identity as learners, predominantly within the site of the classroom and the context of formal academic learning. However, schools are composed of diverse places and situations, some formal and some informal, but each with their own set of expectations. There are classrooms, hallways, gymnasiums, breaks between lessons, times before and after school, various yards, sports fields, dining courts and staircases to name a few. As students navigate these places, they negotiate tensions between institutional expectations and peer group demands.

As schools are 'crucial sites of identity work and identity making' (Reay, 2010, p. 278, both formally and informally, I am interested in how school norms, practices and expectations provide key symbolic materials which students draw on in defining themselves (Perry, 2002). As an institutional ethnography, the key in studying identities is to shift the focus from looking at the outcome of identity formation towards the process itself. Therefore, this final data chapter provides snapshots which illustrate how students' identities and masculinities, both institutionally and informally, are performed, realised and validated in relation to institutional discourses, practices of the school and each other.

This chapter is divided into three sections designed to explore the complex and interrelated process of identity formation of students at CBC. Firstly, in Section 8.2, I focus on how CBC creates a formal school culture promoting a masculinity regime vested in leadership. Through interview, journal and observational data, I detail how the school promotes a pattern of masculinity through its Student Leaders (known in many schools as *prefects*), which simultaneously promotes the school as a vehicle to produce idealised versions of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities, and emphasises an institutional preference for student compliancy. In essence, I begin with what the school promotes as its ideal and examine how it

inculcates students into the school's chosen ideals of masculinity and the normative expectations attached to these ideals.

Secondly, Section 8.3 closely examines the highly orchestrated nature of student daily life through locally composed texts and policies designed to shape appearance and behaviour. These texts, when activated, arguably become a vehicle to produce idealised versions of masculinity. Furthermore these texts represent a response to prominent discourses about boys and neoliberal incitements as they work to commodify students as a product of the institution. In other words, as the school works to coordinate students towards a compliant and studious image through texts, it promotes itself as an ideal institution to turn boys into men. However, due to the convoluted nature of the school texts' writing and processes, the students reveal scope to navigate around rules and regulations.

Thus finally in Section 8.4, drawing from photos of the school taken by the student participants and interviews, I explore some of the ways in which student identities are constructed in response to institutionalised and informal features of the school. Here, the student participants provided a vivid account of their social anxieties and values, which are largely in tension with formal aspects of the school. This final section draws on the previous two, revealing how students simultaneously comply with and refute different aspects of CBC ideals and efforts to coordinate them. Subsequently, the formation of student identities and masculinities are seen to be contextual and largely shaped by features such as place and the presence of others.

8.1.1 Employing masculinity theory

Throughout this chapter, I predominantly draw from the work of Connell (1998) and Mac an Ghaill (1994), who draw attention to the construction of gender within institutional settings, asserting that masculine identities are actively constructed and accomplished in everyday actions within institutions. From wider scholarly work on school masculinities (Connell, 2000, 2005; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1999; Mills, 2001), I understand there are multiple patterns of masculinity that are socially constructed and deeply contextual.

The very nature of identifying CBC as 'boys only' or 'a boys' school' means 'gender is inherently foregrounded' (Hickey & Mooney, 2018, p. 245). Connell (2005) coined the term 'gender regime' as a way of describing the 'arrangement of gender relations that is characteristic of a given organisation' (p. 24). A gender regime is contextually specific and

susceptible to influence by cultural factors such as religion and history. This definition is pertinent as my data shows CBC's ethos and ideals draw from such cultural factors. When I discuss the gender regime of CBC, I mean the patterning of gender relations in the school, which provides context for particular relationships and individual practices. Importantly though, a school's gender regime is not balanced; there are aspects of school life where gender is more prevalent, and other parts where it may be muted. This understanding is important in the framing of this chapter, as part of my intention is to examine the disjuncture between the ideals and ethos of CBC and the lived realities of its students, and explore the ways identities are performed or realised in relation to certain institutional discourses.

Connell (1998) asserts that a 'single institution will often be host to diverse constructions of masculinity' (p. 133). However, diversity can only exist in relation to an ideal. My intention is not to trace or map such diversity, rather to use snapshots to explicate the ideal and desired masculinity which CBC espouses. Connell (1998) theorises that 'research finds in any culture of institution there is a particular pattern of masculinity which holds the dominant position' (1998, p. 133). This dominant position is called 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), meaning, in the given setting, the 'pattern of masculinity which is most honored, which is most associated with authority and power' (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Drawing upon the theory of hegemonic masculinity, which centres on examining how power operates in the formal and informal subcultures of school life, allows me to further examine how masculinities form and are maintained within the school, which highlights the complexity of the institution.

Understanding the relationship between institutional practices and identity construction, I also recognise that different expressions of hegemonic masculinity can be prevalent within one site. Considering the subcultures of school life, such as peer groups, classroom dynamics and sporting teams to name a few, it would be naïve to suggest there is one hegemonic pattern of masculinity that encompasses them all. Nevertheless, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), 'hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power' (p. 835). Schools, as institutions, have power which is multifaceted, complex and negotiated. CBC exercises such power in the form of curriculum it offers, the uniform and rules it mandates and enforces, the enrolments it accepts and the achievements and aspects of school life its chooses to valorise.

Keeping in mind the rules and mandates all subjects experience, CBC promotes one conception of masculinity as integral to the school culture and ethos (both overtly and in more subtle ways). CBC promotes itself as a 'leader in boys' education' that has an 'understanding [of] the emotional and behavioral needs of boys and [appreciates] the difference in decision making between boys and girls' (school website, 2017). To validate such claims, my data, alongside other studies (Connell, 2006; Martino & Frank, 2006) suggests the school has an ideal masculinity which they work the students towards. In this chapter, I examine the hegemonic and ideal masculinity of CBC by investigating the propagation of certain values and discourses that position the students' consciousness, identity and masculinity towards the institutional ideal and valued norms. I document how students enact social life and how their activities within school 'implies the presence and doings of others caught up in and participating in relations that coordinate what is happening' (Smith, 2005, p. 43). In considering constructions of masculinity, I also trace what Smith (1987, 2005) terms *ruling relations*, which expresses how this coordination 'hook(s) into social relations of the economy and of ruling institutions' (Smith, 1987, p. 40). Furthermore, Rankin (2017b) suggests, it is the 'recognition of the real (not just theorized) social organisation of people's lives by the strange forms of power that are at once present and absent in the everyday' (p. 2) that allows institutional ethnography to empirically examine ruling relations.

8.2 White coats: The CBC ideal masculine subject

This section begins with an analysis of iconography and symbols, to examine how CBC creates a formal school culture promoting a masculine regime vested in leadership. I explore how the student leadership[36] team – colloquially known as *white coats* – inculcates students into the school's assumptions and ideals of masculinity. According to Gottschall et al. (2010), 'the male private school subject has always been measured by traditional behavioral codes such as honesty, duty and loyalty towards his institution' (p. 27), and Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) suggest 'schools put considerable effort into ensuring well-mannered students conform to orderly codes of behavior' (p. 108). While this has been critiqued as an imposition of middle-class social norms, Wessendorf (2014) suggests the expectations of schools are to do more than teaching and learning. Thus it is important in this section to consider the shifting and fluid nature of learner identities (Reay, 2010) in reference to school norms and the notion of the ideal

[36] Known in many other schools as prefects.

student. These are key symbolic materials that students draw on to make sense of their experiences and define themselves (Perry, 2002).

The research extends Connell's (1998) assertion that 'in any culture of institution there is a particular pattern of masculinity which holds the dominant position' (p. 133). This 'pattern' can extend to a broader range of identities for students within the school beyond gender. My data suggests at CBC there is a concerted effort to develop what Synott and Symes (1995) refer to as patriarchal, heteronormative, ageist values of the Old Boys' school, and this is largely achieved by promoting and coordinating a strictly compliant model of student subjectivity through a 'good student' and 'student leadership' discourse. I argue that the school's idealised student subjectivity, emphasising compliancy, athleticism, confidence and charisma, serves two functions. Firstly, it is a strategy to promote and coordinate a vision and expectations to students. Secondly, bearing in mind the context of declining enrolments, the student leadership team is commodity to sell the institution.

8.2.1 Defining the term 'student leadership'

Before examining the data, it is pertinent to pay some attention to the potentially ambiguous term 'leadership', as its meaning, I argue, can vary depending on context. In my study, the term leadership adopts two juxtaposed meanings depending on whether it refers to staff or students. This delineation is essential, as staff leadership is different to student leadership, particularly when examining the coordination of power. The vast majority of the school leadership literature focuses on adults rather than students (MacNeil, 2006), a phenomenon explained by DeJong and Love (2014) as adultism:

> The systematic subordination of younger people, as a targeted group, who have relatively little opportunity to exercise social power … through restricted access to the goods, services, and privileges of society and are denied access to participation in the economic and political life of the society. (p. 536)

Shriberg et al. (2017) suggest the concept of adultism can be attributed mainly to the viewing of childhood and adolescence 'as a period to be endured rather than a period of potential growth' (p. 21). Consequently, as MacNeil (2006) argues, 'most adult leadership models emphasise both thought and action, youth leadership models often only focus on learning about leadership, without the opportunity to actualise their ideas' (p. 34). While at CBC, the notion

of student leadership does centre on learning about leadership, my data suggests that it also serves as a tool to promote a notion of the ideal student. Additionally, a common conception of leadership, certainly applicable to students at CBC, borrows from the military, conjuring the strong and powerful image of 'courage, stamina, power and charisma (McCall, 1976, p. 139). CBC values these leadership traits, which arguably reassert a virile gender regime, but only when Student Leaders are compliant and act in alignment with the college values.

The point of difference concerning staff and student leadership is important in understanding how power operates for different people within the same institution. For a staff member, leadership qualities such as individualism, hierarchical relationships, bureaucratic rationality and abstract moral principles (Blackmore, 1989, p. 64) are virtues that may help them climb the corporate ladder per se, but these traits do not necessarily neatly transpose onto the student leadership model. Arguably, at CBC, such traits may be detrimental to a student with leadership aspirations as Student Leaders are generally seen as compliant, collaborative and studious. Thus, in the context of this study, Student Leaders is a proper noun referring to a small group of selected and compliant students in their final year of schooling. These students serve as a tool to promote an ideal which other students should aspire to, and who ironically, despite their title, cannot exercise institutional power in relation to making decisions or generating change.

8.2.2 Defining a Student Leader and 'white coats' at CBC

A colloquialism commonly used at CBC for the student leadership team is *white coats*, a reference to a variation of the school's uniform. The majority of students at CBC are required to wear a purple blazer. According to Shipman (1970), school uniforms are ordinarily a mechanism to establish conformity and institutional affiliation among pupils. While this may be true, my data suggest that the uniform serves as a symbol of status designed to coordinate students' subjectivity towards traditional codes such as 'honesty, duty and loyalty towards his institution' (Gottschall et al., 2010, p. 27). Important for exploring how students engage in the process of identity making, Sibley (1995) reminds us that 'individuals engage in processes of boundary construction that generate stereotypical representations of others which inform social practices of exclusion and inclusion but which, as the same time, define the self' (p. 5). Scholarly work in school identities (Reay, 2010; Weis, 2012) and school masculinity studies (Connell, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1990) suggests students will construct their identity/masculinity in relation to others. My intention here is to describe how the white coats of CBC create boundaries of exclusion and inclusion for students in the process of identity

making. At CBC, the student leadership team serves as an ideal student subjectivity designed for the student base to draw from in their identity formation at school.

The twelve Year 12 students of CBC selected onto the student leadership team each year are to wear a white blazer with purple trimming and the title of their role embroidered on the left chest pocket. The white blazers are lined with badges on the collars, symbols of accomplishment and involvement in school life according to Christian principles such as pilgrimages, the house they represent, social justice initiatives and sport. Thus, the term 'white coat' is a reference to the student leadership team and the blazers they wear. The white coats are an example of what Synott and Symes (1995) refer to as symbolic architecture, which 'constitutes a significant ideological practice that focuses a pupil's consciousness towards social norms and further reifies the institutional character' (p. 139). The Student Leaders must wear these white blazers to all formal school events and they are often required to attend out-of-school functions and events. Not surprisingly, as there are only twelve of these blazers, they stand out against the sea of purple blazers in whole-school functions and events. There is also a level of celebrity associated with being a Student Leader; every classroom in the school has a poster of the Student Leaders partnering the school's mission and vision statement. Additionally, there is a page dedicated to the team on the school website, where the College Captain outlines his vision and introduces his Vice-Captains accompanied with a photo of each of the leaders.

Each Student Leader has a position title connecting him to a particular value of the institution. These roles and titles are represented in Table 7.

Table 7: Student Leader roles

Values Captains	House Captains
College Captain	Bourke House Captain
Vice-Captain of Faith	Hurley House Captain
Vice-Captain of Excellence	Marks House Captain
Vice-Captain of Community	O'Brien House Captain
Vice-Captain of Compassion	Smith House Captain
Vice-Captain of Junior Years	Walsh House Captain

The title/role of each captain is significant within the context of the school site as each represents a particular ideal. It is pertinent to remember CBC operates under a neoliberal incitement cultivating a competitive fervour to lure enrolments and outperform other schools. While the Student Leaders convey the ideal student identity, which coordinates the student body, they also are capitalised upon by the marketing team to promote the type of student the school produces. In the next paragraph, I suggest the two categories of captains (outlined above in Table 7) represent how masculinity is categorised by the school.

Firstly, the 'values' captains privilege respectability and moral virtue; thus these students are seen as a general strategy to promote a capable, responsible subjectivity within the schooling tradition that can be seen as taking up one's rightful place in elite patriarchal society (Saltmarsh, 2005). Of the six 'values' positions, the College Captain is the most coveted and is seen as an institutionally confident student who is highly valued by teachers and students. The College Captain is confident in public speaking, impeccably groomed and holds no troublesome behaviour record. In addition to the College Captain, the vice-captain roles in faith, excellence, community, compassion and junior years, emphasise a masculinity staking claim to introspection and community service. Within the wider political and economic climate in which the school operates, traditionally feminine values such as emotional intelligence and soft skills are now seen as powerful hallmarks of the reshaping of competitive and enterprising male educational identities (McWilliam & Brannock, 2001; Meadmore & McWilliam, 2001). The 'values' captains ordinarily excel in the civil routines of school life, irrespective of their title. They generally are highly regarded amongst staff for being respectful, committed to their study and contributing to school life (such as fundraisers, speaking at and running whole-school assemblies, etc.) Within the school, the values captains are emblematic of the ideal 'good student'.

House captains, in contrast, represent an athletic idealised masculine subject. These positions are generally won by students who are heavily involved in the sporting subcultures of the college, prizing hyper-masculine virtues of physicality, strength and endurance. The house captains carry their house banners at sporting events, create and teach chants to evoke house pride and rally the student body to participate in inter-school competitions. In this light, the house captains highlight how being seen as capable and successful at physical pursuits is 'inextricably bound with being a competitive, self enterprising, "successful" masculine subject' (Gottschall et al., 2010, p. 23). Arguably, the house captains are intended to appeal to students

who cannot identify with the values captains. Thus, it is important to note the exemplary behaviour records of the house Captains as they uphold the school's mission.

With this in mind, collectively the white coats serve as what Synott and Symes (1995) refer to as a 'social function', which concerns and produces 'a certain sort of citizenry, endowed with a repertoire of capacities and ethical habits' (p. 140). It is my intention here to explore how the student leadership team (white coats) is symbolic of the ideal student subjectivity valorised by the school as a social function. My data suggests that, irrespective of whether a student wears a white coat, or aspires to wear one, the concept of student leadership is intended to govern and regulate the inner and outer disposition of the student body.

8.2.3 The influence of Student Leaders on student participants' identity

While only Year 12s are eligible to be a Student Leader,[37] the student leadership team was a point of discussion amongst all of my student participants in their interviews. Over two interviews, student participant Luke mentioned the student leadership team and discussed what the role means and requires:

> I would love to get a white blazer not just because it's a white coat – for like representing your school is a pretty big role in life and it looks pretty good on the resume after school as well and I feel like I would become a better person if I was a leader. (Luke, Student Interview 1, 2017)

In discussing the student leadership team, Luke simultaneously aspired to accrue a particular form of social currency for his post-school life ('it looks pretty good on the resume'), and unveiled a sense of feeling out of place ('I feel I would become a better person if I was a leader').[38] Luke, as an individual but also part of an institutional collective, constructs his identity in relation to others, which brings to mind Reid's (2010) assertion that student

[37] The Student Leader recruitment process begins during Term 3, when an email is sent to the entire Year 11 cohort seeking applications for a position in the following year. The process requires students to write an application outlining their suitability for the position, give a public speech at an extraordinary assembly, and attend an interview with a staff panel. Following this process, the panel of staff members provides a list of recommendations to the Principal for approval. The Student Leaders are then announced to the college community at an end-of-year awards night.

