Student Experiences of Relational Pedagogy in a Big Picture Education Advisory at Willibe High School

Helen Stone

BSc (UWA) Grad Dip Ed (Murdoch) MA (Murdoch)

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Murdoch University

School of Education

September 2018

For Roy and Pauline

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research conducted through Murdoch University. The main content is work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

……………………………………………

Helen Stone
September 2018

Abstract

Traditional high schools do not always meet the needs and interests of marginalised students. This thesis has a two-fold aim: first to understand the problem of student disengagement from formal schooling and second, to investigate how a more relational pedagogy within the structure of a Big Picture Advisory (BPA) classroom might address the problem. How to provide quality, equitable and engaging high school education continues to perplex a range of stakeholders, including policymakers, school administrators, teachers, parents and students, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The role of public education is to give all students the opportunity to flourish, be creative and succeed in life and careers. However, this does not always happen as Australia's high schools are struggling to provide a meaningful and relevant curriculum for marginalised students. In response, this thesis examines how the Advisory or "school within a school" presents a viable way of re-engaging students who are switching off and dropping out of high school in escalating numbers. The Advisory is a design for schooling underpinned by a philosophy of experiential interest-based learning, relational pedagogy and responsive student–teacher relationships. In this thesis, I argue that the Advisory enables a more relational pedagogy which provides a more socially just model of education for marginalised high school students.

Using a qualitative interpretive methodology, through participant observation, interviews and an analysis of school documents, the thesis provides an understanding of how students in a BPA understand, experience and respond to a relational pedagogy based on the values of trust, care and respect. Student narratives gathered during research at Willibe High School (WHS) described a trusting, caring and respectful learning environment. Students also reported a sense of connectedness and belonging which supported their overall well-being. The social and emotional needs of marginalised students were attended to via a more relational pedagogy focused on pursuing individual interests. As a result, students showed a greater willingness to engage in learning, connect to the official curriculum and develop career aspirations. It is through the negotiation of a personalised curriculum and activating authentic learning experiences with peers, family and community that a more democratic and relevant experience of high school becomes possible for each student. In conclusion, I examine the implications for students, teachers, administrators and policymakers and recommendations for future research.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AEYLF	Australian Early Years Learning Framework
AISWA	Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
ANSN	Australian National Schools Network
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
ATSIL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
BPA	Big Picture Advisory (Western Australian model)
BPEA	Big Picture Education Australia (Australian model)
BPL	Big Picture Learning (American model)
BPS	Big Picture School (American model)
CAC	Competitive Academic Curriculum
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CARE	Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education
CES	Coalition of Essential Schools (American organisation)
DCSWA	Department of Corrective Services, Western Australia
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DOEWA	Department of Education, Western Australia
DSP	Disadvantaged Schools Program
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
IPS	Independent Public School
LBOTE	Language Background other than English
LOTE	Languages other than English
LSAY	Longitudinal Studies of Australian Youth
LTI	Leaving Through Internship
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational and Educational Research
NGAA	National Growth Areas Alliance
NSN	National Schools Network
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLNA	Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment

SCSA	School Curriculum and Standards Authority
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (Index of Disadvantage)
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TISC	Tertiary Institutions Service Centre
UWA	University of Western Australia
WAGR	Western Australian Government Railways
WAIT	Western Australian Institute of Technology
WHS	Willibe High School

Glossary of Terms

Educational Equity

In the narrowest terms, educational equity means that there should be a minimum level of education under which nobody falls. Educational equity means that no individuals or groups of people should be excluded from the scholarly community as a result of government or community actions. Educational equity is the right of everyone to a quality, just and engaging education (Gannon & Sawyer, 2014).

Relational Pedagogy

Relational pedagogy operates in education communities to create human relationships that become the building blocks of our reality (Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7). Relational pedagogy assists in developing student and teacher understandings of how our relationships are bound to and framed by external influences including the cultures and values of other individuals. In understanding the broader and invisible forces that influence our relationships we are able to find our place in the world (Wexler, 1992, p. 11). In a relational education community, relationships are formed and maintained within networks of trust, care and respect (Smyth, Down & McInerney, 2010).

Big Picture Education Terminology

Advisor: An Advisor serves as the advocate for the student and point person for the family within the Advisory as well as the mainstream school. Advisors monitor the same group of students from Year 10 to Year 12 through to graduation and spend several time blocks with their students during the week (Littky & Grabelle, 2004).

Advisory: An Advisory is a small community of students. In an Advisory, an Advisor meets regularly with the same group of 15 to 20 students. These students stay with one Advisor over a couple of years to provide in-depth support, personalisation of learning and guidance to students (Galassi, Gulledge & Cox, 1997).

Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA): BPEA is a not-for-profit company in Australia working since 2006 in liaison with Big Picture Learning in the United States. The BPEA network aims to assist young people to meet their social, personal and academic potential. The network assists in engaging one student at a time within a community of learners through implementing distinctive designs for schools in a range of different communities (BPEA, 2017).

Big Picture Learning (BPL): BPL is an international network of schools committed to four principles. The first principle is that learning is centred on each students' interests and needs. The second principle is that the curriculum should develop individual interests and enable students to work in the commercial and social world outside of school. The third principle links students with a community mentor who assists in student learning and development. The fourth principle encourages student evaluation through reflection on the quality of their studies and how their studies assist each individual to grow (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

Big Picture Schools (BPS): These schools have ten design distinguishers that facilitate learner engagement and assist young people in graduating from high school. These ten design distinguishers are described in detail in Chapter 2 (BPEA, 2010).

BPE Learning Goals: Learning goals are a framework for looking at real-world ideas and abilities that are essential to be a functional, healthy and well-rounded person. These learning goals are not content-oriented curricula, nor are they entirely distinct categories. Good project work incorporates more than one learning goal at a time including emphrical reasoning (BPEA, 2010).

- Empirical Reasoning
- Social Reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Communication
- Personal qualities

Check and Connect: Check and connect is a communication strategy implemented at a group meeting each morning. Advisory participants are asked to share their feelings with the team, including any cares, concerns or celebrations that may interfere with their engagement at school that day or in the future (Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio & Thompson, 2004; Stover, 2009).

Exhibitions: Exhibitions are student presentations that occur at the end of each school term or semester and demonstrate individual students' evolution towards their learning goals for that period. Students present their projects and learning to a panel of peers, parents, Advisors, administrators and other guests (BPEA, 2010).

Exploratory: This is an allocated time in the school day when students explore exciting topics for upcoming projects, assignments and internships (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

Interest-Based Projects: Interest-based projects are interest-based learning through individualised learning plans incorporating assessment through exhibitions to a broad audience. The interest and meaning of the project are negotiated with stakeholders over weeks or months with the purpose of increasing depth and mastery in education (Alger, 2016).

Learning Plans: Learning plans are designed by the student and Advisor (and other stakeholders if need be) outlining the individual's learning goals and experiences for a study semester. The plans include student learning goals, how to meet the goals and the processes of achieving the desired learning (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

Learning through Internships (LTI): LTIs are a core component in BPE where learning happens in a community through the internship experience. An LTI involves being placed two days a week in a work environment the student has chosen and arranged (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

TGIF: *Thank God it's Friday* is a weekly communication tool produced by Big Picture Advisories to share the week's concerns, cares, celebrations and successes as well as upcoming inspirations and events (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

Workshop: A meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project. Workshops are an everyday activity in and out of Advisory given the focus on collaborative planning, discussing understandings and reflecting on experiences (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

I provide further information about Big Picture Learning in Australia in Chapter 2.

Chapter 1   Introduction

A relation is more real than the things it brings together. Human

beings and non-human things acquire reality only in relation to

other beings and things. (Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7)

1.1   Introduction

This chapter is an introduction to the thesis and shares my story of how I came to be a research student at a university. In this thesis, I reflect on my journey of forty-five years in the Australian public education system, and present a series of high school student narratives to describe their experience of a more relational pedagogy through a Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) Advisory located at Willibe High School (WHS) (pseudonym) in Perth, Western Australia. The participants call the Big Picture Advisory BPA or Advisory. I use these terms interchangeably throughout the thesis. As a background to the students' experiences, I investigate the enduring problem of disproportionately high rates of student disengagement and marginalisation from public high schools, especially in low socioeconomic localities. In addressing this issue, I explore how high school students understand, experience and respond to a more relational pedagogy as participants in an innovative project for learning at WHS BPA. The Advisory is an alternative school design underpinned by a philosophy of experiential interest-based education, relational pedagogy and responsive student–teacher relationships as central organisers of student learning (Down & Choules, 2011).

WHS is a Western Australian Independent Public School (IPS)[1] that hosts a BPA. This Advisory is a "school within a school", a small learning community located within the mainstream high school (Down & Choules, 2011; Levine, 2002). The Advisory is a small learning community where the students spend the majority of their

---

[1] An Independent Public School is a public school where the principal has been given increased flexibility and responsibility to make local decisions across a range of school operations to enhance educational outcomes for students. Principals of Independent Public Schools have more freedom to make decisions about important matters that impact students' education such as student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability. An Independent Public School caters to the specific needs of its students by determining the curriculum and specialist teachers required that best support them. Independent Public Schools may work in clusters, which enables them to effectively combine ideas and resources to create even greater flexibility and opportunities for each school. Like all public schools, principals of Independent Public Schools must comply with relevant legislation, industrial agreements and whole-of-government policies and initiatives (Department of Education, Western Australia, n.d.).

school time, rather than moving every hour to different subjects and classrooms taught by different teachers (Levine, 2002). The BPA is a group of seventeen students who study and socialise together guided by one Advisor (teacher) through from Year 10 to Year 12 at WHS.

The Advisory setting is designed to provide a system of relationally supportive conditions for marginalised students to re-engage with and successfully graduate from high school based on their interests and real-world learning (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). The Advisory is a collaborative learning space that helps to nurture students' physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual well-being with the support of an Advisory educator. Advisory students are encouraged to explore the world of powerful learning opportunities to develop their various capabilities. High school students can follow their passion, work in their community, connect with mentors and generate relationships to help cultivate their learning (BPEA, 2014). Individuals are encouraged to develop learning plans and goals through consultation with social and academic mentors and industry experts. At the end of each learning project, students exhibit their learning to stakeholders who provide feedback, appraisal and future learning suggestions. Family and community work together to provide robust networks of support and advice for all Advisory participants (BPEA, 2014). Similar to Erwin (2010), I argue that designing high school around the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual lives of young people helps to create more engaging learning experiences for students.

A central contention of this thesis is that an Advisory model can provide a more socially just model of education for marginalised high school students. The Advisory offers opportunities and strategies for individual students to develop their capabilities by mitigating the unequal educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes often played out in low socioeconomic localities (Perry, 2017). In learning through a more relational pedagogy in an Advisory, students' capabilities are developed, thus helping them to access and navigate more efficiently within educational institutions (North, 2009). The Advisory provides a set of educative conditions and possibilities for students to mature as socially, emotionally and academically capable individuals with aspirational identities for their future lives and careers (Appadurai, 2004; Sarojini-Hart, 2013).

Relational pedagogy as is used in this thesis is drawn from a broader theoretical perspective posed by Bingham and Sidorkin (2004a) that all education is relational. Together with other theorists I use a hybrid term of relational pedagogy in this study to refer to a type of pedagogy about how we relate to each other as human beings, how we operate within networks of reciprocity, reinforcement and mutuality, how and why relationships with teachers in public high schools are vitally important to young people in contexts of disadvantage (Reilly, 2012). I lay out the broader connections of relational pedagogy, its principle values, key features and theoretical roots in Chapter Three.

As a nation, we recognise that approaches to high school students' experiences of engagement in learning are most needed in places where marginalised young people continue to underperform and under-participate in schooling (Walsh & Black, 2009; Wilson, Stemp & McGinty, 201, Zyngier, 2012). Actively listening to students' voices in low-SES schools can provide insight into why students choose to engage, or not, in their schooling. Student voice includes both the individual and collective experience and achievement of young people within the environment of learning and education (Fletcher, 2012). In recognising this national responsibility, the orientation of this research is similar to that of Sen (2009) in that the work focuses on enhancing social and educational equity and justice for school students at disadvantage (te Riele 2014). Being socially just means scrutinising how people, policies, practices, curriculums and institutions are put into action to create freedoms and futures rather than excluding and marginalising the groups and individuals who are least served by dominant or powerful groups decision making practices (Apple, 2013; Smyth, Down & McInerney, 2014).

Democracy, then, should not be defined by the dominant middle-class neoliberal rhetoric but by the extent "to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can be heard" (Sen, 2009, p. xiii). The use of student voice through narrative provides insights into a better quality, more equitable and engaging high school design, pedagogy and experience. The centrality of students' voices on their experiences of high school education helps in reclaiming the relational dimensions of teaching and learning (Smyth et al., 2014; Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a). In the Advisory learning community, the research participants bring their knowledge and experience into the learning process (Dewey, 1963). Classic theory on student learning in oppressed locales is typically undertaken in small groups with lively interaction which embraces not only the written word, but music, dance performance and art (Freire, 1972). To

capture this lively interaction, I use student narratives, a collection of student voices constructed from interview transcripts and participatory field work to articulate the "how" and "why" of student learning. In the findings, the students' "lived experiences" find expression in their words (Van Manen, 2016, p. 35). As Smyth (2014) argues these experiences serve as a counter-narrative to and critique of dominant pathologising discourses on the inequitable operation of traditional public-school systems in Australia.

This research is also reflexive. I attempt to share my growing awareness of democratic engagement and learning in the BPA by attending to the ways that a more relational pedagogy can build critical awareness (Kemmis, 2005; Shacklock & Smyth, 1998). I attempt to present a useful document and argument together with a well-formed story; however, in this research, they struggle with each other, given that each method provides a distinctive way of constructing reality and ordering research (de Laine, 2000). In attempting to craft verisimilitude within each chapter for the reader, the students and myself, I share a personal and professional reflection relevant to this research to stir curiosity (Garman, 1994). I move back and forth in time, in and out of worlds, with changing perspectives whilst exploring the different meanings between the personal and the public (Short, 2011, p. 234). I bring myself into this research, and I ask you to bring yourself into this research as well.

To begin, I share a personal reflection before presenting a more formal introduction to the research including aims, research problem, research questions and theoretical orientation. I then share a description of WHS and its location in the Southern Corridor of Perth, Western Australia. As an end point to Chapter 1, the structure of the thesis is detailed, to provide a roadmap for the reader.

1.2 Personal Reflection: A Fractured Fairy Tale That Ties the Thesis Together

At dusk, heading home I have one book in hand: *Experience and education* (1963) by John Dewey. This book helps me better understand Wexler's (1992) idea that "becoming somebody is action in the public sphere" (p. 11). This implies that each person, each somebody, essentially is experienced through and with others as they build their identity of self, community and the world (Wexler, 1992). Like Dewey

(1938), I trust "in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual education and experience" (p. 20). When this "intimate and necessary relation" is broken we are wounded by the school system (Dewey, 1963, p. 20). There are feelings of intolerance to difference, thoughts of shame and disapproval, the pressure to comply, alienation from self as a learner and little pleasure in learning (Olsen, 2009). Physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual disengagement and marginalisation become all-embracing, especially for those who struggle to fit into traditional bureaucratic school systems (Erwin, 2010). Rose (1989) says of his teaching experience that he is troubled by the ease with which teachers misperceive failed performance, how teachers' constant misperception "both reflects and reinforces the social order" (p. 205).

Class and culture raise boundaries which obstruct our vision and blind us to the common sense of interpretation and invention. In education systems, there is an ever-present language and encouragement to label otherness, difference and deficiency (Rose, 1989). For too many students, there is a sense that no-one cares; there is no way to know the individual and few classrooms where responsive, relational or ethical relationships may flourish (Nodding's, 2005). Disengagement and marginalisation are not just about the student who feels harm, but educators are wounded by a bureaucratic system as well. Teachers learn from students, so reflecting on our practice, self and philosophy is necessary, vital to our healing and growth as human beings (Kemmis, 2005). As Dewey (1938) argues, we all need time to reflect to shift our minds and bodies to a place, or space, where an "intimate and necessary relation" can expand and foster positive and engaging experiences of learning (p. 20). According to Erwin (2010), the human dimensions of belonging, being and becoming as individuals with a stable identity and purpose in life can be best described in the following way:

> First is the physical dimension: a person's health, strength, motor skills and athletic ability. Next are the intellectual dimensions: memory, learning, thinking skills, problem solving and creativity. The third dimension covers emotions: emotional awareness and understanding, self-regulation and self-esteem. The fourth dimension is the social dimension: forming and maintaining positive interactions with family, friends, peers, co-workers, the community, and society at

large. Finally, there is the spiritual dimension: our relationships with something larger than ourselves. (p. 7)

These considerations take me back to the prison where I used to be "learned" by Indigenous Elders. The male prisoners only just tolerated me, tacitly shaming me because of my cultural and linguistic ignorance of Indigenous traditions, disapproving of my being in their gendered space. Go back to women's business, they scowled at me. How dare I sequester myself away from my family and community to sit with them? They pursed their lips and turned their gaze away from me. They indicated to me that I was in the wrong job; I was the wrong gender, wrong ethnicity and the wrong language group. I felt the exile, the dismissal in every grain of my soul; however, at that time I had no choice, as circumstances compelled me to work. Teaching is, as my father told me, the poor (wo)man's profession.

Prison is peaceful enough; the food is terrible though. The grounds are manicured, the fencing high with razor wire on top, there is plenty of blue sky in the day, but at night spirits abound, so it is best to stay locked in and be still. A series of silent, non-negotiated judgements and rejections saw me end up working in a prison. Principals, deputies and so-called colleagues judged me as inadequate or having transgressed the conventional order of Australian public education. I did not fit the traditional school system very well. The prisoners and I have misunderstood, misinterpreted or have broken one or many socially sanctioned customs of our community. Therefore, we are banished from our community. From that moment in time in 2007, having been judged and incarcerated, we sat in a classroom with nothing but each other. We had neither common language nor collective ethos to bind us together. All of us had been exiled from the home country, corralled together without thought of each lifetime of experience, culture, state, skin, identity or age into this space to be corrected. We assiduously glimpsed, gestured, related, shared and dreamt through the timeless splendour of each other until we became.

Inside I was Pink Miss: "see b'long 'ere … see lis'en us story …"

A miracle happened. To survive prison, you have to be real, have to be truthful, resilient and have something to offer. It is a cut-throat world in prison, a place where making judgements and serving justice occurs in multiple humane and inhumane ways. You need to be able to network, balance priorities, communicate subtleties, build

relationships, develop trust and show care implicitly and explicitly, and you have to give and take respect. This is so because prisoners are the most mistrusted, uncared for and disrespected individuals on earth. Nonetheless, I felt entirely in my element; prisons are a different world. It was like going overseas each day but coming home each night. I developed engaging learning relationships with prisoners, broke down stereotypes, laughed a lot and listened to their stories. I told a lot of stories, I belonged to that place; I was someone who connected with the prisoners. I became that someone who took the time, I was present and gave that smile or thought, or idea or reflection, that little something every day.

Everything is going to be okay, I could say. Sometimes, the prisoners would ask, what was someone like me doing in a place like this? I learnt to reply, "doing time", just like you. I spoke a smattering of languages and had visited many of the prisoners' homelands, be they of ocean spray, broad rivers, high winds, hot sun or soft grass. Sometimes the men would cry in class; I learnt to leave them be. The prison experience is enough to make a grown (wo)man cry. However, I believe that relationships are not all necessarily good; human relationally is not always based on progressive ethical values. Domination is as relational as love (Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7). Among all this phenomenal power, fury and control I came to understand that "kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see" (Mark Twain, n.d).

I had value as an educator in prison and gained control of my life, often by what was not said to me. Each day the human dimensions of teaching and learning were experienced because dominant discourses deny the humanity of prisoners, but conversations about change and difference feed the souls of prisoners. I delighted in the isolation, the littleness of the context, the beauty of small classes and getting to know each person. The toothless, the beaten, the scarred and burnt, the addicted, the homeless, the psychopaths and the simple social rejects. The individuals and relationships I formed helped me to grow professionally and personally and to navigate the outside world from inside. Then one rainy day halfway through 2014, I just did not go to work. It was more of an internal implosion this time. After a seven-year stretch of teaching/being learned in prison, I fell to earth.

I was exhausted. I took six months off and went to Bali to relax and reflect. During this time, away in a gentle tropical environment I allowed myself to emerge once again.

I think perhaps, like many others who have been compliant to state bureaucracy and financial institutions for years on end, that physically, mentally and spiritually opening up to yourself is tough. The work of unwinding aches (Lopez, 2014) and doing the undoing of hurt hurts (Alverman & Ealkle, 2007), while unlearning the rhetoric takes time (Biesta, 2004).

Having served my sentence, I shuffled anxiously over to academia as I had nowhere else to go.

I found myself in the company of university scholars who suggested that social justice, educational quality and equity, student engagement in learning, relational spaces and aspirations flourish through developing relationships. I was shocked that such an alternative view with government funding was permissible at a public university. Then it hit me. I slide down the wall sobbing, squatting in my tears, realising my institutionalisation, my correction as it were, had been complete. Had I supposedly become correct now from my experience of being so incorrect? Nothing made sense. However, I acknowledged my punishment, I survived my banishment and returned to society a better person. But then again, for most people a stigma invisibly clung to me, a certain suspicion, a delayed reaction of wanting to question me. Think television shows and movies, popular culture and commentary (Berger, 1996). What was I doing for the last seven years in prisons? Imaginations ran wild. Was I a cop, or a dog, a narc, undercover detective maybe, a plant for the crown, border security or informant? Straight, bent, crooked, square, clean or dirty? I could not win. I did not look the type.

I tiptoed through the academic crowd so as not to upset the established order. I experienced a resistance to my true self. I quietly acquiesced with the individuals in my research group, enduring a preoccupation with my own unknowing. I adjusted each day, listening to the research group chattering. I silently questioned their perceptions and experiences of their academic and personal struggles, their heart-to-hearts about others in a milieu of unyielding egos that took much and gave little. To survive again, I would sit still, be silent, compliant, highly conscious that they were not getting to know me. I was anxious that I would land back in prison; written off this time as a recidivist. When dreaming of my prison experience, I was aware of breathing in the most profound sense of being everything yet nothing. Time began again. In my new

university context, I was unsure of who would be judging me or what measure would determine my worth.

1.3   Aim

In addressing the problem of student disengagement and marginalisation, I aim to explore how students understand, experience and respond to relational pedagogy at the WHS Advisory. Creating relational school learning communities and cultures is vital in disadvantaged communities where family situations are diverse and sometimes unable to provide the experiences needed for students to function efficiently and live well in society (Lindstrom, Pas & Bradshaw, 2016). Robust student–teacher relationships cannot take the place of family, but positive student–teacher interaction can impart a sense of humanity, caring and democracy which many of us have felt dissipate as neoliberalism sidles into our everyday existence (Lindstrom et al., 2016). All young people have a right to contribute to a healthy civic life and participate equally in quality and engaging public high school communities (McGregor, Mills, Te Riele, Baroutsis & Hayes 2017; Reid, 2005b), that is, a just and relevant public education that supports individuals to connect to the world around them (Sen, 2009).

In providing a background to the aims of this research I first explain the broader, macro global and political landscape impacting on the processes of disengagement and marginalisation. This review centres on public education policy and the implications of policy at the national, state, local and individual levels (Gable & Lingard, 2016). The intent is to comprehend and then contest the broader, more complex contexts in which marginalisation from traditional high schools occurs. Hence, a key focus of this thesis is to understand educational inequity and to rethink the nature of schooling itself as a social process of cultivating the capacities of all students (Connell, 2013).

I explore the problem of student disengagement through three ideological lenses: conservative/traditionalist; liberal/student-centred; and critical/democratic (McMahon & Portelli, 2004). I then examine a set of dominant discourses influencing education. First, I draw on Tyack and Tobin's (1994) notion of the grammar of schooling. Second, I scrutinise Valencia's (2010) idea of deficit thinking and how it shapes the pedagogical and relational arrangements of schooling. Third, I examine Haberman's (1991) notion of a pedagogy of poverty and finally, I critically examine the idea of

aspirations. This research attempts to bring together the human dimensions of high school disengagement and marginalisation along with the relational processes of re-engagement which typically remain hidden and intangible but intersect with the social reality of those attending WHS Advisory.

The overarching aim is to explain the operation of the Advisory from the point of view of students and, based on their accounts, to identify the kinds of relational practices that need to be created and more widely sustained to support student engagement in learning (Smyth et al., 2010). In pursuing this task, I develop a series of student narratives organised around emergent themes located in the growing school change literature (Darling Hammond, 2015; Down & Choules 2011; Mills & McGregor, 2014; Mitra, 2014; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith 2015; Smyth & McInerney, 2014). Through these narratives, I endeavour to make sense of the Advisory experience from the participants' viewpoint. I explore the extent to which the Advisory alleviates some of the systemic problems within traditional high school structures which continue to alienate and ultimately exclude far too many talented and capable students from the benefits of education. Underpinning this research is a desire to listen to multiple student perspectives (Mertens, 2014) shared through dialectical encounters designed to enhance a sense of belonging, well-being and becoming in public education (Peers & Fleer, 2014).

What happens in Advisory settings is not well understood in the Australian context. My focus is on exploring the cultural, organisational and pedagogical structures and processes as well as the complexities and uncertainties of working with students in a BP Advisory. I am inviting the reader to vicariously experience an Advisory through student narratives to better understand how the Advisory operates for the benefit of students searching for a meaningful and purposeful education (Apple, 2013; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009). I argue that marginalised students need schools which provide caring and teaching in family-like structures rather than apathetic bureaucratic organisation (Lindstrom et al., 2016). Teachers need to focus on students' needs as whole persons to help them engage in learning (Toch, 2003). Active student participation can improve engagement in learning, providing insights into ways to improve student outcomes, build relationships among educational stakeholders, and encourage community partnerships. Authentic student involvement is a way to grow positive student experiences within the

educational process (Smyth, 2006). This thesis aims to provide context and content about the Advisory setting and the nature and effects of a relational pedagogy.

Qualitative case studies such as this one also address the human dimensions of our lived experiences within schools, our perceptions, feelings and emotions, without being overwhelmed by them (Sen, 2009). The educative space of the Advisory is multidimensional, networked, and alive with energy and inquisitiveness. It is a dynamic and creative place which engages students over time (Gergen, 2009; Biesta, 2004). Furthermore, the Advisory community recognises that learning is a deliberate choice and the consequences of choosing not to learn must also become known (Kohl, 1994).

Finally, I seek to make the arguments readable and accessible to a broad audience including teachers and parents, not just academics, although a university template and tone anchor much of this research. The intended outcome is to cast light on the Advisory's contribution to building a relational pedagogy and, on this basis, to re-imagine high schools as places where all young people feel connected and engaged physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and spiritually in high school learning (Erwin, 2010).

1.4   The Problem

In this section, I argue that the standard belief which links Australia's social and economic development to the provision of compulsory schooling until 17 years of age serves to conceal a range of social and educational problems, especially in the high school years. First, traditional public schools do not always meet the needs and interests of all students (Connors & McMorrow, 2015). Low public-school performance is reflected in the escalating number of students not completing 12 years of schooling nor engaging in meaningful learning if they are at school (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). Second, the quality of educational opportunity, experience and the outcomes of education are more likely to reflect an individual's socioeconomic locality rather than their ability (Perry, 2017). Third, learning is measured by sets of narrow standardised tests which do not account for class influences or the human dimensions of education (Polesel, Dulfer & Turnbull, 2012). Finally, students are often managed and silenced by the hierarchical structures and processes of high schools within the logic of the Competitive Academic Curriculum

(CAC) (Connell, 1985; Fine & Weis, 2003; Smyth & McInerney, 2012). An analysis of these issues and the links to broader global trends influencing Australian education policy and practice is provided in Chapter 2.

The Bradley Report (2008) provides some useful statistics to highlight the depth and persistence of educational inequalities in the Australian education system (see also McLachlan, 2013). The report also offers detailed evidence about the propensity of individuals from different social backgrounds to apply for university entry. The current rate of intended access to and participation in higher education and university by Year 12 students across Western Australia is around 50 per cent. Western Australia is below other states and territories for university access and participation; for example, in Victoria more than 65 per cent of Year 12 students intend to access and participate in higher education and/or university (Lamb, Jackson, Walstab & Huo, 2015). This data, in turn, mirrors the high levels of disengagement and non-completion of high school in low socioeconomic locales and the knock-on effect regarding access to and participation in higher education including university in these locales.

More specifically, the Bradley Report recognises that schools like WHS, the site of this research, have historically low rates of high school graduation (Bradley et al., 2008). As a consequence of shrinking high school graduation rates, participation rates in higher education including university pathways are likewise declining. This trend persists indicated in recent research indicating that public high schools surrounding WHS have significantly lower rates of university access and participation than the state average (Lamb et al., 2015). Some schools surrounding WHS have graduation rates of or below 15 per cent. An even lower percentage of these graduating students intend to access and participate in higher education and/or university after Year 12 (TISC, 2016).

These entrenched patterns of different educational quality and engagement in learning outcomes have changed little over the last ten years since the 2008 Bradley Report was released (Cupitt et al., 2016; Gonski, Boston, Greiner, Lawrence, Scales & Tannock, 2011; Lamb et al., 2015). While this research is not about higher education policy or percentages of graduating individuals intending to participate in higher education and/or university, the Bradley Report data reveals a great deal about the broader patterns of social reproduction in Australian high school education (Connell, 2013). In addressing this problem, the thesis examines how WHS attempts to re-engage

marginalised students through an innovative Advisory learning community. The aim is to understand the extent to which this Advisory implements a more relational pedagogy, thus creating progressive conditions for marginalised students to re-engage with and graduate from high school to reach their full potential as young Australian citizens.

In this study I argue, together with other public-school advocates, that relationships are pivotal for re-engagement in learning (Smyth et al., 2010). Like many high school change initiatives, this research is an opportunity to look beyond deficit and pathologising discourses about young people in order to better understand and improve educational outcomes in low socioeconomic localities (Smyth et al., 2014). I argue that it is only by valuing students as assets rather than deficits that teachers can begin to understand the complexities of young people's lives as a starting point for engagement in learning (Hattam, 2006). There is a need to understand and integrate the socio-cultural geography of high schools when working within low socioeconomic locales (Hattam, 2006). This view takes into account the complex and often misunderstood events that are formative experiences for adolescents experiencing disengagement and marginalisation in public high schools as they grow into adulthood. As Hattam (2006) suggests:

> Such a frame challenges the lack of knowledge many teachers have
> about those communities; a lack that unfortunately informs their
> curriculum design and pedagogical practice; a lack of knowledge
> that many students experience as either denigrating, misrepresenting
> or ignoring their communities; a lack that perpetuates deficit views
> of marginal(ised) communities. (p. 5)

Guiding this thesis is the belief that public schools should provide an equitable and engaging curriculum as well as opportunities for all students to experience democracy (Beane, 2005). Young people are citizens and have a right to contribute to civic life and school institutions (McGregor et al., 2017). We "learn what we live", so we ought to live, think and respond democratically where we learn (Beane, 2005, p. 2). Democracy accordingly requires individuals with a social consciousness tied to both community and personal issues (Beane, 2005). Knowledge is constructed dialogically through relationships between and among individuals and their social and physical environment (Dewey, 1963). Therefore, student–teacher relationships are vital to the

creation of democratic, safe and student-centred high schools (Harris, Spina, Ehrich & Smeed, 2013).

1.5   Research Questions

This research explores the experiences of students involved in the implementation of an Advisory learning community at WHS. The overarching question driving this thesis is:

- • How do students experience, understand and respond to the Advisory learning community?

In addressing this question, a series of related sub-questions inform the research:

- • What are the experiences of students in the Advisory learning community?
- • What are the structural, cultural and pedagogical features of the Advisory learning community?
- • How does it assist in the development of the aspirational identities and capabilities of students?
- • What are the lessons for education systems, policymakers and educators?

1.6   Theoretical Orientation

In addressing these questions, I draw on concepts and empirical evidence from the fields of education, psychology and philosophy to explore the centrality of relational pedagogy in re-engaging young people in learning underpinned by the principles of equity. I review the literature on student engagement in learning through the three ideological lenses of McMahon and Portelli (2004) mentioned earlier. I argue that dominant educational discourses around the grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) and deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010) are social constructions that benefit some in the community and not others. That is, school systems have historically perpetuated social hierarchies based on class, gender and race. I discuss student experiences with various high school structures, different types of curriculum and diverse pedagogies (Apple, 2013; Bourdieu, 1977; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009). I also discuss the influence of the quality of student–teacher relationships together with views about student aspirations for further education and careers (Appadurai, 2004; Sarojini-Hart, 2013).

This research is also founded on the diverse and often intangible micro-level relational practices that are integral to the quality of education students receive. It is about the power of positive relationships that encourages re-engagement in learning in one Advisory setting. Relationships with others are where our identities are confirmed or denied (Lyon-McDaniel, 2004, p. 100). In this research, relationships between Advisory participants confirm students and teacher dignity and uniqueness. Positive relationships involve recognising and valuing interactions with those we find ourselves in the company of, at school, at home or in the community. I argue that how we relate to each other as human beings, how we operate within networks of reciprocity, reinforcement and mutuality, is vitally important to young people in contexts of disadvantage (Reilly, 2012). A theoretical synthesis then becomes a foundation for an emerging model of relational pedagogy in Advisory learning communities, which is central to this research.

1.7   Methodology

This interpretive qualitative case study allows an exploration of human behaviour in real-world contexts (Madison, 2012). In most cases interpretive theorists investigate social interactions and implications at the micro-level. According to deMarrais and LeCompte (1999), interpretative theories tend to "view schools as places where meaning undergoes construction through social interaction of the people within the setting" (p. 25). In addition to intricate social interaction, participants in ethnographic case studies such as this one usually work alongside the researcher, often in dialogue about the process of constructing a unique school culture (Bennett et al., 1990). Knowledge, as it moves in this type of research, is expressive and dialectical. Student experiences hence are open to multiple constructions and interpretations (Bennett et al., 1990).

Knowing is generated through negotiation, considering different points of view and through discussion and reflection with other participants in the learning environment. Knowledge can also come to life through the actions of human beings, people and artefacts (Bennett et al., 1990). A context such as the Advisory is subject to a myriad of tangible and intangible pressures that produce dynamic and developing interpretations of knowledge for each member as well as the Advisory group. Reality and meaning for the students are living; knowledge construction is an ongoing process in their dynamically changing world (Bennett et al., 1990).

15

Throughout this research, I attempt to represent the realities of those in the study by including the variety of contextual entanglements and paradoxes found in the Advisory learning community (Madison, 2012). In my experience, the qualitative methodological space is fluid and not always productive; it is alive with disruptions and distractions, both internal and external to the research context (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). Staff and student's identities and realities are also made confidential through the use of pseudonyms. An ethnographic case study such as this one is essential in that it can create rich, descriptive data that illustrate theory, which leads to a keen understanding of social and educational life beyond this group of Advisory participants (Madison, 2012).

1.8 Significance of the Study

Qualitative research of the kind presented in this thesis offers a counter-argument (Mc Gregor, 2017) to the increasing commodification of education and obsession with statistical data, both of which serve to reinforce educational inequalities (Connell, 2013). The commodification of education has created a competitive policy environment that undermines the principles of social justice, fairness and democracy (Mc Gregor 2015: Gale & Densmore, 2003; Beane, 2005). I argue that schools primarily operate within the dominant discourses of the formation of human capital for the public and private sectors (Apple, 2007). Unfortunately, as Fine and Weis (2003) point out, when marginalised students speak, few listen (p, 150). In this case study, I attempt to reposition and prioritise student voice as a means of developing rather than devaluing the cultural capital students bring to school. By positioning students at the centre of their education, it becomes possible to re-engage students to participate in meaningful and critical dialogues about their education (Talbot & Hayes, 2016).

Furthermore, relevant qualitative data around implementation of an Advisory and achievements of Advisory learning communities can provide valuable evidenced-based feedback for public schools, tertiary institutions, government and the broader community. Significantly, this research adds to the extant literature base for educational decision making in disadvantaged communities. This case study thus explores aspects of the persistent process of silencing in public high schools which spoil the aspirations, hopes and careers of far too many young people (Cook-Sather, 2006; Smyth, 2000; McGregor et al., 2017; Thiessen, 2006). Students will inevitably have to confront issues of quality communication, equity and engagement in society; accordingly, schools

should not attempt to shelter them from the realities of adult life. Instead, high schools should prepare students to deal with the practical problems significant to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual worlds (Erwin, 2010).

Addressing these problems in schools is imperative for better quality, more democratic and more engaging experiences in school, life, work, family, community and/or higher education. Learning does not occur in a vacuum; accordingly, communities, families and high schools are testing grounds for democratic practices. I believe it is the responsibility of educated citizens within a democratic society to create awareness of and act towards a more equitable future for all (Riddell, 2010). This research also contributes to the growing body of literature interested in creating socially just and democratic forms of schooling for disadvantaged youth (Smyth et al., 2014).

1.9   Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this case study. The relational pedagogy of the WHS Advisory was innovative, and all research participants were new to this type of teaching, learning and research. Though the Advisory was unique to WHS, the concept of experiential, relational and responsive education is not new to schooling (Dewey, 1938). The rather short, two-year time frame of the research, the dilemma of being a sole ethnographer and the obligation of authenticity creates limitations. The investigative nature of this research requires mentioning as there are many philosophical, political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions and arguments that tail off in the text, unaddressed, begging further attention and creating more questions. There is also a myriad of lived experiences radiating from WHS family members, specialist teachers, community mentors and other individuals who actively supported and contributed to the operation of the Advisory that remain unexplored due to time, space, funding and the bureaucratic requirements of finalising a PhD. Lawson and Lawson (2013) note the potential enormity and complexity of such a study:

> For these students, engagement is not merely a here-and-now phenomenon – a status or an event – in particular classrooms (Eccles & Wang, 2012). Rather, with postsecondary education completion as the priority goal, today's engagement agenda must facilitate new relationships and longer educational careers (Spilt, Hughes, Wu, &

Kwok, 2012), encompassing successive grade levels, schools (preschools, K–12 schools), and postsecondary institutions (Brofenbrenner, 1979; Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Voelkl, 2012). It must also extend outside of school boundaries because family, peer, and neighbourhood ecologies exert powerful influence on students' educational opportunities and interests, as well as their aspirations for the future (C. D. Lee, 2012; Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012; Tate, 2012; Wylie & Hodgen, 2012). (p. 433)

Given these individual and ecological complexities, it is necessary to put boundaries around the kind of literature reviewed. In setting these boundaries, this thesis excludes empirical studies concerned with global alternative schooling options such as Montessori, Steiner or religious affiliation schools (e.g., Catholic programs), nor does it include TAFE (Technical and Further Education) or college preparation programs. Other off-site and CARE (Curriculum and Re-Engagement) schools which are frequently external to public high schools and cater to students permanently barred from public high schools are also excluded. I also disqualify charter, magnet and selective high schools from the literature review. The exceptions to these omissions are the works of education scholars in Australia, erudite middle, senior and alternative school reformers and researchers, whose evidence and ideas resonate with the arguments of this study. Similarly, I detail ethnographic research studies on high school Advisory-inspired learning communities drawn from literature prioritising student voice from Australia, the US and Britain.

I draw upon Big Picture Learning studies completed in the United States. An implicit research foundation is drawn from McDonalds (2004) work on Scaling up the Big Picture as well as Arnolds (2006) longitudinal work on BPS graduate pathways. Both works are broad and useful, but more current, case study research on the BPS model of education are more explicitly drawn upon. Research on teacher learning and professional development (Klein, 2007), negotiating dual accountability systems from a professional perspective (Suchman, 2012), and educational leadership (Squires, 2011) are more suitable works for comparison. However, I found only two ethnographic case studies investigating BPS learning from the students' perspectives at the secondary level. In one study, Riordan (2006) examines students learning through internships (LTI). The other study by Alger (2016) works at understanding the

student experience of a Big Picture School Model. With only a few examples of case study ethnographic research, it seems there is a need for more research that focuses on students' perspectives in the BP learning environment, and in particular how a relational pedagogy can encourage student engagement in learning and preparation for life, study and work.

As the investigation focuses on six students and their individual experiences, there is a need to be mindful of the extent to which generalised conclusions can be drawn. Whilst this theoretical and methodological orientation has the advantage of capturing lived experience (Van Manen, 2016), generality cannot be pre-established or definite (Stake, 1995). Since this case study involves one particular school with an Advisory of seventeen students cared for by one Advisor, a number of parents and a few leaders, the generalisability of my findings is limited, even to other BP schools, their Advisory, or other students.

Nonetheless, this research should be of interest to educators, school reformers and policymakers, for whom the concept of "reader or user generalizability" may be applied (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). That is, the reader decides which specifics of this study are or are not applicable to his or her situation. Accordingly, the theoretical and methodological arguments along with detailing the minutiae of experiences in this exploration are not linear; sometimes the reader must work a little to make connections. I am apologetic. I have broken a cardinal rule of thesis writing: research such as this must be reader sensitive (White, 2011). Therefore, I aim to convey through student narratives a more authentic conversation without losing essential points. The primary purpose of such a methodology is reducing the distance between students' voices, the author and the reader. I wish to share an embracing and stimulating conversation, keeping the logic of the argument at the core (Amorim, 2015). I intend to create verisimilitude within a text that has a purpose and a heartbeat.

1.10   Willibe High School Background

WHS is situated in the Southern Corridor of the Perth metropolitan area in Western Australia. The community positions itself on the outer fringes located within an area that covers 174 km² of productive and protected land. The local government was established and gazetted in the mid-1900s; the city had a population of just over 80 000

in 2016. The geography of the area is naturally stunning, stretching from the white sands and blue waters of the Indian Ocean in the west to the rocky bush terrain of the Darling Scarp in the east. There are national parks, fishing, camping and bushwalking along trails through either the vast jarrah forests or coastal beaches. WHS is located in this natural landscape.

WHS is a government secondary school which opened in February 2001, originally as a Year 8 to 10 middle school. In 2010 WHS began offering Year 11 and 12 or senior school programs to students in the community. In 2010 due to a rapidly growing population the school also embarked upon major building works. In 2015 WHS began operating as an Independent Public School and the same year WHS also accepted Year 7 students.[2] A formal management hierarchy operates at WHS following clear Department of Education Western Australia (DOEWA) job role descriptions, with a variety of accountability mechanisms in place. The school administration consists of the principal, three deputy principals, and a business manager together with eight learning area leaders. The school currently employs 85 teaching staff and 41 non-teaching staff.

WHS offers a composite curriculum of academic and vocational programs, aiming to meet the diverse needs of students. The organisation of the instructional program and teaching staff is grounded in traditional subject areas and faculties. The learning areas offered include English, Maths, Health and Physical Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Technology, the Arts, Science and LOTE Japanese. The large cohort of nearly 1300 students are young people from a mix of urban and rural backgrounds; however, the students present with a wide range of attributes reflecting more disadvantage than wealth. The annual budget operates on a student-centred funding model of approximately twelve million dollars per year. Around 35 per cent of all

---

[2] In December 2011, the Government of Western Australia announced that Year 7 public school students would move to secondary schools in 2015. This brought Western Australia's public schools in line with all Australian states and territories except South Australia, as well as most private schools in the state. The decision to move Year 7 acknowledged that secondary school settings are more appropriate for young adolescents, both for their learning and their social and emotional development. The transition also coincided with the implementation of the Year 7 Australian Curriculum, which the DOEWA determined could be more effectively delivered in secondary settings with specialist teachers and facilities. The DOEWA's objective in moving Year 7 was to provide students with the learning environments and facilities most appropriate for their curriculum needs and age levels. Providing school infrastructure and trained secondary school teachers were the two key elements to ensuring a smooth transition and delivering educational benefits.

students fall into the category of disadvantaged (Willibe High School Business Plan, 2015–2017). Further statistics and discussion are found in Chapter 2.

1.11   Thesis Structure

This thesis has six chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the research. It provides a brief background to the research problem and a reflection on my learning and teaching experience which inform my philosophical and pedagogical beliefs relevant to this research. In this chapter I consider the enduring problem of the disproportionately high rates of disengagement and marginalisation of young people from public high schools, especially in low socioeconomic localities. In addressing the problem of student disengagement, this thesis examines how previously disengaged students understand, experience and respond to a relational pedagogy as participants in the WHS Advisory. This qualitative case study research attempts to communicate something about the social and individual complexity and uncertainty of working socially, emotionally and academically with students participating in the WHS Advisory. I am inviting the reader to experience the Advisory through the students' voices vicariously, appreciating how the Advisory operates for those participating in this study. Following these introductory remarks, I identify the research question, theoretical orientation and significance of the study as well as limitations. The final part of Chapter 1 details the structure and content of the following chapters to provide a roadmap for the reader.

Chapter 2 provides background information about Australia's education system. A key argument is that, by commodifying education in line with neoliberal ideas, the government incrementally shifts its responsibility for public high schooling to the already anxious lives of high school students, teachers, administrators and communities, which it is supposed to serve but does so inequitably (Prosser, Lucas & Reid, 2010). This chapter locates the problem of student disengagement through three levels of analysis. I organise the literature relating to these three levels from the macro (global), meso (national), through to the micro (local) level of schools and students (Gable & Lingard, 2016).

After looking at the literature prioritising student voice in these matters, I move on to consider the benefits of a relational approach to education. I introduce the

Disadvantaged Schools Program with its social equity history and relevance to the emergence of BPEA in Australia. I then outline the BP ten distinguishers, the characteristics of Advisory and the role of the Advisor. After detailing a brief history of the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP), National Schools Network (NSN) and Australian National Schools Network (ANSN) as background context to contemporary equity programs, I move on to describe WHS as the case study site and its unique characteristics as an IPS in Western Australia. I then illustrate the growth of the Advisory over the three years of the study and the life and locations of each Advisory space at WHS. Finally, I introduce the participants of the study; the students and Advisory leaders and administrators.

Chapter 3 explains the theoretical orientation of this thesis. I draw on McMahon and Portelli's (2004) three views of student engagement – conservative/traditionalist, liberal/student-centred and critical/democratic – to consider students' experiences and perceptions of schooling. This chapter has three sections. The first section explores the problem of traditional schooling and why many disadvantaged young people resist formal or mainstream schooling. I explain the impact of the restrictive organisation of traditional high schools, including the abstract academic curriculum and authoritarian pedagogies. These restrictive organisations are compounded by strained student–teacher relationships and dominant pathologising discourses around individual aspirations (Smyth et al., 2014). The grammar of schooling also acts to exclude those without the social, cultural or navigational capital to participate successfully.

The second section examines the usefulness of alternative, small learning communities as a means of re-engaging young people in learning. I highlight the value and essence of more flexible schooling arrangements, student-centred curriculum and a relational pedagogy. This includes the power of positive academic expectations, capitalising on strong student–teacher relations as well as an understanding of the aspirational capabilities of individuals. The third section explores the operation of relational pedagogy. As Dewey (1938, p. 25) points out, this is a philosophy where those involved in an adolescent's education – peers, parents, mentors and Advisory teachers – learn about the world and each other by sharing experiences and ideas while creating a democratic educational context together.

Chapter 4 explains the nature of ethnographic case study research, my chosen research approach. Here I describe the principles of qualitative and interpretative methodology

and the values of socially constructed educative spaces in public schools. The first section describes the method of ethnographic case study research, including a definition, key features and the participatory role of the researcher. Following on from this overview, I provide further details about WHS, the case study site, and the choice of participants. I also introduce the notion of reflexivity and how it enables me not only to critique my role as a researcher but also to gain a better understanding of the emergent themes. Here, I describe the process of data analysis from descriptive accounts to category construction and then to theory building.

In Chapter 5 I present a series of student narratives to assist in the task of describing the nature of relational pedagogy in the Advisory. Five themes emerge from the interview transcripts which I present in full to demonstrate a sense of authenticity, veracity and verisimilitude for the reader (Garman, 1994). The narratives and their interpretations provide evidence of the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual ingredients required by the participants to re-engage in learning in the Advisory (Erwin, 2010). The narratives and their interpretations offer some critical insights into the kinds of practices including community-based projects which not only create a sense of autonomy but build capabilities for navigating the adult world (Gale & Parker, 2015c). I argue that the narratives provide evidence that designing high schools around the multifaceted lives of young people is more likely to re-engage marginalised students with learning (Smyth et al., 2014).

In Chapter 6 I pull together the main arguments of the research findings. I appraise both dominant and alternative discourses about marginalised youth and their connection to prior research, theory and practice based on the data and findings of this study. I offer theoretical and ethnographic evidence that the Advisory setting enhances a social network of relationally supportive conditions for marginalised students to re-engage with high school education (Smyth et al., 2010). I articulate the key findings of this research and venture into the possibilities of building a more relational pedagogy within traditional high school settings anchored in a spirit of democracy and equity. I suggest that further research on these themes, specifically from the students' perspectives, will contribute to a better understanding of how to create the conditions to sustain equitable opportunities for all students to engage in and graduate from Australian public high schools.

Chapter 2   Context

Authority and knowledge are not something one has, but relations

which require others to enact.

(Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7)

2.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the social context in which this study is grounded. This chapter provides a multi-layered understanding of the context in which student re-engagement through relational pedagogy occurs. I concentrate on how broader external forces influence students' experience of schooling in general and the Advisory in particular. In the first section, I organise the literature relating to these contexts into three main sections: the macro (global), meso (national) and micro (local). I present and critique the traditional and recent neoliberal operation of measures of school performance in Australia today. In the second section I provide some historical context to BPEA. In this task I briefly examine its antecedents in the American context followed by the evolution of BPEA within the Australian context. In response to dominant educational policy and practice discourses, I argue that public high school educators and students can create a more relational, equitable and engaging approach to learning to suit the needs of students who are currently disengaged or marginalised from traditional high school settings. In turn, students, educators, parents and policymakers can begin to reflect on how and why (Yin, 1993) dominant Australian education policies and discourses are taken up, challenged and resisted in local, situation-specific practices (Singh, Heimans & Glasswell, 2014). To begin, I offer this personal reflection.

2.1.1   Personal Reflection: A Fractured Fairy Tale That Laces the Thesis Together

I began this journey tired; the thirty years of teaching in public institutions had finally caught up with me. I stumbled upon a chance to learn with a group of young people, their high school, teachers and administrators through a local university campus. My understanding of what education is, should or could be was far removed from the students' experiences and stories of traditional schooling or my current teaching

experiences. Their voices reverberated deeply with my survival act as an educator. The students' declarations represented many who experience disengagement and marginalisation from public high schooling. They spoke of restrictive organisational processes, indifferent pedagogies, irrelevant curricula, strained relationships with teachers as well as the sway of deficit discourses about individual potential to succeed in learning and life. Altering this profoundly unsatisfying educational arrangement, I shall argue, becomes possible through embracing relational theories and pedagogies of education. Putting the student at the centre of a quality education and taking care of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs (Erwin, 2010) should be a priority towards creating healthy individuals and communities, particularly in disadvantaged socioeconomic localities. Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) aims to progress and realise such notions.

My research interest in Advisory grew from a learnt curiosity and perhaps a natural progression of learning and teaching in isolated and marginalised contexts. Additionally, this research evolves from a lifetime of being around family and friends pursuing public education and its perceived benefits to become upwardly socially mobile (Parcel & Bixby, 2016). My father was born in 1935, the only son of a dirt-poor viticulturist surviving only by the grace of Mother Nature. Escaping the unpredictable grind of "life on the land" post-World War II in 1950 my father gained an upward foothold at 15 years old by attaining a carpentry apprenticeship to build wooden railway carriages for Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR). He aspired for much more, religiously attending night school at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) for ten years to gain a spot as a bonded teacher for the Department of Education Western Australia (DOEWA) on the promise of five years' country service. In 1960, at 25 years old, he started his bond at Collie Senior High School as a Manual Arts teacher. Married and three children later in 1967 our family relocated to Perth's southern suburban fringe of Brentwood. In 1974, I was in Year 2 and full time at Brentwood Primary School with my two elder sisters. My mother flew out the door that year to study as a mature-age student at university. She got as far away from the monotony of child rearing as she could, chasing down the promise of a powerful, thriving and free feminist future via university education. Tuesday did not have to be laundry day anymore. I was seven and I still remember her excitement.

During the 1970s, in the golden age of free public education, we all studied and worked towards a bright future. We believed we could make it; we aspired to be equal to the middle classes (Griffin, 2014). However, in the 1980's public education and our place in it began to change (Lingard, 2010; Soucek, 1995). Sometimes we had to climb over rocks that appeared in our education pathway (Smyth & Fasoli, 2007) and sometimes we had to run twice as hard as others for the same gain (Connell, White & Johnston, 1992). My father had a similar experience, slowly crawling up the DOEWA ladder to a principal ship by 1985. However, the dream he once had of making it faded. He hated the paperwork, the politics and the bureaucratic demands of DOEWA head office or "silver city" to the locals. Being a proud father, he shifted to a public high school closer to home and settled for Senior Master in Manual Arts and part-time yachtsman. My mother graduated university and went to work in the public health department as a social worker; my sister moved into university as an undergraduate and my other sister into the workforce.

I loved school; I loved Mr Houston, my primary school teacher for three years, from Year 4 to Year 6. And I loved Mr McMahon my high school English teacher who taught me that "Love is an unbreakable, intrinsic bond between two people". I have never actually left school, except to travel, and I maintained my studious habits by teaching and learning overseas. I am 50 years old now and still in school.

I have a passion for books, bikes, science and water; it is then unsurprising that I graduated in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science in Human Physical Performance and Anthropology from the University of Western Australia (UWA). I did not wait around long enough for the graduation ceremony. I escaped Perth's parochial, conservative and isolated "sandpit society" immediately, travelling around the world for eight years. I ran off to the bush, up Meekathara way first, then teaching swimming in places like Shark Bay, Port Hedland and Windy Harbour; I worked in the iron ore mines of the Pilbara; I spent years teaching English in Tokyo, Japan. I spent my holidays in South Asia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma and Korea. I went to the United States and spent months riding my bicycle along the Blue Ridge Highway. I rode along the east coast of America visiting the "hollows of Appalachia" (Gazaway, 1970). I visited Boston, New York, Miami, Los Angeles and Chicago. Catching a standby flight for $150, I ended up in Amsterdam. I continued riding my bicycle through Holland, Belgium, Germany, France and Austria. I spent the winter working with special needs adults in Switzerland.

When spring came in 1996, I kept riding up and over the Swiss Alps through the St Gotthard Pass and on to Italy. Touring through Italy I was feeling somewhat cultured but, once at Sicily, I departed for Greece on a leaky boat. I rode my bike again through Greece, island hopping, stopping to eat olives while reading philosophy under groves of rosemary. I then sailed to the Middle East. I sat and sipped sage tea for months with Bedouins in the Sinai Desert. I found love and married in Israel; we lived in Ramat-Gan. An air strike put an end to that in 1998. Time stopped. I wanted to die with them, but I was repatriated to Australia as I was not an Israeli citizen.

My unexpected return to Australia was excruciating, to say the least. Everything was so foreign to me. I was repulsed by dirty feet in thongs, mates swilling beer at the Sunday session. A plate of lamb roast made me gag. There were half-naked women in bikinis everywhere. Nothing quite seemed to fit with my memories of home; I felt awkward, on the rebound, I married again and had a child. I decided to teach here in Australia in a proper classroom like a professional teacher, like my father. So, after a year of being a mother, in 2000 I enrolled in a graduate diploma of education at the local university. I loved everything about teaching, but I did not fit into the system very well. I realised that I must develop new education understandings, create a professional style. I needed to listen and act the teacher. I had to change, get with the program, and make a better-quality effort. I tried to look like a teacher, white shirt, black trousers, ponytail, apple for recess, salad for lunch. I tried to be friendly, professional and enthusiastic, yet found myself constantly absorbing simple, silent, subtle rebuffs. What was I missing? Why did I not connect? What was wrong with me?

Possibly my most spectacular failure to fit in as a teacher was with the DOEWA when working at Deep Sea Primary School in 2002 while completing my Master's research. I researched "Specialist Teachers and Curriculum Reform in a Western Australian Primary School in 2002: A Comparative Study of Specialist Music, Health and Physical Education and Languages other than English Teaching Professionals". There was little reform, only the groan of re-establishing the concepts, knowledge and skills acceptable to the conventional order of Australian society (Smith, Stanley & Shores, 1957). I became increasingly shunned as the research advanced. My imposed marginalisation because I did not "fit in" made me fight harder to finalise my Master's. I knew the Australian Curriculum Framework back to front; I just could not do the Australian Curriculum Framework as a teacher should. I failed; the bureaucracy

sniffed me out. It was a choice between an outback position or working as a relief teacher. I did not want to end up like that poor bastard of a schoolteacher in the movie *Wake in Fright* (1971). I struggled to make ends meet as a relief teacher.

In hindsight, I am sure that there is a little black MacBook on someone's workstation in the DOEWA "silver city" with a list of teachers who do not fit in. My name, Helen Leonie Stone (e2002760), is on that list with five big black crosses, one for each transgression of the conventional order of Australian society (Smith et al., 1957).

- ✕ Asks too many questions

- ✕ Fails to engage in small talk or Australian Football League banter

- ✕ Does not follow instructions, interprets, critiques

- ✕ Permits children to play when learning

- ✕ Permits children to listen to foreign music in class when colouring.

After completing the Master's degree and some stalled, painful attempts to gain employment with DOEWA, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) and Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA), I gave up and took a position with the Department of Corrective Services Western Australia (DCSWA). Divorced, depressed and in debt, I hung my head low, feeling like a loser, blaming myself. Why was I so stupid? How did all of this unfold so quickly? In deep reflection, clinging to my daughter, I wondered, this is not how life is meant to work out. I thought, is this for the term of my natural life? How am I to survive? I felt like my ancestors, the ones who got shipped out to Australia as convicts. In 2007, I headed off to prison …

2.2 The Broader Educational Landscape

2.2.1 Introduction

The Australian public education system and its students perform well on most international and national measures of educational success and competitiveness (OECD, 2011). However, not all individuals experience a quality, equitable or engaging education (Lamb et al., 2015). Accumulated political concessions have left Australia with a hybrid school system which is inequitable and incompatible with

many of Australia's changing social and economic conditions (Connors & McMorrow, 2015). Prevailing dominant quantitative measures of public high school student engagement often present only one side of the educational story (Bradley et al., 2008; Cupitt, Costello, Raciti & Eagle, 2016; Gorski, 2011; Lamb et al., 2015; Breakspear, 2012). Rarely are individual perspectives on educational experiences included in traditional quantitative, statistical measurement and reporting. Dominant deficit discourses on student engagement in learning often exclude the experience of students, the quality of their education, learning with diverse pedagogies and curriculums, or students' relationships with teachers, peers and themselves as emerging adults (Zyngier, 2015). Dominant deficit discourses include the attitudes and stereotypes that more powerful groups affix to certain individuals or behaviours, as I discuss further in Chapter 3 (Wyn, 2015).

In the following section I contend that global pressures are acting to commodify Australian public education. Wider socio-political, cultural and economic forces are increasingly residualising public high schools, along with the educational experiences of disadvantaged students. Market-oriented educational developments have shifted funds out of the public-school sector and into the private sector, creating a widening inequity in the provision of public education in Australian schools (Bonnor & Caro, 2012; Connell, 2015). The once collective social goals of public education are now partly in the hold of private sector economic goals in Australia (Bonnor & Caro, 2012; Connell, 2015). According to Reid and McCallum (2014):

> Such developments have some severe consequences for Australian education, including that they widen resource disparities between schools, reduce educational outcomes particularly for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, and diminish the social and cultural mix of schools and thus the capacity of schools to promote social and intercultural understanding. (p. 195)

At the macro-level, student engagement can be understood as associated with market-driven agendas in mass institutional contexts (Savage, Sellar & Gorur, 2013). Student engagement can be determined by policy intended to enhance the performative value of contemporary educational institutions (Gable & Lingard, 2016). Market-driven education policy generates circumstances of competition, school choice,

accountability, prescribed curriculum and standardised testing, amongst other mechanisms of control (Biesta, 2004; Ravitch, 2010). Neoliberal education policies also operate in ways that erode the social democratic purposes of public education (Connell, 2013). Furthermore, government-funded schools become increasingly residualised, thus reinforcing social inequity and disadvantage in those communities least able to challenge their disadvantage (Taylor, 2004). At the meso-level, student engagement is estimated by a range of school performance measures that allegedly capture the efficacy of engagement practices implemented by high schools. School data, NAPLAN, OLNA and parent survey results are such mechanisms (Gable & Lingard, 2016). At the micro-level, student engagement considering issues around the relational dynamics of high schools in light of a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world can be ignored (McGregor, 2015).

Zipin and Reid (2008) contend that public education has the potential to instil in young people significant transformational experiences for the creation of a democratic and safe society in Australia. Reid and McCallum (2014) suggest that there are three critical dimensions of public education in Australia which must work together to create social equality and democratic and productive communities. First, public education should be thought of as a public good. Second, public education is a collective right of all citizens. Third, every community should have a well-resourced public school. Zipin and Reid (2008) further suggest that public schools should be inclusive of the communities they inhabit. Unfortunately, the reality, as Reid and McCallum (2014) point out, is that in Australia today there is a funding system that "privileges choice for some, at the expense of quality and equity for all" (p. 197). Similar to Zipin and Reid (2008), this thesis supports the proposition that public education should be a social and a public undertaking capable of nurturing the development of the capabilities of all students, especially the least advantaged.

Before moving on to a discussion of this proposition, it is necessary to highlight some of the broader, more invisible global forces that direct and demand educational compliance to market forces. Compliance occurs through performance and measurement across highly organised macro (global), meso (national) and micro (local level) education systems, administrators, leaders, teachers and students. Chapter 3 provides details of how these forces are experienced daily at the micro or school level

and individually for students in disadvantaged communities, sourced from research in the United States, Britain and Australia.

2.2.2 Globalisation, Neoliberal Policy and Education

Globalisation can be thought about as an expansion of colonial practices when more powerful countries, driven by commercial interest and at times political prestige, forge links between distant geographic localities (Stiglitz, 2013). Such powerful entities intend to create and impose an external system of governing over distant socio-political, cultural and economic districts (OECD, 2010). These outer locations are often accessed systematically for exploitation and profit, and skilfully manipulated from distant capitals or domains (Rizvi, 2007). Globalisation in its purest form is the process by which businesses or organisations cultivate their international influence or start operating on a transnational scale (OECD, 2010). Globalisation is a term that summarises the capitalist market economy and its expansion through the socio-political, cultural and economic zones and institutions of diverse localities, thus incorporating groups and individuals into a market arrangement of yield and profit (OECD, 2010).