[38] I recognise, as a researcher, there was a missed opportunity in my interview with Luke to expand on what he meant by 'being a better person'. Nonetheless, over the three interviews with Luke, his discussion of the student leadership team provided ample scope to explore how the Student Leaders were connected to his wider aspirations.

identities are ‘constructed as much through a sense of what we are not and notions of how others see us’ (p. 1). When Luke spoke of becoming ‘a better person’, he was referring to the moral economy of CBC, and in a follow-up interview, he expanded on what this requires:

Lee: Can you describe what they are?

Luke: So, this is the Student Leaders of this year. They – where our prefects of the school, they wear white blazers, and they are the leaders of the school, and they set the example of what should happen, or most of them should.

Lee: Okay, so you said they wear white blazers.

Luke: Yeah.

Lee: In these pictures, though, there’s no white blazers.

Luke: No, there’s not.

Lee: So, what do you think the purpose of having this poster is?

Luke: Just to show people who they are. Some people might not be sure who they are, in the classes, so they’d just look at this poster and have a look. Maybe they want to speak to someone.

Lee: You talked about them, also being role models.

Luke: Yeah.

Lee: Okay, what makes you say that they’re meant to be role models?

Luke: Well they’re obviously chosen for a reason. So, if they’re a dickhead, they wouldn’t have been chosen to be in this role–

Lee: Do you think that’s an assumption, or is that said that these are–?

Luke: No, I just feel like the people that have been chosen, obviously are a lot – their leadership is a lot better, like obviously, if they’re someone who mucks around or doesn’t do their work, comes late to school every day, wouldn’t be the person to suit a leadership role. (Luke, Student Interview 2, 2017)

When Luke stated Student Leaders ‘set the example of what should happen’, he referenced the Student Leaders as promotional tools of the school’s ideals. The way Luke considers the student leadership team is influential to his process of identity formation. For Hall (1996), school identities ‘are about processes of becoming rather than being: not “who we are” or “where we came from”, so much as what we might become’ (p. 4). Luke fits within this process, constructing leadership in terms of the school’s value system and defining a future self through

the possibility of becoming one of these leaders. There is an important condemnation of others in his suggestion that being a 'dickhead' is someone who 'mucks around or doesn't do their work, comes late to school every day'. Luke aligns his own value system to that of the institution, which is not surprisingly as being chosen as a Student Leader at CBC requires a very particular and compliant performance from students. Thus Luke did not speak of his own definition of leadership, or value systems; he spoke of and defended how he understands the school to define it as a truth.

It is important to note that Luke has a vested interest in the student leadership team, as he ultimately wants to be on the team. Whereas another student participant, Peter, who appeared ambivalent about applying, provided further insight into how the student leadership team is used by the college to promote its ideal student subjectivity:

Lee: Do you see yourself applying?

Peter: Not really because I don't think I could, I don't think I would see myself as a School Leader.

Lee: Why's that?

Peter: Because it's not that I don't have, anyone could be a School Leader and I think that if they tried they could, anyone can, can be, can be a School Leader. But I think it's all about mindset, and if it's something that you really want to do and I don't believe that I would want to do it mostly because School Leader, you have all these, they, because they, they make being the school captain some, much more than it really is because all you do is, you go to maybe 5 meetings a year, sit down, talk about 3 things, one that only happens and that's it and then you get a badge for doing it.

Lee: Where did you learn that?

Peter: From past scholars, my friends and that's just my general knowledge.

Lee: So anyone could be a leader?

Peter: No, no, not really. They know what they want.

Lee: Who is they?

Peter: The teachers and people – the people that make the decisions.

Lee: What do you mean by what they want?

Peter: The good students – they are always the same – they are always good. They never get in trouble and do the right things, you know, by the school. It is always those that do what the teachers want. They never get in trouble.

Lee: But you said anyone could be a leader.

Peter: Well, not really. They say that but we know it is not true. You have to be an angel all the time, sucking up to teachers and behaving when they are watching us in assembly. I think the school already knows who they want.

Lee: What makes you say that?

Peter: The teachers – they in class – say stuff all the time – like that is not leadership.

Lee: Do they – are they, sorry – do they refer to the leaders?

Peter: Sometimes. Like the other day, Lucas was being stupid and shit in class. I think, I think he was mucking around with Liam or something. Then Ms L goes, she asks, don't you want to be a leader? So, I think Lucas wants to be one, and the teacher, she knows that, and she, she used that against him. (Peter, Student Interview 2, 2017)

Working with Stahl's (2017a) understanding of discourse as 'the coordination of practices of talking, writing, reading and watching, which contribute to the development of institutional practices and which contribute to agents' subjectivities' (p. 4), Peter provides insight into how CBC's student leadership discourse coordinates student identities towards an ideal. Peter talked of a 'good' student discourse and, similar to Luke, suggested it is identifiable in students who 'never get in trouble and do the right things'. Interestingly, his comment 'I think the school already knows who they want' suggests Peter sees the student leadership team as a political façade. He firstly dismissed the significance of Student Leaders as something 'much more than it really is', suggesting the agency of all students is highly coordinated and controlled by the school irrespective of role or title. Secondly, he believes only students who are 'an angel all the time, sucking up to teachers' are selected, proposing certain student subjectivities are rewarded over others. The palpable scepticism and tension in Peter's tone elucidates the fluid nature of student identity formation within schooling, which is often seen as a process:

> Struggling to acquire the means to represent themselves to self and others is part of growing up. However, this active work always occurs under socially given conditions

> which include structures of power and social relations, institutional constraints and possibilities, but also available cultural repertoires. (Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p. 116)

When comparing the contrasting views on student leadership of Peter and Luke, it becomes apparent that reputation, status and public image in school is important, but to differing degrees for different students. Students draw on the symbolic materials of CBC – in this case the student leadership team – to make sense of their schooling experience and to define themselves. Peter's words also reveal snippets of surveillance by the school to coordinate compliant behaviour in the student body. Teachers are watching students in assembly, and in the example of a student called Lucas to whom Peter referred, teachers use the ambitions or desires of students wishing to be on the leadership team as a tool to calibrate and regulate behaviour. Peter's insight serves as an appropriate lead-into the next section of this chapter. While CBC promotes its ideal student subjectivity through the student leadership team, there are policies, processes and rules enforced onto the student body in an effort to inculcate students towards this ideal. Thus the following section examines the role of rules and texts in shaping particular behaviours by the students.

8.3 Disciplinary texts: Coordinating appearance and behaviour towards an ideal

In institutions texts manifest in a myriad of forms for a multitude of purposes. In the previous section, I explored how CBC's model of Student Leaders promotes what Synott and Symes (1995) would argue are the patriarchal, heteronormative, ageist values of the Old Boys' school. In this section, I describe how CBC coordinates student behaviour through what I call disciplinary texts towards a wider *gender regime* (Connell, 2005), which governs and coordinate the students' appearance and behaviour. As this section has a heavy emphasis on texts and subjectivities, I find Smith's (2006) posit pertinent:

> The importance of texts, as of any phenomena of language, to the social is as a coordinator of the diversities of people's subjectivities, their consciousness. People, as individuals arrive at any moment with their own distinctive histories, their distinctive perspectives, capacities, interests, concerns and whatever else they may bring as a potentiality to act in a given setting. Among those sharing the same local setting, actual

> diversities may be both generated by and coordinated through physical movement, work processes, gesture, language (talk and text), and so on. (p. 65)

Drawing from the student participants' interviews, it became apparent that disciplinary texts were a daily aspect of school life and negotiated in relation to individual identity. This section begins by tracing how the student participants perceive what is acceptable and expected of them when at school. Their words allow me to trace how certain discourses, imbued with the ideals explored in the previous section, harness power through certain school texts. The data highlights the complex dialectic in how policies and rules are both realised and enacted and the way they are interpreted by individuals within the institution as part of a design for action.

8.3.1 How to behave at CBC: A 'common-sense' truth

In my interviews with all the student participants, a conversation regarding how the school makes students act or behave became a prominent feature. I was initially struck by the trouble many of the participants had in describing this feature of school life, in that, some of them had never considered there could be another way to act or behave at school. For the student participants, certain studious behaviours were simply a matter of 'common sense'. So it is important to bear in mind this acceptance, or the wider notion of 'common sense', is an example of what Smith (2005) describes as *institutional capture*:

> Institutional discourse has the capacity to subsume or displace description based in experience. Institutional capture can occur when both informant and researcher are familiar with institutional discourse, know how to speak it, and hence can easily lose touch with the informant's experientially based knowledge. (p. 225)

I recognise as a teacher and researcher at the school site the problem of being susceptible to institutional capture. To attenuate this problem, drawing from Smith's (2005) advice, my interview questions strived to 'return to the particularities of what people are or have been doing, to their thinking and feeling as well as to the circumstances, means, time and other resources of that activity' (p. 157). To the frustration of many student participants, who assumed I knew what they meant or knew the processes, I still insisted they provide explicit details to me as a researcher trying to understand the school (see Section 4.6.2 for more detailed discussion). In doing so, I was able to gain insight into how – and why – they understand their

schooling lives to be socially organised. In the interview excerpt below, student participant Luke understands school rules to largely centre on interactions with others:

> Lee: You talked about these rules, and obviously, they link to manners. Where are these rules?
>
> Luke: Obviously, I don't think they're rules, I think it's just common sense, I guess to have manners and to be respectful to teachers, all that kind of stuff.
>
> Lee: So, well, what happens if you're rude to a teacher?
>
> Luke: You obviously get in trouble. Obviously, the teacher would give you a punishment or something.
>
> Lee: So, what's making them give you a punishment?
>
> Luke: Probably just the way you speak to them, or your actions in class, or outside of class.
>
> Lee: So, how do you know how to behave?
>
> Luke: I just think, just common sense, I guess. You know all the border lines, what you can't and what you can do.
>
> Lee: So, these rules, are they part of the school, or are they just there?
>
> Luke: Some, I think – half and half, I think.
>
> Lee: So, you, the way you behave is what?
>
> Luke: I've not … I just think it's common sense to behave normal, like not normal, having like your manners, just being respectful, I just think that's how a normal person should treat teachers. (Luke, Student Interview 1, 2017)

When Luke referred to behaviour in alignment with the school's values as a 'common-sense' truth, we begin to see the conceptual practices that mark students and bring them under the jurisdiction of the school. Interestingly, two other student participants used this term 'common sense' in similar discussions: Firstly, Anthony suggested rules are orders to follow:

> Lee: What are these rules? What's some rules examples?
>
> Anthony: Have to be, like in the classroom you have to do your work, listen to what the teacher says.
>
> Lee: Yep. So where do you learn these rules if you're new to the school?

Anthony: Just common sense some of them, like manners and stuff. (Anthony, Student Interview 3, 2017)

In contrast to Anthony, Oliver began to shed light on how these rules are communicated but also suggested that breaching the rules has implications:

Lee: How does one learn these rules? How did you learn what the rules were?
Oliver: Oh, they told you at meetings, and plus it's just common sense basically …, like it depends on how bad it is, if you know, you used to know how bad it is to get a detention sometimes– (Oliver, Student Interview 3, 2017)

The words of the participants suggest a 'common-sense' behaviour at school centres on respecting others, particularly teachers. I am not suggesting that these rules do not make sense. It is difficult to imagine a form of democracy that does not rest on a good measure of civility, where a concerted effort is made to ensure well-mannered students conform to orderly codes of behaviour and espouse positive ideals of tolerating or getting on with others (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016; Boyd, 2006). Contini and Maturo (2010) argue for civility in that

> school can have an important role in the development of cross-cultural competences, in the formation of social bonds and flexible and inclusive belonging and in the building of a multiple and shared citizenship, that implies the recognition of individual rights and universal values, to promote the living together in a multiethnic society. (p. 1544)

However, in CBC, this 'common-sense' conception of civility plays only one part in coordinating the student body. Thus it is important to examine the wider regimes of the school to trace how power operates within it.

Ball (2013) suggests

> we can recognise these technologies and knowledges at work in the contemporary school, as evidence of their effectiveness and continuing anonymous necessity, embedded in a broader complex of discourses and practices through which childhood and the pupil are 'made up', and normalized. (p. 53)

In other words, examining what my student participants assume as certain truths is important to understanding how power operates within the school. In discussing school rules, the participants did not speak of accepting others, tolerance or appreciation of diversity. Rather, they emphasised a necessity to avoid conflict and punishment, and to follow instructions from teachers. The student participants are working within a normalised model of the CBC ideal 'good student' subjectivity that is embedded to the point they do not question the rationality of any of these rules. When interviewing the students, I was aware that my position as a teacher at the school might hinder student participants' likeliness to be critical. With this in mind, I did attempt to open lines of discussion where the participants could criticise rules or policy; however, as the excerpt from Luke shows below, criticism largely centred on enforcement rather than the rationality of the rules:

> Lee: Okay and we might come back to that in a tick. Let's talk about things about school that you dislike.
>
> Luke: There's obviously different things at school that you do like and you don't like. Probably the main things – like some of the rules that school gives you – how they are – I quite enjoy school but there is just some things that I don't like.
>
> Lee: So let's talk about – you said some rules – what's one rule that–?
>
> Luke: Like they're pretty strict on hair and all that kind of stuff – I agree with that kind of stuff but they are a bit like agile on some of the rules that CBC bring I suppose aren't the best rules.
>
> Lee: So what would be an example of the hair – so you understand why it's there?
>
> Luke: Yeah well, obviously I got told to get a haircut last year and my hair wasn't even that long compared to other people at school, so I find that a bit unfair. (Luke, Student Interview 1, 2017)

This excerpt encapsulates how complicit student participants are despite feeling some moments of disjuncture. Luke – presumably content with his haircut – had to alter his physical appearance as that is what he 'got told' to do. Examining students' experientially based knowledge holds the key to tracing how power operates within the school. It is evident that power and knowledge of school rules are interwoven. As the students spoke of their behaviour as a truth, or as Luke put it 'being normal', we see the school coordinate student subjectivities

towards a ‘good student’ ideal through the engrained experience of the school culture. This school culture is heavily textual in nature, and the school diary was recognised as a source of the rules. However, as in the case of Cody below, students’ engagement with this text is limited by their engagement with the diary:

Lee: Alright then, how do you know what the school expects as in attitude wise?

Cody: Well, they do set a lot of rules and regulations and you can find out in the diary and stuff, so pretty much they just say what not to do. I guess the expectations are pretty clear and at most schools you try and get good grades, just do your work I guess, don’t get in trouble.

Lee: Let’s talk about the diary. What’s in the diary?

Cody: There’s a lot of rules in the diary that you can always refer too. I think it’s for when the teachers tell someone off they can refer to the diary and be you’ve done this and it says not to do it, so I guess it’s just a–

Lee: Have you read the diary?

Cody: No, I haven’t.

Lee: Okay, so how do you know what to do?

Cody: I feel like it’s a bit of common sense really. You wouldn’t swear at a teacher or get mad at or fight another student something like that. Most of the rules are pretty common sense, you would know you just don’t do it, you don’t have to read the diary.

Lee: Why is it common sense not to swear at a teacher?

Cody: Because that’s just disrespectful, even if it wasn’t a teacher, you just don’t swear at someone for no reason I guess.

Lee: So is that respect just in school or is that respect in general?

Cody: No, in general. (Cody, Student Interview 2, 2017)

While Cody admits to not reading the diary, he recognises it as a point of reference for teachers and students to understand what is expected. In institutional ethnography, it is ‘people’s use of texts [that] gives ruling relations a material form that institutional ethnographers can use to investigate social organisation’ (Rankin, 2017b, p. 2). In this outline we can see what Foucault (1980a) calls the “microphysics of power”, being individual choices, interactions and behaviours that together produce more general social patterns. Power, in relation to the school

rules explicated here, is neither good nor bad, but rather productive and a vehicle for the construction of an institutional ideal. The discussion of school rules provides an interesting insight into the complex interplay between students, teachers and texts within schools. While students' experience of school – particularly in relation to behaviour – is heavily coordinated by texts, there is an irony in that students seemingly have little knowledge or engagement with such texts. Largely, the coordination of students by texts is through the work of teachers activating them. Irrespective of who is activating the texts, though, texts are still a powerful technology of the school in orchestrating the work of both teachers and students towards institutional ideals. In the following section, I describe the student diary to locate the student participants' understanding of rules and expectations in a chain of institutional texts.

8.3.2 The student diary

The CBC student diary is a neatly plastic-bound book distributed to every student at the beginning of the year. The front cover is bright green, with a symbol taken from the Edmund Rice icon[39] sitting above the college slogan/theme for the year. The content of diary is organised into four distinct sections (outlined below in Table 8), of which three relate to coordinating behaviour and appearance:

[39] The icon of Edmund Rice is a creation by Irish artist Desmond Kyne, unveiled in Liverpool, England in 1986, and is a prominent feature in all Edmund Rice affiliated schools. The icon itself, drawing from Byzantine and Celtic iconography, is Kyne's artistic portrayal of Edmund Rice's life with prominent symbols. These symbols are drawn from to create the CBC logo correlating to each year's theme.

Section	Details
College Identity	- An introduction from the college principal - A series of prayers and mass responses - A history of the college and of Edmund Rice - An explanation of the Edmund Rice icon, the college crest and house system - A series of maps of the college campus grounds - A history of the libraries - A list of annual college events and a short description
Organisational Matters and Policies	- There are 47 different subheadings in this section outlining matters from school hours, to uniform and behaviour. - I expand on this section below as this is the section the student participants are most likely referring to in discussion of school rules.
Diary	- Each school week has been provided a double-page spread organised into a table with a row for each day of the week and four columns titled *subject, homework, due* and *notes*. - Each school week has been dated and titled in accordance with where it fits on the school calendar, e.g. Week 1, Term 1. - On each weekly spread, there is a small section in the bottom right-hand corner for the teacher and parent/carer to sign off after checking the diary.
Movement Log and Communication	This section contains four different sets of tables with different purposes: 1. Absence/Lateness/Early Leave – a table with rows spanning from the top of the page to the bottom with five columns titled *Date, Period of Absence (from and to), Reason, Medical Certificate (Yes/no* option to circle) and *Signature.* 2. Teacher/Parent Communication – a table with rows spanning from the top of the page to the bottom with three columns titled *Date, Comment* and *Signature.* 3. Personal Responsibility Log – a table with rows spanning from the top of the page to the bottom with five columns titled *Date, Teacher, Reason, Parent Signature* and *Teacher Signature.* 4. Movement Log – a table with rows spanning from the top of the page to the bottom with six columns titled *Date, Lesson/Time Left, Teacher's Signature, Movement To, Return,* and *Teacher's Signature.*

Table 8: Sections of the student diary

Before discussing the disciplinary section of the student diary, it is important to acknowledge how this text serves as another expression of the school's ideals, providing insight into the wider discourses shaping the organisation of the school. The *College Identity* section of the

diary draws from a range of historical, religious and political discourses to validate its vision. In the *Welcome,* the Principal gives 'thanks to the legacy of the Christian Brothers whose vision and inspiration gives us the strength to face the future with God's grace' while announcing CBC's is one of the city's 'most educationally progressive Colleges' (Student diary, 2017, p. 3). As a Catholic institution, traditional virtues of intellect, morality and social development, in the Principal's words, 'ensure we are authentic as a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice Tradition' (Diary, 2017, p. 3). However, as an institution competing for enrolments within a commodified education market, there is a necessity to be seen as current and relevant in the private school market. This discourse binary means the school's identity as an institution appears fluid, and the Principal employs rhetoric to announce the school is a place to shape boys successfully in aspects of intellectual, moral and social development. The interplay between tradition and innovation unveils two competing discourses shaping the school as an institution and thus, by implication, student and staff notions of manhood as something both modern and historic. The diary itself, including a large part of the Principal's welcome address, largely centres on compliancy rhetoric to outline specific expectations regarding student appearance, behaviour and application. The Principal, in his welcoming address, suggests students will be 'measured' as a success by:

- Ensuring CBC is a community where all are respected.
- Ensuring we grasp the opportunity of a CBC education with all our heart, mind and soul.
- Being punctual to school and lessons.
- Completing homework, assignments and practicals by the due date.
- Wearing our College uniform with pride.
- Respecting College property.
- Ensuring our appearance and behaviour both in and out of the College respects our long and proud history and sets the tone for future students.
- Participating fully in lessons, co-curricular and social justice initiatives. (Diary, 2017, p. 3)

As a text, the student diary provides clear regulatory frames (Smith, 2005) to ensure students are doing work toward an institutionally validated identity. When I interviewed the student participants, their reference to the 'rules' being in the diary was most likely a reference to the

Organisational matters and policies section. Compared to the *College Identity* section of the diary, the *Organisational matters and policies* provide far more explicit details regarding expectations of students. As show in Table 9, there are 47 subheadings in the *Organisational matters and policies* section, yet there appears to be no logical order in which the information is presented within the diary itself. Therefore, in an effort to map the various subheadings in relation to students, I have divided each subheading from the *Organisational matters and policies* section of the student diary into three categories: *logistical information, expectations of student appearance,* and *expectations of student behaviour and application.* I have represented my coding of the diary subheadings in Table 9.

Logistical information	**Expectations of student appearance**	**Expectations of student behaviour and application**
School Offices (p. 24) Supervision Times (p. 24) Pick-Up and Set-Down (p. 24) Arrival, Lateness and Absence from School (p. 24) Out of School Hours Care (p. 24) Vacation Care/Pupil Free Days (p. 25) Senior Campus Canteen (p. 25) Junior Campus Canteen (p. 25) Change of Course or Subject (p. 25) Vocational Education and Training (p. 25) Newsletter (p. 27) CBC's App (p. 27) Student Reports (p. 28) Student/Parent/Teacher Meetings (p. 28) Textbooks (p. 28) Safe Schooling (p. 37) Frequency and Duration of Homework (p. 39) Parent/Staff Communication Protocol (p. 41) Fortnightly Timetable (p. 41)	Incorrect Uniform (p. 25) Jewellery (p. 26) Haircuts (p. 26) Tattoos (p. 27) Wearing of Hats (p. 27) Laptop Bags (p. 28) School Bags (p. 28) School Shoes (p. 28) No Spray Deodorant Cans (p. 28) Earphones (p. 27) Uniform (p. 29)	Driving to School (p. 25) Diaries (p. 27) Lateness to Class (p. 27) Movement Log (p. 27) Messages (p. 27) Mobile Phones (p. 27) Gaming (p. 27) Energy Drinks (p. 28) CBC as a Safe Environment (p. 28) Co-curricular Policy (p. 30 – 32) Cyber Safety (p. 33 – 34) Assessment and Reporting (p. 35) 7 Steps to Success – Work Submission (p. 36) What Can You Do If You're Being Harassed? (p. 38) Student Personal Responsibility (Behaviour Management) Policy (p. 39) Homework Guidelines (p. 39) Restorative Practices (p. 40)

Table 9: Breakdown of Organisational matters and policies

By just representing the subheadings in the student diary, it becomes apparent how heavily orchestrated school life is for students, not to mention their conduct and surveillance. There are echoes here of moral panics concerning boys and their behaviour and lack of academic progress (Ashley, 2008; Epstein, 1998; E. Smith, 2003). However, the student diary does not specifically detail institutional processes in relation to breaches of its rules. Rather, it outlines expectations and lists a range of possible consequences or actions should there be a breach. In discussing the rules, student participant Cody began to outline how this text comes into action within the school by referencing a subsidiary text:

> Lee: Okay and then you talked about what's perhaps another rule that you know of but you haven't read?
>
> Cody: Let me think, there's a headphones rule I guess.
>
> Lee: Alright.
>
> Cody: So the teachers are really – some teachers are really strict on headphones in that you're not allowed to use headphones in class, apparently that's a rule in the diary. I haven't seen that but apparently it states it clearly in the diary that you're not allowed to use headphones.
>
> Lee: So the school diary's one form of controlling how you are.
>
> Cody: And also they do a lot of other things, so maybe at the beginning of the year in the holidays the leadership team or the teachers they brainstorm a lot of ways they want to try keeping the kids in line I guess. So maybe forms of punishment or stuff like that.
>
> Lee: So can you give me an example?
>
> Cody: So there was a couple of stages, there was this thing called – I can't remember what it was called, there was this thing so there was a couple of stages of punishment. So first of all I think we'd get a warning and second of all you'd get a yard clean-up and then you'd get a detention, so on Thursday, Saturday all that stuff and then there's also these other things called PLP slips they brought in where everything that you did goes through the office, but I don't think many teachers use it, but they tried implementing it. (Cody, Student Interview 2, 2017)

Smith (2005) suggests 'texts don't achieve the capacity to regulate just by their existence … the text has no force until it is activated' (pp. 81–82). Yet when people activate texts there is

scope for varied interpretation and action. For example, Cody began by talking about earphones, saying some teachers enforce a rule that is 'apparently' in the diary that he has not seen. This enforcement could be seen as an activation of the text, but for Cody it is more activating hearsay rather than a rule actually sighted. Regarding earphones, the student diary actually states: 'Students are not to use earphones at school unless under the direction of the teacher' (p. 27). Problematically for Cody, there is nothing straightforward about this rule as the teacher's discretion determines whether earphones can be used, meaning the implementation of the rule can vary from class to class or teacher to teacher. Cody's introduction of a new text, which he refers to as a PLP slip, is an important thread in examining how the policies and rules in the student diary become activated.

8.3.3 Regulatory texts and intertextual hierarchy: The student diary and PRP slips

It is pertinent to mention here Smith's (2006) notion of *intertextual hierarchy* as texts such as the student diary and PRP slips demonstrate 'how texts regulate other texts' (p. 86) while continuing to be 'an important dimension of the textual organisation of institutional processes and the ruling relations' (p. 79). In the excerpt below, Cody provided his personal insights into how the rules and policies within the student diary become activated by referencing a new text in the form of a PLP slip. The PLP slip he refers to is actually PRP, an acronym for Personal Responsibility Process. The PRP slip is not mentioned in the student diary but serves as an important tool for activating the policies within it to locate the students into particular institutional processes. Describing the PRP slips, Cody expanded on how this is so:

> They're just white slips and it has, so you write the teacher's name and then you write the student's name on it, the date and all of that and there's a checklist so you check what the student did wrong; so there's behaviour, uniform, all this stuff like homework incomplete and stuff like that and you tick what consequence you want to give them, so either yard clean-up, lunchtime detention, all that stuff. (Cody, Student Interview 2, 2017)

The listing of the teacher's and student's names is significant as it embroils both into an institutional process that allows the school to monitor and follow up whether the policy has been followed. Furthermore, the significance of the 'checklist so you check what the student did wrong' also works on the assumption that the student did something wrong, and that a

consequence depends on the teacher's discretion. The institutional discourse of CBC's expectations and ideals becomes activated when a teacher makes a decision to issue a PRP, meaning 'what is done becomes recognizable as an instance of the procedure within the intertextual hierarchy. The sense a subordinate text makes is found in the interpretive frame the regulatory text establishes' (Smith, 2006, p. 87). Thus identifying the actions the flow from a breach of any rule reveals how texts, in this case the student behavioural policies and PRP slips, can subsume the actualities of what people do and organise subordinate texts (Rankin & Campbell, 2009). In other words, teachers activating school policy only see students through the frame of the school's ideal. If a student does not fit within these parameters, it is assumed there is a breach of rules and a series of texts and processes ensue. The dominant text in this case is the school diary which homes the policies, and the subordinate text is the PRP slips, which can only operate and be activated by parameters set out in the student diary. Cody also elaborated the manner in which the school traces these encounters:

> So I think there's a couple of copies, one of the copies goes to the teacher so the teacher has a copy of one, one of the copies goes to the student and one of the copies goes straight to the office, so the parent gets alarmed, the parents of the student gets alarmed when something goes wrong. (Cody, Student Interview 2, 2017)

Cody's explanation demonstrates how the school uses the PRP slip to trace the activation of its policies in three different ways. Firstly, the teachers do, in fact, keep a copy of the slip for their own personal records. The institutional logic behind teachers keeping a record is that, for minor consequences such as a yard clean-up,[40] a teacher on yard duty signs the student copy of the PRP slip and it is returned to the issuing teacher. Secondly, when a copy is sent to the office, an office staff member makes an electronic record of the breach, and the software automatically notifies parents through an email. If a student was issued a detention, the student's name is placed onto a digital detention roll and will not be removed until the detention is served. Thirdly, the student copy is used as an entry ticket for the issued consequence, meaning if a teacher ticks detention, the student must present the slip to the teacher on detention duty and

[40] A 'yard clean-up' requires students to spend either all of their short break or half of their longer break picking up litter from the schoolyard. When on 'yard clean-up', students are required to wear plastic gloves and carry a large plastic garbage bag, making visual the nature of their consequence.

have it signed.[41] Or, as stated above in the case of a yard clean-up, the teacher on break duty signs the PRP slip and the student must return it to the issuing teacher.[42]

The process Cody shared, which I have expanded on, is quite complex. In an effort to understand how students are coordinated to act and dress in a particular way, I have represented the PRP process in Figure 21. I differentiate the texts (in circles) and actions or activations (in square boxes) to map the complex interplay between action and texts.

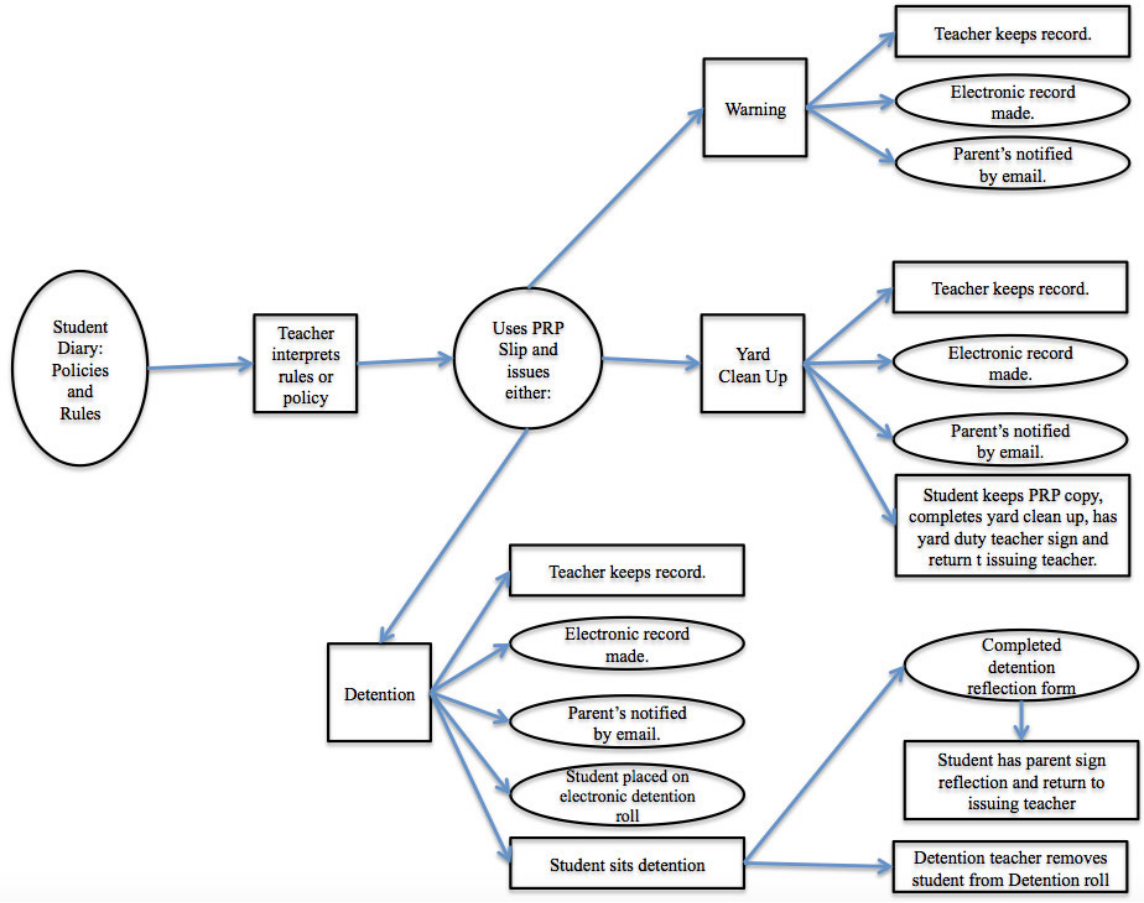


Figure 21: Mapping of texts and actions according to the PRP process

Figure 21 demonstrates the ways in which the regulatory text of the student diary serves as a starting point for a complex web of consequential texts and actions. While there is no mention of PRP slips, the policies within the student diary are clearly seen to regulate the slips and the people activating them. Figure 21 also begins to unveil the sheer amount of work involved for

[41] The student's name is removed from the digital detention roll after sitting a detention.
[42] There are no electronic rolls keeping track of yard duty clean-ups. The onus is on the student to return the PRP slip and the issuing teacher to pursue it if not returned.

students and teachers when a breach of policy occurs. Work for teachers involves record keeping, communication and tracking whether students complete their consequence/s. For students, there is a requirement to also keep a record in the form of the PLP slip, have it signed by teachers and, in the case of detentions, their parents. Furthermore, office and administration staff are embroiled in the process by having to digitally log the records of the PRP slips. However, the process outlined in Figure 21 is still rather idealistic, in that it only has efficiency and effect if all the actors share an understanding of the school policies and processes designed to coordinate breaches. It is important to recognise that I have only examined one of the school's policies here and I suggest this is emblematic of policy design and implementation at CBC more generally, in that a breach of policy instigates these kinds of processes. However, I suggested earlier there are discrepancies between the diary's rules – an ideal/surveillance practice – and the everyday school reality for the participants. To examine this disjuncture, I return to the disciplinary text – the student diary – and unveil a series of contradictions and ambiguity that makes policing student appearance and bodily comportment and behaviour potentially precarious.