Global and neoliberal mediating strategies flow into Australia, imposing a push to re-structure and re-culture national socio-political, cultural and economic institutions according to capitalist goals. Neoliberalism is a policy model that includes social and economic impositions that aim to transfer control of economic influences from the public to the private sector (Deeming, 2016). Neoliberal policies creep into education systems through a laissez-faire approach to economic development and sustainability (Lyotard, 1984). With globalisation, educational institutions have increasingly come under international scrutiny, whereby knowledge is competitively valued and accordingly ranked, often bound to opaque neoliberal agendas (Lyotard, 1984). Mediating the control of education funding and school resourcing are policy directives and compliance measures linked to performance scales and outputs (Marsh & Wohlstetter, 2013). Neoliberalism, for example, encourages the emergence of high-stakes testing such as that undertaken by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Ravitch, 2010). There are multiple standardised accountability systems that collect information on students' performance, resulting in the ranking and

comparing of student outcomes for the 65 participating OCED countries. Hogan (2016) explains how this process seeps into education systems:

> Such an approach to education has challenged the ideology of the traditional state-centred public provision of schooling, opening it instead to market-based processes of reform. Here not only does the state adopt neo-liberal policy principles that encourage the discourses of accountability, competition and choice in education, but the state also works to open public policy processes to private sector participation. (p. 93)

The education literature also references historically embedded educational inequality that is continually reinventing itself on multiple levels via class structures and through differential access to education and its benefits (Bourdieu, 1977; Connell, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2015). Globalisation can also be seen to re-traditionalise educational inequity through market-driven agendas (Connell, 2013). Neoliberalism generates dominant discourses around the relative value of human capital as economic units, which then leads to a skewed perspective of what is valuable knowledge and what is not. This argument takes us back to Adam Smith (1982 [1779]), who posited that the division of experience and education is the link between the division of labour and resultant social positioning including access to power, resources and incomes (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996).

As neoliberal forces impose a culture of competitive individualism in which education becomes a positional good (Apple, 2000), more powerful individuals and groups are able to maximise their educational resources to guarantee and maximise their future based on their privileged position. An educational advantage then allows those with disproportionately more social and economic capital to convert these currencies to cultural capital (Apple, 2000). Disadvantaged individuals or communities are often less able to access the positional good of education (Lingard & Mills, 2007). Accordingly, the disadvantaged have less opportunity to accrue educational resources or to convert these educational opportunities to currencies of cultural capital (Apple, 2000; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Therein lies the dynamic of inequality. Giroux (2005) provides a critical perspective on inequity and residualisation in public education:

Wedded to the belief that the market should be the organising principle for all political, social, and economic decisions, neoliberalism wages an incessant attack on democracy, public goods, and non-commodified values. Under neoliberalism everything either is for sale or is plundered for profit …. public services are gutted in order to lower the taxes of major corporations; schools more closely resemble either malls or jails, and teachers, forced to get revenue for their school by adopting market values, increasingly function as circus barkers hawking everything from hamburgers to pizza parties – that is, when they are not reduced to prepping students to take standardized tests. (p. 2)

The problem is that there are many individuals and groups in disadvantaged communities who are unable to access and develop their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual capital or capabilities in a rapidly changing economy (Ball, 2016; De Witte, Cabus, Thyssen, Groot & van den Brink, 2013). So, notions of educational quality, recognition and redistribution in terms of equity and the experience of an engaging democratic education and lifestyle come under threat (Bartik & Hershbein, 2016). The debate that follows indicates that public high schooling is changing in response to the forces of globalisation and neoliberalism, with profound effects on the schooling experiences of disadvantaged students, educators, families and communities (Gray & Hackling, 2009). Not surprisingly, there has been little qualitative research on how young people in high school experience these shifting educational dispositions particularly in low socioeconomic localities (Smyth & McInerney, 2012). There has been important work in Australia- the QSRLS team, Lingard, Luke, Gore, Hayes, Smyth and Zyngier all of whom are cited in this thesis.

2.2.3 Australian High Schools: Restructured, Re-cultured and Quantified

In the last three decades, the pressure on Australian education systems has intensified as national governments have taken an increasing instrumentalist policy view of education as a means of maintaining global competitiveness (Lingard, 2010). In the context of international and national policy, Australian public high schools have not been immune to educational change (Niemi, Toom & Kallioniemi, 2012). The federal government's increased role in education in Australia is a reflection of broader

international trends where governments are taking an increasing interest in schools, curriculums, assessment and learning outcomes (Lingard, 2010). Australian educational policy is the bureaucratic instrument with which the government imposes its expectations that public education systems will deliver the prescribed curriculum to the nation's citizens (Lingard, 2010). As globalisation has seeped into our collective and individual lives, the national government has become a key policy player in shaping the skills, attributes and dispositions of public high school students (Fielding, 2012). Australian education policy in its current state primarily works to produce citizens who are ready to work in an increasingly globalised knowledge economy (MCEETYA, 2008).

The force of neoliberalism in the 1980s in Australia created a shift in public education from prioritising collective purposes towards prioritising individual purposes through education policy (McGregor, 2009). In response to differing funding models and social developments in the 1980s and 1990s, national curriculum and pedagogical changes were part of the rhetoric of domestic education efficiencies (Reid, 2005a). These systemic modifications were based on decentralising control together with enhancing local and school-based management and decision making. There has been an emphasis on local responsibility and school choice that may be perceived as a move away from locally relevant education practices (Reid, 2005a). Furthermore, local public high schools have been given the responsibility for delivering a prescribed national curriculum at the local level, whether or not they can achieve such demands (Lingard & McGregor, 2014). Neoliberal policy then contributes to the residualisation of public high schools through an ever-increasing privatisation of Australian educational resources to a user pays system.

Connell (2013) explains that a user pays education system stratifies public and private education through commodifying access to education through different education pathways. By commodifying access to and opportunities for schooling, national governments control education outcomes through mandated neoliberal education policies. De Witte's team of researchers (2013) put this stratification in other words:

> excluding sections of society from entering into the pecking order of
> the knowledge economy and precluding access to the mechanisms of

competition necessary to neoliberal and market agendas has negative

social and economic consequences (p. 13).

This is demonstrated in the escalating numbers of young people from disadvantaged localities unable to gain substantial skills, knowledge and abilities from public schooling. In turn, the students are unable to competitively enter the labour market or gain the experiences to navigate a variety of public institutions.

A user pays system exacerbates marginalised students' chances of receiving a cutting-edge education in public high schools. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) add that neoliberal policy has replaced educational theory as the primary source of guidance for educational change. Caldwell (2012) details how the trend in policy and educative practices throughout the 1990s was to diversify the curriculum through introducing a corporate structure in public education institutions, thus implicitly linking educational outcomes to economic imperatives. The changes to Australian education were implemented through curriculum review, devolution of decision making, professional development, business-like school cultures, corporate planning and public image. Fielding (2012) asserts that there is now a dominating view that Australia's economic future depends on a school system tightly controlled by capitalist agendas.

Seddon (2001) also argues that an outcomes-based model of education likewise has the effect of changing the character and mode of public education management from an input model to an output model. School and student outcomes have now become the currency with which to measure educational success in a regulated and competitive, often academically prioritised, environment. In Australia NAPLAN (National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy) is one such measure of the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. This shift has the effect of reinstating traditionalist patterns of educational authority by employing the rhetoric of school choice, which underlies the problematic assumption that education is available equally to all Australians (Seddon, 2001). Connell (2013) articulates this shift:

Markets require a rationing of education and the creation of hierarchies and mechanisms of competition. Hence, the redefinition of schools and universities as firms, and the striking revival of competitive testing, as well as the expansion of public funding for private schools. Teachers are placed under performative pressures that

tend to narrow the curriculum in schools and make the sector's workforce more insecure. Even the knowledge base of education is impacted, with technicalisation of professional knowledge and a growth of cultural fakery around education. Bases for alternatives exist but have not yet found institutional articulation. (p. 99)

McGregor (2009) points out that placing education at the forefront of national competitiveness means that neoliberal desires favour governmental powers that shape the types of individuals who will help maximise the economy. As a consequence, the spirit of the free market has acculturated teaching and learning and commodified educational access, opportunity and outcomes (McGregor, 2009). Weis and Dolby (2012) likewise argue that neoliberalism is an impediment to education for democratic and community transformation as it champions competitive individualism, profit, and training for industrial and economic employment.

Lingard (2010,) goes on to argue that the already high rates of marginalisation of high school students in low socioeconomic localities work against the social and economic objectives formulated by government officials and policymakers to achieve sustainable economic growth (p. 129). In other words, the knowledge economy needs highly skilled workers, but in creating these workers the education system also works to exclude a large number of individuals who lack the opportunity to gain these skills (De Witte et al., 2013). Exploring high school policy and practices can reveal a great deal about how institutional structures and cultures function to exclude those students on the margins of society. Dimensions of exclusion come to light when we investigate the characteristics of institutions, curriculum and pedagogies together with the nature of student–teacher relationships as well as the concept of identity as an aspirational self. I now turn my attention to the influence that international policies have on restructuring, re-culturing and quantification of Australian education and student experiences of high school in Australian disadvantaged high schools and communities.

2.2.4   Australian High Schools: Impact on Marginalised Students

As Lingard (2015) previously reasoned, neoliberal policy trends focus on numbers globally, nationally and in state systems. He argues that the quantification of public schooling tends to reconstruct social justice as equity based on numbers. In turn, he

argues that equity is reconstructed through comparative and numerical expressions based on standardised test data. Neoliberal policy tends to objectify public schooling, thus denying the significance of the socioeconomic context of schooling and student experiences of particular schools (Lingard, 2015). In Australia, individual and competitive neoliberal determinations around achievement and high school efficiencies have tended to maintain if not increase the struggles experienced by marginalised youth (Zipin, Sellar, Brennan & Gale, 2015). This relates to a central contention of this research, as traditional public schools do not always meet the needs and interests of all students (McDonald, 2014; McGregor et al., 2017; Connors & McMorrow, 2015; Zyngier, 2013). For disengaged and marginalised students, there is pressure to conform to a middle-class-oriented curriculum, language and tastes, all of which intensifies as students' progress through the senior years of schooling. Increasingly, their educational development is managed through a narrow curriculum, authoritarian pedagogies, rigid school timetables and relentless testing regimes which they are often unfamiliar with (Polesel et al., 2012; Ravitch, 2010; Wrigley, Thomson & Lingard, 2012).

As many researchers claim, education outcomes are more likely to reflect an individual's socioeconomic locality rather than their ability (Sullivan, Perry & McConney, 2013; Hayes et al., 2013). International research indicates that public high schools on the urban peripheries are frequently poorly prepared or resourced to deliver quality education to their communities (Breakspear, 2012). Bonnor and Caro (2012) contend that, for staff working with underserved students, pressure to conform and perform to mandated policy and curriculum in demanding working conditions in low socioeconomic locales inhibits the building of stable staff cultures or healthy relationships with high school students and their communities (see also Breakspear, 2012). MacBeath (2007) suggests that outlying urban public high schools often experience persistent understaffing together with fewer qualified teachers and less experienced leaders. An outcome of this dearth of teacher expertise is unfair comparisons between student achievements on national performance tables. Day and Hong (2016) provide evidence that shows that high teacher turnover and burn-out are also common in disadvantaged schools. As a result, students' learning opportunities have been weakened over the years due to curriculum fragmentation and disintegration. Similarly, Richardson and Watts (2012) longitudinal study explores the

dynamics of teacher motivations and career challenges experienced by educational professionals. The dynamics of disadvantage, difficulty and resilience play out in hundreds of public schools daily.

Young people are often managed and silenced by the hierarchical structures and processes of high schools within the logic of the Competitive Academic Curriculum (CAC) (Connell, 1985; Fine & Weis, 2003; Smyth & McInerney, 2012). Peripheral public high schools often have inadequate access to a full range of education and learning courses or the staff proficiency to help students navigate pathways through high school and onto higher education pathways (Perry & McConney, 2010). This educational/opportunity gap is maintained in part due to the public high school sector delivering scarcer learning opportunities, weaker school and life experiences, as well as reduced academic and social outcomes due to neoliberal reforms (Perry, 2017). These issues and the links to broader global trends influencing Australian education policy and practice are given further consideration in Chapter 3.

2.2.5   Summary

At the public high school level, the market effect is devastating for marginalised and disadvantaged students in low socioeconomic communities. Public schools become resource poor, highly stressed and finally worn down while carrying the brunt of disproportionately more students who are living in poverty or have special needs (Gonski, 2011). Rates of disengagement and dropping out escalate when residualised high schools are unable to meet the needs or interests of such individuals. Inadequate funding, a dearth of good teacher supply, expertise and leadership together with fragile school cultures add to already strained public schooling capabilities in engaging their students in learning (Gonski, 2011). The educational opportunity gap is maintained and sometimes widened through the provision of weakened education and school life, and the lack of scaffolding of positive experiences that can lead to real post-secondary educations and careers (Perry, 2017).

In this section, I have examined the broader global and neoliberal landscape influencing Australian public high school education. I described the underlying power relations of three decades of globalism as a system of exploitation departing from collective social goals and working towards supporting private sector economic goals

in Australia (Deeming, 2016). Neoliberal market-orientated educational restructuring in Australian education systems has resulted in the residualisation of public education and thus a widening gap in the access to quality, equitable and engaging public education in Australian high schools (Lamb et al., 2015; Lingard & Mills, 2007; MacBeath, 2007). As we will hear in the following chapters, students increasingly experience marginalisation and dissatisfaction in an ever more competitive, commodified and undemocratic public education that is not inclusive of individuals or community socio-political, cultural or economic needs. There are, however, alternative forms of high schooling that meet the needs of such individuals and communities such as that proposed by Big Picture Education Australia, the focus of this research.

2.3 Big Picture Education Australia: A Relational Design for Schools

2.3.1 Introduction

The role of public education is to give all students the opportunity to flourish, be creative and succeed in life and careers (Alger, 2016). However, this does not seem to be happening in practice, as Australia's high schools are struggling to provide a meaningful and relevant curriculum for marginalised students (McGregor, Mills, te Riele & Hayes, 2015). In response, this thesis examines how one Advisory or "school within a school" presents a viable way of re-engaging students who are switching off and dropping out of school (Levine, 2002). The Advisory is a design for schooling underpinned by a philosophy of experiential interest-based learning, relational pedagogy and responsive student–teacher relationships. In this thesis, I argue that the Advisory helps create the conditions for a relational pedagogy which provides a more socially just model of education for marginalised high school students.

This section presents a historical overview of how and why (Yin, 1993) BPEA emerged in Australia. I first detail the historical and philosophical origins of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) in the United States and point to the work of the progressive educationalist Ted Sizer. Based on the early reform work of the CES, Big Picture Learning (BPL) and Big Picture Schools (BPS) have sought to develop a more personal approach to learning. Against this backdrop, I review the development of BPEA in the Australian and Western Australian contexts. I then outline the Australian

design distinguishers characteristic of BPEA at WHS. Advocates of school change suggest that public high schools should address the needs of the whole student as well as listening to the students whom the school serves (Hattam & Prosser, 2008; Toch, 2003). My central argument is that mandated curriculum, performativity and system accountability run counter to nurturing the human dimension of education and the social relationships that should underpin public schooling that strives for equality, democracy, and healthy and happy students (Polesel et al., 2012). Such a supposition resists a dominant discourse that schools primarily operate with the aim of creating human capital for private benefit (Apple, 2007; Connell, 2013).

One response to the dominant neoliberal market-orientated perspective described in the previous section is a progressive view of the public high school that prioritises the human collective and democratic dimensions of living and learning. These more democratic and "socially just" approaches to education can better serve the needs of students in underserved school communities (Connell, 1993). This view also seeks to support students' abilities and aspirations to become autonomous learners (Wright & McLeod, 2015; Wyn & White, 1997). This thesis develops the argument that Advisory students bring personal capital and assets to the learning process and it is essential to recognise and integrate these personal "funds of knowledge" into their learning experiences (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Talbot and Hayes (2016) suggest that a relational pedagogy embraces students' ideas, student assets and capital and culture in their learning. This relational approach can offer students time and space to participate in meaningful and critical dialogue about their education. I shall now turn my attention to the philosophical and historical efforts of BPL and BPS to create a relational and engaging response to the persistent and protracted problem of student marginalisation and disengagement in public high schools.

2.3.2 Big Picture Learning and Big Picture Schools in the United States

Alternative models of education have been developed across the world to address issues of educational quality, equity and engagement in learning. Many of these models also challenge the discriminatory policies and practices that act to exclude particular groups and individuals (Giroux, 2015). In the United States, alternative high school designs and philosophies are often supported by progressive high school

40

reformers. These reformers contend that learning is a social endeavour, requiring meaningful interaction between and among teachers and learners within an environment that deliberately encourages collaboration, inquiry and creative problem solving (Kohn, 2004). For progressive educators holding this view, knowledge is neither entirely objective (out in the world), nor altogether subjective (relevant only to the individual's interests) (Dewey, 1963). Progressive educators believe that knowledge, experiences and reflection are continually developing in transforming deeper awareness, mastery of skills, and sophisticated understandings dynamically through the relationship between and among individuals and their social and physical environment (Dewey, 1963). How these alternative progressive theories are enacted can be demonstrated by exploring the history and development of BPL, beginning in the United States.

In the United States, the CES is one model of education that attempts to maintain the democratic possibilities of public schooling with social equity in mind (Sizer, 1997). The CES was established in 1984 and developed through the work of progressive educator Theodor Sizer. Sizer, a teacher and philosopher, spent his professional life implementing Dewey's (1963) notion of positioning the learner at the centre of their education (Sizer, 1997). His focus through the CES was to change a generally inefficient and ineffective American public high school system to benefit the individual student. Sizer (1997) also worked towards creating the conditions to improve American education policy. The vision put forth by the CES is based on the following principles:

> We envision an educational system that equips all students with the intellectual, emotional, and social habits and skills to become powerful and informed citizens who contribute actively toward a democratic and equitable society. Acknowledging that no two schools are or should be alike, we envision schools that necessarily differ from each other in size, scope, and programmatic emphasis while that sharing common principles, practices, and the hallmarks of powerful learning communities within and among each other. Finally, we envision that these schools positively influence the conditions in which all schools operate, serving as examples of and advocates for education policy that supports meaningful teaching and learning that

41

allows all students to use their minds well in school and throughout

their lives. (CES, 2017)

With these CES principles at the forefront of their organisation, BPL began in the United States in 1995, again pursuing the mission of positioning students directly at the centre of their learning (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). BPL co-founders Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor combined their substantial life and teaching experience in public high school education to demonstrate that schooling and education can and should be profoundly changed to meet the needs of individuals, not institutions (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). The BPL model of schooling is based on the idea that authentic teacher–student relationships are central to creating flourishing students, families and community cultures (Alger, 2016). Deborah Meier's foreword to *The big picture: education is everyone's business*, states:

For a century or more reformers have been fiddling with how to improve on a paradigm of schooling derived from another age and intended for a very different purpose. It is contrary to everything we know about being human. (Littky & Grabelle, 2004, p. vii)

In other words, the old industrial, hierarchical and power-laden structure of high school does not serve all students equitably, democratically or with just care. The educative purpose of BPL is to develop engaging learning environments that involve rigorous, relevant and relational student work that focuses on individual competence. Furthermore, BPL schools strive to create avenues for artistry and mastery through authentic school engagement (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). Likewise, BPL maintains that a narrow focus on test scores and performativity scales does not adequately measure individual or group knowledge (Alger, 2016). Understandings are different between students, and individuals bring diverse experiences and knowledge foundations to their learning. BPL asserts that what individuals need in their high school education and for future success is continually developing (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013, p vii).

A progressive democratic philosophy binds BPL and BPS while advocating personalised learning in a community of learners. The BPL design shifts the notion of "one size fits all" in public high schools and discards the notion of students being at risk (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013, preface). Instead, students are welcome at school and charged with being successful in a relational learning environment that is

responsive to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013, p. vii). BPL challenges the traditional didactic model of education to enable all learners to progress by engaging individuals and their interests rather than imposing prescribed structures, cultures and pedagogies upon all students. BPL provides an opportunity for Advisory participants and peers to continually experience, discuss and reflect upon learning measures and outcomes with each person in mind rather than the learner having to comply with external standards (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013, p. vii).

In the Advisory, students are more likely to drive their learning, to be invested, passionate and future focused as lifelong learners (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). The Advisory facilitates students to grow their learning in the community with mentors, and individuals and are not assessed solely by standardised tests. Instead, students can meet assessment through exhibitions and demonstrations of achievement, through their motivation, and through "the habits of mind, hand, and heart – reflecting the real world" (BPL, 2017). Student evaluations and challenges that all of us face in our everyday lives should also inform the school curriculum. By 2017, BPL and BPS's had grown into an international education network. The next section reviews BPEA in the Australian and Western Australian context through its links with the National Schools Network (NSN), Australian National Schools Network (ANSA) and the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP). These organisations have worked to preserve equity and democracy in public high schools in disadvantaged communities.

2.3.3   The Australian Context: Foundations of BPEA

The Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) in Australia set out to achieve a more engaging approach to public school education in low socioeconomic localities. The program began in 1974 with a goal to raise levels of participation in Australian public learning among students, teachers and parents in disadvantaged communities (Connell et al., 1992). The principal mechanism for achieving this goal was to create engaging and relevant curriculum and learning for all students through a more participatory pedagogy (Connell et al., 1992). The DSP strategy chose participatory pedagogy as preferable to a traditional, abstract curriculum and hierarchical instruction which tends to privilege middle-class norms. One goal of the DSP was to help mitigate dominant deficit discourses regarding middle-class expectations and

emerging neoliberal market forces which act to marginalise working-class children in public education (Connell et al., 1992).

The DSP funding network laid a practical foundation for many small-scale programs in low socioeconomic localities that were of benefit to marginalised individuals and disadvantaged communities. The DSP ceased operation in 1989. Other Australian networks then developed to take the place of this formative public-school equity and engagement initiative working with disadvantaged communities (Connell et al., 1992). The National Schools Network (NSN) and later the Australian National Schools Network (ANSN) are two such organisations that continued to work towards equity and public-school engagement via innovative and relevant educational programs for disadvantaged communities.

From 1991 the NSN network trialled innovative educational pedagogy and practice in a range of public high schools in disadvantaged communities. The Commonwealth government financially supported NSN in partnership with diverse education systems from its inception:

> The NSN was funded by the Hawke-Keating Government in 1991. It was one of a few national networks of its kind in the world. It is recognised nationally as one of the few groups that can bring together diverse stakeholders in a collaborative way to advance ideas, programs and policies with a special focus on schools in disadvantaged communities in all sectors. (BPEA, 2017)

During the 1990s the NSN acted as a stakeholder in negotiations around the award restructuring agenda, which operated to bring about industry efficiency changes, consolidate minimum wage formulations and create pathways for equitable skill-related career paths through education in a range of disadvantaged communities. From 1991–93 the NSN established research and development networks with approximately 90 Australian public schools. With the support of NSN, these schools were able to trial and evaluate innovative methods of teaching and learning to meet individual and community needs. In the following years, until 1996, over 500 schools participated in NSN projects, exploring more effective and relevant classroom and school designs, and collaborative teaching, learning and engagement with the local community. Innovative, practical and culturally relevant teaching, learning and assessment

strategies together with student presentations and service learning were implemented across hundreds of disadvantaged public schools in Australian communities. Commonwealth funding for NSN projects ceased at the end of 1996.

The work of the NSN was taken up by the ANSN, a not-for-profit organisation that continues to operate around Australia to support public education and school change in disadvantaged areas (BPEA, 2017). ANSN provides a set of principles directing community interaction, creating learning communities and informing a set of progressions and structures for leading school and teacher change (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015, p. 509). Schools could become members by attracting ANSN support for relevant educational projects through state and territory project funding bodies (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015, p. 509). The ANSN initiative comes from decades of intermittent and often fractional interventions in Australian public school change funding arrangements.

> The ANSN principles are respectful, hopeful and challenging for all stakeholders wanting to progress ideas, programs and policies in public high schools in low socioeconomic locales (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015, p. 509).

It is these principles that continue to underpin the current work of BPEA. The BPEA organisation builds on the early public-school work of the DSP, NSN and ANSN. The first BPEA school started in Australia in 2007. BPEA's central aim is to improve "Australian education by generating and sustaining innovative, personalised schools that work in partnership with their greater communities" (BPEA, 2017). BPEA pursues these ambitious aims by working to design

> Break-through public schools, research and replicate new designs for education, train educators to serve as leaders in their schools and communities and actively engage the public as participants and decision makers in the education of our young people. (BPEA, 2017)

Similar to the DSP, NSN and ANSN, BPEA aims to improve levels of participation and retention in Australian public schools in low socioeconomic locations (Connell et al., 1992). For BPEA, the mechanism for achieving this goal is to create engaging and relevant curriculum and learning for all students through the establishment of

small Advisory learning communities and creating curriculum focusing on student experiences of learning through relational pedagogy (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013, p. vii). Against this backdrop, I now describe the ten design distinguishers that characterise the BPEA Advisory at WHS. These distinguishers provide a base from which the philosophical, structural and relational dimensions of the Advisory occur at WHS.

2.3.4 Big Picture Education Australia Design Distinguishers

The ten design distinguishers provide initial understandings of the philosophical, structural and relational dimensions of the Advisory at WHS. BPEA "schools within schools" are characterised by a common ethos, language and set of practices called distinguishers (Levine, 2002). The distinguishers are designed to work together to create a holistic and integrated learning environment. Each BPS, each "school within a school" or Advisory learning community, is unique in providing a comprehensive education for each student (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). The design is based on three foundation principles:

> Firstly, that learning must be based on the interests and goals of each student. Secondly, that a student's curriculum must be relevant to people and places that exist in the real world. Finally, that a student's abilities must be authentically measured by the quality of his or her work. (BPEA, 2017)

I now provide an overview of the ten design distinguishers.

1. ***One student at a time within a community of learners*** (Littky & Grabelle, 2004): Each student spends time one-on-one discussing their past, present and future learning with their Advisor. Personalised one-on-one time and discussions with the Advisor facilitate the recognition and integration of individual interests and passions into authentic project work linked to broader curriculum requirements (BPEA, 2017). Through personalised learning and conversation with the Advisor, peers, teachers, parents and community mentors, Advisory students are consistently challenged to deepen their knowledge and experience of learning.

2. ***Leaving school to learn in the real world*** (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013): The idea of leaving school to learn requires students to spend two days per week in a work environment in their community which the student has chosen and arranged with appropriate support (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). Working with their interests and passions, students collaborate with a mentor in the community to develop a project that is of benefit to the workplace and supports the students' learning at schools (Riordan, 2006). Advisory students are expected to interact maturely with adults in both the school and the broader community (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

3. ***Authentic assessment through exhibition***: Exhibitions or demonstrations are a way for individuals to provide evidence of their learning to others (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). These are supportive expositions where students exhibit their portfolios of work to a panel made up of the Advisory participants and interested stakeholders including families. In this free-thinking appraisal session students have the opportunity to reveal their learning, reflect with others on how to reach their goals, and field questions and reflections on all of their learning experiences over a set period (BPEA, 2017).

4. ***Flexible school organisation***: This supports individuals in engaged learning and in working well with others. Students are encouraged to learn as a social and collaborative process (BPEA, 2017).

5. ***The Advisory***: Advisory is the centrepiece of student learning (BPEA, 2010). The Advisory is a flexible yet stable small learning community where students spend the majority of their time (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

6. ***School culture***: School culture is based on living and developing the principles of trust, care and respect between all internal and external stakeholders. School culture has a strong focus on practising academic rigour, constructing student-centred curriculum and forging authentic relationships. Students are guided to gradually create a robust intellectual purpose for their personal learning goals over their years in the Advisory (BPEA, 2014).

7. ***Everyone is a leader***: Everyone is considered capable of growing their leadership capabilities for now and in the future (BPEA, 2014). Leadership emerges from social collaborations with leaders and peers, thus creating new opportunities for students to develop learning plans and lead their chosen endeavours.

8. *Parent and family engagement*: The idea of "enrolling the family" as active participants to support student learning is pivotal to the BPE design (BPEA, 2014). There can be multiple discussions and meetings about a student's previous knowledge or to co-construct a personalised curriculum with the prescribed syllabi to meet student needs. There are open lines of communication through face-to-face communication, being welcome in class to chat, negotiation on learning plans and the freedom to phone, email and text with Advisors and students.

9. *School–higher education partnerships*: All students are required to adopt a positive orientation to lifelong learning to optimise their chances of successfully negotiating post-school transitions (Alger, 2016). It is vital that disadvantaged schools maintain and expand opportunities for students to widen their life experiences, and to broaden their knowledge of education and training options, by accessing, resourcing and visiting learning communities and locations outside of their locale (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

10. *Ongoing professional development*: Professional development can include workshops, writing, reading and presenting at conferences, visits to other schools, diploma and degree certification in specific fields, travel and time off for reflection (BPEA, 2014).

The ten design distinguishers are interrelated and provide an approach that deliberately inverts traditional school education by positioning the student and their passions and interests at the centre of their education (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). These ten distinguishers guide engaging learning for students through the operation of an Advisory.

2.3.5   The Role of the Advisory

The Advisory is the central mechanism of the BPEA design and the primary focus of this research. The Advisory functions with the above ten design distinguishers as a well-thought-out framework to guide the philosophy, pedagogy and operation of the Advisory setting for its participants. The Advisory is a small community of students usually located within a mainstream public high school in the WA context (Galassi et al., 1997). It is a support system for between fifteen and twenty students who stay with one Advisor for up to five years of high school. The Advisor trusts, cares for and respects each student. The Advisory is the students' family group at school; it has a name, culture and personality emerging from the individuals that make up the group over the years (Galassi

et al., 1997). Students are expected to become polite, considerate and productive members of their Advisory (BPEA, 2010).

Sustaining the Advisory program is a belief that "every student needs to have relationships with at least one adult in the school characterised by warmth, concern, openness and understanding" (George & Alexander, 1993, p. 201). These powerful learning relationships are built through attending to Advisory culture, student well-being, connecting parents to their child's education, whole-school support, staff development and community participation (Otero, Csoti & Rothstadt, 2012). Essential to the success of the Advisory is strong leadership, support from administration and acceptance from the mainstream school culture (Kemmis, 2005). Without these related support mechanisms, the sustainability of the Advisory is compromised. The Advisory is where the relationships between students and Advisors are nurtured (Galassi et al., 1997). Both in and out of the Advisory, students are continually experiencing, understanding and reflecting through interactions with Advisory teachers, participants and stakeholders (Otero et al., 2012).

2.3.6 The Role of the Advisor

Each Advisory learning community is supervised by one Advisor (Galassi et al., 1997). The Advisor performs a role that is different in a number of ways to that of a mainstream classroom teacher. The role of the Advisor is complex and challenging. The Advisor does not just deliver lesson content, but negotiates holistic learning with the student over an extended period, often years with each student (Galassi et al., 1997). This type of student–teacher relationship helps in personalising learning and encouraging student engagement (Hutchison & McCann, 2015). The Advisor also assists the student with their learning matrix and plans, and discusses learning progress and goals in a scaffolded manner (BPEA, 2010). Knowledge of each student's strengths and weaknesses accumulates over the years in an Advisory, thus providing opportunities for a comprehensive education balanced with students' needs and interests (Galassi et al., 1997).

The Advisor is likewise pivotal in brokering learning opportunities with others, as well as brokering internships in the community (BPEA, 2010). The Advisor often has industry links, networks of colleagues and friends, and the ability to communicate with mentors and community on behalf of students seeking internship experiences (Galassi

et al., 1997). Advisors ideally coach students with their presentations to various audiences and individually counsel students in their journey towards adulthood (BPEA, 2010). For students, the role of the Advisory and their Advisor are pivotal to their learning and connectedness to school. It is a home where students are supported and grow with each other, their family and community over their high school years (Galassi et al., 1997).