8.3.4 A case of unclear policy: The uniform

Arguably, all forms of policy (private–public, macro–micro) work to establish an ideal. However, as Taylor et al. (1997) assert, 'since policies are part of a social environment, they can be expected to be ignored, resisted, contested or rearticulated (p. 7). In the case of CBC policies coordinating student and teacher work, another complication lays in how the policies are written. Regarding student appearance, the student diary specifically states 'Students are expected to wear the correct uniform at all times' (Student diary, p. 29). In fact, any breach of this expectation will 'result in your son being asked to change into the relevant uniform item' or 'your son will not be allowed onto school grounds until appropriately dressed' (Student diary, p. 29). Yet a contradiction precedes this on p. 25 of the student diary:

> If a student arrives at school wearing incorrect uniform an email may be sent home notifying parents. It is the responsibility of the student to have a note in their diary if for some unique circumstance they can not wear their uniform. A student who consistently wears the incorrect uniform, without a note, will be issued a detention and will be spoken to by the relevant SLC (Student Learning Coordinator).

Throughout the interviews with the student participants, they often would reference inconsistency in approach from staff as a source of tension or annoyance in their experience of schooling. The tonal shift in the diary regarding uniform, from essentially 'a change or go home' approach to 'an email may be sent' and a detention and lecture from an SLC,[43] creates two drastically conflicting messages. Importantly, each of the conflicting statements regarding uniform instigates different processes. If a student was simply told to 'change or go home', the process may appear quite clear and simple; however in reality it is not. Returning to Taylor et al. (1997), components of *public* policy are made by the state to steer individuals and organisations (p. 2); thus it is important to bear in mind all schools in Australia are accountable to certain legislation regarding duty of care. If for example, a student of any age presents in incorrect uniform and cannot change, it is unlikely any member of staff would deny him entry to the school. If something were to happen to that student while his parents were under the assumption he was at school, where he was hypothetically denied entry as he did not wear the uniform correctly, there would be serious liability issues for the school and staff members involved. Thus, I will call this approach to enforcement *policy bluff*, being a policy designed to showcase a level of authority, where in reality and legality the school cannot. As in the example here, sending a student home during school hours requires consent, contact and parents/carers to physically collect the student or provide consent for him to leave. Therefore, I argue, it is a case of policy bluff when the diary states 'your son will not be allowed onto school grounds until appropriately dressed'.

However, the second variation of the policy outlining a potential process of emails, notes, detentions and meetings brings about greater inconsistency, and with that, increases the likelihood of institutional processes being blurred by human interpretation and responses. If a student presents to school in incorrect uniform, arguably an email will only be sent if a PRP slip is written by a teacher and processed by the front office. However if a student has a note from their parent explaining the uniform breach, this process essentially becomes redundant for the purposes of tracking consistency unless a staff member personally notices a pattern and chooses to investigate. The reality is students have multiple interactions with various staff in any given day where there is a high degree of variation. A student's first interaction with staff

[43] SLC is an acronym for Student Learning Coordinator. At CBC, there is an SLC assigned to each year level who is responsible for case managing student behaviour.

is either at the entry gates where a school leader[44] welcomes students in the morning, or if running late, the office staff at the front reception. Students are also likely to interact with teachers in the schoolyard and in their lessons. If a student is breaching uniform guidelines, the policy is not clear on which staff member is responsible for pursuing the student. If a leader at the front gate allows the student to pass with no comment on the breach, does this gesture symbolise institutional consent? If a student does not have a note for a uniform breach, can he receive multiple PRP slips in one day? What are the parameters for defining 'consistently wears the incorrect uniform'? From my experience as a teacher at the school, policing the uniform is never straightforward and I echo my student participants' observations that there is inconsistency as to how the rule is enforced. I could pose many more hypothetical questions or scenarios to examine some of the issues and ambiguity as to the school's policy and processes; however my point is to demonstrate the multidimensional aspect of certain policies whereby the actors implicated in the policy – teachers, students and school leaders – in some way contribute to the way this policy develops and works (Ball, 2006).

Returning to the daily routine of CBC, the fact many of the student participants recollected episodes in which teachers gave students PRP slips shows that some students openly resist or ignore policy. If the students were compliant with the school rules then PRP slips would be unnecessary. Their resistance is not surprising when considering the literature on student identity (Reay, 2010) and adolescent masculinities (Mac an Ghaill, 2004; Martino, 1999) which suggests identities develop in response to the school's differentiated forms of authority. Thus for some students, resisting certain school policies can be seen as an expression of identity. And arguably, the convoluted design and processes around some policies have provided a platform for students to do so outside its formal ideals.

In this analysis of CBC uniform policy and processes thus far, I have provided only one example of how the ideals of the school often jar with the reality of those working within the institution. There are multiple examples from my data that I could draw from; however my intention here is to trace and explore how the ruling relations operate within the institution and this example is suitably emblematic of the others. This approach is complementary to my

[44] Leader in this context refers to either the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals or Directors of Senior or Middle School.

institutional ethnographic approach, as I have followed a similar process to that outlined by Rankin (2017a):

> Problematics embedded in the selected pieces of data provide a concrete place to start, they produce the preliminary stages of turning the apparent chaos of masses of data about everyday life into specific, socially organized instances of a something that can be taken up and explicated as IE inquiry. (p. 8)

The ambiguity of CBC's policies aside, there is certainly a concerted effort by the school to coordinate the subjectivities of its students particularly in the areas of appearance and behaviour. Tracing the tensions between school policy and students' experiences demonstrates that policies exist within a context, which is not a new theory (Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 2007, 1993), but necessary as, in the final section of this chapter, I briefly examine how two students negotiate both formal and informal features of school life to further explicate the broader and dominant discourses infiltrating the daily experience of students at CBC.

8.4 Tension between institutional and informal identities

In this closing section, I explore the intersection between ruling relations, identity formation and student participants' value systems. Through the individual stories of the students I am able to further examine how they are coordinated and negotiate different forms of power, both institutional and informal, within the school site. Drawing from the photos taken by the student participants and the complementary interview discussions of them, this section examines the significance of space and place to students' experience of school.

8.4.1 Informal spaces in formal places

At CBC, what may appear as informal times such as recess and lunch breaks are in fact highly coordinated exercises. As the school site is quite small due to its CBD location, students are confined to a few allocated spaces during these times. Consequently, there are places that are 'in' and 'out' of bounds for students. These 'in bounds' spaces are determined by the presence of teachers who are assigned as a tool of surveillance and policing, whereby they must wear a fluorescent vest and visibly patrol their allocated space. To complicate matters, different spaces consist of different rules and routines, formally and informally. For example, formal rules can be seen in how the sports field is divided into middle and senior school sections, the gymnasium has a roster for what year level can have access on any given day, no food is to enter the library,

and no running or balls are allowed in the eastern or western yards. Whereas in the informal subcultures of students occupying certain spaces informal rules exist, for example, the types of games played in spaces, the students allowed to join such games and the conduct with which they must do so.

The formal institutional imperative to condense and monitor the student body during breaks encompasses duty of care and work health and safety legislation. There is an institutional logic extending beyond the scope of CBC that suggests young people simply are not to be trusted without constant adult supervision. Consequently, CBC only has large spaces available during break times that are easily monitored by one or two teachers and meet legislative requirements. Students preferring quieter or more intimate locations must either visit the library or an outside dining court. However, even these two quieter locations are heavily policed and populated during break times. The library is a place of study, with no food, no phone and no talk. Breaching one of these rules results in a student being asked to leave. The dining court is a place of bustling chaos, serving as a thoroughfare and home to many of the Year 12 peer groups. The dining court is an undercover haven where particular senior groups have staked claim to certain areas and younger students – despite there being teacher presence – are taunted if they choose to stay in this space. Where the library is silent, the dining court is loud and brimming with students excitedly speaking over one another. So students seeking an undercover space to spend their break times and avoiding more athletic spaces such as the gymnasium, courtyards occupied with handball or the sports field have limited choices. Considering the complexity of space and place in school, this section examines two student participants' contrasting experiences of the informal and dominant peer subcultures thriving during the break times at CBC. I begin with Oliver's bid to find a safe place of refuge and intimacy for his peer group during these breaks. I then examine how Cody emulates and negotiates a violent and dominant form of masculinity in the schoolyard. I bridge the two anecdotes as they offer different perspectives on a similar conception of power amongst their peers while considering formal facets of their school.

In regard to identity, Hay (1992) suggests students' bond to places 'enables meaningful relationships and strong social networks to develop' (p. 101). Therefore 'becoming an 'insider' in a place fosters feelings of security and status (Ellis, 2005, p. 55). A shared feature between Oliver and Cody is how they fashion a social identity through affiliation with certain spaces. I am interested in how power operates within these sites. As Swain (2006a) suggests, 'a boy who

was dominant in the playground at 11:10 am could be placed in a subordinate position by a teacher at 11:15 am (although he would still be dominant within his own peer group)' (p. 340). As is the case with my data, there are times and places that Cody is comfortable where Oliver is not. In the following series of excerpts, both student participants began with a discussion of spaces in the school site that are active during break times. Thus, as informal sporting and peer subcultures are seen to particularly thrive during these break times, these can be seen as areas of school life 'where processes of masculinity formation are intensely active' (Connell, 2000, p. 24).

In order to examine the masculinity/identity of the student participants, I must contextualise Connell's (1995) conception of *hegemonic masculinity* to examine other expressions of masculinity as 'the localized, hegemonic mode of masculinity serves as an idealized form of behavior that boys are able to measure themselves against to discover the extent of their "boyness" or manliness' (Swain, 2006a, p. 337). Drawing from the data provided by Oliver and Cody, a hegemonic form of masculinity operating within CBC valorises a sense of humour, an athletic and sporting skill set, violence and ownership of space.

8.4.1.1 Oliver's experience of subordination

Connell (1995) introduces the concept of the *subordinate* model of masculinity, which is seen outside the hegemonic form and controlled, oppressed and subjugated by it. A model of *subordinate* masculinity is relevant to the following data as subordination can accrue from deficiency in culturally valorised traits such as athletic prowess. In many ways, through their use of space, Oliver and his peers can be seen as *subordinate* to formal and informal forms of masculinity, and this is largely shaped by their experience of space and peers during break times at CBC. I begin with an image Oliver took of a significant location.

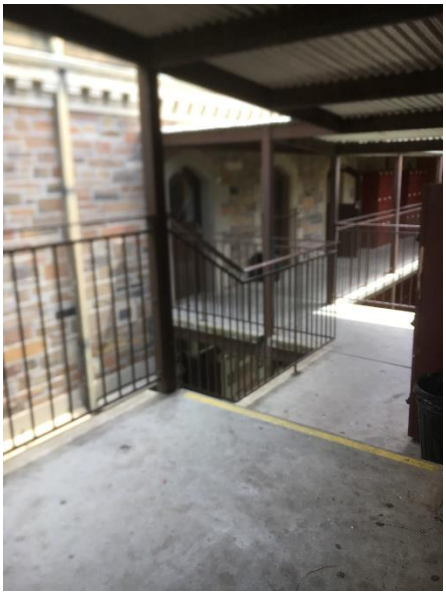


Figure 22:Oliver's refuge

In describing this picture, Oliver introduced the space and some of the rules:

Oliver: Yes, okay that's, well mainly all the time we use as a …, so me and my mates we hang out there, we … lunch, just chill, it's the … all the … combined basically, and it's just a balcony … block, and yeah we just talk, have fun, socialise.

Lee: So is there any rules, school rules about using that space?

Oliver: Well they say that if you're up there you're not allowed to be on there because there's no supervision, but they don't do anything about it, so they don't really care.

Lee: So who's they?

Oliver: Teachers.

Lee: Teachers. So if you see a teacher, you guys don't hide?

Oliver: No we just stay there.

Lee: Yeah. So you've been told in the past that you're not allowed to be there?

Oliver: Yeah but the teachers never, they are never there and never do anything. Even if a teacher sees us, they don't say anything. (Oliver, Student Interview 3, 2017)

All policies and rules, whether in construction or implementation, play out in a context. In this case, Oliver suggested all his peer group does is 'hang out' and 'just talk'. Bar being in a location that is deemed out of bounds during breaks, they are not drawing attention to themselves in any overt way. Therefore, the teachers' response, or in this case non-response, suggests teachers police the behaviour of students over whether they are in a location that is 'in' or 'out' of bounds. By sitting down and talking, Oliver's small peer group is not seen as problematic and, as such, they are not redirected or challenged by staff. Thus Oliver and his friends have learnt that some rules can be ignored if behaviours and circumstances are right. The location he refers to is not easily visible to teachers on duty on the ground three stories down below. However, Oliver did not boast of defying school rules. The significance of the location lies in how it 'enables meaningful relationships and strong social networks to develop' (Hay, 1992, p. 101). Oliver touched on the history and importance of this intimacy further:

Lee:	So what's the attraction to that place with your friends?
Oliver:	I mean like it's just a place where we hang out, it's like getting away from all the other people, and this is just our main area, like you know how people have, so the library as a place or the sports field as a place, say the downstairs in the court, the food court, well that's our place.
Lee:	How did it come to be, is it near somebody's locker or–?
Oliver:	Yeah it's, well it's mainly close to our classes and near everyone's locker basically. And it's just like, okay it's mainly cos of that, and to get, like just, it's just where we can talk about stuff and without anybody hearing.
Lee:	What's, so when you say our, that's your–
Oliver:	Yeah our like conversations.
Lee:	And that's your friendship group?
Oliver:	Yeah.
Lee:	Is there any rules within the group?
Oliver:	No.
Lee:	So–
Oliver:	We just talk.
Lee:	Yeah and this is just a place that you guys–
Oliver:	Yeah it's just normal …
Lee:	Alright, so how did the friendship group come about?

Oliver: Okay so we basically started off with me and James, and then as we saw people, like we just started socialising … other classes, and then they just like kind of came, or we invited them obviously and they just started, and we just, it just happened.

Lee: Okay and then what about that space?

Oliver: Oh we just, we were there one day and it was a brilliant place, so we stayed there again. (Oliver, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Oliver began to introduce a notion of *subordination* through his difficulty connecting with other students in other places. He talked in divisive terms: 'people have' spaces and he does not, and he needs to 'get away' from others. Subordinated school masculinities can be seen through passiveness and a deficit, or lack, of effort to connect with others in different contexts, particularly sport (Mills, 2001). So for Oliver and his peer group, the necessity to create a space they can feel is their own could be seen as a response to the hegemonic form of masculinity.