A fundamental tenet of the Advisory approach is that students' positive development depends, to a considerable degree, on whether the contexts in which they develop, including schools, are reliable sources of supportive relationships (Nodding's, 2005). The creation of such relationships largely depends on the ability of adults to read accurately and respond appropriately to student behaviour and well-being. Hence, rather than focusing on children's knowledge and behavioural skills, this approach integrates and utilises the interpersonal skills of adults (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Relational pedagogy, therefore, is manifest in Advisors who are aware of and explicitly focus on the quality of their interactions with students to develop classroom communities that promote physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual growth (Erwin, 2010). Outside of the Advisory, Advisors are also responsible for the usual duties of being a teacher, such as working with their subject speciality be it English, History or Physics. Working in teams with other practitioners and school administrators to achieve professional development is another duty that is required, often outside of school hours (Galassi et al., 1997). Accordingly, the Advisor efficiently manages student learning, engagement levels and relationships, through the Advisory group (Galassi et al., 1997).

2.3.7   Summary

This section has summarised the historical origins of BPS and BPL education based on the early work of Theodor Sizer and the CES in the United States in the 1980s. The CES network began in 1984 as one response to the ineffectiveness of large urban public high schools in meeting the needs of all students, particularly those experiencing socio-political, cultural and economic inequity and disadvantage in American high schools (Alger, 2016). A decade later in 1995, Big Picture Learning and Big Picture Schools were developed through the work of Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor in North America and now internationally. BPEA became active in Australia in 2006 and in Western Australia in 2010. I have described the ten design

distinguishers that are characteristic of BPEA and the role of the Advisory and its participants. Now this research enters into the "untidy reality" of teaching situations within research (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972, p. 7). Here, I move into the tidal drift of sense making concerning objective and subjective truths. I focus on "description and interpretation, rather than measurement and prediction" (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972, p. 32). This study seeks to understand how these lofty re-engagement goals and processes are enacted and experienced by the Advisory participants themselves. But first I shall provide more detail about WHS, the case study site, with a particular focus on the reasons why this school chose to work with the BPEA design to build a more relational pedagogy for re-engagement.

2.4   Willibe High School: A Case Study

2.4.1   Introduction

This section provides a profile of WHS, in particular its Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) rating, attendance and graduation rates for 2016 and how some of these features position students and their community in terms of disadvantage across Australia. The Advisory provided an opportunity for a targeted intervention for students perceived to be at risk at WHS. The term at risk is critiqued in Chapter 3. By implementing the Advisory, WHS sought to improve student attendance, engagement in learning, graduation rates and post-school pathways for its students. This section details how and why the Advisory was established by the school's administration, staff, students and parents. Following this I provide a snapshot of the life of the Advisory in three different locations at WHS before a permanent learning community was established. To finish, I introduce the Advisory participants, their names made confidential by pseudonyms, while a summary ends this chapter.

2.4.2   Willibe High School Culture, Community and Context

WHS takes a holistic approach to deciding the high school's guiding values, teaching and learning strategies, as well as the school's future direction. WHS has a culture that promotes an active team attitude for both teaching and pastoral care for all students. The school culture encourages students and their teachers to be lifelong learners and

to play an active and positive role within the school community. The school provides a welcoming environment that values cultural differences, promotes a love of learning and empowers students to make a positive contribution to the world (WHS Business Plan, 2015–2017). The school ethos is defined by the values of care, courtesy and cooperation. One of WHS's strategic priorities is in line with the Director General's Classroom First Strategy (DOEWA, 2015). In achieving healthy attitudes to learning, the school embraces a student-centred approach to teaching and engagement in high school education. Despite a strong policy and school culture framework, WHS still struggles with low student attendance rates, achievement levels and disengagement from learning.

For example, the student attendance rates at WHS for 2016 reveal that a large number of students do not attend school on a daily basis. Behind these statistics the resident population experiences a complicated lifestyle due to a mix of social and economic variables. Measuring the complex lifestyle experience in the area surrounding WHS is possible, in part, through the National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) and the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (Index of Disadvantage) (SEIFA). These indexes provide comparable levels of socioeconomic disadvantage constructed on a range of characteristics measured by the Australian Census. The indexes provide a general view of the relative level of disadvantage in a region compared to other areas and are used to advocate for an area based on its level of disadvantage.

> The index is derived from attributes that reflect disadvantages such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. When targeting services to disadvantaged communities, it is important also to look at these underlying characteristics as they can differ markedly between areas with similar SEIFA scores and shed light on the type of disadvantage being experienced. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013)

Working in tandem with the NGAA and SEIFA scores is a measure of public schools' performance that is called the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) specifically created this ICSEA score to measure student outcomes through national

testing regimes (Faragher, Broadbent, Brown & Burgess, 2014). The role of the ICSEA is to enable meaningful comparisons of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test results by students in schools across Australia. NAPLAN data enables fair comparisons to be made between schools providing educational services to students from similar socio-educational backgrounds (ACARA, 2014). The benchmark for a school's ICSEA score is set at 1000. If the ICSEA value is lower than 1000, students at that school may experience a reduced educational advantage. Conversely, the higher the ICSEA value, the greater the educational advantage students may experience at that school.

> Research shows that key factors in students' family backgrounds (parents' occupation, their school education and non-school education) have an influence on students' educational outcomes at school. Research has also shown that school level factors (a school's geographical location and the proportion of Indigenous students a school caters for) need to be considered when summarising educational advantage or disadvantage at the school level. (ACARA, 2014)

The ICSEA score for each school is informative for a number of reasons. The ICSEA value represents in an easy-to-read numerical manner the degree of influence such identified key factors may have on educational advantage. The value endeavours to measure the influence of identified factors both for students and at the school level. The ICSEA score helps in understanding the level of advantage or disadvantage that individual students bring to school with them due to such factors (ACARA, 2013). Information on NAPLAN and ICSEA and other relevant data are collated and presented on the My School website. It is then possible to identify the "difference schools are making to the students attending a particular school. The index also enables schools seeking to improve their students' performance to learn from other schools with similar students" (ACARA, 2014).

These statistical categories have relevance for this study as 34 per cent of Western Australian high school students do not complete twelve years of education (Lamb et al., 2015). In the WHS region, public high school non-completion can be as high as 85 per cent of young Western Australians in some pockets of the community (Bradley et al., 2008). Accelerating these low figures are individuals with a disability, Indigenous

students, those with a language background other than English (LBOTE) and regional Australians, together with homeless youth who face additional challenges to completing high school. For example, transport to and from high school is a significant issue for many of these individuals (Lamb et al., 2015).

2.4.3   WHS School Profile

There are a variety of reasons why I selected WHS as the case study site. The Advisory provided an opportunity for a targeted intervention for at-risk students at WHS. As the school operated as a middle school until 2010 so there are no data on post-secondary pathways accessed or participated in by the students who attended WHS. As a consequence of its middle school status, from 2001 to 2010 the data shows a zero baseline for post-secondary pathways. A shown in table 1 the school draws more students from the bottom SES quartile and lower-middle quartile than the average Australian distribution. For example, in 2016, 38 per cent of WHS school students were drawn from the bottom SES quartile. There have also been a 1 per cent increase in the number of students from Indigenous backgrounds as well as a 5 per cent increase in the number of students from a language background other than English (LBOTE). The school has experienced a growing student population and an increase in diversity and the number of students experiencing disadvantage, both indicators of public school residualisation. Perry and Lubienski (2014) sum up the impact of school residualisation in the following way:

> in Australia … the average level of achievement of a kid from a low socioeconomic status (SES) background in a low SES school is roughly three years behind a high SES kid in a high SES school. For any given student, attending a low SES school versus a high SES school amounts to more than a year's difference in academic performance. Clearly, where one goes to school in Australia matters … a lot.

Table 1   WHS school profile for the 2015/2016 year

Data source	Distribution of students			
	Bottom quarter	**Middle quarters**		**Top quarter**
School distribution	38%	33%	20%	8%
Australian distribution	25%	25%	25%	25%

School ICSEA value: 980; Average ICSEA value: 1000; Data source: Parent information
Source: Department of Education and Training, Western Australia (2014).

From 2010 to the present the school has experienced a rapid growth in student numbers, due the provision of Year 7 classes as well as Year 11 and 12 senior school classes as shown in table 2.

Table 2   WHS enrolment breakdown for the 2015/2016 year

Category	Enrolments
Total enrolments	1259
Girls	596
Boys	663
Full-time equivalent enrolments	1259
Indigenous students	4%
Language background other than English	7%

The statistics on attendance rates shown in tables 3 and 4 indicate WHS's poor standing in terms of attendance, academic success and thus graduation. Zubrick (2014) explains the effect of poor attendance on student academic achievement from a study in Western Australia:

> The effects of attendance on academic achievement are readily demonstrable for all students. However, these effects are modest when compared with the impact of socioeconomic status on current and onward academic achievement. The combination of low SES with poor attendance rates, with higher proportions of unexplained absences, is particularly damaging to achievement attainment and onward success. There are substantial opportunities for targeted interventions for at risk students. (p. 339)

Table 3   WHS Student attendance rates 2016

Category	Rate
All students	87%
Indigenous students	80%
Non-Indigenous students	87%

Table 4   WHS Student attendance level 2016: proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time

Category	Rate
All students	55%
Indigenous students	34%
Non-Indigenous students	56%

Table 5 shows that for the year 2016 the number of students attaining an ATAR and therefore the potential to apply for university immediately after school through TISC was 8 students (4.3%). The 2016 data indicate that a further 25 students (13.6%) engaged with ATAR subjects and Certificate 2 studies. Furthermore, 79 students (42.9%) mostly gained Certificate 2 and 3 qualifications in vocational education and training (VET). Seventy-one individuals (38.6%) journeyed on to other pathways such as the workforce, travel or welfare. Potentially, 95 per cent of WHS students departed WHS without completing a full 12 years of formal schooling.

Table 5   WHS Year 12 graduation pathways

Year	Year 12	ATAR only	ATAR & Cert 2	VET Cert 2 or Cert 3	Other	Unverified
2016	184 (100%)	8 (4.3%)	25 (13.6%)	79 (42.9%)	71 (38.6%)	1 (0.5%)

2.4.4   An Opportunity for a Targeted Intervention

Against this backdrop, WHS chose to implement a BPA Advisory approach. The Advisory program is an equity initiative seeking to meet the needs of students and to mitigate some of the obstacles facing 17 students and their families living in the

disadvantaged community around WHS. The school community also sought to implement a student-centred and relational program to re-engage its more gifted yet disengaged high school students. WHS stakeholders also believed in the benefits of working with students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). The school correspondingly sought to make the most of students' learning experience by opening up assessment methods through the use of exhibitions and portfolios (BPEA, 2014).

There was similarly an understanding that many of the Advisory participants had been silenced and dismissed by traditional schooling processes despite their academic potential and the salience of their aspirations. Inherent in the Advisory implementation was the importance of a positive experience of senior high school education and positive role modelling of the older students on the younger students at WHS. Improving student attendance, engagement and development of individual capabilities are crucial at all levels of education; however, it is particularly salient in the middle and senior years of high school because high school disengagement rises dramatically during early adolescence (Klem & Connell, 2004). The implications of student (dis)engagement with traditional high schooling are discussed in Chapter 3.

Quantitative statistics tell one story but the following voices tell another story, a qualitative tale. I now present the rationale of the school community, administrators, teachers and parents for implementing the WHS BP Advisory. Providing an alternative way of doing high school (Pope, 2001), the principal together with the school community decided to explore options to re-engage students by:

> *The program initially was pushed by me. Big Picture was something that I wanted to implement to give different opportunities to kids in our school. There are kids who are really disengaged with school. So, for them it is about re-establishing themselves with learning, re-establishing their identity, helping them focus their interests and combining the interests with study and seeing that they can actually make progress at school in a different way* (Principal, interview, 2014).

Creating participatory and interest-based learning opportunities:

> *In Advisory, they're connecting it to their academic – what they're doing now – "This is what you need now in order to get to that next step, and this is what that next step might look like. And if it doesn't*

look like that it might look like this." So those conversations I think are essential, so that firstly the dream is articulated and that the dream connects realistically to what the student – the student's own interest in that, because to be in a job that doesn't connect to you personally must just be soul destroying. So, there's that. Then there's the articulation of, "Okay, well we want to get there – let's try these different things." And because it's got the real world and authentic learning involved it makes it so much more meaningful (Deputy Principal, interview, 2014).

Developing project-based learning experiences:

And although they don't do those specific subject areas, it's the enquiry; it's the method of learning that's important. So, they've got the strategies to be able to seek information, bring information together, format it, sell it, whatever they want to do. So, they've got the processes around that so they can apply that to different contexts that come up in later years and be confident that they can find the answers as opposed to sometimes you think schools are a little bit more about regurgitation of facts and less to do with the skills required to get, maintain, and use knowledge (Miss Mae, interview, 2015).

Acknowledging the unequal starting point of students:

Miss Mae talks a lot about the emotional work with some of these kids. They're not coming from particularly positive family lives, for whatever reason. I mean, you know, life is messy sometimes and you've just got to pull through it, like you, you've said I have done it. And I think Big Picture tries to get those kids who have all the potential and have the talent but because of circumstances aren't able to make it in that really competitive traditional system that has a tendency to shift out those kids who aren't making it academically, so this is a program for those kids to be supported so they can move on and fulfil their potential (Adahe (parent), interview, 2014).

Supporting aspirations for the future:

I think for many kids who have been disengaged in school, their aspirations would've been really low. So even though their ability levels are high, aspirations are low. Getting into Big Picture has changed it. It's brought their aspirations back to what it should be. Our next step I think is to grow it beyond that so that they actually see that they have got limitless potential and they're only holding themselves back. And I think that's all part of that relationship building (Principal, interview, 2014).

Building relationships and social networks:

I think the interesting thing about the Advisory is that there's a very strong identity, like a very – like you said, close-knit, very strong bonds, and I think that has a huge effect personally and academically on the kids. It's very positive and if we hadn't have had this space, and this place, and this teacher, all 17 of those kids would struggling somewhere else alone (Mrs Temperance Bissett (parent), interview, 2015).

With some of the statistics and reasoning behind the Advisory operation detailed, I now describe the Advisory's three-year history, after which I introduce the Advisory participants.

2.4.5   Advisory Implementation and Participants

Before the Advisory learning community developed into a formal group of students with an Advisor, much of the BPEA and Advisory groundwork was negotiated via face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails through the local university, BPEA directors and the leadership team at WHS. In 2012 a small leadership group at WHS set about discussing and planning staffing, budgets, room allocation, resources, legal contracts, timetables, support staff, pedagogies, curriculums, perceived and expected Advisory relationships and dynamics as well as contingency plans. In 2012 expressions of interest for professional development in BPEA and for Advisor's, support staff, family and community mentors, Advisory students and other interested parties passed around the entire school. Mr Aloe Blacc, the program champion, shared his vision:

In the Advisory, I think the key to the answer is in the question and that is about relationships. Knowing the students well, knowing their aspirations, giving students time, giving them empathy, all of those things that help build the relationship between the student and the teacher and therefore build trust. And I guess trust is both ways, students trusting Advisors for advice, Advisors trusting students and guiding students and knowing that they will give of their best in terms of their learning. So, for me that's the key to the establishment of that and I guess the other part, which may go into some of the other questions a bit, is about the authenticity of the learning and helping students realise that authenticity through their research, through their projects that they do, and through a genuine attempt to link them to an advocate through the internship. (Principal, interview, 2014)

During 2012 Mrs Felicity Snowlee (Deputy Principal), Miss Audra Mae (Advisor), Miss Dianna Macklemore (Advisor), led by Mr Aloe Blacc (Principal), partook in BPEA professional development. Working with BPEA founders and other experienced BPEA Advisors they attended a five-day foundation course and visited a number of BPEA schools in Tasmania and New South Wales. There were also opportunities to attend various conferences and workshops throughout the development year. In 2013, with a year of professional development to work with, the logistics programmed for and departmental permissions behind the leadership group, WHS commenced the Advisory journey.

2.4.6 How Does a School Within a School Work? Relationships, Relevance, Rigour

Introducing a school within a school is an attempt at school change to improve engagement in learning in large, mainly urban, secondary schools, by creating more personalised, smaller units within the larger school (Lee & Ready, 2007). Schools within schools is a downsizing strategy to improve student and school performance. Larger schools bring the benefits of specialised staff, enriched facilities and lower administrative costs. A school within a school operates to maintain the benefits of the larger school while creating the advantages found in smaller schools. A school within a school is a separate and autonomous learning community (Raywid, 1997). It plans

and runs its own program, has its own staff and students, and receives its own separate budget. Although it must negotiate the use of common space, such as the canteen, sports areas and library, with a host school, both its teachers and students are affiliated with the school within a school as a matter of choice (Raywid, 1997). Schools within schools operate to improve student social-emotional capabilities such as relationships, connectedness, mentoring, accountability, communication and post-school transitions (Lee & Ready, 2007). I will now detail how the WHS Advisory came into being based on the decision to better meet student needs.

In 2013 the original Advisory of seventeen participants found accommodation in a classroom at the front of the mainstream building. This building block was scheduled for renovation at the end of 2013 as part of the new building agenda. Miss Mae, the Advisor who has worked at WHS since 2001, took command of the group and began to build upon established relationships with students, their re-engagement in learning and getting to know their parents and community. As one student, Boii, commented, robust student–teacher relationships existed before the Advisory formed. Shared interests, continuous attention and high expectations are aspects of the Advisory relationships which act to engage students in learning. Boii commented on his relationship with the Advisors and how this created relevance and rigour for his learning:

> So, even in Year 7, I came to this WHS, I was having conversations with Miss Mae and as the years progressed, you know, we were drawn closer to each other just from basketball really, and then her becoming my Advisor in Big Picture was, you know, drawn us even closer and she's helped me a lot through Year 10, 11 and even this year with a lot of the academic stuff I've been studying, the different people I've been in contact with throughout the years. Yeah, so, she's been the backbone for most of that. Macklemore, my, my, I'll have to say, just, my Year 9 was when I met Macklemore, I was put into her maths class, and I wasn't doing so well, and I had to go in for a meeting, and that's when she was like, "okay mate, you know, you got to step up the grades a bit in maths" and I asked her for help and just since then we just been talking. And when I was put into Big Picture, and she was the other Advisory teacher for the other half of the Year 10s at the time, she was,

you know, still there for me even though she wasn't my Advisory teacher, she was still talking to me about my progress and my studies and all that. (Boii, interview, 2014)

In the BPA's second year of operation the original Advisory group was moved from the single classroom and re-housed in the recently redundant religious studies/art room/chapel in the middle of the school. For WHS it was to be a busy year of raising new buildings and decommissioning old buildings. This second Advisory room sported a very high ceiling, double doors that lead out to a small garden area (often used for reflection and to "let off steam") and a sectioned-off space for the Advisor to work alone or with students in small groups. This area also had a sink with running water. The students created a functioning mini kitchen where they could heat small meals with the microwave, such as a cup of soup/noodles or milo, or toast sandwiches, with the ability to wash up cups and dishes or sometimes just get away from the group. The kitchen was a favourite place, and I enjoyed many hot cups of noodles in there while speaking with Advisory participants.

The religious studies/art room/chapel also had new fixtures with smooth circular purpose-built furniture that was adolescent-friendly, easy to move yet easy to create one's personal space. The desks were smooth edged to create small group circles or one large circle where everyone looked inward to each other and were evenly seated and spaced. Students were able to use laptops, iPads, mobile phones and listen to music without fear of chastisement. I was surprised how frequently students were communicating with workplaces, friends, sporting interests, parents and teachers to organise their hectic lives. Miss Mae was always there, if not physically then spiritually. The walls were full of aspirational posters, daily thoughts on the whiteboard and student work displayed around the room. The Advisory had an atmosphere of conscientiousness, tenacity, self-sufficiency and individuality. Each student had a home territory or desk/chair space they that would move in and out of during the day without having to ask permission to shift from a teacher or supervisor. This original Advisory group also shared this religious studies/art room/chapel space with a second Advisory group which was a year younger than them. There were often conversations and movement between the two Advisory groups.

In 2015, during the third year of operation, the Advisory moved into a purpose-built Advisory room in the senior school building alongside two other Advisory rooms. This purpose-built Advisory was housed next to student services and surrounded by both academic and vocational classes offered at WHS. By this time Miss Mae's Advisory students were a tight-knit group, communicating mostly in gestures and often talking to younger Advisory participants about how to succeed in the future with their Advisor. In the next building is an amphitheatre for whole-year school meetings, an arts area and an undercover sports centre for small ball games and socialising. The Advisory students are proud and confidant yet unpretentious. The smooth circular furniture was brought across from the previous Advisory and set around the room for the students. In the rooms are relaxing new lounges, new microwaves, and new white and smart boards with fast Wi-Fi connections, communication being central in the Advisory learning community. As the students had spent two years together, this third year provided time and space to consolidate and finalise work projects and gain academic or workplace credentials. Miss Mae advised the students until the end of the year, with all Advisory participants graduating with a variety of qualifications and feeling excited to be taking their futures into their own hands.

2.4.7   Personal Reflection: Snippet of a Fractured Fairy Tale

I remember sitting on a new blue velvet lounge after my last interview in November 2015 and looking into the purpose-built Advisory rooms at WHS with their large sliding windows, fresh carpet and coffee cups lined up on the sink, shining in the sun. These rooms were so swanky and comfortable. I compared this image with my Year 12 experience in 1984 in a Western Australian public high school. I remember rasping chalk on blackboards, busting to go to the toilet before lunch, and going blue in winter due to hunger and cold. I remember suffering the screeching of the uncapped metal desk legs, worn down by cement floors where the linoleum had given way years ago. Mr Hanson saying, "shut up Helen" every two minutes in Geography, because I was so dumbfounded to learn that the world was not an evaporating swamp or flat or solely run by God. There were ice-capped mountains, melancholy sweeps of close-cropped moors, great rifts and valleys that united continents and scorching deserts just like ours in the world. I constantly had an urge, an anxiety, to run as fast as I could out of the classroom, yet unbeknown to me I would always be running in quicksand (Walta &

Hutchinson, 2015, p. 69). I found out later that I was and still am invisibly tethered to the education system and its cruel optimism. (Berlant, 2007)

2.4.8   Advisory Student Participants

WHS's BPA high school students were all previously marginalised from the mainstream learning environment for a variety of reasons, as the narratives in Chapter 5 will explain. The BPA is a group of seventeen students who study and socialise together guided by one Advisor from Year 10 to Year 12 at WHS. I recruited student participants by first joining their Advisory as a volunteer and through engaging in informal conversations to build rapport and trust (Madison, 2012). After a month of observation and discussions, I decided to invite all seventeen Advisory students to participate in the study. I began research in earnest in March 2014 by circulating seventeen ethics forms requesting parental consent and student assent to participate in the study. Of the seventeen Advisory students invited to engage in the research, fifteen returned parental consent and fifteen students returned their consent forms to participate in observation and semi-structured interviews. Of these sixteen students, I chose eight students to complete two semi-structured interviews each, one in 2014 and one in 2015. I continued to visit the Advisory each week or monthly on a voluntary basis until the students graduated in late 2015. Six of the interviewees' transcripts make up the thematic narrative backbone of the research findings.

Each of the seventeen students was attempting to re-engage with high school education through the Advisory program at WHS. The sample of the six students participating in the study was purposeful in that all participants together with their family had elected to enrol in the Advisory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). All of the students were considered to be and considered themselves to be information-rich, articulate and mature enough to participate in this research (Glesne, 2011). Although the students previously presented as disengaged, marginalised and somewhat silenced by conventional education processes, all of the Advisory participants were academically capable. I also considered the race, ethnicity and special educational needs of the participants to ensure they were a representative cross-section of the WHS population (Glesne, 2011). I now provide a brief introduction to the six participants: Beyoncé, Boii, Krishna, Faith, Cory and Gemma.

Beyoncé resisted and disengaged from her traditional high school experiences. She enrolled in Advisory for Year 10 in 2013 at WHS. Her family is musically talented but they often struggle to live in a steady, peaceful manner due to chronic mental health issues. She lived on a defunct boat in the hard stand area of a small marina together with her siblings and father. Her father does not work formally, and her mother left the family years ago. Beyoncé has worked in a fast food restaurant since she was fourteen years old to help support the family. Beyoncé was an intelligent, kind and free-spirited young person who sometimes experiences a crisis of confidence.

Boii's family moved to Perth from New Zealand for work five years ago. Boii started in Year 9 in 2012 at WHS when he won a place in the targeted basketball program. His father works fly-in fly-out (FIFO) in the mining industry in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The family experienced considerable strain since moving here. Boii is a bright, appreciative and future focused young person who enjoyed the sense of belonging and cooperative culture of the Advisory. He spoke of the relational characteristics he experienced in the Advisory.

Krishna struggled to fit into school from the age of five. Since 2014, Krishna has been learning through the Advisory. Krishna's parents tried to combat her resistance to traditional schooling, having enrolled her in multiple public and private education options. Krishna was highly anxious and highly intelligent; she continued to struggle with body dysmorphia as she worked towards being a personal trainer. She talked about how she was constructing her learning through negotiation and the relational pedagogies and values that underpinned her experience in the Advisory class.

Faith started Advisory in Year 10 in the year 2013. She was a softly spoken Maori teenager who sometimes struggled to express herself. She experienced a fragmented and violent family background. Faith was very smart and motivated to succeed in her education. Faith spoke about her connections to her lived sporting experiences and how she integrated her interests into her schoolwork. She provided insight into how choice operated in the Advisory and how project work, portfolios and exhibitions allowed her to self-monitor and reflect on her learning.

Cory faced multiple and complex challenges in his life. He was part of the Advisory since Year 10 in 2013. Family upheaval, poverty and homelessness have been consistent in his life. He lived with his father who had a history of substance abuse,

while his mother was not part of his life. He was a strapping young fellow who loved all the Australian sports and to laugh with his mates; he was part of the cool group and popular with the girls. Cory was intelligent, sensitive, articulate and aware of his growing maturity. He aspired to become a physiotherapist.

Gemma was invited to join the Advisory in 2015, when she re-enrolled in Year 11, when another student withdrew. She was a quiet achiever and struggled socially and academically with traditional high school expectations at the ATAR level. Before she entered the Advisory program, she had taken six months off from school after suffering a mental breakdown due to overwhelming pressure from school. Gemma aspired to study and work in obstetrics, gynaecology and midwifery after graduating from high school.

Having introduced the Advisory student participants, I now introduce the principal, deputies, Advisors and parents, all active leaders and participants in the operation of the Advisory at WHS.

2.4.9   Principal, Deputies, Advisors and Parent Participants

The school principal, school deputy principals and two Advisors consented to be interviewed. The parents of each student were invited to an interview as well; however, of the seventeen students, only two parents agreed to individual interviews. The two parents who agreed to an interview were both highly invested in their children's education and future. Fortunately, I was able to speak informally to most of the other parents and caregivers over the three years, at various fundraisers, sausage sizzles, exhibitions, meetings, car park catch-ups, formal graduation school events and informal observation visits. When conducting research at WHS or its surrounds I always introduced myself as a researcher (de Laine, 2000, pp. 41–42). I made sure that I treated all conversations with trust, confidentiality and anonymity. I also made sure that all conversations were voluntary. It was always explicitly and implicitly understood that any information which discussed the operation or participants of the Advisory was at the discretion of those providing the information (de Laine, 2000, pp. 41–42).

There was little discrimination amongst the Advisory individuals on the basis of ethnicity, religious background, gender, disability or sexual preference as there existed a high degree of acceptance, tolerance and inclusiveness amongst participants in the

Advisory learning community. However, perhaps such a crisp representation is just my way of socially constructing a "perfect" Advisory to avoid the underlying anxieties of the BPA or to avoid recognising and imposing my concerns on others in the research (de Laine, 2000, pp. 148–150). The significant leaders and participants in the WHS Advisory are provided with psydonyms Mr Aloe Blacc, Mrs Felicity Snowlee, Miss Audra Mae, Miss Dianna Macklemore, Miss Arianna Margarite, Mrs Adahe Ruapehu and Mrs Temperance Bissett.

Mr Aloe Blacc was the WHS Principal and has worked in public education for over forty years. He worked tirelessly for the benefit of the students and was both wise and generous, using his time and energy to complement the staff and student efforts.

Mrs Felicity Snowlee was the WHS Deputy Principal. She was a seasoned teacher of thirty years; she committed herself to public education with a strong focus on organisational change management. Mrs Snowlee was fashionable and fun; she had an artistic flair and an eye for building opportunities for the school. She garnered substantial respect in the school community for her hard work and savvy approach to public education.

Miss Audra Mae was an Advisor. She was a seasoned teacher of twenty-five years, having worked in both public and private education services. She had a strong sporting background and performed both as an athlete and administrator at a national level. She taught with tough love and thoroughly understood the complexities of her students' lives. Her students held her in high esteem and cared for her.

Miss Dianna Macklemore was another Advisor but in a different year group. She taught for twenty years in public education and had excellent higher cognitive and mathematical skills. She brimmed with enthusiasm and energy and played an influential role in the emotional development of her students.

Miss Arianna Margarite was a part-time Advisor who moved between the three Advisory year groups. She was a young mother and brought her counselling skills of care, reflection and time for students when they were not coping well. She spoke quietly yet was very articulate and thoughtful. She loved water sports and used this favourite pastime to connect with the students.

Mrs Adahe Ruapehu was the mother of Boii in the Advisory learning community. She had experience with racial discrimination and the denial of equal opportunity in New Zealand. She moved to Western Australia five years ago to take advantage of work opportunities in the Pilbara iron ore mines. Unfortunately, the heat of Western Australia, the uncertainty of regular mining work and cultural dislocation impacted on the family's sense of fulfilment. Adahe also had a protracted struggle with breast cancer.

Mrs Temperance Bissett was the mother of Krishna in the Advisory learning community. Temperance found formal schooling for her daughter a constant battle since Krishna was a small child. Krishna was intellectually gifted, highly anxious and bored quickly. Temperance enrolled her daughter in multiple mainstream/alternative/flexible learning programs over the years in both public and private education, all of which Krishna eventually refused to attend. At the moment, Krishna was engaged with learning through Advisory.

2.4.10   Summary

In summary, I have described the characteristics of WHS's structure and formal operational processes, culture and context to give the reader a feel for WHS. I have identified the various reasons for the implementation of the Advisory followed by its three-year journey during a time of renewal and transition for the entire school community. To finish, I introduced the Advisory participants using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

2.5   Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this contextual chapter has provided an overview of the wider socioeconomic forces impacting on schools and those who inhabit them, some background on the emergence of BPEA and its relevance to this research, a profile of WHS including social demographics and student performance, and finally, a brief introduction to each of the research participants. I examined the contemporary global and neoliberal framings of education and their impact on student engagement, and argued the importance of reinserting the voices of young people back into conversations about the nature, purpose and processes of education. I detailed how neoliberal policy informs the positioning of disengaged and marginalised students in

current Australian public high schools in deficit terms (Deeming, 2016; Hogan, 2016). I explored how globalisation and neoliberal policy operate to reproduce educational disadvantage through redirecting strategy, resources and the rhetoric of choice from the public to the private sphere (Seddon, 2001). In Australia, this shift to private interests occurs through the evaluation and ranking of different types of knowledge made legitimate through standardised testing, increased accountability and individualistic competition in public high school education (Marsh & Wohlstetter, 2013; Giroux, 2005). Through middle-class-oriented curriculum, language and tastes, access to education and its benefits are limited as the state implicitly controls education as a positional good (Apple, 2007; Lingard & Mills, 2007). Currently, education managed by state systems favours the type of individuals who help maximise the economy (McGregor, 2009). Markets require a rationing of education and the construction of hierarchies and mechanisms of competition to survive, but the impact on students of an all-embracing capitalism at the public high school level is significant (Connell, 2013).

In the context of these broader macro-level problems, I provided an overview of the emergence and operation of BPEA as a means of rediscovering a relational pedagogy capable to support young people in contexts of disadvantage. I traced the lineage of BPEA through Ted Sizer's CES and various school reform movements here in Australia especially the DSP, NSN and the ANSN and detailed WHS as the case study site together with the participants of this research. With this contextual chapter in mind, I now turn to consider some of the key theoretical underpinnings of this research.

Chapter 3   Theoretical Orientation

The self is a knot in the web of multiple intersecting relations; pull relations out of the web and find no self. We do not have relations; relations have us. (Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7)

3.1   Introduction

In Chapter 2, I described the broader political, economic and social contexts in which this research was located. My central argument was that, over the last three decades, public education in Australia has been dominated by the forces of globalisation through the introduction of market-based educational policies, discourses and processes (Lingard, 2010). These forces created a fiscal, bureaucratic and perceived choice rhetoric in the education system whereby public and private high schools were becoming increasingly stratified (Savage et al., 2013). Kenway (2013) articulates that market-oriented values have gradually fashioned an individualistic, competitive and standardised approach to education and progressively residualised public schools, particularly in disadvantaged communities. These changes make it increasingly difficult for disengaged and marginalised students to engage successfully with learning through public education (Gilbert, Keddie, Lingard, Mills & Renshaw, 2013). As a result, the democratic purposes of public education are eroding for the vast majority of students who are "living on the margins" of society (Smyth & Wrigley, 2013). In this chapter, I draw on concepts and empirical evidence from the fields of education, psychology and philosophy to explore the centrality of relational pedagogy in re-engaging young people in learning underpinned by the principle of equity.

In Chapter 2, I also advocated the value of public education as a public good. This implies the belief that public education is a collective right of all citizens, and that every community should have a well-resourced and democratic public-school system (Reid & McCallum, 2014). Public schools are well placed to provide democratic, relevant and well-designed educational experiences for all students (McGregor, Mills, te Riele & Hayes, 2015). In doing so, engagement in learning can be enhanced which

then helps loosen the grip of low achievement, school disengagement and early school leaving in disadvantaged locales (Callingham, 2017).

While the conception of 'equity' is often located in socioeconomic status, the costs of education are increasingly placed on individuals, families and communities (Keddie, 2016). The issue of inequity exists not only in educational access and opportunity but the academic performance of schools and students. Inherent, but unstated, within the conception of equity is deficit or difference (Gorski, 2011). In economic terms, a deficit represents a negative return on investment. In human terms, a deficit likewise results in a forfeiture of investment or gain on the human capital and assets which students bring to school (Gorski, 2011). A challenge then for public high schools is to create positive, purposeful, engaging educational experiences, so disadvantaged students build the self-esteem, qualifications and relationships needed to reach their goals (Down, personal communication, 2016).

Within this broader context, Chapter 3 is organised around two key themes. First, I address the notion of student engagement through the three ideological lenses described by McMahon and Portelli (2004). Implementing McMahon and Portelli's (2004) framework, I examine how relationships influence teaching and learning and thus engagement in learning using empirical research with a focus on student voice. Second, I consider how the dominant discourses of the grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) and deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010) operate to perpetuate educational and social inequalities and what might be done about it. I argue that dominant deficit discourses are social constructions and one reason why reform efforts often fail, particularly in disadvantaged communities where they are most needed.

In the next section I consider the importance of providing a counter-narrative to the dominant deficit discourses that serve to pathologise marginalised youth (Smyth et al., 2014; te Riele, 2006). I explore student experiences with various institutional structures, different types of curriculum and diverse pedagogies. I also examine the ensuing quality of student–teacher relationships together with views about student aspirations (or lack thereof) for further education and careers to explain why relational pedagogy is so vital to re-engaging young people in learning.

3.1.1 Three Ideological Lenses of Student Engagement

I now examine in some detail McMahon and Portelli's (2004) three ideological lenses – conservative/traditionalist, liberal/student-centred and critical/democratic – as a means of comprehending the complexity of student engagement in learning at WHS. Firstly, the conservative or traditional conception, according to McMahon and Portelli (2004), envisions student engagement,

> In a hierarchical, narrow or limited way. Student engagement is almost exclusively identified with a certain conception of academic achievement or a process identifiable by behavioural traits and observable psychological dispositions (p. 65).

Of significance to this traditional view is the psychological idea of student engagement as it relates to the individual dimensions and the malleability of the concept in different learning contexts. Psychological research describes student engagement in learning as having three distinct yet overlapping aspects (Fredericks, 2014, pp. 14–15). Behavioural engagement draws on the notion of participation including the intention to become involved in academic, social and out-of-school events. Emotional involvement includes positive and negative feelings towards or from teachers, peers, the schools as an institution and knowledge in general. Cognitive engagement encompasses the concept of individual investment in learning (Fredericks, 2014, pp. 14–15). In other words, the individual is thoughtful and willing to exert the effort necessary to internalise complex ideas and master complex skills (Reschly & Christenson, 2012, p. 10). Psychological definitions tend to be external measures and objective to the student; they are essential for statistical, data-driven analysis and research but do not include the lifeworld of students, as I will discuss later in this chapter. (Biesta, 2004)

Secondly, the liberal or student-oriented conception broadens the meaning of engagement beyond traditional notions of the academic and focuses on the strengths of students. Hence, the idea does not overtly adopt a deficit model yet it still anchors itself in dominant psychological notions of engagement (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 65). The liberal or student-oriented concept bases itself in the idea that

the purpose of schooling is broader than individual experiences – intellectual, kinaesthetic, artistic, social, personal, and vocational (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 65).

I suggest that this concept of engagement provides an opportunity for relational pedagogy to develop in learning communities, as detailed in section 3.5.

Thirdly, a critical-democratic conception of engagement is a

result of the dialectical processes between teachers and students and the different patterns that evolve out of transformational actions and interactions. As enacted, engagement is generated through the interactions of students and teachers, in a shared space, for democratic reconstruction, through which personal transformation takes place. (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 70)

This orientation to engagement recognises the capacity of students and educators to co-construct the educational environment. Likewise, it assimilates student participation and philosophy (Sen, 2009). A critical-democratic conception of engagement also identifies the importance of relationships between teachers and students. In-depth teaching and learning occur through constructive and respectful rapport between learning community members considering each student's unique learning style, interests and relevant links to the broader community (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 65). Authentic, long-term student–teacher relationships can also help illuminate access to learning outside of their community for some individuals (Gross, 2012, p. 140). I suggest that this concept of engagement enables relational pedagogy to be enacted in learning communities with the aim of transformation.

Thus, each frame provided by McMahon and Portelli (2004) provides insights into student engagement when considering popular education discourses, the grammar of schooling and notions of deficit thinking. Together these organisational and contextual dimensions influence the quality of student experiences and the quality of teacher–student relationships at particular types of schools and, in turn, the degree of student engagement in learning.

3.2 The Grammar of Schooling, Deficit Thinking and Student Disengagement

3.2.1 Introduction

I now turn to a discussion of the features of the dominant discourses of schooling found Tyack and Tobin's (1994) notion of the grammar of schooling and Valencia's (2010) idea of deficit thinking and how these impact on the nature of relationships in schools as well as student engagement in learning in different types of high school. Dominant deficit discourses are social constructions; dominant deficit discourses are ways of speaking or behaving – they are the language and actions that appear widely and commonly within a given society. They are the behaviours, values and patterns of speech and writing that frequently reflect the ideologies of those who have the most power in society (Burr, 2015; Foucault, 1972).

Bernstein (1971) claims that an analysis of high school organisation reveals the distribution of power as well as aspects of social control among different social classes. Examining class-based educational networks and traditions experienced through hierarchical styles reveals the division of knowledge in society (Bernstein, 1971). Apple (1979) argues that socio-political, cultural and economic conventions are value-laden. These values are transmitted and transformed through the institution of high school and are made legitimate by broader social norms and conventions of social groups. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) highlight how education is the link between the division of labour and social position comprising access to power, resources and incomes. The distribution of educational opportunity is not equal in society even though there exists rhetoric to the contrary. Burr's (2015) work indicates that we learn, or resist learning, dominant deficit discourses and their attendant values through the institution of schooling. In the subsequent section I consider how these broader dominant organisational forces play out in the lives of young people in high schools.

3.2.2 The Grammar of Schooling

Tyack and Tobin (1994, p. 454) articulate that the grammar of schooling includes the building, hardware and organisational processes together with the school's more nuanced cultural beliefs, values, knowledge base and use of language. Hofstetter and

74

Schneuwly (2013), in broader terms, indicate that the grammar of schooling refers to both the structure of education and the culture of schools as social institutions. Apple (1979) claims that public high schools are not apolitical or neutral environments; they are arranged to publicly legitimate the differential access to cultural resources which is linked to inequitable economic networks and conventions. High school as an institution is arranged to benefit only some sections of society. The grammar of schooling perpetuates the operation of the hidden curriculum in education institutions (Gatto, 2002). The grammar of schooling is very resistant to change because the politics of school rarely change. In the words of Tyack and Tobin (1994): "The organisational patterns that shape instruction are not ahistorical creations etched in stone. They are the historical product of particular groups with particular interests and values at particular times – hence political in origin" (p. 476). One reason schools are resistant to change is that reform efforts are generally based on adult or administrator notions of how education should be delivered and practised. Paradoxically, the viewpoints of those whom the reform is to benefit, the students, are rarely heard or only attended to in token ways (Cook-Sather, 2006). As Wallach, et al. (2006) argue:

> Beyond seeking the opinions of those who should ultimately benefit from school reforms, we argue that involving students in important decisions about their learning will bring about the very results in student achievement that reformers strive for – high school students being college-, work- and citizenship-ready. (p. 1)

One difficulty in this process, as Biesta (2004) remarks, is that student voice is not value free:

> When we look at education from this perspective, we can see that schools do not simply provide students with a voice, they do not simply teach their students to speak. Schools provide students with a very specific voice, namely, with the voice of the rational communities it represents through the curriculum. In giving students such a voice, schools not only legitimize certain ways of speaking. At the very same time, they de-legitimize other ways of speaking. This, as sociologists of education have shown us, explains why some

students have to unlearn much more than others in order to succeed in

the educational system. (p. 312)

Current evidence suggests that large public high schools do not work for large numbers of disadvantaged students (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Smith 2015; Fielding & Moss, 2011; Smyth & Wrigley, 2013; Connell, 2013). Rumberger (2011) argues that the reasons why public high schools fail to engage increasing numbers of individuals before graduation in disadvantaged communities are well known in the educational literature. Likewise, Washor and Mojkowski (2013) suggest that these reasons are linked to "Academic failure, behaviour, life events and disinterest together with a sense of not mattering, not fitting in, unrecognised talents and interests as well as restrictions" (p. 120).

Adding to the problem of the grammar of schooling is the issue of deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010) in which some individuals and/or groups of students are thought about and treated in disparaging and demeaning ways by teachers, peers and administrators. In the subsequent section I consider how traditional high school organisation and cultures play out in the lives of young people living with disadvantage (te Riele, 2006).

3.2.3   Deficit Thinking

Deficit thinking is a social construction, a notion where students are blamed for their school failure; it happens through a process of shifting the blame from the structural, cultural and pedagogical elements of schooling to the assumed deficits, inability, fault or carelessness of students (Valencia, 2010, p. xiv). Marginalised students are often shaped as victims; stereotyped by the terms at risk, disadvantaged or troublesome. Research indicates that it is these at-risk individuals who are most affected by deficit thinking (Bottrell, 2007; te Riele, 2006). Often a swirl of misinformation and labelling surrounds at-risk students. When students feel uncared for or worthless as individuals, they gradually disengage from school (Noddings, 2005). Over time, the "unchosen" (Short, 2011, p. iv) are gradually "pushed out and shut out" from public high schools (Robinson, Smyth, Down & McInerney, 2012, pp. 7–8). However, to view the situation critically, as Kohn (2004) articulates so well, it is the school which has failed the young person. Valencia's (2010) work on deficit thinking identifies six related

ideas: victim blaming, oppression, pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability and heterodoxy (Valencia, 2010).

The term at risk blames the victim for their inability to succeed at school. The so-called at-risk student does not fit the dominant school system and is stereotyped as slow, often out of time with other students. Teachers perceive at-risk students as leisurely, avoiding any commitment to hard work or learning (Adam, 1995). These labels implicitly indicate that an at-risk individual's efforts and constant failure to prove themselves or provide any evidence of their ability means that they can by no means be assimilated into conversations or pathways of success, attainment or productivity (Valencia, 2010). There is an idea that such at-risk students must be pushed to perform and stood over in a sense to achieve academically. There is also the rising culture of medicalisation concerning deficit that helps legitimise the victimisation of particular students (Hill & Turner, 2016).

Oppression and hopelessness tend to define such individuals in public schools, thus negatively influencing their potential for future success. Therein lies the false logic or pseudoscience that young people are the education system's beautiful failures, where there are only winners and losers (Clark, 2016). Bridgeland, DiIulio and Morison (2006) indicate that these troubled, inert, underachieving and bored individuals are a silent epidemic, resulting in thousands of students not attending school each day.

Victim blaming likewise centres on ideas of temporality; teachers have a timeline of expected or imagined success, measures or accounts and reports of progression, often imposed by the dominant model of schooling. The notion of educability is also central to deficit thinking. It is often assumed that the intellect of different social groups is based on their gender, race or ethnicity and that it determines the worth and educability of different classes of students (Valencia, 2010). The notion of educability (or lack thereof) is a mistrustful, narrow and discriminatory idea about human ability in a social and educational environment (Valencia, 2010).

Heterodoxy returns to the concept of deviance, that is, when students are not conforming to the norms of traditional schools because of their perceived lack of ability or merit (Valencia, 2010). Such deficit views are reinforced through everyday language where students are described as SPED (short for special education) and vegie maths, referring

to the lack of legitimacy or worth in vocational or non-ATAR subjects (Francis, Mills & Lupton, 2017).

In accord with this kind of deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010), educational authorities commonly offer disciplinary and authoritarian responses to fix the individuals or to seemingly address the escalating numbers of students who are marginalised and failing school (Smyth et al., 2010). Remedial groups, special education classes and reduced academic curriculum classes separate and denigrate particular groups of students through the high school years. The often-explicit steps towards perceived achievement, such as IEPs (Individual Education Plans) usually set the student up for failure (Kozol, 2007). te Riele's (2006, p. 129) research shows that a compounding situation for those at risk is that sometimes they are forced to exclude themselves due to constant and negative comparison with "normal" students. Zandvliet, Den Brok and Mainhard (2014) conclude that students positioned in such remedial educational environments say it negatively impacts on their meaningful involvement with school. Dominant pathologising discourses typically explain school failure as an individual deficit, as Kozol (2007) states:

> So long as myths and misconceptions about equal education remain unexamined in the schools that serve the poor, these kids are left to wrestle with the crippling belief that their repeated failings in comparison with [others] … are entirely the result of an inherent defect in their character or cultural inheritance, a lack of will, a lack of basic drive and normal aspiration, or, as many have no choice but to believe, a deficit in their intelligence. (p. 164)

Such stereotyping also contributes to the development of combative attitudes towards teachers, schools and peers, which are evident in Kohl's (1994) book *I won't learn from you: and other thoughts on creative maladjustment* which states that the more teachers harp on about change the more students reject change and thus consolidate an oppositional disposition (Kohl, 1994). Reay and Lucey (2004) claim that just as middle-class families buy into better resourced public schools by moving suburbs, working-class families who are unable to progress in public schooling and experience a variety of belittling frustrations vote with their feet and self-exclude themselves. Their research indicates that individuals purposely move away from harmful high

school behaviour management policies, rude administrators, uncaring teachers bullying by peers and denigrating cultural experiences (Reay & Lucey, 2004, p. 35). Angus (2015) notably argues that deficit thinking can become an excuse for institutional, collective or individual failure to act for change or improvement considering the conditions of engagement in learning. Such dominant discourses are often presented as fact when in reality they represent submission to a shared contrivance to protect privilege and the status quo.

There also exist harmful discourses about the perceived personal dispositions of individuals and their potential or capability to engage in traditional learning environments. One such personal disposition trending in academic conversation is that of aspirations or the lack thereof, an idea I shall discuss latter in this chapter. In short, I have argued that dominant educational discourses reflected in the grammar of schooling and deficit thinking create the conditions that lead to student disengagement, exclusion and early school leaving for those struggling to fit into traditional schools in the most disadvantaged communities. The manner in which large urban schools choose to view their students, families and communities can alleviate the influence of disadvantage for individuals, communities and national agendas.

3.2.4   The Problem of Disengagement and Early School Leaving

In general, the issue of disengagement, marginalisation and early school leaving are complicated, as are the pathways to re-engaging youth in high school. As students make the transition into senior high school (Years 10–12) many adolescents experience a broader, more cold, competitive and grade-oriented environment than they experienced in junior high school (Eccles, Midgley & Adler, 1984). Jackson and Davis (2000, p. 142) report that adolescents experience a greater diversity of teachers and peers and must make more choices in their education and home activities. Langenkamp (2010) builds on this assertion and indicates that, in this anxious environment, many young adolescents' grades drop, and they do not attend school as regularly as they did. Kinney (1993) found that students may develop a negative view of themselves and feel an increased need for peer friendships. In addition to an already stressful environment, there are vital cognitive, psychosocial and emotional transformations influencing the life trajectories of adolescents (Hanewald, 2013). In senior high school, students are older and more mature; they display higher individual

agency and have a greater focus on success in the final years of school together with a focus on post-secondary life and career (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 144). However, it is not easy for them to negotiate and navigate these life challenges, especially those living in adverse circumstances.

Disengagement and marginalisation from the benefits of public high school education can be a consequence of personal circumstances, but research indicates that it is commonly a product of a complex mix of interrelated factors (te Riele, 2014; Smyth & Hattam, 2004). The official and mostly quantitative literature indicates that those who are disengaged and marginalised from public high school environments are often young people who experience family breakdown, homelessness, mental health issues, low self-esteem, poor educational experiences, low educational achievement and challenging behaviours (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010). Individuals with a disability, Indigenous students, those with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE), regional Australians together with homeless youth face additional challenges to completing high school (Lamb et al., 2015). The need or desire to enter the workforce also accounts for a proportion of students who choose to try their luck external to public high school (Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vickers & Rumberger, 2004). Many disadvantaged communities are demanding government initiatives to support innovative ways to engage with and educate all students so they can transition successfully into the workforce or other post-school options (Billett, Thomas, Sim, Johnson, Hay & Ryan, 2010).

As a nation, we know that high school students who are disengaged and marginalised eventually drop out of high school far too early. These young people are more likely to be unemployed, earn less income, report poorer health, have shorter lives and make up a disproportionally higher percentage of the prison population in Australia (Lamb & Huo, 2017). Furthermore, dropouts cost the nation in terms of lost earnings and taxes, increasing the strain on public welfare (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Compounding the pressure for young people who are out of school is negative media coverage on disenfranchised and marginalised youth. Dominant deficit discourses are often dismissive of the constraints of a collapsing youth job market, the casualisation of work, an insidious teenage drug culture, and stealthy social media and peer pressure (Wyn, 2009). Moreover, disadvantaged communities often lack awareness and the

resources to transform the broader issues which combine to foster negative stereotypes and experiences of individuals in or out of high school (Wyn, 2009).

Disengaged students, who later become disconnected adults, stand in direct opposition to the claim that Australian public schools are just and democratic (Connell, 1993). I argue that public education is vital for the attainment of social justice and civic responsibility in disadvantaged communities. When we optimise the potential for all young people to become active and contributing members of Australian society, inclusive of diverse and unique communities, we strengthen our national capability (Pendergast, Chadbourne & Danby, 2008).

3.2.5   Summary

Socially constructed dominant discourses in education, such as the grammar of schooling and deficit thinking, often regulate the nature and organisation of engaging or disengaging educational relationships in both public and private high schools. Apple (1979) argues that the power to influence teaching and learning and engagement in learning for students is arranged to publicly legitimate the differential access to cultural resources which tie into unjust economic networks and conventions. Kozol (2007) demonstrates how these arrangements are maintained through stereotypes and the operation of deficit thinking to explain school failure as an individual deficit rather than an institutional problem. Smyth and his team (2010) indicate how dominant education discourses often omit the lack of understanding within high schools of the complex personal, family and local structures, cultures and histories that contribute to students' dissatisfaction with public high schools. This inequitable situation creates serious economic social and political problems for the individual and society. An exploration of the manner in which student engagement is conceptualised provides a framework for understanding how to re-engage students in high school (Ellis, Grant & Haniford, 2007).

3.3   Understanding Student Disengagement

3.3.1   Introduction

Insight into the organisation of traditional high school through McMahon and Portelli's (2004) threefold framework provides some insight into student engagement.

As noted earlier, the traditional academic–vocational perspective provides a marketplace rationalist perspective on, or capitalist orientation to, the quantification and measurement of the benefits of education to both the individual and society. As the national education budget is sizeable, the government is concerned to measure its efficacy (Noonan, 2015). I discuss the invisible network of power exercised through traditional schooling such as its class base, and the priority given to middle-class ideals and academic principles. These dominant expectations are held in place by a range of exclusionary pedagogies and deficit discourses which act as a barrier to engagement in learning for marginalised students.

3.3.2 The Problem with Traditional Measures of Student Disengagement

Student engagement is mostly reported in a numerical, percentage-oriented or data-driven manner. For example, Australia carries out many national-level measures and comprehensive studies of student engagement in both mainstream and alternative education programs. These large-scale studies often employ psychometric properties that can act as a useful variable for data-driven decision-making efforts in schools. Data can similarly be used to predict the effects or outcomes that programs may have on students' engagement or whether (re)engagement programs are sustainable for a particular cohort of youth (Christenson et al., 2012). However, these executive studies are mostly quantitative and aimed at informing policy-level initiatives (Teese & Polesel, 2003). Examples of quantitative accounts include *How young people are faring* (Long & Curtain, 2005), produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), which has also contributed various books and briefs focused on young Australians in or out of schooling. Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) reports are provided by the Federal Department of Education. The Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) also offer a range of information tables, graphs as well as statistical briefs on young Australians and schooling.

Although useful at one level, these quantitative publications focus on the product of education and tend to neglect the processes of teaching and learning. Similarly, statistical information tends to emphasise high school completion and degree attainment rather than the quality of students' learning experiences (Teese & Polesel,

2003). Large-scale publications lean towards a pragmatic and narrow view of what happens in schools and overlook the events experienced in school communities on a daily basis. Such perspectives also tend to ignore the complexity and underlying causes of student disengagement (Smyth et al., 2010). Ditchburn (2012) argues that traditional hierarchical structures, rigid pedagogies, mistrustful teacher–student relationships and deficit assumptions about personal character dispositions all function to limit the potential capabilities of "unsuccessful" students in Western Australian schools.

3.3.3 Inflexible School Structures

A significant characteristic of Australian public high schools is that they are usually compulsory for youth from age twelve to eighteen years of age. The institution of school generally consumes the productive part of the day, with hundreds and sometimes thousands of young people organised into an education system without consultation or any attention to individual talents (Farrell, 2008). American studies indicate that the majority of students reject the "bureaucratic vastness" of traditional schools and the ways in which they limit their choice about what they learn and with whom (Toch, 2003). In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that large numbers of students resist the rigidity and boredom of traditional schooling (Aronowitz, 2008; Gatto, 2009). In Australia, high school students share similar concerns about the impact of large, impersonal high school structures and cultures on their well-being and learning (Smyth & Hattam, 2004). Students report that these traditional and hierarchical environments result in particular individuals and groups feeling disrespected and unwelcomed at school (Smyth & Hattam, 2004).

Traditional educational institutions often execute intricate management arrangements through a larger central bureaucratic organisation which are difficult for individuals to access, question or change (Farrell, 2008). Gatto's (2002) critique of American schools shows how the institution of schooling reproduces the social order through a hidden curriculum. Large public high schools have both explicit and implicit control agendas in operation at the same time. Inherent in high school routines are measures to confuse students, implicitly sorting individuals through a class position with indifference to each individual's needs and wants. Gatto (2002) argues that daily school routines are fashioned to create the conditions to encourage students' emotional dependency on success, intellectual dependence on formal curriculums, provisional self-esteem and

the inability to hide (or continuous surveillance). Steinberg and Kincheloe (2006) argue that traditional public high schools create an authoritarian and exclusionary model of education that silences minority groups and creates an environment where some students or groups do not feel safe or feel they belong. Riddell (2010) contends that it is not just the overriding corporate high school structures that alienate students, but the internal fashioning of the formal curriculum that isolates and positions students disproportionately within high schools' networks of power and value. It is not just the structure of high school that disengages students but the culture of schools as well.

3.3.4 Irrelevance of the Competitive Academic Curriculum

In traditional school systems, Thiessen and Cook-Sather (2007) assert that there are often prevailing notions that "children must be seen and not heard" which tend to position youth as "empty vessels" that must be filled with knowledge from specific and authoritative sources (p. 607). That is, Freier's (1968) Banking Concept of education, that those in authority deposit legitimate nuggets of information into the somewhat empty minds of students. Smyth and Hattam (2004) found that students resist such thinking, indicating that a focus on the abstract CAC is irrelevant for many young people. Students say the CAC makes them feel unfairly judged and excluded from the normalising high school curriculum. Oakes (2005) work on academic streaming supports these findings. As a result of stratification, individuals are grouped and streamed into smaller groups of like qualities for bureaucratic efficiency and specific curriculum dissemination. Smyth and Hattam (2004) believe that groups of students are then expected to work with a "certified" adult in a single room for an hour or so with a select subject (see also Farrell, 2008). Students say that subject-only timetables fragment their experience of engaging in learning or connecting to school life. Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) found that British high school students can explain how one-hour timetable blocks result in curriculum fragmentation and reduced learning. Fragmentation restricts opportunities for them to explore core concepts from prescribed syllabi deeply. In turn, students become bored and disengaged from learning (Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996).

Adding to curriculum irrelevance is the fact that knowledge expertise is prescribed and learnt over time in an increasingly complex way (Farrell, 2008). Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) found that students resist being obliged to learn narrow curriculum

content via specialist teachers espousing vague ideas and examples. Equally, in Naylers' (2014) research, students reported that they often feel lost when they are expected to sit passively and reiterate meaningless curriculum content, as school knowledge is abstracted from the real world and the lived experience of many young people. Traditional schools, moreover, evaluate students by asking them to reiterate prescribed knowledge through constant examination (Farrell, 2008). A narrow curriculum and continuous testing and pressure to succeed "legitimately" creates stress and doubt about their value and worth for many students (Polesel et al., 2012). Polesel's research team reports that high school students tell us that they are often unable to engage with an official content-driven curriculum in a high-stakes testing environment. High school students say they find testing regimes challenging to manage, and being competitively ranked against peers negatively impacts on their self-esteem (Polesel et al., 2012). Supporting these findings is Rudduck and McIntyre's (2007) research on the traditional high school model which shows that, when one teacher has all the power in class and the students very little power, students feel academically and socially incapacitated.

3.3.5   A Pedagogy of Poverty

Haberman (1991) writing about disadvantaged inner urban schools in America describes a pedagogy of poverty, whereby it is taken for granted in *ghetto schools* that teachers teach and students learn and little else matters. More subtly, there is an assumption that mostly middle-class teachers believe that students should be made to engage in school, or appear to be engaging in learning, through fear. Teachers can use fear as a tool for dominating and punishing individuals for permissive and unproductive behaviour at school (Haberman, 1991). The implication is that non-conforming students are perceived as different and therefore deficit in some way. In meeting the clear-cut teacher roles and job expectations, the mostly middle-class educated teacher must manage and control what they perceive to be unproductive, disruptive and disadvantaged students. Haberman (1991) argues that the teacher fears and misunderstands non-conforming groups or individuals, those in a class different to him or herself. Haberman (1991) explains that there is also an administrative expectation that the marginal and poor should be thoroughly disciplined and thus kept malleable and quiet. For example, Skiba and Rausch's (2013) research shows that

current zero-tolerance behaviour management policy and practice is one instance of exclusion and punishment for non-conformist, disruptive or different students perceived as having a deficit in some manner (p. 1074).

Haberman (1991) elucidates how the strict teacher must often rationalise his or her disciplinary ruthlessness as the only option for school authority and operation. Butler's (2015) research illustrates how a pedagogy of poverty is played out in a regional high school. She discusses how in disadvantaged Australian communities student behaviour is sometimes categorised as feral or amoral (Butler, 2015). These authors indicate that non-middle-class behaviour is judged as different or deficit when students disobey instructions, speak out of turn, question the authority of the teacher and are non-compliant with an ordered hierarchy set out by the school. To recap, hard-nosed school operations, zero-tolerance policies (Skiba & Rausch 2013) and tough behaviour management processes and procedures (Robinson et al., 2012, pp. 7–8) are often used to combat perceived unruly behaviour. Haberman (1991) asserts that,

> Taken together and performed to the systematic exclusion of other acts, they have become the didactic coin of the realm in urban schools. They constitute the pedagogy of poverty – not merely what teachers do and what youngsters expect, but, for different reasons, what parents, the community, and the general public assume teaching to be (p. 292)

The consequence of this type of predictable and official school operation and experience is that hard, insensitive teaching and discipline stalls, in many ways, positive school change and student engagement in learning (Rose, 1989). I challenge these processes in section 3.4. Haberman (1991) goes on to explain that, in addition to expecting complete control over school students, teacher competence is equated with student compliance. He explains how this dynamic means that the students potentially have ultimate control over classroom learning as they shift responsibility to the teacher "to make them learn" at the teacher's peril of whole classroom non-compliance and disruption (p. 293). Haberman's (1991) contention ties in with the views of Gatto (2002) and Aronowitz (2008), who draw attention to the invisibility of power through the hidden curriculum in schools.

Gatto (2002) argues that the dynamics of student–teacher relationships can be deceiving and, to survive school, explicit and implicit agreements between student and teacher are formulated. In the words of Haberman (1991), "students reward teachers by complying. They [the students] punish by resisting" (p. 292). To find a happy medium is difficult. Davis and Dupper's research (2004) supports this argument, suggesting that students experience a clash of values, uncooperative and competitive cultures, alienation and retaliatory discipline policies which leave students sceptical and cynical about the importance of relationships with teachers. Skiba (2014) gets to the point, saying that the hidden agenda and the shallow deception of high school are often evident to students.

Haberman (1991, p. 290) concludes that as a result of a "pedagogy of poverty" there is a climate of uncomfortable silences, a passive-aggressive arrangement where a constant state of anxiety and a lose–lose dynamic acts to undermine positive classroom relationships, learning and experiences. Hattam (2006) found that students experience high schools as negative places where "denigrating, misrepresenting, or ignoring their communities", values and contributions regularly occurs (p. 5). Constant negativity results in massive disengagement with learning. Smyth (2012) adds weight to these findings, indicating that young people often refuse to engage with teachers or their instructions in schools, as evidenced by their critical language, disruptive behaviour and frequent absence. Haberman (1991) illustrates how students cunningly resist the imposition of a world order that ignores their lifeworlds. Although there is resistance, young people living with disadvantage still have aspirations for their future lives and careers.