Furthermore, by stating 'other' students have their own place, Oliver was suggesting space is a feature of social status. Informal constructs of power are seen when a group of students are strongly affiliated to particular spaces, which unveils some of the unspoken rules of territorial and masculine subcultures existing during break times. Consequently, Oliver and his peers feel obligated to claim a space or territory that simultaneously provides privacy and a sense of power through ownership. The emphasis on privacy and proximity is also of significance for Oliver: 'it's just where we can talk about stuff and without anybody hearing'. In the same way Oliver views the necessity to have a physical space to mark as his peer group's own, this concept of boundary extends to conversations. During break times, Oliver's reluctance to connect with others (in sport and conversation), creates social boundaries around conversations he appears to lack the social currency to overcome. Subsequently, he largely emulates the hegemonic notion of social and geographic boundaries seen in the schoolyard by creating his own to reduce this sense of subordination. Sadly, Oliver shared that he enjoys playing sport but due to the competitive and physical nature of the schoolyard during break times, is not able to participate. This displacement exacerbates his subordination socially/physically and formally/informally:

Lee: What made it brilliant?

Oliver: Ah, I guess it is just away from everyone. We can just have our own time and not have to do stuff others want to do.

Lee: What do you mean others, doing stuff … if that makes sense?

Oliver: Well, okay, just in the gym right, it you want to play basketball you have to play by the basketballers' rules. They are all good and we just like to shoot and muck around but they will make us play by their rules so it is not really fun.

Lee: Do you say anything to teachers?

Oliver: No. There is no point. The courts, there is not enough space. So the basketballers get what they want.

Lee: Why do you think they do?

Oliver: Because they all play basketball. They are the best so the teachers just let them have the court.

Lee: Are there any other spaces that you can't use?

Oliver: The sports field is another.

Lee: Is that because, like the same reason for the gym?

Oliver: No, it is heaps more rough. People get hurt there all the time playing soccer or marks up. I tried once but I kept getting elbowed and kicked in the shins and there were no consequences.

Lee: Did the teacher see this happen?

Oliver: No. It is not like you will dob for getting hurt, but some of the guys play real dirty and they laugh when they are doing it. Like hurting others.

Lee: Why will you not tell a teacher?

Oliver: I don't know, you just don't do that. The others would probably gang up on you or get you back somehow.

Lee: So back to your balcony spot here …

Oliver: It is good because it is our spot. No one comes there and we can just talk between us, you know. (Oliver, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Oliver provided insight into how sporting masculinities assume a level of power formally through the teacher's approval of more athletic groups dominating the gymnasium. I assume the 'basketballers' Oliver referred to either are the same ones that play for the school open[45]

[45] An 'open' team is the most senior and highest graded team in a particular sport.

team and/or local district clubs. Therefore the term ‘basketballers’ suggests a skill set in sport holds currency and, in the gymnasium, provides sufficient status to dictate the terms of how the place is occupied. Oliver and his peer group are subordinated by their deficiency in skills and cannot join in. To complicate matters, when Oliver suggested teachers ‘just let them have the court’, he offered further insight into how the school legitimates and authorises particular forms of masculinity to occupy certain places. The research of Martino and Frank (2006) focusing on male teachers in a single-sex school addressing issues of gender regimes is of particular salience here. Martino and Frank (2006) suggest teachers can engage in ‘practices of normalization’ (p. 29) in their response to dominant forms of student masculinity. What I found particularly telling is Martino and Frank’s (2006) suggestion that a teacher’s complicity with student hegemonic forms of masculinity can allow dominance to thrive in student subcultures. In a similar vein, Oliver is subordinate through his deficiency to match the basketballers’ athleticism and the teacher is complicity in allowing the basketballers to determine how the gym is used. However, Oliver also propagates these dominant forms of masculinity by refusing to challenge them. Even on the sports field, where a dominant, violent and physical form of masculinity (‘getting elbowed and kicked in the shins’) operates, the informal subculture is so strong that ‘It is not like you will dob for getting hurt’. In many ways, Oliver’s agency is torn between a competing dichotomy of formal and informal action. The rules of CBC are quite clear on physical contact and aggression, as in other schools, in that students must be inclusive and non-violent. Acting formally as a student, he could inform a teacher of these breaches and potentially create a space to join games on the sports field. However, his fear of the informal student subcultures suggests this will never happen. In response to the question why he would not inform a teacher, Oliver forewarned of possible consequences, ‘The others would probably gang up on you or get you back somehow’. Oliver’s reluctance to challenge other students’ occupation of spaces entrenches his subordinated position within the informal student hierarchy while allowing the more dominant students to maintain theirs.

At the beginning of this exchange, Oliver presented an image of a small unassuming place away from student and teacher surveillance. Oliver described his school experience during break times at CBC as socially exclusive, violent and hierarchical. He suggested the dominant form of power operating through break times is seen in the various peer subcultures occupying different ‘in-bounds’ locations. Subsequently, this experience became one of subordination to dominant social and athletic forms of peer masculinity. Consequently, Oliver finds refuge and belonging in a hidden space with a group of peers who likely share his experience.

8.4.1.2 Cody's complicity in violence: The sports field

Oliver alluded to a violent subculture at the school. In drawing on Cody's interview excerpt, which starts with a photo of the sports field (seen below), I explore how Cody is instrumental to and complicit with hegemonic forms of peer masculinity within the context of the sports field during break times. This hegemonic form is largely expressed through violence, as Oliver mentioned. Therefore it is appropriate to draw from scholarly work in this area to examine the connection between dominant masculinities and violence at CBC. However, I do not lose sight of the school as an institution. While the school is the site where these masculinity performances take place, it also is seen to coordinate student behaviour through a discourse of competition. Consequently, we see much of the students' informal peer cultures as covertly constructed in response to formal school structures and surveillance.

In school, violence against other boys is seen as a gender performance (Mills, 2012; Robinson, Saltmarsh, & Davies, 2012), allowing me to expand my examination of how power operates within CBC. Connell's (1995) concept of *complicit* masculinity, which is pertinent in the case of Cody, connects to the hegemonic masculinity but does not embody it. It is important to bear in mind Connell's (2005) warning that 'it is tempting to treat [complicit masculinity] simply as (a) slacker version of hegemonic masculinity … there is often something more definite and carefully crafted about [it]' (p. 79). In schools, a complicit masculine student may be competent at sport or an active competitor, but they are generally not good enough to be regarded as a top player (Dragowski & Scharrón-del Río, 2014). Thus complicit masculinities are seen as tolerated more than subordinated. In many ways, complicit boys imitate features of the hegemonic masculinity without exerting its power and influence, all the while reducing the struggle to maintain their own status (Swain, 2006a). Although not ordinarily violent, complicit masculinities avoid challenging the subordination of others to reap some benefit through affiliation with the hegemonic form (Connell, 2005). Subsequently, complicit masculinities are generally accepted by a dominant part of the hierarchy (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).



Figure 23: Cody's image of the sports field

Cody began by introducing the sports field as a social place for students to enjoy sport:

Cody: Well definitely the first photo's my favourite place in the school and had a lot of great … sports field

Lee: So that's what we want, yeah.

Cody: I just feel like I've always had, ever since I started at this school the sports field has just been a place where I could relax, have a good time with my friends, joke around and play soccer. I feel like definitely a sports field–

Lee: So for someone that's not aware of how CBC is or what it is, explain what the sports field is.

Cody: So the sports field is pretty much just like an oval, so you've got a lot of choices. You can – there's a lot of soccer games going, you make the footy, there's some basketball hoops up in there. So usually a lot of the kids flock to the sports field just to have and then we have really fun games of soccer, so it's like most kids in our year participate and we just choose teams and there's some good banter going on and good game. It's always good fun. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Similar to many of the other student participants, Cody's bond to the sports field is largely because it is where meaningful relationships and social networks develop (Hay, 1992). By referencing the popularity of the space, he suggested sport and activity are prominent features of the school and a technology to accrue social capital. This means if a student is highly regarded in a popular sport, it is likely to provide them a level of social status. Cody suggested the intersection between being social and competitive is 'always good fun', a point he elaborated on:

> Cody: Yeah, it's definitely social and it's also, it gets physical as well.
>
> Lee: Alright. Is that just for social or is it used for other things as well?
>
> Cody: Definitely it's used for physical stuff because it could be used as a classroom as sorts for PE, but mostly at lunch and recess it's just a social place, but also it's a place where you can play sports.
>
> Lee: How did you learn how to use this place socially?
>
> Cody: Well, mostly it's just like it probably started off by joking around with your friends or ever since you came to the school – even at my primary school even before I came here I always – lunch and recess is always a good time to have fun playing sports but also socialise with your friends, so it's a great – not relief, but it's a great … after you've been working hard at school, it's great to come out and just relax with your friends I guess.
>
> Lee: You talk about your mates, are there other students up there?
>
> Cody: Yeah, definitely; all kids can go in there, any student can go up there. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

The ease with which Cody spoke of moving between social and competitive serves as a social mechanism to exclude others. Cody is a confident and able soccer player. Many of his close friends play at club, state and national levels, whereas Cody does not. However he is often selected in the school open team and plays alongside many of these more prolific athletes in inter-school competitions. Cody's selection and position within the school team is significant as he can be seen as embodying what Swain (2006a) describes as an 'aspirant form of masculinity' (p. 338) or, as Adler and Adler (1998) more harshly put it, 'wannabes'. At CBC, soccer and football are the most popular sports, formally through co-curricular activities and informally during break times. When a student is selected onto a state or national squad, he is

treated like a celebrity. Formally, the school will post pictures and announce the achievement through its social media pages and weekly newsletter. Informally, some students will rejoice in the achievement and discuss the student athlete's strengths as a player during class and break times. Cody may never experience adulation for his soccer skills; however, his skill set is sufficient to hold his own on the sports field.

As was seen in the case of Oliver (above), not every student possesses either the social or athletic capital to participate in games of sport during break times. While Cody does acknowledge 'any student can go up there (to the sports field)', this is not an automatic invitation or expression of inclusivity. The reality is, a student must be able to hold their own in order to participate in a soccer game and, even if they can, they then would have the problem of overcoming social norms and routines that exist within these games. Knowing these social norms of peer groups is important in avoiding conflict. Below, in explaining how the space operates under the school's direction, Cody explained how breaching the subcultural norms of the sports field can lead to violent confrontations:

Lee: What were some of the things that instigated a change in how the space was used?

Cody: Well there was a bit of a play up of behaviour, there was a couple of incidents on the sports field where a kid got badly attacked, I'd say attacked and then there was a bit of a – yeah, it's just a couple of people playing up on the sports field.

Lee: So attacked, do you remember the event?

Cody: Well I wasn't there personally, but I definitely heard a lot of stories about it, about on the sports field there was some kid, all of it happened pretty quickly I heard, but apparently he instigated a fight I guess, but he kicked a ball over the sports field, so that's always known as a dog move, so always forever whenever someone kicks a ball on the sports field you chase them around, you trip them over a little bit and it's good fun and games. So that happened and then the kid that kicked the ball over he kicked another kid and then I guess that was probably not the best move I guess. That could've ended there but I guess some other people got involved and then since that person got kicked his friends came over and there was a bit of a fight happened I guess.

Lee: So the change of rules – let's go actually back you talked about the dog move, how do you guys come up with these social rules, so what's acceptable – what's an example of something that would be not acceptable …?

Cody: Well, obviously tackling someone from behind would be known as something you just wouldn't do or maybe yeah, attacking someone from behind or kicking the ball on the sports field, like picking the ball up during a soccer game. You just don't do that stuff, everyone knows that you just don't.

Lee: Where do those rules come from?

Cody: I don't know, just, I guess they just happen. Kicking a ball over the sports field that's just known as we were having such a good game and then someone goes and kicks the ball over the sports field and just ruins the fun, so I guess that's just known as something that's not good. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

When Cody discussed the fight, he acknowledged that he was not present. Yet, he spoke about the fighting incident in almost fable-like terms, imbuing his peer group's codes of 'not kicking the ball over the fence' and 'dog moves' as significant lessons to be taken away. When speaking of the 'kid that got attacked', Cody protected his peer group through shifting blame ('apparently he instigated a fight I guess') and providing justification ('but he kicked a ball over the sports field'). Cody is not a leader in this peer group. However it is problematic to suggest that there actually has to be one student or a small group identifiable as the hegemonic form. As Swain (2006a) suggests, in schools the hegemonic form 'generally mobilizes around a number of socio-cultural constructs, such as physical and athletic skill, strength, fitness, control, competitiveness, culturally acclaimed knowledge, discipline, courage, self-reliance, and adventurousness' (p. 337). So, the hegemonic form of masculinity can be seen as an informal ideal for some students in some contexts. Even though there may be more athletically dominant players, this does not necessarily equate to them embodying the complete hegemonic form Cody's group work towards. In effect, they could all be seen to complicity work towards a hegemonic ideal that none will actually meet. Bearing this in mind, Cody's defensiveness and loyalty of his peer group likely lies in the benefits and advantages to belonging that extend beyond the break times on the sports field. Connell (1995) terms this the 'patriarchal dividend'

and, at the very least, Cody enjoying comfort and opportunity on the sports field that other students do not is one such dividend.

For Cody, belonging to the dominant peer group of the sports field requires complicity, thus by subordinating others (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Swain, 2006b) he is able to mark a level of territory within the peer hierarchy. Cody also spoke about 'the game' as if it holds sanctity, and to his peer group it likely does. However, there is a level of naivety in the assumption other students are vested in these break time soccer games and that 'everyone knows' the informal codes of conduct in operation. Such naivety also suggests he assumes 'everyone' aspires to or is capable of the hegemonic masculinity he protects. Yet, the fact there is conflict underscores the rich disparity amongst student masculinities, identities and values percolating on the sports field at any one time. In effect, the hegemonic masculinity Cody is complicit with may, in effect, only be relevant to his peer group. Yet, in the excerpt below, Cody seems to suggest the physical nature of the sport field becomes an important aspect of understanding where he sits amongst his peers:

Lee: Okay and yet the physicality is something you've talked about a few things and it's part of the way you guys socialise.

Cody: Yeah definitely, I love the physical aspect of the game and stuff.

Lee: So what is some of the physical stuff?

Cody: Well, say someone's running with the ball that you don't really like, so you go in for a dirty tackle I guess, so you crunch their legs, something like that or push them off the ball, bit of a dirty move that you wouldn't really be allowed to or say you kicked them from behind, something like that; that's something that really does happen a lot and there's a lot of pushing, a lot of shoving, a lot of words thrown around on the sports field definitely.

Lee: So what happened, how do you feel when that happens to you?

Cody: Oh no, I don't feel like I take offence to it that often. I know that most of the time it's in good nature, but sometimes there's actually a bit of harm, a bit of confrontation; so I try taking myself out of that situation because I don't want to get caught up in trouble stuff like that.

Lee: But, so these physical fights or confrontations, are they part of what to expect?

Cody: Definitely. They are important. So if you don't like someone, that is the best way they can know about it. Give them a kick or hit or do a dirty move. He might hit back and then you know where you stand.

Lee: What if he does not hit back?

Cody: Well you know where you stand. He is chill with you and then you can sort it out from there.

Lee: But if he hits back?

Cody: Well, it usually escalates. Might get some pushing and shoving and each other would say what they think. It does not usually go to a full punch up, but if it does, the problem is over then. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

According to gendered research in schools, violence can serve as a technique of normalisation allowing masculinity hierarchies to maintain while consolidating heterosexual identities (Renold, 2002). Cody views the violent features of his sports field experience as a normalisation process allowing him to understand where he fits amongst other students. Within the culture of break times on the sports field, the violence and physicality Cody referred to is seen to police a heteronormative gender regime while punishing those who violate these norms (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Violently engaging with another student to ascertain a sense of standing may seem barbaric; however Mills (2001) suggests that violence has been 'masculinized in such a way that boys often perpetrate violence as a means of demonstrating their perception of what counts as a valued form of masculinity' (p. 8). In Cody's case, the sports field masculinity requires 'dominance, aggression, and intimidation shown towards the "other"' (Robinson, Saltmarsh and Davies, 2012, p. 17). This type of behaviour is not condoned by the school but, as Cody explains below, it can occur if teacher surveillance is inconsistent:

Lee: You talked about the school changing the direction of play. Have they got any other rules or things that they do that control how you use the space up there?