3.3.6   The Problem of Aspirations

Appadurai (2004) defines aspirations as the capacity to aspire. He states:

> in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity,
> especially among the poor, the future-oriented logic of development
> could find a natural ally, and the poor could find the resources required
> to contest and alter the conditions of their poverty (p. 59).

Perceiving aspirations as a cultural capacity recognises that young people's aspirations can be derived from local economic conditions and can have multiple expressions in

local contexts. The best way to understand and support young people's aspirations is through exploring the relational networks where aspirations can be realised and rewarded. Dewey (1938) explains that "the central problem of education based on experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (p. 27).

Appadurai (2004) extends this suggestion by asking in what tangible ways the experience of productive aspirations as a cultural capacity become a positive experience, thus nurturing aspirational capabilities in young people. Dewey (1938) continues:

> The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after… that all human experience … is ultimately social: that is it involves contact and communication (pp. 37–38).

Appadurai (2004) proposes that contemporary understandings of culture must take in the following three dimensions: "Relationality, dissensus within some framework of consensus and weak boundaries" (p. 62). These three aspects are extant and embedded in the relational philosophy, design, culture and pedagogy of the Advisory. Gannon and Sawyer (2014) suggest that the capacity to aspire or to have aspirational capacity often develops in local schooling experiences and circumstances. However, aspirational capacity, like other capacities, is influenced by the inequitable distribution of the right to a quality, just and engaging education. I discuss these aspirational nuances in section 3.4.4.

3.3.7   Summary

In this section I considered how dominant pathologising discourses play out in the lives of disengaged and marginalised young people in high schools. I reviewed the literature and arguments about how students experience the grammar of schooling, such as inflexible school structures, irrelevant curriculum, a pedagogy of poverty, deficit thinking, and the role of aspirations from students' perspectives. Previous research on these topics assists in understanding the high rates of student disengagement and marginalisation from high schools. Students tell us that they feel

judged and disadvantaged by dominant deficit discourses, the abstract academic curriculum, and pedagogies of poverty. The research tells us that students must face the daily challenge of strained student–teacher relationships along with being erroneously labelled aspirationally deficit, lacking the capabilities to engage with learning either as an individual, a family or community. Working together, these prevailing discourses create a profoundly unsatisfying high school experience for disadvantaged young people. There is, however, considerable literature that challenges dominant pathologising discourses, providing a more promising and relational approach towards re-engaging young people in high school.

3.4 Challenging Deficit Thinking

3.4.1 Introduction

Bourdieu's (1984) work challenges dominant pathologising discourses on disadvantaged youth. He provides a critique of the construction and experiences of high school students, together with the many imposed inequitable structural, cultural and intangiable variables that may govern their place in the world and their opportunites to develop their human capabilities. Critiques of deficit thinking, meritocracy, quantitative measures of education efficacy and the role of social justice in building strong teacher–student relationships provide a starting point for developing a public education that offers a better quality and more equitable and engaging curriculum for all students. For this reason, qualitative case studies such as this one seek to promote a more democratic and articulate response to pathologising discourses about young people and education (Smyth et al., 2014). As Hattam (2006) reminds us, "there is a need to understand and integrate the socio-cultural geography of high schools and their students when working with more comprehensive sets of socioeconomic relationships within low socioeconomic locales" (p. 5).

In this section I argue that a critique of deficit thinking provides a necessary starting point for creating a relational pedagogy grounded in the values of democracy and social justice for all students. These alternative framings allow for more promising questions to be considered in regards to re-engaging young people in learning (McGregor, 2015; Zyngier, 2013). In addition there is space to consider the ways in

which relationships, power, voice and identity can be reshaped to empower young people to meet their aspirations for their future education, lives and careers.

In section 3.2.3 I reviewed Valencia's (2010) critique of deficit thinking to reveal how dominant and governing ways of thinking and acting perpetuate injustice for marginalised students. Gillies and Mifsud (2016) posit that engagement in school learning is frequently narrowly defined in dominant perspectives. For example, McMahon and Portelli (2004) contend that traditional and student-oriented concepts of student engagement tend to omit the social processes of engagement and learning. They argue that narrow psychological concepts of engagement conceal the strengths and histories of individuals, the power of student–teacher relationships, and the potential of families and community to contribute to meaningful and just education (McMahon & Portelli 2004). Indeed, traditional measures of engagement in learning hide the strengths and creativity of high school students, which are particularly evident when they are considering their social and future capabilities (Gillies & Mifsud, 2016).

Gorski (2011) contends that deficit thinking about student engagement often targets students' weakness rather than their strengths, omitting the potential of students' social and cultural capital (p. 152). Furthermore, Gillies and Mifsud (2016) assert that labelling and the words at risk infer a causal and restrained personal view of behaviour and attainment for marginalised students. They argue that deficit terms can also become markers for social exclusion, and a means of reinventing inequities in society (Gillies & Mifsud, 2016). The covert and overt complexities of high schools also conceal the flawed logic of meritocracy.

3.4.2   What's Wrong with Meritocracy?

Meritocracy is the evolution of social ordering in the most efficient and uncompromising manner. Nielson (1985) asserts that meritocracy is committed to increasing productivity and maximising individual and social ideas of wealth. To have merit is to progress the idea of economic wealth, in the pursuit of a modern world, a progressive world where power, intelligence and competition are essential to neoliberal growth. Furthermore, Nielson (1985) argues that this type of thinking implies that for society to progress each individual, from whatever class they are born into, must be given the opportunity to rise up and take the social and economic position they have

the talent for. There is an assumption that ability and hard work will be rewarded with upward freedom of movement (social mobility) while talentless and unproductive individuals will fall to the level of their merit (Nielson, 1985). The outcome is that each individual gets what they deserve, regardless of family, class or status. Nielson (1985) goes on to assert that privilege is erased from our quest to develop and arrange a (wo)man-made social order benefitting everyone. The problem with meritocracy is that privilege, family, wealth and the status quo develop numerous and shifting barriers to limit the development of merit or social wealth, through restricting access to a quality, just and equitable education. As discussed earlier, the grammar of schooling, deficit thinking, inflexible school structures, irrelevant curriculum, a pedagogy of poverty and the imposition of deficit aspirational capacities all function to deny the participation of disadvantaged students in the meritocratic process.

3.4.3   Why Are Statistics and Standardised Testing Problematic?

School engagement and marginalisation can likewise be viewed as problematic terms in dominant education discourse and literature. The word "engagement" can sometimes lead to objectifying and labelling of individuals within capitalist frameworks of value and accountability (Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel & Lim, 2014; Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014; Teese & Polesel, 2003). The term can lead to a view of young people as economic and systemic problems and essentially positions individuals as commercial units which are required to be more productive (Wyn, 2009). Connell (1994) provides evidence that there are three essential assets missing in official quantitative measures. With a view to looking beyond quantitative measures of school achievement, Connell (1994) asserts that socially just schools include the human dimensions of engagement in learning. Socially just schools are often innovative, promoting a different philosophy, structure and culture to traditional models of schooling. Socially just schools value teachers' expertise and position them to strategically broker relationships between students, schools and communities. Socially just schools also promote student-centred learning, resulting in scaffolded empowerment from individual to school to community. I now clarify a selection of theoretical and empirical tenets of social justice and student voice as enacted in Advisory-type learning communities.

3.4.4 The Disadvantaged Have Aspirations too!

Contrary to dominant deficit discourses, British research shows that theories of aspirations as a future-orientated concept can assist marginalised students in re-connecting with school structures, cultures and authentic learning opportunities (Sarojini-Hart, 2013). Research also indicates that academic aspirations tend to have a reciprocal relationship with academic achievement (Marsh & Hau, 2003). Select educational research specifies that students' aspirations can be realised by creating connections to future pathways via teacher–student relationships where students' voices, interests and life worlds are recognised (Biesta, 2004; Hattam, 2006). Australian research proposes that aspirations for career or higher education futures can be critically scaffolded over the high school years, eventually becoming a reality for the student (Parker et al., 2013). Real-world experience (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013) and reflecting on that experience can lead to individuals consolidating aspirations which have personal meaning, thus justifying educational effort for students (Gale & Parker, 2015a).

Gale and Parker (2015b) tackle the dominant discourse that disadvantaged communities, families and children lack aspirations. Backing this view are well-known and convenient commentaries offered by media analysts, politicians and some academics that sustain a notion of the class-based aspirational deficits of marginalised students (Wyn, 2009). Gale and Parker (2015a) provide another insight into aspirations, arguing that dominant deficit discourses assume that an aspirational deficit in disadvantaged communities explains their lower rates of educational attainment and participation in public education. In other words, there is an assumption that disengaged and marginalised high school students have few aspirations for future goals in high school education and future university pathways (Gale et al., 2013).

Likewise, Carter-Wall and Whitfield (2012, p. 4) argue that the simplicity of such thinking is that what might look like low aspirations may in fact be high aspirations that have been worn down by negative experience. Gale and Parker (2015b) indicate that individuals in disadvantaged high schools do have positive, future-oriented aspirations to participate in and graduate from public education; however, individuals from disadvantaged communities may "Have reduced capacities to navigate their way around the desires and possibilities of dominant aspirations, given their different

specialised knowledges, less valued cultural and material resources and archives of experience" (p. 141).

The problem of aspirations is not one of possessing aspiration or aspirational capacity, but the inequity that disadvantaged students face when they try to capitalise on their aspirations due to negative school experiences and negative valuations of their attempts to aspire. Gale et al. (2010) indicate that there are also difficulties with how university education aspirations are valued and managed by individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. The bigger question, according to Gale's research team (2010), is the extent to which educators are willing to work with difference to make sure that all students with aspirations for higher education and university pathways have the same opportunities as all citizens in our society.

Clair and Benjamin (2011) believe an aspirational deficit is similarly a social construction. It is a notion that perceives that particular individuals or groups lack aspirations to engage in education. However, there are different understandings of aspirations for higher education and university pathways, and how we should define such ambitions, creating critique and confusion. Kintrea (2009) argues that the prevailing rhetoric of aspirational deficit policies, programs and interventions that aim to raise aspirations, build aspirations, grow aspirations or develop aspirational capacity amongst cohorts of students and communities with supposedly low aspirations is flawed. Gale and Parker (2015a) posit that the "raising aspirations" argument is driven by the assumption that the disadvantaged, disengaged and marginal lack aspirations compared to other social classes or high achieving groups. Sellar (2013) adds that raising high school students' aspirations for higher education, for example, is part of the broader neo-liberal project to cultivate dispositions among individuals from disadvantaged communities that are conducive to capitalist market competition (p. 245). Lingard (2010) contends that, on the other hand, we know that youth have agency and often reject the marketisation of their selves. He found that young people actively resist neoliberal desires that wish to tap into their human capital and absorb them into the market economy (Lingard, 2010).

In other academic circles, programs to raise disadvantaged students' aspirations for higher education and university pathways assume that aspirations are a personal dispositional and psychological trait and are thus inadequate for academic discourses

given the association with deficit thinking (Bok, 2010). This argument can be tied in with other personal dispositional and psychological traits and their accepted roles in academic discourse such as grit, hope, fate control, alienation, locus of control, self-efficacy and effort optimism (Anderson, Turner, Heath & Payne, 2016). This confusion between terms, desired policy and program agendas, and between different academic disciplines, could no doubt fill another dissertation. Sellar (2013), however, posits that these arguments provide some explanation of why associating an aspirational deficit with disadvantaged communities is convenient, but not an accurate way to explain lower rates of educational attainment and participation in public high school education. Gale (2010) also point out that this flawed thinking can result in negatively valued assumptions of identity and community utility and may adversely influence personal engagement in learning at public high schools.

3.4.5   Why Social Justice Matters in These Times

Social justice and democracy are complex issues fraught with many obstacles and challenges. One of the most challenging is that inequity is not always readily visible unless you change the lens from which it is viewed. Cuban (2001) asserts it is important to call into question the way in which problems in secondary education are defined or framed. As Freire (1972) argues, perceiving high schools from a social justice perspective can offer a unique opportunity to include marginalised communities, enabling both individuals and groups to make timely decisions and take responsibility for their life. Connell (1993) adds that addressing social justice in schools is to recognise and resist the dynamics of oppression and privilege. Social justice works to bring to light and challenge historically ingrained, institutionally endorsed stereotyping based on race, class, gender and ability. Sensoy and Diangelo (2009) explain how a social justice agenda empowers students and communities to reflect on their socialisation. As North (2009) adds, to grasp and counter inequality in relationships is to analyse the apparatuses of oppression. It is a way of seeing, knowing and acting against unfairness and inequity while augmenting further freedoms and possibilities for all.

Being socially just means scrutinising how people, policies, practices, curriculum and institutions are put into action to create freedoms and futures rather than excluding and marginalising the groups and individuals that are least served by dominant decision

making (Apple, 2013). As individuals and groups are positioned differently in the matrix of educational authority and power, they have varying degrees of personal agency and resources to benefit from the established system. Achieving social justice is a long-term proposition; it includes learning how to negotiate and progress the differential access to social and institutional power of disadvantaged individuals and communities (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009). I argue that authentic and liberal student–teacher relationships are necessary to begin to experience and learn social justice in public schools.

3.4.6 Why Student–Teacher Relationships Matter

Teacher–student relationships have power, so these relationships need to be authentic; this is especially true when working with disadvantaged youth. As learning is considered to be a social process in this research, the relationships between teachers and students play a vital role in the growth of each student (Otero 2000; Smyth et al., 2010). A particularly important finding from the perspective of a relational pedagogy advocated in this thesis is that high-quality teacher–student relationships can mitigate the effects of various risk factors in the lives of children, leading to more positive outcomes for students from disadvantaged communities (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017). Including student opinion and integrating their lifeworld's assists in the building of healthy student–teacher relationships (Biesta, 2004; Bentley & Cazaly, 2015; Hattam, 2006; Otero, 2000). Based on British research from the student's perspective, students believe that respect, fairness, autonomy, intellectual challenge, social support and security are indispensable in the construction of relationships as well as patterns of confidence and commitment to learning (Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996). Students report that these six principles are essential to secure working relationships within British high schools that advocate a collaborative learning framework. Over ten years later British high school students say they want their high school teachers to take the lead in creating classroom relationships that are pleasant, enjoyable, interesting, clear and comprehensible. Students articulate they want teachers to be demanding but sensitive to student expectations and to support individuals when they experience difficulties (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). By involving students in decisions about their education, healthier relationships between students and teachers emerge that lend

themselves to better curriculum relevance and more rigorous learning due to more engaged students (Wallach et al., 2006).

Select international research examines teacher–student relationships in large-scale urban Advisories and their effects on school culture and student behaviour (Walloff, 2011; Wilkins, 2006). Other international research focuses on Advisory relationships in terms of student behaviour (Falguni, 2012; Stover, 2009), academic self-efficacy (Kemp, 2011), students' sense of belonging (Borgeson, 2009) and students' feeling of connectedness to others (Shulkind, 2007). Student voice also appears in the international research on small and alternative schools. These secondary schools have an Advisory-type structure and recognise the importance of teacher–student relationships (Pieratt, 2011) in creating relational trust and social capital (Roy, 2008), students' aspirations (Cronin, 2013) as well as students' experience of care (Waterhouse, 2007). Keeping open avenues for students to disclose the quality of their school experience helps them to participate more democratically in their education.

Alternative schools also encourage authentic relationships with the surrounding community (Farrell, 2008). Alternative schools often use family and community relationships to enhance project-style learning as there are fewer students and closer learning relationships. Canadian high school students say that project-based learning is a preferred way of learning. For students, project work outside of school with mentors promotes creative, holistic learning, connecting new learning to prior knowledge, incorporating authentic self-assessment and reflection, and instilling lifelong learning patterns (Holtermann-DeLong, 2009). Community project work also encourages a broad use of digital technology and inspires displays and celebrations of unique local cultures and philosophies (Farrell, 2008). As a consequence, cultural learning and recording, the development of digital assessments and the use of learning portfolios are tools for hands-on performance tasks. A digital or community liaison portfolio offers evidence of accomplishment and improvement over time and is more abundant in detail and substance than a list of ranks and scores (McDonald, 2010). At the completion of work projects, exhibitions are another method of sharing learning and evaluating the rigour of educational progress with others. An exhibition panel is made up of an Advisory teacher, family, peers, a mentor and community members who assist students to demonstrate their progress against goals and who help discuss, critique and reflect on student learning (Littky & Grabelle, 2004).

3.4.7 Summary

In summary, previous research on student experiences of alternative schools describes a broader, more experiential education featuring flexible structures, caring cultures, relevant curriculum together with participatory and relational pedagogies that connect to students' physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs (Erwin, 2010; McGregor, Mills, te Riele & Hayes, 2015). I offer evidence from student experiences that contest existing dominant discourses about young people and school. Students say they prefer alternative and flexible schooling arrangements as they are more open and democratic than traditional high schools. Students remark that they engage in learning when their individual and collaborative goals are recognised and integrated into student-centred curriculum and pedagogies. Indeed, strong student–teacher relationships and the assimilation of student lifeworld's encourages the provision of some of the educative conditions, the possibilities, for students to mature as aspirational skilled individuals (Biesta, 2004; Hattam, 2006). In developing and participating in expressive and social activities, the opportunity to benefit from education in public high schools that serve disadvantaged communities grows. Relational pedagogy can further add to student engagement in learning at high school given its focus on the collaborative, critical, interactive and dialogic perspective on learning (Anderman & Anderman, 2009; Lysaker & Furuness, 2011).

3.5 Towards a Relational Pedagogy

3.5.1 Introduction

Relational schools are built on the foundation of providing an engaging education for youth to succeed. Here, I identify the human and affective dimensions of relational school processes and outcomes as an antidote to the problems of student disengagement described in section 3.3. Drawing on Bingham and Sidorkin's (2004a) notion that there can be no education without relation, I want to describe how schools can begin the task of creating relational learning communities based on the values of trust, care and respect. Drawing on the experience of my participants at the WHS Advisory, I say why these things really matter in terms of engagement in learning and how they develop a greater sense of connectedness, belonging and well-being among students.

I purposely move beyond the obstacles and barriers to student engagement described in the first half of the chapter. In this section I endeavour to identify some key elements of a relational pedagogy that is more conducive to engaging young people in learning. In developing this argument, I also refer back to McMahon and Portelli's (2004) critical-democratic conception of engagement because it opens up new possibilities for thinking and acting around student engagement in schools. What I take from McMahon and Portelli's (2004) approach is the importance of "the dialectical processes between teachers and students and the different patterns that evolve out of transformational actions and interactions" (p. 70). In the words of McMahon and Portelli (2004), schools are places where students and teachers come together to engage in processes of "democratic reconstruction, through which personal transformation takes place" (p. 70). This socially critical conception of student engagement enables me to expand on the benefits of student-centred approaches (see section 3.1.1) by encompassing structural, cultural and pedagogical transformations. Goodman and Eren (2013) suggest that this idea of engagement recognises the capacity of students and educators to co-construct the educational environment. Likewise, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) claim that this type of conception integrates utilitarian student participation. It also identifies the importance of relationships between teachers and students. In the words of Mitra and Gross (2009), democratic teaching and learning happen through constructive and respectful rapport between the participants, considering each student's unique learning style, interests and relevant links to the broader community. Robust student–teacher relationships can also help students access learning for personal growth with confidence (Gross, 2012).

3.5.2 Relational Pedagogy and Learning

In this thesis, I argue that relational pedagogies offer a more engaging and socially just alternative to schooling for many young people who are disenchanted with traditional high schools. This argument becomes even more compelling within the context of the broader neo-liberalising agenda in which market-based trends emphasise control over school organisation, curriculum and pedagogy together with prescribed teacher and student behaviour as the main approach for regulating students (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 for discussion). Relational pedagogy, as I use it in this case study, draws upon Bingham and Sidorkin's (2004a) proposition that all education is relational. By way

of summary, Bingham et al. (2004) identify a set of key principles underpinning the notion of the relational in education:

- A relation is more real than the things it brings together. Human beings and non-human things acquire reality only in relation to other beings and things.

- The self is a knot in the web of multiple intersecting relations; pull relations out of the web, and find no self. We do not have relations; relations have us.

- Authority and knowledge are not something one has, but relations, which require others to enact.

- Human relations exist in and through shared practices.

- Relations are complex; they may not be described in single utterances. To describe a relation is to produce a multivoiced text.

- Relations are primary; actions are secondary. Human words and action have no authentic meaning; they acquire meaning only in the context of specific relations.

- Teaching is building educational relations. Aims of teaching and outcomes of learning can both be defined as specific forms of relations to oneself, people around the students, and the larger world.

- Educational relation is different from any other; its nature is transitional. Educational relation exists to include the student in a wider web of relations beyond the limits of the educational relation.

- Relations are not necessarily good; human relationality is not an ethical value. Domination is as relational as love. (p. 7)

Schunk (2012) extends Bingham et al.'s (2004) conceptual frame, explaining how learning processes function in social contexts. Dewey's (1963) writing advances the idea that relational pedagogy is a way of engaging in learning through common and fair educational settings created together. From her work on literacy learning, Comber (2015) recommends that in implementing a relational pedagogy everyone in the learning context should share their thoughts and speak about their learning. Lysaker and Furuness (2011) contend that a learning community is cohesive, inclusive, collaborative and transformative. McDonald's (2010) classroom work in relational pedagogy indicates

that there are multiple opportunities to question ineffective instructional styles and develop more effective learning strategies.

Moll et al. (1992) add that relational pedagogy allows our consciousness to grow individually, interdependently and in cognizance with others. Together with Bingham et al. (2004), they suggest that knowledge is constructed slowly through experience and reflection and by engaging with multiple contexts and considering multiple perspectives. More recently Popkewitz, Diaz and Kirchgasler (2017) posit that relational pedagogy and learning helps to clarify the principles on which the transfer, translation and transformation of knowledge occur and how they operate in the real world. From a psychological point of view, relational pedagogy also provides insight into how knowledge shifts, translates and converts into intellectual and social capital to enhance individual and community capabilities (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011; Stone et al., 2012). Finally, Smyth et al. (2010) point out that relational pedagogy is sustained by the values of trust, care and respect, which serve to build a greater sense of connectedness, belonging and well-being in learning communities.

3.5.3   John Dewey's Progressive Vision and Practice for Education

In this section I elaborate on the contribution of John Dewey (1938) to my understanding of relational pedagogy as a means of creating authentic experiences in school settings. Dewey argued that experience is at the centre of a democratic progressive education. Shook (2014) adds that progressive educational philosophy focuses on the interests of learners, integrating scientific methods, problem solving, and pragmatic and utilitarian goals jointly with the idea of social responsibility. Dewey (1938) claims that at the centre of this approach to learning is a focus on reflection and experience. The progressive movement challenges traditional liberal education by allowing educators to shift educational traditions by critiquing networks of power, examining faith, belief and authority with reason, and by prioritising experience and feeling as ways to understand truth and self. In other words, progressive educationalists advocate integrating individuals with their community and using education as a tool to problem solve while striving for social and political reform. Apple (2014) likewise suggests that progressive education operates well when human relationships are healthy and authentic.

John Dewey (1938) first described the idea of experiential education long before the language of student disengagement or marginalisation entered into education debates. He wrote about the experiences that assist students in succeeding in their educational journey. Dewey (1938) believed that learning occurs through participation in experiences that are meaningful and relevant to achieving goals, and that continuity and interaction are central characteristics of experiences that promote engagement in learning. Dewey (1938) explains that there is a continuity of experience on a spectrum and wrote that experiences that generate further opportunities for learning and growth are the most fruitful for students. For example, the experience of becoming literate has enduring consequences, generating the potential for future education (Comber, 2015).

Dewey's principle of interaction refers to how context influences individual experience. Environmental and internalised perceptions influence what is learned from experience, so the learner's situation as well as the student's psychological state both act as determinants of what they may be experiencing. Continuity and interaction are ongoing and provide a relative "measure of educative significance and value in experience" (Dewey, 1963, p. 18). The Advisor educator is the mediator of these experiences and is somewhat reliant on interpreting dialogue and considered reflection to assess such an experience both individually and as a group. Dewey's (1963) theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for those educational reformers seeking to shift towards a more democratic vison and practice.

3.5.4   Becoming Somebody: Self-Identity and Schooling

There is no definitive way in which students learn, although numerous theories exist to explain the learning process and the complexity of the interplay between the various factors influencing human affect and social values. Here I draw from Wexler's (1992) idea that "becoming somebody is action in the public sphere" (p. 11). That is, each person, each somebody, essentially is experienced through and with others as they build their identity of self, community and the world (Wexler, 1992). Many other philosophies are grounded in the idea that learning is a social process (Bandura, 1977; Wenger, 1998). According to Bandura (1977), much of our education occurs in a social environment. Other theorists, as I present here, also explain how learning is mutually defined and enacted through a dynamic framework of experience, learnt behaviours, environmental variables and personal cognitions (Donsbach, 2008). Bingham et al.

(2004, p. 6) assert that it is important to emphasise the primacy of human relations, as in a disadvantaged context they can be frail and transient and students are more able to learn when these relationships are carefully understood and developed. They go on to say that a pedagogy of relations may not solve all aspects of inequality and injustice in our schools. However, it represents a shift "from struggling against something to struggling for something" (p. 6). I argue that relational pedagogy is well suited to re-engaging marginalised students in learning given its focus on supporting the individual and human dimensions of young people. The following introduces how educational relationships operate in a relational world, taking into account the self, others and the world. I also define the concepts of trust, care and respect, as well as the notions of connectedness, belonging and well-being as they relate to the human dimension of schooling and their necessity for engagement in learning.

3.5.5   A Relationship to Self

The expression of a person as a self, as they are in the present moment, experiencing and reflecting, allows for vicarious learning when information comes from observation (Kemmis, 2005; Bandura, 1977). Vygotksiĭ and Cole (1978) state that it is "through others we become ourselves" (p. 167). Students facilitate their learning through relationship building with their teachers and peers, mentors and community. Traditional psychological notions of relationships highlight the self and self-development and how through interaction the self draws upon and absorbs the external world to reconstruct an internal world, accumulating knowledge and experience and explicitly making one's world through social relations. Autonomy, separation and becoming are the most comfortable position for the mature person (Raider-Roth, 2005, p. 20). From a psychological point of view, the concept of the human self is rooted and inextricably linked to interaction with others. Miller and Stiver (1997) explain: "The goal is not for the individual to grow out of relationships but to grow into them; as the relationship grows so does the individual" (p. 22).

What this means for learners is that the self is constructed within, between and through relationships. At school these relationships provide knowledge and experience to grow with each other using mutual participation and empathy, as Raider-Roth (2005) explains: "The relational learner is one who initiates actions, makes meaning of his/her experience and develops awareness of this experience in an ongoing, mutually

regulatory web of school relationships" (p. 22). Relational learning is a dynamic act full of complexity and nuance not only for the individual, but for people around the student. Family and community play a vital role in establishing networks of relationships for young people.

3.5.6   A Relationship to People Around the Student

For sociologists, learning and social interaction operate hand in hand. Willis (2000) explains this bond in the following way:

> The symbolic realm also operates at another, connected level, where
> it is involved, viscerally, in the maintenance and differentiation
> formation of the social whole or whole social formation, including the
> reproduction of the conditions upon which "self-activity" originally
> takes place. (p. xvi)

The nature and play of relationships then becomes instrumental in understanding how students learn. Lysaker and Furuness (2011) describe a relational epistemology that takes into account care. The authors explain that the self is relational; it is a constructed identity that comes to life within relationships escorted by the languages of others across contexts, time and space. Lysaker and Furuness (2011) posit that one of our tasks as teachers is to elicit the many features and voices of youth to disrupt the equilibrium, resulting in an "openness to transformation" (p. 188). As the teacher gets to know the student, "a shared set of subjectivities characterised by a sense of space for reciprocity and afforded by care" can be articulated by all in the learning community (p. 188). Donsbach (2008) indicates that these individual and local relationships are invariably tied to the broader world and its dynamic relationships.

3.5.7   A Relationship with the Broader World

Dewey (1938) understood relationships in schools as "the essential foundation of learning", as a dialogic transaction materialises between an individual and the social environment. Relationships are the fundamental way of building knowledge (Dewey, 1938, p. 42). Biesta (2004) explains this dialogic transaction more precisely:

> There is, however, another way to understand learning, one which
> does not think of learning as the acquisition of something that already

exists, but instead sees learning as responding, as a response to a question. If we look at learning in this way, we can say that someone has learned something *not* when that person can copy and reproduce what already existed, but when someone responds to what is unfamiliar, what is different, what challenges, irritates, or even disturbs. Here, learning is an invention or creation, it is a process of bringing something new into the world, namely, one's own, unique response, one's own voice. (p. 320, original emphasis)

Similarly, Gergen (2009) describes relational pedagogy as existing within four circles. These circles loop between teacher and student, and among students, involving the classroom and the community, while linking each learning community to the world. Gergen (2009) posits that a relational orientation enables us to consider entities together, for example, "Teaching cannot be separate from learning; without one the other fails to exist" (p. 247). The point is that to consider togetherness, by collapsing bound entities in the classroom, relationships and the resultant dialogue shifts to the mutually affirmative, thus immersing class members in social interchange giving rise to critical consciousness and collective action for collective good. Gergen (2009, pp. 247–248) adds that there is also the added advantage of "doing" together as a mentor and "being" together as friends. Kreisberg (1992) claims that by operating within a matrix of mutual reciprocity learning occurs through social interaction. Other theorists, educational, sociological and psychological, likewise explain how learning is mutually defined and enacted via interactions (Donsbach, 2008).

When schools create a relational culture, opportunities for students to experience meaningful relationships with others are enhanced. Relational spaces facilitate youth in growing their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual capital with their peers, teachers, families and communities (Erwin, 2010). Some argue that the relational quality of education, relationships with others, is more important than attendance, compliance or assessment statistics individuals may display or perform (Ball, 2000). In the section to follow I elaborate on three key values – trust, care and respect – which are pivotal to building a relational pedagogy in Advisory learning communities.

3.5.8 Building Relationships: Trust, Care and Respect

In this part, I define the notions of trust, care and respect as the grounding values of relational pedagogy and the cornerstones of the Advisory culture. In pursuing this task, I refer mostly to student informed research and how these concepts work in high school for them.

> **Trust** [trəst].
>
> Noun: firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of
> someone or something.
>
> (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/trust)

Bryk and Schneider (2003) contend that at the heart of all relationships is trust. According to Bryk and Schneider (2003, p. 41), relational trust includes the social aspects of respect, personal regard, competence and integrity. Empathy is also an aspect of trust which attests to our ability to understand and share the feelings of another (Wiseman & O'Gorman, 2017). Cranston (2011) together with Harris, Caldwell and Longmuir (2013) agree that relational trust is the most promising avenue for sustained school improvement. They claim that the benefits of high levels of relational trust in schools is that the sentiment attempts to combat specific vulnerability, so school community members are more likely to engage in change. Harris, Caldwell and Longmuir (2013) go on to say that strong school trust can also improve the likelihood that community members will participate in school activities with their children. Senge (2014) reports that trust creates a social fabric in which members of the learning community can generate and build social supports to improve student relationships for each other. Harris, Caldwell and Longmuir (2013) also assert that trust grows in schools that provide safe spaces for students and offer places for students to collaborate and improve on their academic and social successes. The authors argue that the notion of trust requires continuous effort from all in the school community to be beneficial. They go on to explain how this kind of trust builds forms of capital which are essential to student performance at school:

> Trust can be seen as a form of capital, that is, a resource that has the
> potential to accelerate the performance of a school. There are four types
> of capital: intellectual, social, spiritual and financial capital which are
> interrelated and underpinned by trust. (Harris, et al 2013, p. 3)

Trusting relationships between students and teachers who care are vital in the development of young individuals. Smyth et al. (2010) explains that when institutional trust is available, students are more likely to feel safe and welcomed at school. Significantly, they begin to trust in the authority and good intentions of the school which now has greater legitimacy. High schools that actively pursue democratic and inclusive models of schooling, which listen to all students' voices, are able to create the kind of relational trust required for student engagement in learning (Smyth et al., 2010). Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) also found that high institutional trust creates a better fit between students' capabilities and their ability to take responsibility within the high school environment. Trust is closely related to care.