Cody: Yeah definitely, there only used to be two teachers patrolling the sports field at a time, but ever since that incident and a couple of other incidents happened that week as well, there's now four teachers on the sports field; so there's I guess a teacher in each corner so they're always rolling and having a look what's happening.

Lee: And does the teacher presence change the way you guys behave?

Cody: Yeah, definitely. Say if you had a teacher that wasn't too strict or let a lot of things slide you'd definitely be able to get away with much more, so it'd probably be more of a physical game that day, but if there was a strict teacher there you'd probably want to take it easier a little bit. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Considering features of the physical location assists in understanding how certain competitive discourses permeate the student subcultures. As Westwood (1990) notes, 'discourses as registers of masculinity are worked through a variety of spaces' (p. 59). Spatially, the CBC sports field coordinates students to a set pattern of movement designed to encourage competition. For example, the sports field is set up in such a way that several games of soccer can be played at one time. The school is not only aware of sporting competitions during break times; they appear to encourage them through inter-house competitions. Throughout the year, middle management and Student Leaders (discussed earlier in Section 8.2) hold mini soccer and basketball tournaments. The winning teams are awarded house points and even at times recognised at whole-school assemblies. These inter-house teams are highly popular and a large portion of the students strive to make a team.

Students who do not play sport have no avenue to contribute to inter-house competitions. Considering Connell's (2005) notion of *gender regime*, the organisational culture of the school patterns the students towards a particular sporting masculinity. On a wider level, the CBC ideal student subjectivity, athletically and academically, is celebrated for success in competition. The school celebrates victories and students who outdo others to make state and national squads in sports with assemblies, newsletter articles and social media postings. Students who achieve in the top percentiles of exams, tests and year levels are valorised similarly. In other words, the school produces and perpetuates competition. Dragowski and Scharrón-del Río (2014) assert the production and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity largely influences forms of violence and aggression in schools. So, in response to a physical altercation between students born in a climate of competition, it is interesting that the school responded only by intensifying teacher surveillance on the sports field, rather than tempering the competitive climate that fosters it, or creating more inclusive environments that recognise the skills of other students in activities other than sport.

To challenge the schoolyard violence, Mills (2001) suggests one must challenge the system creating and venerating dominant violent masculinity. In their wider scholarly and collaborative work, Keddie and Mills (2009, 2011; Mills & Keddie, 2007a, 2007b, 2010) identify that practices of disruptive pedagogy work in schools to challenge the gender injustices perpetuated in many schools. For CBC, this could mean attenuating competition as a form of social currency amongst students. The scholarly work of Keddie and Mills is salient considering the extent to which violence infiltrates informal peer cultures on the sports field is largely hidden. Below, Cody shared how his peers work together to mask the visibility of violence to avoid formal reprimand from the teachers:

> Lee: What do the others in the game do? Does the game stop? (Referring to the fighting on the sports field)
>
> Cody: Kind of. Everyone knows the fight is happening. But you need the game to keep going so the teachers don't notice. So if it is pushing or shoving, the game keeps going.
>
> Lee: And if it escalates to a fight?
>
> Cody: Oh then the game stops for sure. Everyone circles around and watches. It won't last long because the teachers are there pretty quick and the two fighting are taken off.
>
> Lee: So the others will try and hide physical …
>
> Cody: Definitely. If you play on the sports field that is, um, the expectation. If two people are having a beef, you let them have it and try to make sure they don't get in trouble for it. We all kick and play dirty at different times so we all know that is how you play.
>
> Lee: Does the fighting or animosity between two people continue once … the … sorry, does it continue outside of the breaks?
>
> Cody: Not usually. It is not like two people will fight in class. If you have a problem, deal with it on the sports field or leave it. (Cody, Student Interview 3, 2017)

Irrespective of how embedded the informal norms of Cody's peer group are, he suggested the school ultimately operates with the most power. However, Cody reveals a level of astuteness amongst his peers that the surveillance of teachers can only be so effective. While the school's institutional ideals work on the assumption that teacher presence will negate violence or breach

of school rules, the reality is it can only temper violent actions. From personal experience, this is largely due to the busyness of these duties, with hundreds of students sharing a confined space. In the chaos of human movement and activity Cody and his peer group create a space to exercise violent and competitive forms of masculinity. While the school would certainly condemn and likely discipline such behaviour, ironically the school's discourse and promotion of competition aids this prevalence of hyper masculinity. Cody, like other student participants in this research, suggested teachers serve as representations of institutional power. And in response to teachers, he regulates his behaviour and his response to situations to ensure he does not receive formal reprimands. However, the interplay between formal/informal and social/learner is seen in his complicit masculinity. By masking violence and hindering teachers' capacity for surveillance, Cody and his peers dilute the school's capacity to exercise power and coordination while actively entrenching social norms privileging their position in an informal student hierarchy. Obviously, though, violence involves the subordination of others. In this light, Cody and his peer's performance of masculinity is socially bound to place, competition and diverting surveillance.

In regard to the peer cultures operating during break times away from the formal coordination of the school, the contrasting experiences of Oliver and Cody offer insight into how power and performances operate. In both anecdotes, informal peer power is expressed through mechanisms of domination of others, territoriality in space and valorisation of athletic traits. Consequently, Oliver's experience is one of discomfort and seeking refuge. Whereas Cody, socially comfortable and athletically apt enough, is able to enjoy the very spaces Oliver finds disconcerting. Through the propagation of a competitive discourse and schoolyard design, CBC promotes certain expressions of athletic masculinity while seemingly dismissing others. This is most evident in how some teachers allow gifted sportsmen to dominate spaces at the cost of others. Institutionalised forms of power, seen in school rules and teacher surveillance, are also significant contributors coordinating how Oliver and Cody act. Yet the socially bound nature of the school still suggests these institutional forms of power are vested in ideals more than reality. Oliver suggested that, by acting civilly, one can occupy a place that is out of bounds. Cody suggested masked violence can thrive if teachers are not aware. Through both Oliver and Cody, we learn a sense of belonging within the subcultures of peer life requires the ability to negotiate both informal and institutional spheres of school.

8.5 Conclusion

According to Castells (2004), it is easy to agree that identities are constructed; however as he posits, the real issue is 'how, from what, by whom and for what' (p. 7). In this chapter, I have sought to explore some of the 'how, from what, by whom and for what' in CBC. I began by drawing on scholarly work on schoolboys' masculinities to assist in mapping one example of the school's gender regime vested in a student leadership model. The *white coats,* or student leadership team, demonstrate a way in which schools work to construct student identities and evince a concerted effort to develop the patriarchal, heteronormative, ageist values of the Old Boys' school (Synott & Symes, 1995). While the white coats are designed to foster compliancy amongst students, they represent an ideal and serve as a promotional tool to lure potential new enrolments. By drawing on interview data from student participants and mapping school policies and procedures in relation to student behaviour and appearance, I have illustrated that student identities are largely constructed by institutional processes. In other words, the promoted ideal of the perfect CBC student – a white coat who is compliant, well-groomed and studious – does not evolve from mere experience within the school culture. Rather, his experience of school is in a constant state of coordination by institutional texts that activate processes. However, through the vignettes of several student participants, this chapter illustrates schools are awash with micro-politics and peer group dynamics that can be institutionalised or counter-institutional, but nonetheless work to construct, elevate, deflate or marginalise students' sense of self.

Chapter 9: Reflections and conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents an overview of this research, speaks to possible contributions, outlines limitations and concludes with a reflection regarding my time as a researcher and a professional within the institution. Throughout the data chapters, I have imbued my analysis with description in an attempt to capture how the everyday life of school for leaders, teachers and students is caught up in a wider web of ruling relations. In this concluding chapter, rather than summarising, I will centre the 'I' and my lived experience of researching the institutionalisation. I recognise that – despite great efforts of researcher reflexivity – I will always be enmeshed in the school in which I work. This means I will always be subject to discourses in and beyond my control, and arguably in a constant state of negotiation regarding the hierarchical tensions that form around conceptions of quality education and the commodification of school.

9.2 Overview of the research agenda

My research explored the institutionalised and daily lives of leaders, teachers and students in a private Catholic all-boys school throughout a period of unprecedented declining enrolment numbers. The data collection occurred at a moment in time when Australia was facing educational change premised on the globally 'hegemonic policy discourse' of neoliberalism (Morrow & Torres, 2000) promoting market mentalities and mechanisms designed to increase competition, quality, innovation, effectiveness and efficiency. My work contributes to the evolving institutional ethnographic research of Westernised schooling, which operates in the wider neoliberal policy context of privatisation emphasising parental choice and competition between schools.

Fundamental to my research was exploring the dialectical relationship between social structures, school culture and human agency. Thus the questions that framed my research were:

- In what ways are leaders', educators' and student's identities performed/realised/ validated in relation to institutional discourses and practices?
- What roles do texts play in the school culture and how do they contribute to shifting power dynamics?

- How do agents/individuals negotiate institutional tensions that form around learning and marketisation and commodification at school?

To explore these questions, I drew on both institutional ethnography and autoethnography as an approach largely because the contours of this study were influenced by my trajectory, roles and responsibilities as a professional within the school. With this method of inquiry, my analytical agenda is not necessarily to find answers, but rather 'is focused on discovering how people's purposeful actions (their work) are linked into coordinated circles of activity that extend into distant places' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 2).

9.3 Contributions

My work contributes to the literature regarding boys in schooling, particularly single-sex schooling, and understanding of the intersection between macro-educational policy and the everyday experience of schooling.

While there is some research on all-boys schooling (Burke, 2011; Saltmarsh, 2008), this scholarly space is sparse and there is none examining an all-boys Catholic college suffering unprecedented decline in enrolment numbers. Throughout my own research, I have drawn on pioneers in this area who have helped shape my understanding of how to research the complex features of school life in such a neoliberal context. My initial readings of Australian institutional ethnographies in schooling were in fact dissertations centring on the working lives of teachers. Hewson (2013) explored the implementation of an electronic curriculum and assessment tool as both a policy and as a text coordinating teachers' work. Additionally the doctoral work of Spina (2017b) explored how the everyday work of teachers is organised by interconnected global, national and subnational power relations relying on the quantification of education. While these two texts assisted greatly in developing my understanding of how policy – as a form of ruling relations – infiltrates the lives of teachers carrying about their everyday work, my initial interest were in how this type of research could help explore students' experience of school. I could not find an institutional ethnography that started from the standpoint of students. However, of particular influence on my work was Stahl's (2017a) institutional ethnography of a charter school in the United States working under neoliberal incitements. His work specifically describes and explicates the work of leaders, teachers and students.

While my research – in the scheme of wider research on schooling – is a minute niche, being single-sex schooling and a context of declining enrolments, it does contribute to broader understandings of how the daily lives of students, teachers and leaders are 'caught up' in a complex and diverse range of discourses, practices and power dynamics in school. I recognise that the representation of data in this thesis, on the surface level, appears somewhat disconnected. However, I argue that part of the analytic agenda of the institutional ethnographer is to illustrate how the seemingly disconnected is connected. While I have already discussed the limitations of this research design in greater detail (see Section 4.8), I did find synthesising the messiness of everyday schooling a difficult task and by no means claim to have done it successfully. However, in the words of one of my supervisors, who consistently had to echo this advice to me throughout this project, *sometimes you need to step back and see the forest through the trees*. Thus my intention has been to identify and describe a variety of factors that influence the daily happenings of the school and, in order to achieve this, I had to simultaneously concentrate on what was happening in the school and its wider political, economic and policy-driven context. With this in mind, one of the key findings of my study was the importance of 'context' in understanding how people experience and perform identities within institutions.

Throughout my research and extensive reading, many different authors used the term 'context' in different ways. An influential body of work on my thinking was by Braun, Ball, Maguire and Hoskins (2011) who concentrate on *school context* as a framework to identify and relate a variety of factors influencing differences in policy enactments between similar schools in London. In institutional ethnographic research, I found that context was often written in terms of either 'local' or 'translocal/extra-local' (DeVault, 2006; Rankin, 2017b; Smith, 2005), essentially meaning researchers would write about context as happenings in a particular site, location or institution, or context by means of happenings that operated beyond it. I often found this way of describing context problematic. Throughout my research, there were often times I was talking about different features or layers of the local or extra-local. Therefore in an effort at 'taking context seriously' (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011, p. 585), my work identifies four layers of context that may assist in delineating levels of social structure. The four layers of context pertinent to and identified by this study are:

- **Macro context** – referring to the education systems of Westernised countries working in a globalising and neoliberal imaginary
- **Translocal context** – referring to national and state governments, their policies and how media coverage helps in creating narratives and truths about schooling
- **Local context** – I refer to the school as an institution and community in its own right.
- **Micro-local context** – by this I mean the individual people and relationships happening in one particular school.

Irrespective of the level or layer, I argue context can be identified through policies, discourses and regimes of truth, and can influence the daily happenings of individuals in schools thus pertaining to events and action. Therefore the term context is seen as both the material (such as texts, policies, regulations, media) and discursive (meaning the truths and narratives created). Furthermore, these four layers of context are highly interconnected. It is important to recognise that for the events, discourses or ideologies of one level of social structure to influence another, there must be traces of overlap and influence. This overlap and influence largely happen through the mediation of texts. Texts can be highly prescriptive and demand accountability, such as curriculum and national testing. Texts can also foster an ideological code that creates certain truths, for example, the way statistics have generalised the underperformance of boys in schooling without considering broader sociological factors. Figure 24 below is an effort to represent the overlap and levels of context (and texts) relevant to this study. Following this representation, I speak to the limitations of this study.

Macro-level context – Global

This level of context recognises the impact of globalisation and neoliberalism in education. Due to the rise of international comparative assessments and national testing, international organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank have become central to economic and educational policy for most Western and developing counties. Sahlberg (2011) refers to this as the global education reform. The policy pressures of globalisation have occurred within a neoliberal framework that works to promote some of the following features:

- prescribed curriculum
- focus on literacy and numeracy
- test-based accountability
- market-orientated reforms (e.g. private sector management models, school and parental choice discourses, privatisation of some educational functions).

This level of context has largely grown through the rise of international comparative assessments and national testing of education systems through tests such as PISA. These forms of assessment are examples of texts that generate data to enable national and subnational comparison. According to Sellar and Lingard (2013), the numbers and data from these tests illustrate 'the remarkable ability of numbers and calculations to defy disciplinary and even national boundaries' (p. 25) Consequently, these international organisations promote testing as a tool to measure a nation's capacity to produce citizens able to contribute to global and national economies. As such, these organisations have become important sources of policy ideas in nations' construction of educational policies. Thus these international tests and organisations work to create truths about countries' educational – and by extension economic – performance.

Macro-Level context – National

Within Australia, the federal government draws on the tenets of neoliberalism and globalisation in the creation of policies and texts shaping the work of schools. Of significance to this study, these include:

- promotion of school markets through funding (of both private and public schools) connected to enrolment numbers
- the creation of a national curriculum authority and curriculum
- compulsory national literacy and numeracy testing and the publication of individual school performances through the *My School* website
- the introduction of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for Year 12 students – a unified university entrance system that provides students with a national ranking in relation to other Year 12s.

Through these policies and texts certain truths are created about schools and students. For example, a function of the *My School* website allows for schools to be compared to one another. Furthermore, the Australian media fuels certain narratives regarding the education of young people in light of these government initiatives. Of significance is how the neoliberal forms of accountability and the use of data positions boys as disadvantaged and underachieving. However this data is generalised and does not consider which boys (meaning race, social class, etc.). Consequently, these truths led to the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry *Boys: Getting it right*, resulting in policy initiatives that worked to shape schools through recommendations for a more boy-friendly curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and increased employment of male teachers (Mills et al., 2007).

Local context – The school

The school is largely shaped by the translocal. For CBC, declining numbers see increased engagement in marketing stratagems to create relevance within the competitive local school market. Declining numbers means less funding which has structural ramifications (e.g. the need for redundancies or – in extreme cases – school closure). CBC works to brand its institutional image as:

- specialising in boys' learning, which leads to ensuring every student succeeds academically, particularly in relation to NAPLAN and Year 12 results.
- promoting an idealised student subjectivity. The ideal CBC boy is a leader, he is studious, and he has a pattern of values. The ideal CBC subjectivity is for sale, and the school hopes potential clientele are interested in buying it.