> **Care** [ker]
>
> Noun: the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare,
>
> maintenance, and protection of someone or something.
>
> (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/care)

Blum (2005) found that, when students feel that a school is a safe place and that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals, they are more likely to complete their education. Noddings (2005), when describing the concept of care in education, states that care is sharing, care is reciprocal, and care is related to ethical and communal values. She contends that reception, recognition and response characterise the consciousness of one who is cared for, which makes care especially crucial for educational relationships and endeavours (p. 16). Those who care are attentive, are present with others and give their time and energy. In teaching the nature and play of relationships become instrumental in understanding how students learn. Frymier and Houser (2000) found that caring relationships that develop between teachers and students can influence learning both directly and indirectly (pp. 207–209). Despite the cross-weave of ideas and words, Noddings (2005) suggests that the concept of care needs to be detached from morality, judgement and evaluation. To care is to be human, and the living thing is more important than theory (p. 57). hooks (1994) believes we must "teach in a manner that cares for the souls of our students … if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (p. 13). Wexler (1992) imparts that trust and care are vital in the development of young individuals as they begin to identify and "become somebody" (p. 11). Care is integral to respect.

Respect re·spect [rəˈspekt]

Noun: a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something

elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

(http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/respect)

Respect mingles with the values and expectations of trust, care, being and belonging. Respect is facilitated by creating trusting, caring and respectful relationships between teachers and students. In the words of Goodman (2009):

> Respect is a cardinal virtue and pivotal to the common beliefs surrounding school relationships. Respect includes an appreciation of universal human dignity, equality, and autonomy. Respect is what flavours our self-esteem, pride and our sense of self. (p. 3)

Inlay (2016) suggests that nurturing this internal capacity involves fulfilling the fundamental social and emotional needs for a sense of belonging and a sense of self. The "beingness", the effective and overt behaviours of individuals within school, conveys messages of the implicit or hidden curriculum of a school that is a subtle but powerful influence on school culture (p. 23). She explains that another equally powerful component of relational pedagogy is the "beingness" of teachers as they teach who they are and the authenticity of their identity (p. 23). How educators interact with students, with colleagues, with supervisors and with parents all convey messages. Kearney, Gleeson, Leung, Ollis and Joyce (2016) found that creating a culture of respect begins with the internal capacity of teachers and students to be respectful of self and others. The presence of trust, care and respect creates the conditions for nurturing student connectedness, belonging and well-being and engagement in learning for many marginalised students.

3.5.9 Nurturing Student Connectedness, Belonging and Well-Being

In this part, I extend the discussion of relational pedagogy by considering the importance of creating a sense of connectedness, belonging and well-being among students.

Block (2008) argues that one of the key challenges facing traditional high schools is the need to transform the isolation and self-interest within classrooms and instead, create a culture of connectedness and caring for all students. Poliner and Lieber (2004) found in taking up this challenge that in many high schools, especially in the American context, the Advisory provides the opportunity for weekly academic monitoring and connections to academic support services. McClure et al. (2010) found that the Advisory correspondingly acts as an anchor point for connecting adult family members and adult community members to a school.

Hutchison and McCann (2015) also found that one of the benefits of a senior high school Advisory is that it provides a consistent environment for young people; a small learning community culture based on authentic relationships helps to connect a small group of students and one adult. Walloff's (2011) and Brodie's (2014) American ethnographic case studies found that Advisory students and teachers are positive about their experiences of building academic performance, character development and improving the sense of connectedness between Advisory students. Psychologists such as Brown (2006) argue that as long as young people are hardwired for connectedness, they will fear disconnectedness or shame which negatively impacts on their sense of self-worth and limits their potential to grow their capabilities. Western Australian researchers Gray and Hackling (2009) found that personal growth is likely to occur when a student has connections with a group of peers they feel comfortable and safe with in the senior high school environment. Klem and Connell (2004) add that an outcome of improved connectedness is that individuals can then take risks and learn more about their academic and personal strengths and areas for development. A robust Advisory program can also help students become more self-reflective through one-on-one discussions with their Advisor and also by having time for those studies as a peer group during Advisory time (McClure et al., 2010).

Woodhead and Brooker (2008) define belonging as a kind of "psycho-social" glue that connects people to each other. The Australian Early Years Learning Framework (AEYLF) describes the word "belonging" together with the words "being" and "becoming":

> Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and whom they can become. (DEEWR, 2009a, p. 7)

Psychologists in multiple studies have found a link between a more positive sense of belonging for high school students and academic motivation (Anderson, Hamilton & Hattie, 2004). Other studies report on aspects of achievement (Anderman, 2003), engagement and participation (Willms, 2003) together with social and emotional functioning, confirming that they are strengthened by a sense of belonging at school (Fredricks, Blumenfield & Paris, 2004). Together these notions are especially crucial for students in low socioeconomic localities where a sense of belonging to the school and the community has been linked to a lower rate of internalising problems as students transition through the potentially damaging high school experience (Pittman & Richmond, 2007). Belonging also has the effect of increasing student well-being and reducing perceived obstacles in the learning process (Gray & Hackling, 2009).

Educational theories of belonging establish that students' relationships to others in the school community, both to adults and peers, are prerequisites for human flourishing (Noddings, 2005; Waterhouse, 2007). Relationship building encourages belonging as individuals create support networks and as they experiment with different aspects of their social, academic and educational pathways (Hutchison & McCann, 2015). In the context of the Advisory the development of a culture of belonging, similar to a second family with one anchor point over the adolescent years, is supportive for students. That is, one Advisor knows a student well and can speak freely with every student in a collaborative, non-competitive, atmosphere (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). As mentioned previously, reinforcing this research is a desire to listen to multiple student

perspectives about these kinds of high school classroom experiences (Mertens, 2014). I argue that by creating a relational pedagogy based on these kinds of values students are more likely to engage in dialectical encounters to enhance a sense of connectedness, belonging and well-being (Kemmis, 2005; Peers & Fleer, 2014).

Belonging, as it resonates with the ordinary person, can play a part in developing human capital in the early years of education (Sumsion & Wong, 2011). I argue that belonging is pivotal to young people's sense of identity and place in the world, as it appears to be in this research. Belonging develops as a shared obligation to others and becomes a powerful idea in addressing the problem of deficit thinking outlined earlier and thus it is an important part of reform with a social inclusion agenda (Peers & Fleer, 2014). It is not only children, but young adults who need a sense of belonging and of being comfortable in the educational environment and a sense of trust and security with teachers and other educative professionals. "When a child has a sense of belonging they are more confident, feel more secure, be more creative and more likely to explore the world of learning" (DEEWR, 2009a, p. 8).

Woodhead and Brooker (2008) also impart that belonging is a relational or collective experience that leads to an inherent desire for connectedness. Connectedness and belonging encourage well-being for both individuals and groups of students at high schools.

> **Wellbeing** well-be·ing [ˈˌwel ˈˌbēiNG]
> Noun: the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.
> (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/wellbeing)

Multiple definitions conflate school strategies to achieve well-being and students' perceptions of well-being. Here I borrow Fraillon's (2004) broad definition of student well-being as the degree to which a student is functioning efficiently in the school community. A more systemic view of well-being can be "A sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at school" (Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012, p. 222).

Dodge's psychological team synthesises the most shared and relevant characteristics of well-being – namely positive affect; resilience; satisfaction with relationships and other dimensions of one's life; and efficient functioning and maximising one's potential – as

they apply to an education setting (Dodge et al., 2012). Gray and Hackling (2009) suggest that a sense of wellness through the whole body and mind is important for high school students and their retention in senior school. Groves and Welsh (2010) argue that in school there must also be opportunities for reflection, for students to digest information and share their thoughts with others, to feel a sense of well-being at high school. In high school, well-being is vital for two reasons. The first is the recognition that schooling should not just be about academic outcomes but that it is about the welfare of the "whole child". The second is that students who have higher levels of well-being tend to have better cognitive outcomes at school (Dodge et al., 2012). The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians states that:

> Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion. Schools share this responsibility with students, parents, carers, families, the community, business and other education and training providers. (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4)

Bambara and Kern (2005) indicate that this goal is the first formal recognition in Australia that schooling has a broader role to play in the development of Australian youth, above and beyond academic outcomes.

3.5.10   Summary

In summary, relational pedagogy puts the individual at the centre of learning, and relational schools act to maintain various structural, cultural and pedagogical conditions necessary to promote the broader social and democratic functions of education (Dewey, 1963). Relational schools rely on interactions and stability between the self, others and the broader world to enable students to experience learning over a period of years. Students build their sense of identity by reflecting on their experience with peers, Advisors, teachers, family and community (McClure et al., 2010). In the chapters to follow I present evidence, largely from the point of view of students, about the importance of "becoming somebody" (Wexler, 1992, p. 11). I argue that engaging learning relationships are founded on trust, care and respect, providing a physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual base to connect with and from (Erwin,

2010). Although it is clear that positive teacher–student relationships are beneficial for students, the relational approach to engagement does not lend itself to standardised instructional scripts, prescribed curricula and standardised testing. The human dimension of connectedness, belonging and well-being are significant outcomes of a more relational pedagogy in the Advisory, yet they are fragile and elusive ideas to capture. As Noddings (2005) noted, genuine relationships require understanding and synergy with individuals and their expressed needs. Pedagogies and the practices that instantiate them are necessarily emergent and variable rather than predetermined and fixed. In the chapters to come, I endeavour to reveal something about a relational pedagogy as it is enacted in the Advisory at WHS. It is broader than individual experiences, broader than social contact; it can be critical, engaging, democratic and transformative (McMahon & Portelli, 2004).

3.6   Chapter Conclusion

This theoretical chapter has presented ways different ways of "doing" school (Pope, 2001), and then explored a range of key ideas to encourage a relational pedagogy to engage students and their community in public schooling. I organised this chapter around three key themes. I presented McMahon and Portelli's (2004) framework to develop an understanding of the issues around student disengagement and re-engagement. I drew upon concepts and empirical evidence from the fields of education, psychology and philosophy to examine three competing orientations to the problem of students who are switching off and dropping out of learning at high school in escalating numbers. These ideas emerge from a conservative or traditional conception; the liberal or student-oriented understanding; and the critical-democratic comprehension of engagement (McMahon & Portelli, 2004).

Disengagement, marginalisation and early school leaving are a national problem, not only for those experiencing difficulties with high school, as they further widen the opportunity gap, but for a nation that must bear the cumulative cost to the education, health and welfare systems (McLachlan, 2013; Vandenberghe, 2009; Wyn, 2009). The problem with the traditional and conservative concept of engagement is the underpinning assumptions including dominant deficit discourses. These manifest through the grammar of schooling, deficit thinking, inflexible school structures, irrelevant curriculum and a pedagogy of poverty. Moreover, there is an assumption that

deficit aspirational capacities curb participation in public education for some, again restricting access to a quality, just and equitable education. I argue that dominant deficit discourses are social constructions and one reason why reform efforts often fail (Mc Donald 2014), particularly in disadvantaged communities where they are most needed.

I consider it essential to provide a counter-narrative to the dominant deficit discourses that pathologise marginalised youth (McGregor, 2015; Smyth et al., 2014; te Riele, 2006; Zyngier, 2013). I have therefore explored student experiences with various institutional structures, different types of curriculum and diverse pedagogies. I also considered the quality of student–teacher relationships together with views about student aspirations (or lack thereof) for further education and careers to illustrate why relational pedagogy is so vital to re-engaging young people in learning.

I then explored concepts that are relevant to building a relational pedagogy to re-engage students in learning. Student-centred curricula are more relevant and engaging and student-centred pedagogies build communication and conectedness for students (McGregor, Mills, te Riele & Hayes, 2015). Furthermore, personal student–teacher relationships help mitigate the effects of various risk factors in the lives of children, leading to more positive outcomes for students from disadvantaged communities (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017). Confidence and commitment to learning are also strengthened in such alternative learning settings. These flexible learning conditions encourage strong student–teacher relationships, creating space to incorporate student lifeworld's and helping students to develop as aspirational and skilled individuals (Biesta, 2004; Hattam, 2006).

In essence I have detailed some key theoretical and practical tenets that are pivotal in re-invigorating pedagogy. I move on to the idea or heuristic of a relational pedagogy as a means of re-engaging young people in learning. The theory of relational pedagogy acts as a framework for understanding human relations as a priority in education systems rather than administrative and bureaucratic processes (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a). I attempted to explain how the learner's situation, as well as the student's psychological state, act as determinants of what they may be experiencing and how this can be enhanced through relational pedagogy. In other words, I described how we "become somebody" through school, self, other and the world, drawing from both conceptual and empirical research (Wexler, 1992). I detailed the foundational values

of trust, care, respect, belonging, connectedness and well-being and their relevance to student engagement in learning. In Chapter 3 I have built a hybrid theoretical basis for further understanding marginalised high school students and how to best re-engage their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs in high school Advisory settings (Erwin, 2010). Chapter 4 describes how I went about completing the task at hand.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Relations are complex; they may not be described in single
utterances. To describe a relation is to produce a multi-voiced text.
(Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7)

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the tradition of interpretative qualitative research as the chosen methodology. It examines the ontological and epistemological considerations (Thomas, 1993) that led me to select an ethnographic case study approach for this study. This chapter has three main sections. The first describes ethnographic case study research, including key definitions, major features, the role of the researcher, the particular methods of data collection and the reasons why WHS came to be the case study site. I also explain the recruitment process of participants and the role student narratives play in ethnographic research. The second section explains my data collection procedures, fieldwork processes and products, as well as how and why (Yin, 1993) I have reconstructed the student interviews in the way I have. The third section describes the data analysis methods including the use of student narrative in research. I discuss how themes emerged from the data, and the veracity of qualitative interviews, and end with a consideration of the ethical dilemmas of student representation and interpretation. I then present a conclusion to the methodology chapter.

4.1.1 A Personal Reflection: A Fractured Fairy-Tale that Knits the Thesis Together

I am an Aussie, seventh generation, tough convict stock mixed with a fierce splash of Scandinavian Viking. I am always of two minds, a perpetual Heinz variety and a Gemini caught between right and wrong; good and bad; hot and cold; north and south. I am a pink colour, forever sunburnt, the love of far horizons running in my veins (Mackellar, 1908). I am the product of both sides of the law, half rum sergeant and half petty thief girl, equally God's police and a damned whore (Summers, 1994). I can sleep evenly in the blistering heat of the Pilbara yet desire the cool deep forests of Tasmania. At Christmas, I am magnetically hauled overseas by the lunar tides to the

Arctic Circle; however, find myself stood on a scorching Perth beach in a batik sarong and Bintang singlet. I am a bogan to others but not to myself. I understand why I constantly search the horizon; I am looking, squinting into the sunset, waiting patiently for my Scandinavian and English cousins to arrive (Barrett, 2003). I am always moving, trying to balance my gene pool and history. I am neither here nor there. I never quite fit, yet I am trying to belong, to blend in. My presence is true for me, my being is living for me, or is this just how I imagine myself (Garman & Piantanida, 2006)? Like most journeys this research began with a question: why is high school such a profoundly dissatisfying experience for disadvantaged young people? To answer this question, I discuss how I went about finding an answer.

I maintained a personal journal to write in during the study years. To try capture my account of the Advisory experience as a PhD student. I had four years to get this PhD done. I had saved money from my prison work and won an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarship. There were now seven of us. David and his four children, myself and Alice. And Midnight our cat, Kelpie our black and tan dog came later.

Unbeknown to me, I was going to be experiencing the 10 distinguishers of Big Picture Education Advisory. True to Dewey (1938), I was trying to live a learning, not simply reading about learning a living. An ethics meeting was my first experience. We sat down and discussed ways of managing the academic rigour and intellectual purpose of our research team. Given my new colleagues were a Professor, a London School of Economics graduate and a Post-Doctoral Fellow, expectations were high in the first minutes of discussion. I was the student, "one student at a time" in the language of BPE. This research was going to be interesting, challenging and exciting; I was thinking and feeling comfortable with the new project Advisors and colleagues. The university also provided an iPad, a quality desktop computer, a lovely office and administrative support. I was learning in the real world, with my head, my heart and my hands.

Over the years, I was invited to work with a diverse range of academics, teachers, students, parents, administrators and community members. Every day I received formal and informal invitations to educational happenings. It was like a mini internship or "leaving to learn" every day. Opportunities for conferences, shared lunches, coffee conversations, workshops, presentations, community forums and fundraisers, school-based research and business partnerships were my education. Most days I attended and

participated in as many events as possible; there were a lot of school–college partnerships to navigate. Enthusiastically, I involved myself with local education initiatives and learned how our team was implementing the Big Picture Education design. I learned the structures and culture of an Advisory by participating in one. On every occasion, I discussed issues around high school student engagement and how to enhance it. I spoke to and asked individuals (old and young) their perceptions and engaging experiences of high school teaching and learning. This included their high school relationships, perceptions of equity in public education and whether they felt welcome in formal high schooling. I was continually questioning and discussing how high school might be designed to serve better the needs of those students marginalised in the process of public high schooling. I spoke to many parents and students.

I was fascinated by the clarity of each story shared with me. Each individual's reflection was an influential and formative experience that has endured through a lifetime of experiences. I listened to each story, one student, one story at a time. Individual reflections came to embody a universal issue, a personal injury, a workplace paradox, a social ambiguity or a bureaucratic absurdity; each story was a shared struggle or joy. I tried to match these stories with theory and research, policy and practice. This was superb professional development for me. After a year, my questions were subtly changing. My understandings became more in-depth, and over time the responses and reflections congealed into thematic knots. Voraciously, I read published research on young people and educational issues (Blossfeld, Buchholz, Skopek & Triventi, 2016). I watched films, listened to songs and stories, and considered quotations comparing western (Adam, 1995), eastern (Nishiyama, 2000), northern (Flyvbjerg, 2001) and southern (Connell, 2007) perspectives on educating young people. I found that there are many types of leadership so I compared and contrasted them.

I had the opportunity to travel to the United States with other Australian professionals to meet exciting and influential Big Picture school leaders. I learned about and experienced Big Picture Learning in a variety of American contexts and also explored engagement and learning issues specific to Los Angeles, Sacramento, Rhode Island and Tennessee. There was collaboration everywhere; I loved it. I treasured experiencing these Advisory learning programs, the American students and teachers offering to share their innovative study programs and curriculums in old and new

buildings and diverse surrounds, with cafes serving exotic fare. Again, I was learning in the real world, beyond my world.

However, it was on my return to Australia that my PhD journey became personal. In the second year, an epiphany came about in Newcastle, New South Wales at Cooks Hill Big Picture School and Conference. I was struck deeply by a young girl's mentor who was working with Ayurveda principles. I began following some of these principles in my life for balance and focus. I could not help but wonder if my ancestral spirits were talking to me over there, getting under my skin, my convict ancestors speaking to me seven generations later; a shiver ran down my spine and I was urged to listen. I dreamt one night in Newcastle seven generations ago I was waiting there for my convict others to arrive and they appeared, rowing a small boat towards me, waving to me in delight. This dream was so real I knew that this experience was one of my beginnings.

However, another dream, another origin was so brutally clear and resolute. A classic Australian film captures this dream, The Tracker. I was the new chum, I was terrified of the implications. Am I, too, guilty? Rolf de Heer has me. I flew back to Western Australia, but my history does not leave me ever. My past cannot leave me. My heritage and work experience cause me untold stress. We do not have relations; relations have us (Bingham et al., 2004).

Soon I begun stumbling somewhat awkwardly into a process of coming together and thinking deeply about educational quality, equity and engaging high school experiences in disadvantaged communities. Authentic assessment in my mind means genuinely and gently appraising yourself and finding your place in the world and its effects. It requires recognising that each person, each somebody, essentially is experienced through and with others as they build their identity of self, community and the world (Wexler, 1992). I happened to recognise the humiliating poverty of my primary school years; handmade knickers, tangled hair and hard bread for lunch. We were "just off the land", so the suburbanites would sniff at us. I was unable to navigate school or consumerism; I did not have the social capability to meet and greet (Gale & Parker, 2015b, p. 141).

I remembered my high school angst and my teenage flashes of anger, the hot cheeks, the rampages, the long silences and vicarious imaginings of my youth, and realised they

were splattering all over this PhD and making a mess of it. I am no longer ashamed of my vulnerability and poverty, but am I satisfied in my struggle to move away from poverty via education? But have I really moved away, or is that just what I want to believe? Or am I just another fool, as Berlant (2007) shares, submitting myself to cruel optimism of further education in the absence of a more purposeful life?

During this research, I endured sleepless nights of desperate questioning: how was I going to get over this or that PhD obstacle? My options were kids first, concession card, work harder, crawl, pinch and scrape, save it for later, recycle, re-use, and a vegetable garden. Other options were: embrace the pain, anticipate, duck, watch and learn, suck it up princess, op shop, carpool, no money for fuel. I said train or bus or miss out, tighten the belt, reduced for sale, leftovers and "maybe later we can", as a nice way of saying no to the children. In my head, unrelentingly historical student voices emerged, previously silenced and buried, young voices of dispossessed and disposable youth, structurally and culturally exiled to the tattered edges of society, calling for acknowledgement (Giroux, 2011). I was drowning in my own and others' voices of disconnection and denial, desperately pleading "listen to me, I'm leaving" (Smyth, 2000). But I cannot move, I had nowhere to go. If only I could and knew how to or when or where to go, with whom and for what reason. Again, I could not navigate the education system, I could not direct the winds, but I could adjust my sails, and so I did. I had to trust the process (White, 2011).

In the third year, these many voices squeaked and rubbed at meetings, squeezing themselves uncomfortably into workshops; they were immature, stuttering and dropping out of range at conferences. In attempting to convey some findings, I questioned how it was that everyone seemingly knew more than me. Needing to identify and prioritise those voices in the academic community, I frustratingly tried getting an angle, forming a perspective, finding a groove or filling a literary gap (White, 2011). Colleagues were catching me, laughing and encouraging me as I tried to make a space, attempting to fit in but falling out instead, up a kerb, out of a bus and down a hole in the road. This way, they were saying, try this for stability. With outstretched arms, they believed in me, I could see it in their eyes. Authentic exhibitions are hard work and lots of fun, although colleagues' multiple suggestions were floating away, I tried grasping but caught wind over and over; I feel I am unable to capture the turning of my soul in this process (Rodgers, 2006).

Soon enough in the fourth year I became obsessed with finding the truth, the answer and the solution, only to see at each progress a flaw, a paradox, a contradiction, a counter-argument or alternative. Every day I struggled with questions of authenticity, representation, perspective and the illusion of understanding (Garman & Piantanida, 2006). I became critical. All elements of working and studying involve becoming political; colleagues are political; the community is political; and Australia is political. I started considering every artefact of evidence as a legislative command, economically corrupt, culturally misappropriated and intentionally constructed to achieve an outcome, just or unjust. In the turmoil, I was trying to create a future, but whose future was more important?

"Mum's gone crazy; she's losing it", I heard the kids whisper in their bedrooms. I was writing, writing and writing, like a mad woman, trying to make sense of the seeing, hearing, reading, tasting and smelling of research (Roth et al., 1989). Spending weekends at the office tapping away, attempting to fold paragraphs into relevant chapters while at home folding mountains of clean washing into meaningful individual piles. Trying to construct meaningfulness and sensibility amongst clouds of fluff and hot air. The summer in Western Australia is stinking hot, dry, rendering the body and mind indolent. The air conditioning wreaks as much trouble in the eyes, nose and throat. In writing a dissertation I again feel the institutional muscle of educational organisation and culture (Bernstein, 1971). There is no escape. I drag my thesis around with me every-where, winning each paragraph, sentence by sentence, word by word.

Among the hundreds of pasta dishes, steak sandwiches, salads, baked beans and cupcakes, lawn mowing, gymnastics, Muay Thai, swimming lessons and Brazilian jujitsu competitions had they grown up? Ten times we went to Bali but still did not know where Girrawheen, Innaloo or Mirrabooka are. Wangara is where? The study years were a blur of activity, tears, tantrums, broken hearts and bloody noses; time spent waiting at doctors' surgeries and emergency rooms for X-rays, plastering and bandaging many heads, shoulders, knees and toes. There were the stitches in the eyebrow, chin and elbow and where, let me see, wow that was close, another centimetre and it would have been …

The endless, endless, endless diabetes mellitus, or Type 1, blood sugar levels, HBA1C, insulin injections and jelly beans at 2.00 am. Every morning I thank God, my daughter made it through the night.

The children ever so slowly start leading their lives independently. However, did that happen? "Why are you crying, Mum?", they would ask. "Oh, I don't know, I think I got sunscreen in my eyes again. I am sweating after riding my bike, that's all, you know". The wind is a blowing like a bitch out there, against me. I did not want to discourage them.

4.2   Ethnographic Case Study Research

4.2.1   Introduction

In this section I describe ethnographic case study research, its key features and the participatory role of the researcher. Following this is a description of the methods in this study and the reasons why WHS came to be the case study site. Ethnographic case study research was the most suitable methodology for this research because it enabled me to identify and describe the Advisory relational design structures, cultures and pedagogies that attempt to re-engage marginalised students. Merriam (1998) indicates that case studies such as this one follow an interpretive paradigm, suggesting an inductive form of thinking in which "education is considered to be a process, and school a lived experience" (p. 4). Lowenthal and Muth (2009, p. 178) recommend that ethnographic case studies take the stance that reality is not static, objective nor constrained to what is observable. That is, reality is fluid, flexible, reliant on context and constructed by the study participants. In this study, high school students are active agents in creating their realities and the students produce meaning through their experiences in the Advisory setting as well as experiencing their individuality via interactions with others. As deMarrais and LeCompte (1999) impart, the Advisory context is vital to the definitions made within and between the Advisory participants. To close, Madison (2012) suggests that ethnographic case study research is vital in that it can create rich, descriptive data that illustrate theory and lead to a keen understanding of social and educational life beyond the actual group of Advisory participants.

4.2.2 Key Features of Ethnographic Case Study Research

Ethnographic researchers appreciate that their purpose is to understand how individuals and groups experience a particular phenomenon and then make sense of their experience to build local cultural theories (Willis, 2000). The participants thus play an integral part in the research process (Madison, 2012). O'Reilly (2009) explains that it is customary in ethnographic case studies to draw upon iterative-inductive research methods, and direct and sustained contact with study participants. I used these methods together to understand the irreducible daily life and struggles of marginalised high school students. Ethnographic studies of schools invite student voice and recognise that students are active participants in the learning process, thus supporting the central notions of this study. Down and Choules (2011) point out that by including and analysing the perspectives and experiences of marginalised students, the 30–40 per cent of public high school students who do not graduate, it is possible to provide a perspective that is seldom encouraged or heard on matters of school change (p. 3). I maintain that ethnographic case studies can help to reveal the human dimensions of young people's experience of schooling. Moreover, in considering students' voices, researchers can better understand the quality and quantity of educational opportunity, experience and outcomes of education. Ethnographic case study research, therefore, offers a counter-narrative to dominant discourses about educational policy and practice (McGregor, 2017). Furthermore, the use of an ethnographic case study methodology allows me to reflect on my own practice in order to improve it.

Carspecken (1996) claims that in ethnography the researcher is a "key interpreter" of the stories, experiences and narratives emerging from the research (p. 109). Van Maanen (2011, p. 2) recommends that qualitative researchers enter a "field" that has distinct boundaries and gather data from the site from a small and selective sample. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) suggest that an inductive mode of analysis should be used to generate comprehensive narrative accounts of participants' experiences (p. 46). Van Maanen (2011) suggests that themes emerge from the original narratives and can then be placed alongside established theoretical perspectives to make sense of research data (p. 3). Lichtman (2006) reiterates the key features of ethnographic case studies in the following passage:

It is a way of knowing that assumes that the researcher gathers, organises and interprets information (usually in words or in pictures) with his or her eyes and ears as a filter. It is a way of doing that often involves in-depth interviews and observations of humans in natural and social settings. It can be contrasted with quantitative research, which relies heavily on hypothesis testing, cause and effect, and statistical analysis (p. 22).

My ethnographic intention in this study, then, is to provide a glimpse into the relational life of students' BPA experience (Willis, 2000). Madison (2012) adds that being a participant in an ethnographic study is an unstructured, dynamic and emotional incident that is not easily categorised or generalised. Much of the participant's educational experience is subjective and value-laden (p. 15). The point is, as Ellingson (2009, p. 2) states, that by presenting the views and experiences of both individuals and small groups in the findings a multidimensional and more crystallised understanding of learning relationships emerges. It is not just the participants that have a role to play but the researcher as well.

4.2.3   The Role of the Researcher

Analogous to de Laine (2000) I also experienced a good deal of soul searching and methodological self-consciousness when undertaking this research (p. 183). The point is that as researchers we all come to research with values, beliefs and histories that shape the way we see the world. The challenge is to open up new perspectives on and approaches to schooling. Initially, I wanted to focus on the experiences of students at WHS but soon came to realise that these experiences are not isolated and that there are threads and connections across significant contexts. Hence my focus on a considerable body of research on student engagement in learning in Chapter 3. Furthermore, I realised that all research is deeply personal as I endeavoured to map in the reflection in the introduction to this chapter. I do have a preference, and I have sought to be transparent about its origins and influences. That is why I have documented my working-class Australian upbringing, and my travels and trials as a student, teacher, mother and researcher.

I am attempting to present a useful document and argument together with a well-formed story (de Laine, 2000). Denzin (1997) expresses the process in another way:

like a delicate ecosystem, I cannot moderate one biome without compromising another biome. I need all the synergistic biomes, otherwise the rich diversity, the tensions, conflicts and actualities of the research processes and products could not be understood relatively or truthfully as they relate to each other (p. 9). Denzin (1997) also says networks shape each way of knowing. Each method has fundamentally different measures and procedures of assessment. A well-formed argument and a good story are different types of thought; their analysis is drawn from different sources. In the words of Denzin (1997): "Arguments convince one of their truths, story the likeness to reality. Verification of stories is not by appeal to procedures for establishing the formal empirical truth, but by establishing verisimilitude" (p. 10).

My position as a researcher is that of a nomad. I have worked in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of education, with children, adolescents and adults in Asia, North America, Australia and Europe. Similar to Thomas (1993, p. 3), throughout the investigation, I felt that there was no right way to conduct qualitative research, although I attempted to focus on concrete experience over abstract principles. Similar to other qualitative researchers, I acknowledge that the outcome of the study participants' experience "will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal" (Thomas, 1993, p. 18). Likewise, as in any such ethnographic case study, I desire not to privilege any one construct over another; there are no "value-free" facts (p. 21). Social and cultural dynamics are interpreted by each ethnographic participant and sensed as "real" based on how they view the experience (p. 21).

deMarrais and LeCompte (1999) suggest that perceptions are part of our personality, and individuals bring "values, personality and past experiences" to each social interaction (p. 20). In keeping with White's (2011) advice on thesis writing, this research centres on the participants experience and communications, the research process does not move forward quickly nor possess a logical route; ambiguity is continually inserting itself through much of the research process (p. 34). Throughout this research, mine and the students' values, realities, meanings and experiences emerged tangentially. As our relationships, understandings and their meanings developed, the student participants and I sought valid interpretations through each other and via theory. Later I wrote each perspective, each story up as this thesis. Revealing these experiences and understanding each experience was an ongoing

process which the students and I along with a myriad of other contributors entered and dwelled in over the research years.