Micro-level context – The individuals

My thesis has attempted to capture how leaders, teachers and students at CBC have negotiated the above ruling relations.

Figure 24: Four layers of context

9.4 Limitations and future opportunities

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. However, as I set out the limitations, I will consider how these can lead to future opportunities.

9.4.1 Balancing breadth and depth

A limitation to this study is the depth of explication regarding leaders', teachers' and students' standpoint. One of the most difficult decisions I faced as a researcher was determining what data to involve and dismiss. There were times where I was simply overwhelmed with the sheer amount of data and I acknowledge a more experienced researcher would likely know how to manage it far better. As is common in ethnography, I understand no research of this nature, irrespective of scale, can ever claim to be total and comprehensive. Attempting to illustrate the happenings through the standpoint of the participants, the depth of this research is limited by my attempts to capture multiple standpoints and their interconnected nature. A potential area for future research is to examine the effects on just leaders, or just teachers, or just students, in a school facing declining enrolments or financial difficulties. Such a study may broaden the pool of participants within a particular role (e.g. more leaders of differing responsibilities, a greater cross-section of teachers or students, etc.) and add greater depth to how roles are defined within institutions.

9.4.2 The missing voices: Education Support Officers and parents

I recognise an important limitation to this study is that I have only given voice to leaders, teachers and students. At Christian Brothers College, the everyday of schooling is deeply enriched by the tireless work and commitment of Education Support Officers (ESOs) who provide support in administration, timetabling and daily organisation, facilities maintenance, canteen duties and the classroom. I would argue that a great deal of research in schools often overlooks the work and standpoint of support staff. This oversight comes with a great irony, in that, without ESO support the school would struggle to function. Considering that ESO staff are often the first to be stood down or made redundant when economic hardship hits schools,[46] their absence from my study does not mean to infer that their interest in the school's future is anything but on par with that of leaders, teachers or students.

[46] In the final months of writing this thesis, COVID-19 saw many schools shut down leading to the stand down of staff. At CBC, in preparation, staff identified as non-essential Education Support Officers were initially told they would be stood down should schools close for a prolonged period of time. Fortunately in South Australia, at the time of writing, schools are running as normal.

Considering these neoliberal times, particularly within Australia where over 34% of students attend private schools, I recognise my study would have been bolstered by insights from parents as to why they selected Christian Brothers College over other schools. While students are fundamental to how schools operate and what the everyday may look like, it is parents who – in most circumstances – decide which school their child attends. Furthermore, parents often become involved with the daily happenings of school life. They serve on parent committees, often assume positions on the school board, and are frequent visitors for events such as information evenings and parent–teacher interviews. Parents are often fierce advocates for their child when a grievance occurs on school grounds and do not shy away from seeking the audience of teachers or leaders when dissatisfied. Considering that Catholic schools in South Australia have experienced unprecedented declines in enrolments, while the more expensive and elite colleges have continued to grow, the standpoint and voice of parents would provide an enlightening insight into how schools as institutions are perceived and experienced.

9.4.3 Objectivity and subjectivity as a researcher and member of the institution: Wearing different hats at the same time

Undoubtedly, the heavily interwoven nature of my roles within the institution is a limitation to this study. It would be impossible for me to lay claim to objectivity despite my personal journal and analytic work helping keep the research on track. Thus I recognise a complexity to this study is that my research is funnelled by my subjectivity. Thus appropriately, in this section, I provide a brief biographical reflection about my career in relation to this study. In doing so, I intend to illustrate the deeply interwoven nature of my work as a researcher and educator.

I began my doctoral work (through orientation course work) in the second half of 2014. I started working at CBC at the beginning of 2014. At the time of writing, I am still employed at the school though I have changed roles several times. So it is fair to say that I cannot look at my time as a teacher at CBC as ever something separate from when I began considering the school as a research site. My first year teaching at CBC was with a cohort of Year 7s, and as chance would have it, some of these Year 7s became the Year 10s I interviewed for this project in 2017. Initially, I was provided a one-year contract as a middle school teacher, which was turned into a permanent position early in 2014 when the school was at its height of enrolments. While I did not teach these boys from 2015 to 2017 (as they completed Years 8 to 10), I was fortunate to teach a great deal of them in their final years of schooling and to see them graduate in 2019.

I was never meant to teach any higher than Year 9 when I started at CBC. Yet throughout this research period, as the Catholic system – including CBC – begun to experience a decline in enrolments, paired with teachers leaving for reasons such as retirement or opportunities elsewhere, I was asked to begin teaching senior classes. This is important because the reason I am now a senior teacher at the school the enrolments declining. The school could not afford to replace some of the outgoing and experienced senior teachers on account of over-staffing. Consequently, the leadership team at the time had to draw from the pool of internal teachers to fill senior classes. In the middle years (Years 7 to 9), I taught English and humanities. At the end of 2015, I was approached to teach senior classes.

Therefore, the very Year 7 boys I taught in 2014 as a new teacher to school, where for some I taught their very first lesson at the senior campus, in November of 2019, I taught their very last lesson as Year 12s. There is obviously a nostalgic symmetry here, but my point is to illustrate how in schools – perhaps like in life more broadly – the experience of the daily is often shaped by events, circumstances, texts and decisions made outside the immediate sphere of one's view. This is the point I believe Dorothy Smith, through her design of institutional ethnography, attempts to illustrate. While we have agency in the form of decisions or actions or behaviours, we weigh them up against other thoughts, opportunities, aspirations, relationships and emotions. It is in this intersection between agency and action where the ruling relations Smith speaks of are made visible and which my study explores.

When working in an institution experiencing constraints, I came to realise my professional life was not solely in my control. To return to that moment in late 2015, the one where I was approached by leadership to take some senior classes, I could have – like other teachers did – decline. Yet I took the opportunity with the reassurance and confidence of my peers. This is not to say the idea of teaching Year 11 and 12 worried me. While I had not taught curriculum from the SACE Board, I had seen the anxieties and work of teachers when it came to ensuring their marking aligned with standards, their curriculum met course requirements and whether their results held at the end of the year. Perhaps ironically, in that I was attempting a PhD, I doubted whether I had the capacity to teach the subject on an intellectual level. When I started teaching at CBC, students and some other staff alike often revered the Year 12 teachers. In essence, they were seen as the bearers of the subject they taught across the whole school. Middle school teachers would seek their guidance, but never the other way round. Simply put, teaching Year 12s had status. Bearing in mind my initial teacher training was in primary and

middle school, I felt out of my depth. If circumstances had been different and enrolments at the school continued to grow – or at least remained steady – the school simply may have hired another senior English teacher and I would never have been offered the opportunity.

So what was initially meant to be teaching a couple of senior English classes for one year led to me becoming a core senior English teacher of Year 11 and 12 classes only. Later, in 2017, I won[47] the position of Head of English – a middle management role. In late 2018, following the appointment of a new Principal to begin in 2019, I won[48] the position of Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning.[49] Now, in 2020, I still have this role, but I also won[50] an additional role as the Head of the Senior Campus, which positions me as a member of the executive.

This reflection highlights how the dimensions of my research have largely been influenced by my career trajectory, the institution and economics shaping the institution. Throughout this research, I continued working full time and never took an extended period of leave to research or write this thesis. The work of this thesis has largely been completed on weekends, late weeknights and intensive bursts of academic activity in school breaks. Furthermore, a considerable amount of the data from this thesis explicates policies, processes and discourse in relation to the high school certificate, something that would likely not have unfolded had I remained teaching in the middle years as it would have been unlikely I would have invited Year 10s (senior students) to participate in the study. Thus the autoethnographic features of this study were paramount, as I can never truly say that throughout this research there was a time where I was simply a teacher or a researcher or a leader. Even now as school leader, I still teach a class (which is still by far my favourite part of my school day). When collecting my data throughout 2017, I conducted interviews with participants either during lesson breaks or after school. When sitting in staff meetings as a teacher and middle manager at the time, I was also a researcher as I was making journal entries, collecting texts, and considering what was happening or being said in relation to scholarly literature I had read at the time. In essence, I was wearing multiple hats at the same time. As I have *climbed the corporate ladder* and won

[47] I use the term 'won' loosely as I was the only person who nominated interest in the position.
[48] This position was 'won' against a field of internal and external applicants.
[49] The new Principal chaired the panel for this position. The outgoing Principal was not on the panel or involved in the recruitment process.
[50] Only members of the senior leadership team were eligible to apply for this position.

leadership positions in recent years, the nature of my work and the ways I see things about the school, as an institution, has also transitioned, a point I speak to in the closing reflection.

9.4.4 Charting my reflective processes

Initially, in the beginning stages of the data collection process, my study started with the situated experience of a group of boys talking about their everyday schooling and their description serves as the 'ground zero' (Campbell, 2006, p. 91) of this institutional ethnographic investigation. However, as my thinking developed and my roles within the school transitioned, I began to see how the daily experience of school was a heavily coordinated process susceptible to local and extra-local forces. This insight is not particularly groundbreaking in and of itself. On face value, schools are heavily orchestrated institutions by mere extension of the fact that they involve the coordination of hundreds of people within one geographical site for a generally shared purpose. So while it was not initially intended, I extended the interviews from students to include teachers and school leaders in the process of data collection. However, what has always been of interest throughout my research has been what has been influencing and shaping the coordination of daily life at CBC, or as Dorothy Smith would say, extending 'our everyday worlds into regions we have not been to, and perhaps could not go, without the explorer's interests' (2005, p. 2). At the beginning of this research project, as a teacher, I may have surmised that it was simply the school leadership team coordinating school life. Now, as I reflect on my experiences as a beginning leader, I realise how wrong I was.

9.5 Closing reflections: From questioning performances to performing the questioned

In Chapter 1, I began by explaining how this research was born in an interest in how the school would make certain students (and their teachers) celebrities for reasons of academic, athletic and leadership accomplishment. These local celebrities of the school were either Student Leaders in white coats, athletes or academic high achievers. The customs of adoration were seemingly a part of the everyday life of CBC. Driving the making of these celebrities was the school leadership team. Often the Principal, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principals would be seen on the assembly stage or at a staff meeting introducing and recognising these localised celebrities. Tugging away at me as a teacher and researcher was why just a select few? Why is it only the winners? Ironically, now six years later, I have become one of the leaders who are on the stage privileging and valorising students and staff for the very things I once questioned.

And the answer to *why is it only the winners?* is because the school, in the marketised and commodified arena of modern schooling, has been losing. With declining enrolments and comparatively lower academic achievements than like schools, schools like CBC are seen as only either winners or losers. CBC is simply trying to survive this narrative and create a different truth to what the data suggests. And perhaps, in order to do so, the school and the people that work within it must not let the ruling relations of comparison and measurement define it. But as I will now explore, such idealism is not so easy.

When considering the influence of the macro-context on school life, for example neoliberal policies and the marketisation of education, I have come to understand ruling relations create moments of disjuncture that question individual value systems. When I began teaching, before my time at CBC, I wanted to work with – and in some small way improve the lives of – young people. This is my personal and professional value, and I recognise that sometimes the personal and professional values are synchronised while at other times there is disjuncture. Yet schooling in neoliberal times defines what 'improvement' looks like. For example, as a teacher, I want my students to succeed but definitions of success are largely confined to numbers and grades, particularly in high school. I recognise that students are also enmeshed into such a strain of thinking, and largely, this is because their post-schooling aspirations often extend from their performance at school. My experience teaching Year 12 English over the last four years has illustrated as much. The boys I have worked with are often highly aspirational, but they do not see Year 12 to be about learning, rather, a gateway to university and a platform for performance. Therefore grades and performance are important. Institutional ethnography has helped illustrate that our work together – as teacher and student – has become more about appeasing performance standards than actual learning. We will spend hours nuancing assignments to nudge the grades a little higher, and I cannot deny this also benefits the teachers. On one hand, I am helping the young people I work with towards their marketised and commoditised goals, thus feeding my personal values. But such work is dangerous, as it only works to reproduce a system in which the value and measure of teachers becomes an extension of their students' performance. Thus on the other hand, my professional reputation improves as my students' grades do. And with growth in professional reputation comes opportunities for leadership, which I took.

The way I work with students has changed as my professional role within the institution has changed. Undoubtedly, this exercise of being a researcher has helped identify what has

orchestrated this change. As a teacher, I used to speak of work in relation to individual students or classes, a particular strand of curriculum outcomes, and the daily frustration and joys that come with working with young people. Now, I know I often speak of achievement data, enrolment numbers, staff performance, infrastructure and buildings, and most importantly, what the school offers over others. There are days when I feel I have moved from teacher to businessman and this has implications for my relationships within the school.

Through my interactions with students, I have noticed changes as my role within the institution has changed. For example, I might have once spoken to a student about how poor behaviour might hinder his future opportunities. Recently, and with a level of retrospective despondence, I recall asking a student how his poor behaviour might reflect poorly on the college. This is not to say that I put the institution over people. For example, when now on stage – as a leader – calling students forward for commendation in leadership, academic achievement or athletic performance, I feel a sincere pride for these boys. I am genuinely happy for them. But equally, I am aware that there are hundreds of boys who fill the gymnasium who will never have their name called on that stage. But as a leader, in the same way I spoke of the mutual benefit to a teacher when students achieve high grades, when students of the school earn significant accomplishments, celebrating them not only reiterates an ideological code of what the school values but also helps in promoting the school as an institution. As a leader, my tension lies in that one cannot celebrate some students without automatically dismissing others.

Similarly, as part of the institution, my relationship with teaching staff has changed. As a teacher, I empathise with my colleagues who are in a constant state of tension, torn between intense curriculum accountability frameworks, the complexity of teaching young people, and the genuine striving to see every student succeed. Yet as a leader, I must also speak to and manage these teachers when they do not meet curriculum standards, have a class that appears to be underperforming, or when students and families complain about their performance. Over the course of the last two years, the school has had to dismiss two staff for serious performance matters. In one of the meetings regarding a staff member, a lawyer advised the executive team that the school is ‘behest to its weakest staff member’. On reflection, I have come to understand that I often view staff within a diametric binary of *strengths* or *weaknesses*. This view of people is institutionalised and illustrates a constant tension I face as a leader in a school. While I would like to think my drive and compassion has not changed since becoming a leader, it would be

naïve to suggest that, in performing a leadership role in a context where competition is fierce and numbers matter, my view of people and the institution is no different.

Christian Brothers College, like all schools, is a complex site of internal and external tensions for all people involved. Through my study I have attempted to illustrate how the daily life of the school has been intensified by policy and the context of declining enrolments. My research is not designed to solve the problems that come with schooling in neoliberal and marketised times. It has been my hope to capture how the ruling relations that permeate the school, from within and beyond, shape daily life. This type of work is important as, in the words of Dorothy Smith (2005), it goes 'beyond what people know, to find out what they are doing is connected with others' doings in ways they cannot see' (p. 5). In other words, my research has helped capture how people are framed by and within ruling relations that suggest there are only winners and losers. My challenge now, as a teacher and leader, is to broaden the frame in which we measure and value the work of people.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Student interview guide 1

Student Interview 1	
Protocol and Guide	
Organisational Information	
Student Code:	
Location of Interview:	
Date/Time of Interview:	
Year Level:	
Interview Number:	

Interview Purpose and Introduction:
The purpose of this interview is to explore student experiences at CBC. The interviews should take between 20 to 30 minutes. If you are willing, this interview will be recorded using an audio recorder so I can review and transcribe it. Your name and identifying information will not be mentioned in the study.
Do I have your permission to record our conversation? Yes No (Circle)

1. *Do you like being at CBC?*
    a. *What parts of the school do you enjoy?*
    b. *What parts of the school do you dislike?*
    c. *Do you think that is just a CBC thing? Or any school?*
2. *You are in Year 10, tell me about how you are going this year at school?*
    a. *What classes do you take?*
    b. *What has been your hardest class? Why?*
    c. *What has been your easiest class? Why?*
    d. *Do you engage in other aspects of CBC life? Such as co-curricular? Why or Why not?*
3. *Overall, what is the hardest thing about being a student?*
4. *Tell me about a typical school day.*
    a. *What do you do when you wake up?*
    b. *When do you get to school? How long does it take? How do you get here? What do you do on the way?*
    c. *When at school, what is usually the first thing you do when you arrive?*
    d. *How does the day start?*
    e. *What do you do at class/es?*
    f. *What happens between classes? What do you do?*
    g. *Describe what learning or work at school on a typical day?*
    h. *What else happens at CBC?*
5. *I want you to think of a time where you really succeeded at something school related. Can you tell me about it? I may ask more questions.*
    a. *What did you do to prepare?*
    b. *How did you feel?*
    c. *What did that mean for future action?*
    d. *Why is this significant? How do you measure it as a success?*
    e. *What factors are involved in this story?*
6. *Now, I want you think of an experience or moment, school related, that you failed. Can you tell me about it? I may ask more questions.*
    a. *Why do you deem it a failure? A missed opportunity?*
    b. *How did you feel?*
    c. *What does this mean for you now?*
    d. *Why is this important? How do you measure this as a failure or something bad?*
    e. *What factors are involved in the story?*
7. *What do you think you need to be in order to be good at school?*
8. *When you are struggling at school, who do you seek support from?*

Close of interview

Appendix B: Student interview guide 2

Student Interview 2	
Protocol and Guide	
Organisational Information	
Student Code:	
Location of Interview:	
Date/Time of Interview:	
Year Level:	
Interview Number:	

Interview Purpose and Introduction:

Thanks for coming in for a second interview. Today, I am really interested in understanding how you do things in regard to schoolwork and what this means for you. So to get us started, I will ask some general questions and then we will get more specific.

- *What do you think this purpose of school is?*
    - *Why do people send their children to school?*
    - *Is this school any different to any other?*
- *I am in interested in learning about your School Work. Can you tell me:*
    - *What school work looks like? Feel like? Means?*
    - *Why do you do it?*
        - *What does (response) mean?*
    - *How do you know if you have learnt/achieved something/completed something?*
- *Let's talk about work at this school.*
    - *How do you know what to do? How are you informed?*
    - *What are the reasons you are told to do things?*
        - *What happens if you do not do them?*
        - *How does the school make sure you do things?*
    - *Is some work more important than others?*
        - *How so? Explain?*
    - *What are some of the things that make learning/work possible?*
    - *What are some of the things that make learning/work difficult?*
- *What is the impact of schoolwork on other aspects of your life?*
    - *Explain/Expand/get some details*
    - *Do you think this is fair?*
    - *What is the biggest impact on school work being achievable?*
    - *Does it shape the way you do things even at school? Perhaps like some of the other things we talked about in the previous email?*
- ***(Hopefully participant has brought two varying samples)** I have asked you to bring in some examples of schoolwork. I want you to talk me through them? I have some guiding questions:*
    - *What is the subject/nature of task? What context was it given (connect to something etc)?*
    - *What does it require? How do you know what to do? (For the task and success)*
    - *What will happen when this is submitted? (If assessed, go into criteria? What do they know about this?*
    - *Why are you proud? Happy? Annoyed? Disappointed? Etc.*

Close of interview

That is all the questions I have for you today – thank you for your time and for sharing.

Appendix C: Student interview guide 3

Student Interview 3	
Protocol and Guide	
Organisational Information	
Student Code:	
Location of Interview:	
Date/Time of Interview:	
Year Level:	
Interview Number:	

Interview Purpose and Introduction:

Thanks for coming in again. Today is our last interview and I am interested in learning about how you operate at school. I have brought in some resources that will also help.

Let's start with how this school makes you act or be a particular way?

- Have you ever thought about it? Can you see it?
- What sort of things does a school do to make sure you do particular things?
    - Where would I find information about this?
- Why do you think a school operates like this?

We will begin with the photos I asked you take. So, I was hoping you could talk me through some of these

- *Explain the space*
- *Why is it significant*
- *What do you use it for?*
- *How do you know how to use it? What are the rules? Are there different types of rules, school and friendships?*
- ***See where the interview takes you – trying to elicit how they operate in these spaces.***

I have also brought in some items that you might find familiar. I am interested in getting your opinion about these.

- *How would you describe them?*
- *What is the purpose of these? Who taught you this?*
- *Are these just for the wall? Do they mean anything for you? Have you ever thought about this?*

Close of interview

This is all the questions I have. Thank you.

Appendix D: Staff interview guide

Staff Interview	
Protocol and Guide	
Organisational Information	
Staff Code:	
Location of Interview:	
Date/Time of Interview:	

Interview Purpose and Introduction:

Thank you for helping me with my study. I have some specific questions for you about how the day-to-day activities of the students here at CBC are coordinated. Furthermore, I have questions about specific documents used in the classroom to coordinate particular activities.

Tell me about the courses/subjects you teach. How do you decide what information/content or activities will be used?

How do you structure assignments? Is there a guideline for what assignments should look like? Be structured? How do you know?

How do you manage course content outside of assignment? What influences these?

Do you see differences in the work and/or effort from different students? What are those differences? What motivates this?

What texts or documents shape your teaching? What do you understand of their origins? Where did they come from etc???

What do you expect from students in your classes? How do you communicate these expectations to students? Are these your expectations? Or the school's?

How does the school regulate particular behaviours? Activities?

Close of interview

This is all the questions I have. Thank you.

Appendix E: Research information sheet for participants

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET	
SECTION 1: CONTACT AND PROJECT DETAILS	
Researcher's Full Name:	Lee Del Col
Contact Details:	ldelcol@cbc.sa.edu.au
Supervisor's Full Name:	Dr Garth Stahl
Contact Details:	Garth.Stahl@unisa.edu.au
Protocol Number:	0000036592
Project Title:	An Organisational Study of student experiences at CBC

Information

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian,
Thank you for volunteering to be a part of my study. The following information is intended to prove you with details and requirements regarding the study.

Purpose, Benefits and Risks of the Study
I am researching the everyday experiences of students at CBC. I am hoping to learn about how student encounters with the school institution shape their attitudes and experience towards learning. The benefit of this study is to contribute to current academic literature regarding student experiences of school. It is not anticipated that there are any risks to participation in this study beyond those encountered during everyday school life.

Requirements of the Study
Consent from yourself and a parent/guardian is required. Please return the consent form (attached to this sheet) signed and dated.
The study will take place over the course of term 3 and early term 4 2017. Participation in the study involves:

- **Individual Interviews**
  - The individual interviews are designed to elicit detailed accounts of student activities when at, or in preparation or relation to, school. The rationale behind two interviews is to afford the researcher opportunity to review notes from the initial interview and seek clarification or elaboration during a second interview. It is intended the first interview will take place during Week 4 or 5 of Term 3, and the second interview during Week 8 or 9 of Term 3. Exact dates will be negotiated with participants. All interviews will take place on school grounds. The exact location of the interviews will be negotiated with each of the participants respectively to ensure comfort. Please note, the researcher will ensure he is visible at all times and as such, this will be included in the negotiation of place with the participant.
  - Both interview processes will be reflexive; as such the researcher may probe for further information by asking clarifying questions or for further details.
    - The first interview questions will begin with:
      - What do you do to prepare for school?
      - How do you manage your schoolwork?
      - What parts of the school assist in your learning? What parts of the school distract you from learning?
      - How does the school communicate to you its expectations about being a student?
    - The second interview questions will be influenced by the first interview, subsequently differing from participant to participant. The second interview will be framed by the overarching aims of the study.

- **Observations**
    - Preceding both rounds of interviews, I intend to observe the participant in lessons. The lessons and times for the observations to occur will be negotiated between the participant, their teacher and myself. Should either the participant or their teacher express any level of discomfort with this process, the observations will not take place.
    - The observations will be descriptive and an observation protocol will frame this form of data collection. The Observation Protocol will contain the following components:
        - Date/Time/Lesson
        - Location
        - Description of Setting
        - Who is present
        - Illustration of how the setting is set (bird's eye view)

      Guiding Questions
        - What is happening? How does the participant engage with the setting?
        - How does the participant engage with peers? Teacher?
        - How are the activities being coordinated?
        - What texts may coordinate the activities being observes?

It is intended that the study will be completed midway through 2018, however data collection will only occur over the time period specified above.

Data Collection and Storage

- All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to identification of any individual will be released, unless required by law.
- All data will be coded with use of pseudonyms, which only the principal researcher will have a copy of the key.
- All electronic data will be stored for five years with the School of Education, University of South Australia, and on a secure digital file system of Christian Brothers College server. All other forms of data (such as observations and notes) will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the school office of the principal researcher.

Ethics and Approval

- This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant contact the Executive Officer of this committee, Tel: 08 8302 3118 email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au
- Approval for this project has been granted by the College Principal and Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA)

Complaints

- Participants or third parties who wish to lodge a complaint about either the study or the way it is being conducted should contact the Executive Officer of this committee, Tel: 08 8302 3118 email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

Thank you again for volunteering to be a participant in my study. Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details above.

Appendix F: Participant consent form

Consent form

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: humanethics@unisa.edu.au

SECTION 1: CONTACT AND PROJECT DETAILS

Researcher's Full Name:	Lee Del Col
Contact Details:	ldelcol@cbc.sa.edu.au
Supervisor's Full Name:	Dr Garth Stahl
Contact Details:	Garth.Stahl@unisa.edu.au
Protocol Number:	0000036592
Project Title:	An Organisational Study of student experiences at CBC

SECTION 2: CERTIFICATION

Participant Certification

In signing this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential, unless required by law.
- I understand that should I be involved in a focus group interview, I will protect the identity and responses of all other participants.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I understand that the tape will be transcribed and stored electronically with the School of Education (University of South Australia) and by the College (Christian Brothers College) in locked servers

Participant Permission

Participant Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Parent/Guardian Permission

***NOTE**: Participants under the age of 18 normally require parental consent to be involved in research.*

I have explained the study to subject and consider that he/she understands what is involved.

Parent/Guardian Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Researcher Certification

I have explained the study to subject and consider that he/she understands what is involved.

Appendix G: Position information document: Deputy Principal

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Deputy Principals of EREA schools are employed by the Executive Director on behalf of the Board of Edmund Rice Education Australia. It is a key role within the organisation and requires diversity and flexibility in order to undertake the duties and responsibilities associated with the position.

NB. Specific duties and responsibilities may vary depending on individual College leadership structures, but may include the following:

LEADERSHIP

The Deputy Principal:

- maintains active membership of the Catholic Church and a manner of life which gives witness to that membership;
- fulfils the accreditation requirements prescribed for this position;
- works towards achieving the key educational goals and values of the school;
- with the Principal, integrates the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and its Touchstones in the life of the school;
- participates actively in the Religious Education programme of the school;
- provides leadership by;
  - displaying a positive approach to issues that arise
  - displaying familiarity with current educational issues
  - providing a positive role model for staff in terms of dress standard and professional manner in all interactions with members of the College community
  - being involved with appropriate professional associations
  - participating in personal professional development
  - being involved in the co-curricular activities of the College
- maintains confidentiality in discussions with staff, students and parents.

ADMINISTRATION

The Deputy Principal:

- meets regularly with the Principal to share information regarding staff, students and school organisation;
- works co-operatively with and supports the Principal (and assumes the role as Head of the School if the Principal has an extended absence);
- works co-operatively with outside educational bodies and maintains effective communication with them;
- monitors all Student Reports in order to analyse Performance Indicators with a view to affirming positive efforts and working towards improving negative efforts;
- works co-operatively with and supports the Heads of House/Year Coordinators and the School Counsellor in terms of student welfare and College events;
- frames policy statements and undertakes regular reviews, relevant to his/her areas of responsibility;
- maintains good communication with all sections of the College, particularly in terms of student welfare and College events;
- delegates responsibilities whenever appropriate;
- assists in the implementation of the strategic plan of the College.

CURRICULUM

The Deputy Principal:

- provides clear and competent leadership of middle management;
- is aware of curriculum developments at a local and national level and incorporates appropriate responses to these at the school level;
- aligns curriculum, strategies, structures and processes with the ethos and mission of the College;
- communicates competently and confidently regarding curriculum matters with staff, students and parents;
- communicates an appreciation and understanding of cross curricula elements of the teaching and learning programme;
- communicates a competent understanding of relevant learning theories;
- analyses all Student Reports in terms of Performance Indicators.

PASTORAL CARE

The Deputy Principal:

- articulates the College's pastoral care strategies and communicates, directs and monitors the Pastoral Care Policy;
- chairs meetings of the Pastoral Care Group;
- is accessible to students, staff, parents;
- ensures that appropriate counselling, guidance and direction is available to students;
- consults with the School Counsellor and Heads of House/Year Coordinators to develop and maintain strategies for pastoral care of student groups;
- liaises with the Secretary of Student Services to monitor student welfare issues and communicate relevant information to College Staff;
- consults with the School Counsellor and Director of Studies to chair case conferences and/or develop Individual Educational Plans for particular students;
- works co-operatively with Heads of House/Year Coordinators to maintain student involvement in College/House events;
- monitors procedures for maintaining morale and self-esteem among staff and students;
- maintains good rapport with colleagues;
- makes appropriate reference to the College's expectations to remind students of their responsibilities as members of the College community;
- encourages relationships between staff and students which are mutually respectful and friendly;
- provides for personal space and care for themselves within the rigour of the job and its responsibilities.

DISCIPLINE

The Deputy Principal:

- communicates, directs and monitors the Managing Student Behaviour Policy;
- promotes and encourages acceptable standards of student behaviour;
- communicates the discipline policy and an appropriate range of strategies to the staff;
- encourages the staff to develop their own disciplinary approaches consistent with school policy and is supportive of such approaches.

STAFF

The Deputy Principal:

- provides structures for appropriate staff in-service and professional development;
- develops and supports adequate programmes for the pastoral care of staff;
- ensures the appropriate induction of new staff to the College and provides support for new teachers in their formative time (assisting the Director of Staff);
- ensures, via relevant evaluation procedures, that staff are effective in their allocated responsibilities;
- contributes appropriately to the selection of new staff;
- communicates competently and clearly with staff;
- provides an excellent role model to staff in terms of dress, communication, punctuality, commitment, professional manner;
- provides an excellent role model for teaching staff in the stimulation and motivation shown within the teaching activities of the school;
- is careful regarding private, personal and confidential matters;
- acts as a mentor, particularly to the Heads of House/Year Coordinators, in terms of dealings with students, parents and staff;

STUDENTS

The Deputy Principal:

- communicates, directs and monitors the Bullying Policy and the Child Protection Policy;
- makes appropriate provision for suitable student leadership programmes;
- strives to resolve communication conflicts between staff, students and parents;
- maintains procedures to establish appropriate standards in dress, uniforms, application, respect and social behaviour;
- makes appropriate provision for student education in subject choices, counselling, etc;
- authorises arrangements to be made for sick students;
- oversees procedures for reports on any students who are injured from accidents at school;
- collects and maintains written reports on any physical incidents between students and staff;
- records and responds to student absences;
- coordinates all programmes related to the orientation and induction of Year 7 students;
- coordinates all programmes related to the graduation and departure of Year 12 students.

SCHOOL STRUCTURES

The Deputy Principal:

- oversees the construction of the timetable consistent with the priorities and requirements of the College;
- participates in development and implementation of College policies and procedures;
- plans, with the Principal, the provision of facilities and resources appropriate to the curriculum;
- ensures that teaching facilities are fully equipped for the commencement of each term;
- encourages responsibility in use, care and maintenance of common resources;
- plans, with the Principal, for capital development, maintenance and strategic planning.

ORGANISATION

The Deputy Principal will assist the Principal to organise, prepare and co-ordinate:

- all staff meetings;
- the calendar for the school year and all associated rosters;
- supervision rosters for bus areas, recess and lunch times, canteen, bookshop and other required areas;
- supervision of classes for teachers who are absent;
- recording of teacher absences;
- recording of routine absences of staff from school premises;
- maintenance of administrative data and records;
- day-to-day alterations to the school programme;
- applications for camps, field trips and excursions from the school premises by teaching staff;
- school assemblies;
- visiting speakers to the College, staff or classes;
- drawing up the College's calendar of dates and events;
- overseeing special College functions - College masses, sporting carnivals, Edmund Rice Day, Graduation, Awards Evening, music/drama/art presentations;
- setting-up and supervision of all examination procedures;
- format and content of student homework diaries;
- House events/assemblies/fundraising events.