There were some constraints within the study due to my positionality as an older, white, female researcher collecting data from high school students and parents who identified as disadvantaged. The WHS team were clear about not including any identifying information about the study participants. Also, there were strict guidelines from the Department of Education Western Australia (DOEWA) and the Human Research and Ethics Committee (HREC) of my university. The issues concerned completing research with human subjects and the possible detrimental effects of this research on any individuals through the study such as psychological stress, as the main subjects were children. I carefully maintained the confidentiality of all research documents, data and artefacts through the use of pseudonyms in data collection, analysis, coding and writing up the dissertation. I was fortunate in that my role as a researcher was perceived positively at WHS and all study participants actively shared their experiences and opinions over the years.

4.2.4 Site Selection and Recruitment

WHS is distinctive as the school has pursued a social equity initiative that promotes healthy student–teacher relationships through exercising a more relational pedagogy since 2012. I chose to focus on this single site rather than conduct a multi-case investigation due to the school's implementation of a BPA from 2012. Pole and Morrison (2003, p. 17) suggest such a site provided an opportunity to conduct an ethnographic case study which illustrated the complexities and idiosyncrasies of a specific educational intervention at a particular time. BPEA in partnership with the local university presented a unique research opportunity for me. After visiting some BPEA schools in the Perth suburbs, WHS was my first choice as the research site. Fortunately, the school was close to my home, was succeeding in its program implementation, and student retention in the program was steady. I secured approval in writing for my specific project from DOEWA and HREC in April 2014.

4.2.5 The Participants

All of the students enrolled in the BPA have a history of school disengagement and marginalisation due to learning challenges, problematic discipline histories or chronic

truancy issues. Although the students presented as challenging to conventional education processes, all BPA candidates were academically capable. The BPA participants in this research were made known to the reader in Chapter 2. The BPA students were Beyoncé, Boii, Krishna, Faith, Cory and Gemma. Mr Aloe Blacc is the Principal, Mrs Felicity Snowlee is the Willibe High School Deputy Principal, and Miss Audra Mae is the Advisor of this research group. Miss Dianna Macklemore is another BPEA Advisor but for a different year group. Miss Arianna Margarite is a part-time Advisor who moves between the three BPA year groups. Mrs Adahe Ruapehu is the mother of Boii in the BPA. Mrs Temperance Bissett is the mother of Krishna in the BPA. Chapter 5 details a thematic analysis of the students' narratives together with an interpretation.

4.2.6   Summary

This study reveals something about myself and my beliefs as an ethnographic case study researcher. Similar to the research that Madison (2012) describes, this study is naturalistic, contextualised, interactive, reflexive and systematic. Throughout the study, I regularly reflected upon and evaluated research evidence; this was an iterative process, and I found myself working cyclically through the research process. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) also point out that qualitative researchers are often craft workers and artists, creating useful and feasible forms of communication and artefacts from partial resources as the situation requires (p. 23). Now I will discuss the data collection methods.

4.3   Data Collection

4.3.1   Introduction

This section explains the data collection procedures, fieldwork processes and products, as well as how and why (Yin, 1993) I reconstructed the student interviews. I gathered data from multiple sources during the research project. I went about participating and observing in the "field" at WHS BPA and visiting other "fields" or BP schools, both in Australia and internationally (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 2). I conducted semi-structured interviews and collected and reviewed documents (Atkinson et al., 2007; Carspecken, 1996; Lichtman, 2006). I now elaborate on these data-gathering methods.

4.3.2   Participant Observation and Field Work

The field work occurred over a period of three years from April 2014 to the end of 2016. I attended the school initially as a visitor and then more formally as a researcher over the years, arranging visits predominantly around BPA student activities. The frequency of my visits did not follow a set pattern. I visited the school once a month on average over the two years; however, during interviewing times I attended the school every other day. The pattern of observation fluctuated for several reasons. The BPA timetable was flexible, with students and teachers attending conferences, internships, interviews with mentors, in specialist classes, paid work or attending to personal needs with family.

By participating in the BPA activities, I got to know each student, and their many strengths and weaknesses. I was asked to share in the students' internships and projects, including art and musical presentations, and I experienced large catered functions. I contributed to personalised learning and made suggestions for collaborative learning and teaching. I felt surprised by the ease with which the students interacted with adults, both in the school and the community. I was able to observe the planning of individuals' learning matrix at the beginning of the year and participated in check and connect times in the mornings (Lehr et al., 2004). Check and connect is a student engagement activity implemented in the BPS design. It is a communication strategy performed as a group meeting each morning. BPA participants are asked to share their feelings with the team including any cares, concerns or celebrations or any issues that may interfere with their engagement at school that day or in the future (Stover, 2009).

Throughout the day I assisted by contributing to portfolio construction as well as watching and commenting on student presentations and exhibitions for assessments. The potential for leadership was always in the minds of students and families as they considered engaged learning in the real world and business prospects. Over the years I also had opportunities to attend specialist English classes with students in BPA together with sharing informal chats at recess and lunch with students, parents and administrators. Observing and participating over the research years, I became aware of many aspects of "building rapport" with the study participants (Madison, 2012, p. 39). I implemented Madison's (2012) suggestions for field work: I actively

practised mindfulness; I was actively thinking and listening considerately, being aware of my status in the BPA (p. 42). I was sometimes probing and always aware of pressures and tensions in the BPA as well as conforming to ethical aspects of the investigative progress.

WHS is relatively large, and I observed as many of the school settings as possible to gather the broadest view of the school's structure, culture and relationships as was useful for answering the study questions. There is a gym, canteen, library, music room, languages other than English (LOTE) room, drama area, media space, numerous sporting areas and gardens as well as administrative areas. I was also an active member of the Independent Public-School Board, contributing to board meetings four times a year.

Bassot (2016) recommends keeping a handwritten journal recording the learning journey throughout the PhD process, and this practice was significant in developing my BPA understandings. I kept my fieldwork notes and personal journal in five A4 spiral notebooks along with all manner of business cards, telephone numbers, journal articles, reference items, promotional papers, conference invitations and evidence of professional development. I considered the journal to be an essential tool in this research process so I put away many personal and professional reflections and notes for safekeeping and future reference. The five journal notebooks acted as a reflective tool enabling me to draw conclusions, link ideas, make comparisons, list themes and group emerging issues as well as asking questions and making connections to the literature. I have shared aspects of the contents of the notebooks throughout this thesis.

4.3.3   Semi-structured Interviews

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggest that typically, in qualitative research, long and/or multiple interviews are implemented to gather detailed data from participants (p. 529). I used formal and informal meetings to support participant observations and field work. Three semi-structured interview questions begin the interviews and guide conversation but do not constrain discussion of emerging issues. The overarching question driving this thesis is:

- How do students experience, understand and respond to the Advisory learning community?

I asked the students

- What are your learning experiences in the Advisory learning community?
- How do the Advisors teach in the Advisory?
- Does being in the Advisory help you aspire to the future?

I followed all ethical interview protocols, such as gaining written and oral consent before the interview. As Glesne (2011) recommends, I also provided the interview participants with the questions weeks before the meeting so they could reflect on their responses. I also set an agreed time and place for the discussion in the BPA office, so participants were comfortable and in a familiar position. Each participant's interview was digitally recorded on an iPad to analyse their construct of what they were experiencing in their Advisory journey via thematic analysis. All the interviewees were asked the same questions which were cross referenced to create consistency in the data. Opportunities arose in the interview process to ask for clarification on the spot, to follow unexpected issues and to probe for deeper meaning from each participant (Glesne, 2011, pp. 81–86). As Smyth (2000) explains, in this type of research "The data was quite literally being created, rather than collected, and the representations we were confronting were epistemological eruptions in the sense of being presented to us with imaginative rearrangements" (p. 404).

I formally interviewed each participant twice, once in 2014 in third or fourth term and again in the first or second term of 2015. The formal interviews took approximately 30 minutes to complete. However, there were often conversations before and after the official interview as well as my participation in Advisory activities. Carspecken (1996) conveys that apart from "in situ" (p. 126) note-taking and transcription during interviews, "body language" also provides important clues during interviews (p. 126). He suggests that the many non-verbal cues reveal much about participants' personal perspectives together with the nuanced tone and texture of their language (p. 128).

In total, there were around 30 hours of interview recording that needed transcription. Initially, I planned three rounds of interviews; however, this was reduced to two rounds of interviews. We simply ran out time. As Glesne (2011) highlights, if participants are involved in other research projects there is a need to be aware of "research burnout", especially during interviews (p. 285). Glesne (2011) suggests that to combat "research burnout" researchers need to possess a certain efficiency with the interviews so the

participants can resume teaching and learning as soon as possible (p. 285). She also speaks of "theoretical saturation" where the data collected on the relevant questions diminishes, and respondents provide little new information regardless of the length of time spent together (p. 285). Having completed the interviews, I also continued to collect secondary documents relevant to the study.

4.3.4 Document Collection

Document collection was another data-gathering method in this investigation. Carspecken (1996) appraises documents as serving the purpose of substantiating observations and interview data, thus making the findings more trustworthy (p. 44). Records can also provide pathways to questions not previously considered as well as providing background information such as history, patterns and rationales which in turn make the study more valid (p. 87). Over the research timeline, I collected examples of teachers' and students' journals, photos and videos of in-class activities (with participants' permission). I also devoted time to gathering a range of Big Picture promotional and educational pamphlets, collecting previous WHS school reports and compiling testimonials from students, teachers, parents and community members on the success and progress of the Advisory. Pole and Morrison (2003) suggest that secondary sources of data include official statistics, diaries, photographs together with art and artefacts subsidiary to this data collection. In this study, these sources included public media on school–community partnerships, newsletters, curriculum plans, meeting agendas and minutes, program evaluations, calendars of events, the school newsletter and emails. These all contribute to a study's goals and background information (p. 53).

4.3.5 Constructing Student Narratives

Recording the original interviews with the study participants was both fun and informative. Having only three questions facilitated the smooth transition between each topic and I used the three keywords of learning, teaching and aspirations to keep the interviewees on topic. By establishing only three topic areas, I then had a loose framework to compare and contrast participants' responses for analysis. Several of the interviewees provided answers that prompted me to research concepts and experiences I had not considered, thus enriching the depth of the data and findings. I also found

that at the end of the interview when I had turned off the iPad the interviewee often offered a very honest concluding opinion. The conversation was like a slightly nuanced spin on the recorded version, where the interviewees made sure I understood the actual meaning of their words, that I implicitly understood their experiences and perceptions. I recorded most of this post-interview information in my fieldwork journal.

Once the interviews were complete, I sent the audio file via a locked DropBox account to a professional transcriber. Although our team provided some support for transcribing, there was neither time nor expertise to complete the hours of interviews I recorded. After the initial round of interviews was complete, I offered a transcribed copy to each participant for proofreading and consent to use in this research, and I asked if they wanted me to omit any part of the interview they were uncomfortable with. Only one of the participants sought to change the interview conversation by deleting all the "And but I …" statements, of which there were many. We went through this process twice, once in 2014 and once in 2015. All the participants verified their consent and approval by signing a consent sheet after they had proofread both the interview transcript and the constructed narrative. Following is an example of an original interview transcript from Gemma in 2014:

> *Really good actually. I'm currently doing top class in Certificate 4 is what my lecturer told me and I find that because I'm still doing partial mainstream here in human biology, because it's mostly theory in this Cert 4 course now, I understand a lot because of my previous knowledge from human biology that I've got here. So I've really got two aspects of it that I can contribute to the one, and that's how it's been easier. And I've also found with, I do a lot of public speaking in there, I find myself more confident and that's definitely come from Big Picture as well because with the exhibitions and everything and at first I was really, really nervous but I get up there now and I just I face it I think, and it's really great.* (Gemma, interview, 2014)

4.3.6   Summary

Data was collected from multiple sources during the two years of research. The previous section detailed how I conducted participant observation and field work in

the high school and the Advisory. I have also detailed the organisation and execution of semi-structured interviews and the types of secondary sources of data I collected. I noted how the interviews were transcribed as authentically as possible.

4.4   Data Analysis

4.4.1   Introduction

This section describes the data analysis methods including the use of student narrative in research. I discuss how themes emerged from the data, and the veracity of qualitative interviews, and end with a consideration of the ethical dilemmas of student representation and interpretation. Data analysis and evaluation occurred over the three years of this research, as Pole and Morrison (2003, p. 45) describe, by engaging in reviewing, reflecting on, expanding and condensing theoretical and empirical literature, semi-structured interviews, participant observations, field notes, secondary sources and the multiple journal entries recorded. I used a software package titled NVIVO to systematically read, code and categorise the interview transcripts. I went about importing the twenty-four transcribed word files into SPSS v22 for analysis. I used SPSS v22 to directly compare the proportion and incidence of thematic words and phrases enunciated by study participants in response to the three interview questions. I ceased gathering new information at the end of 2016 after the participant observation, interviews and document collection were complete. Following in the steps of Bogdan and Biklen (1992), I was able to set a firm boundary on the time and place of the research as well as setting a specific time limit for analysing the study which was to be December 2017. Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 170) also suggest that, after collecting the data, the work of examining, coding, categorising and conceptualising themes begins.

4.4.2   Student Narrative Analysis

Smyth and Hattam (2001) suggest viewing the data from the participants in a way that is faithful to the informants' vernacular. The reason is that some of the participants, according to Smyth and Hattam (2001), "may have been disparaged as deviant and in some cases conspicuously silenced (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983, p. 257) because their views frequently challenge dominant representations of the nature of the problem" (p. 406).

Again, in the model of research Smyth and Hattam (2001) pursued there was a deliberate intention to let the themes and categories emerge from the data. There was also an intent to gather the silences and perhaps see if some of these silences could be named and challenged (p. 407). Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 170) suggest that thematically coding and categorising the interview data enables the creation of organisational structures, similar to trees, that group like data together as well as showing links between data. Grouping concepts, incidences, experiences and behaviours in this manner helps in understanding relationships and their influence on individual student's educational engagement and educational outcomes. After reading the transcripts about five times each and taking the time to reflect on their content, I highlighted common words by hand. I then imported all 24 interviews into NVIVO and SPSS v22 so I could search, group, and count, compare and contrast specific relationships in the narrative data sets. Examples of my analysis are contained in Appendices 10 to 13.

4.4.3   Emergent Themes

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) propose that emergent themes are the agreed upon understandings stemming from the interview data (p. 134). The emergent themes in this study were the categories of experience, the common threads, that the BPA students shared through the research process. In this research, emergent themes indicated the participants' engagement in learning, how they felt in the Advisory, and the learning experiences, scholastic development and growth the study participants accepted as part of their ongoing education. In the words of Williams (2008): "Emergent themes are a basic building block of inductive approaches to qualitative social science research and are derived from the lifeworlds of research participants through the process of coding" (p. 248).

Six themes emerged from the dual process of hand-eye coding and through NVIVO and SPSS v22 coding. The six themes are:

1. Moving from disengagement to re-engagement
2. Developing a sense of belonging and connectedness
3. Becoming somebody, being yourself
4. Gaining control and autonomy

5. Learning with adults in the real world

6. Building capabilities and navigating the world.

These themes are discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6. The integrity of the student narratives is now discussed.

4.4.4   The Veracity of Qualitative Narratives

Gergen and Gergen (2007) discuss the many challenges that face the narrative inquiry researcher, including the "crisis of validity" and the "rights of representation" (p. 472). They ask if we should accept the belief that there is no one "truth" and that narratives are co-constructed between the participant and the researcher, in particular social, cultural and historical contexts. If we do, then this raises issues about whether the research findings can be perceived as valid and whether the researcher can legitimately represent the research participants. Similar to educational psychologist Clandinin (2016, p. 183), the narrative inquiry approach I have pursued leads to questions about the veracity of the narratives told by the participants, including the question of whether or not they represent memory reconstruction versus facts.

Using a social constructionist perspective, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) claim that all "narratives sit at the intersection of history, biography, and society" (p. 132); they are dependent on the context of the teller and the listener, and the stories are not intended to represent truth. With this concept in hand, I tried to authenticate myself and the participants via the dimensions of verisimilitude. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define verisimilitude as the process of interpreting the researcher's and the participants' sense of physicality, experience and self through linking the lived world with an actual vernacular which reverberates with academic and literary discourse (p. 9). Following Denzin and Lincoln (2011), verisimilitude is relevant to this research as the idea demands this investigation be transparent and situated. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that research plausibility requires transparency about biases and also research legitimacy (p. 599).

Verisimilitude creates a relationship to encourage one naturally storied world, it entices literary discourse and experiential scripts to merge into one representative account (Denzin, 1997, pp. 10–13). There is a sense of physicality, a feeling of deja vu, in the spirit of a virtual reality or perhaps an entrance into some undeniable truth of

experience. Denzin (1997) remarks that it is not necessary to demonstrate the validity of each transcript but to explain the experience with sufficient facts (p. 12). Significantly, it is the reader that co-constructs a truth with the author. Verisimilitude in its most innocent form describes the relationship of the text to reality (Denzin, 1997, p. 13). A document with verisimilitude provides the prospect of a vicarious experience; the reader comes to know the things that are told as if they had experienced them and if disbelief can be suspended (Denzin, 1997, p. 13).

Garman (1994) contends that a dissertation is a site for political struggle over the real, the phoney and the meaningfulness of the manuscript for its occupants. Arguments are carried out between occupants to establish truth and arguments are historical, political, cultural and relational (pp. 1-2). Garman indicates that the idea of verisimilitude links textually with subjective experience and I believe this is one criterion for assessing the story in a text. The question asked of the document, according to Garman (1994) might be: "does the work represent human experience with sufficient detail so that the portrayals can be recognised as truly conceivable experience?" (p. 3) Like an artist Denzin and Lincoln (2013) suggest working with the voices of students, seeking to balance aspects of context, theme, relationship, personality and voice through creating a cohesive narrative of each participant (p. 23). Each student's story then becomes rich in vernacular, instinctual and empathetic, heartfelt and real, providing a vicarious experience for the reader. It is this essence, this verisimilitude, a natural relationship between the participants and reader, that I wish to create.

Garman working with Piantanida (2006) over the years, identifies a number of other criteria to establish the quality of ethnographic and academic writing. They include verité, integrity, rigour, utility, vitality, aesthetics, ethics and verisimilitude (Garman, 1994, p. 7). Similar to the values underpinning the Advisory, there is overlap and synergy within and between these qualitative concepts. Here, I briefly summarise these key concepts which lie at the heart of what I am trying to achieve in this qualitative study.

- Verité is the accuracy and faithfulness of a text; there must be intellectual honesty and authenticity in the text.
- Integrity is the structural soundness of the text. The text must be bound by strong moral principles; it must hang together and be logical and identifiable within the inquiry tradition.

- Rigour refers to the intellectual depth and maintenance of consistent boundaries within the text. There is a need for soundness and stability of the writing.

- Utility refers to the usefulness and viability of the work. Do we learn from such writing and if we do who benefits from such scripts?

- Vitality leads us into the heart of the text, to share in the energy and meaningfulness of the words. Vitality is the life of the story and its appropriate use of words, symbols and communicative strategies.

- Textual aesthetics is the experience of reading and participating in the journey of the story. Is there elation, connection and a quickening of the spirt somehow?

- Ethics is the ways in which the research affords respect, privacy and confidentiality to the participants.

- Verisimilitude is the quality of seeming to be true or real. Is the story recognisable?

4.4.5   Ethical Dilemmas and Representation

A dilemma in the interpretive narrative approach is the moral and ethical stance taken by the researcher. Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) recall that the process of telling one's narrative has a moral dimension to it since the storytelling customarily involves choices. Whether these options are made overt or kept covert, the moral and ethical stance of the researcher also influences the co-construction process, just as the moral and ethical position of the reader of this research will affect the co-construction of its meaning (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Sen, 2009). Foucault and Gordon (1980) requested social scientists to be alert to the potential danger of their explanations and diagnoses because, when disseminated, the script could lead to further subjugation of participants. Likewise, Fine and Weis (2003) caution about the risk of writing about those who have been "othered", and point to the inherent risk of romanticising narratives (p. 68). Madison (2012) highlights that there is also a need for qualitative researchers to be aware of their power when conducting research to "help" the other (p. 4). Moustakas (1995), in a way, elucidates the ethical dilemmas faced through this research because the power of my translation comes far more from my poor, white, working-class teacher "being-ness" rather than any academic or intellectual dexterity. Amorim (2015) would argue that this work of mine is too kindly, too pleasant.

de Laine (2000) reminds us that there is always a possibility of harm when working with young people in educational research regarding sensitive personal issues (p. 3). She says that in qualitative inquiry field work puts people in contact with others in intimate ways (p. 77). Interaction and communication establish social relationships as a context for personal interpretation. Unlike the dispassionate mode of quantitative inquiry, qualitative field work creates close relations (p. 53). Mertens and Ginsberg (2009) suggest that social ties have a claim on the researcher's loyalty and fidelity and may run counter to and independent from the research itself. de Laine (2000) goes on to say that establishing ties in the field is a source of evidence and joy, but sharing confidences with participants can become entangled with data that sometimes morphs into uncensored information that should not be aired in public (p. 191). Given that the process of telling one's narrative/story can be transformative, this can leave a heavy burden of responsibility on my shoulders as the researcher (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). I ask my readers whether the stories I share, my translations, are essentially colluding with structures of domination and dominant discourses. Have I managed to balance out and harmonise the various discussions from private to public, academic to literary, and dominant to subordinate?

One method of reducing this burden and increasing the validity of the participants' accounts was to ask for feedback, which I used to triangulate or compare and contrast the accounts for cogency. In the words of Creswell and Miller (2000):

> the qualitative paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and it is what participants perceive it to be. This lens suggests the importance of checking how accurately participants' realities have been represented in the final account. Those who employ this lens seek to actively involve participants in assessing whether the interpretations accurately represent them. A third lens may be the credibility of an account by individual's external to the study. Reviewers not affiliated with the project may help establish validity as well as various readers for whom the account is written. (p. 125)

As one way of sharing this burden, I gave my research drafts to the study participants and critical friends to read for feedback and critique (Dreyer, Keiller, Wolvaardt &

Frantz, 2016). Together we navigated towards an accurate representation of students' experiences. Here I present some of their feedback.

Feedback from Faith (participant):

> *Well, I realised how bad my, like, terminology is – oh, I just said like – and I say like too many times. I didn't understand myself in quite a bit of it. And yeah, I just – I think I should work on my vocabulary and talk. And I know a lot more things now, like when I was going through it I was editing it and I was adding things in that I … last year, and just stuff like that* (Faith, interview, 2014).

Feedback from a critical friend:

> *Okay, so I have had a skim read of this and intend on printing it off and doing a thorough read through … but what I have seen thus far regarding reflecting on what we have done here … well, it has brought me to tears … Gives it the weight and consideration it deserves … well done Helen. Bloody well done and thank you!* (Miss Mae, email, June 2016)

Feedback from one of my supervisors:

> *In the Australian context, the term teacher, rather than Advisor, may resonate better (See above), even in BP schools, although using the word Advisor does offer a more expansive understanding of the role in the BP context.* (Supervisor email, January 2015)

Feedback from another colleague:

> *Happy to catch up … I'm in Sydney or maybe catch up at the Restaurant? Name some days/times that suit and we can do that. ONE Date: The early set of publications that don't have a date were published in 2008 (pretty sure). Later ones, e.g. the learning cycle booklet and e.g. Exhibitions guide do have dates on inside TWO: How the design "came about". I guess there is a long history that starts with changing the way we do large schools and a shorter one that starts with BPL with the first school. That would/could be a study in*

itself exploring the US school reform movement from Dewey to 60s to 80s and Coalition of Essential Schools to 90s to now and groups like Big Picture. From practice and some reference to sources … see … Littky D with Grabelle, S (2004) The Big Picture Education is Everyone's Business ASCD. This book is Dennis Littky and his musings about where his ideas have come from and what he believes (Colleague, email, July 2014).

As discussed in section 4.4.4 Garman and Piantanida (2006) remind us of the implications of understanding and establishing verisimilitude as a methodological notion so that we create a shared space in the form of a narrative (p. 38). Relating dialect to discourse can help us to contemplate the gap between concrete experience and abstract thinking. This space then creates a possibility of comprehending what our lives could become. Rodgers (2006) also argues that ethical dilemmas and representation may well lead us to reflect on how relationships of truth and the imaginary self enable us to alter the direction of our lives (p. 1295). It did for me.

4.4.6   Summary

I analysed research data from multiple data sources over the years of the research. These included conversations, books, movies, conferences, academic workshops, travel to other schools and, most importantly, field work and interviews sourced from the Advisory at WHS. The narratives crafted are multidimensional texts congregating and reflecting around six thematic knots exploring student experiences of engaging learning through a more relational pedagogy in the Advisory. I have attempted to be faithful in the presentation of the student narratives, bringing the previously silenced voices (Fine & Weis, 2003) to the forefront of an academic venture. Over the years I have learnt to craft an academic thesis, to reflect critically, be proportionate, to give just weight and full measure in assessing and representing each aspect or detail of the Advisory participants' experiences and progression. Throughout the analysis I aim for authenticity and veracity of multiple voices, to produce a sense of reality reverberating through the text, creating a vicarious experience for the reader. I have explained the ethical dilemmas of such a qualitative study as an individual researcher, who is working class, and proud, but compromised by so many dominating and external academic demands.

Nevertheless, I have analysed and interpreted the data, their meanings and nuances, by combining multiple interactions and clustering them around common themes (Madison, 2012; Pole & Morrison, 2003).

4.5   Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 4 has situated this research within the tradition of interpretative qualitative research, specifically an ethnographic case study methodology. I have chosen this particular approach to research because, as Lichtman (2006) claims, it offers an alternative to the positivist tradition which functions to "keep the voices of many silenced" (p. 5). Similar to Lichtman (2006), this research does not adhere to the traditional scientific values of objectivity, validity, and the ability to generalise with similar phenomena. Instead, I am interested in "personal responsibility, multiple voices and verisimilitude" to establish the study's credibility and worth (p. 6).

This chapter has three main sections. The first described ethnographic case study research, including a definition and key features. The role of the researcher and the data collection methods implemented at WHS as the case study site. I then explained the process of recruiting participants and the role of student narratives in ethnographic research. The seond section explained the data collection procedures, fieldwork processes and products as well as why and how (Yin, 1993) I constructed the the student interviews. The third section described the data analysis methods including the use of student narrative in research. I discussed how themes emerged from the data, and the veracity of qualitative interviews, and ended with a consideration of the ethical dilemmas of student representation and interpretation. I examined claims that qualitative research such as that presented here can provide an important counter-narrative to dominant deficit discourses about young people and schooling. I argued like Garman and Piantanida (2006) that a qualitative investigation can have internal validity and trustworthiness through its quality and attention to meaningfulness. Like Pole and Morrison (2003), I claim that research legitimacy is achieved through viewing informants with a critical stance, seeking alternative explanations, being reflexive and authentically representing the voices in the research.

In the next chapter I present individual narratives constructed from the original interview transcripts. These are stories constructed as coherent evidence of the realities

of students' lives informed by a set of theoretically informed insights. The narrative themes are a first attempt at making meaning, to share findings in a simple, easily consumable format for the reader. The strength and clarity with which students perceive their schooling experience are in line with what the literature tells us about the power of narrative inquiry in illuminating the experiences of high school life for disadvantaged students.

Chapter 5   Student Narratives and Discussion

Relations are primary; actions are secondary. Human words and
action have no authentic meaning; they acquire meaning only in the
context of specific relations.
(Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7)

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter described the ontological and epistemological considerations (Thomas, 1993) in my decision to select qualitative research and an ethnographic case study method for this study. It described the theoretical and practical implementation of the study. This chapter shifts the focus to examine how the WHS Advisory functions to build a more relational pedagogy with a view to understanding what the participants had to say about their high school journey. The narratives include supporting evidence on how students at WHS understand, experience and respond to a relational pedagogy based on the values of trust, care and respect. Throughout the narratives students described feeling a strong sense of connectedness and belonging which supports their overall well-being. As a consequence of attending to the social and emotional needs of marginalised students via a relational pedagogy, individuals re-engaged with learning. Similar to Down and Choules' (2011) findings, in these narratives we find that, by pursuing individual interests, students showed a greater willingness to engage in learning, connect to the official curriculum, and develop career aspirations. The six narrative themes described in this chapter allow us to delve a little further into the processes involved in creating a relational pedagogy and what seems to work best for students.

I will now present in greater detail how each of these participants experience, understand and respond to the Advisory. Similar to Madison's (2012) description, the realities of those in the study include the variety of contextual entanglements and paradoxes arising from being in an Advisory. Following Thomas (1993), I deliberately collapse the boundaries of the research, adapting a flexible style that enables the Advisory participants' voices to "resist domestication" in the traditional methodological sense (p. 2). I aim to convey through student narratives a more authentic conversation without losing essential points of their learning experiences.

Amorim (2015) argues that the primary purpose of this type of narrative is reducing the distance between student voices, the author and the reader. I wish to share an embracing and stimulating conversation, keeping the logic of experience at the core of this research. I aim to create verisimilitude within the thesis text that has a purpose and a heartbeat. Thus we can see that Advisors, peers, teachers and parents were seen as conversation partners when the students needed support. The student narratives resemble what some researchers describe as a secure base in which youth are assisted with forming engaging learning and these narratives can provide an evaluative framework for thinking about these learning experiences (Fivush, 1991). The current study also shows that, in addition to having conversations with other people, adolescents had deeper, more meaningful conversations with their Advisor in which they pursued personal curriculums while reflecting on their current learning experiences in relation to their futures.

5.2 Beyoncé's Narrative: Moving from Disengagement to Re-engagement

5.2.1 Introduction

Beyoncé resisted mainstream schooling and by her own account was argumentative and disruptive. She snubbed instructions and had a history of protracted absenteeism. She enrolled in BPA starting in Year 10 in 2013 at WHS. Beyoncé told me that she progressed from negative behaviours and resisting high school to becoming less combative to schooling once in BPA. She came to recognise the opportunities afforded in BPA and began to see her ability to work with others towards collective goals as one of her strengths. Through her involvement in BPA Beyoncé has come to recognise her ability to challenge and change the circumstances she finds herself in. The following is Beyoncé's story in her own words.

> *I never used to like going to school because I'd come into a classroom, and I'd feel like I wasn't welcome.* When you come into a mainstream classroom, and it's just, you don't want to talk to anybody. It gets you down. I'd feel like everyone was judging me because that's why I didn't ask the questions. I didn't want a judgement for asking a stupid question. I feel like I'm an extroverted

person, but I'm very introverted too and very un/antisocial when I want to be. I have a bit of an attitude. That's why I think the school pulled me out of the mainstream. More so than my NAPLAN scores. And the other thing is being in a classroom full of people that don't want to learn anything when you're at school, to me that's pointless. The class just sits there and does nothing, and they step all over the teacher, and I'm not for that. You give a teacher respect.

Being out in the mainstream when I get told to take out my music it's like: you do realise I'm not going to get any work done*? I've tried to explain it to teachers in the nicest way possible, but they just kick you out of class, and I'm just, well, sitting out here! I'm still not going to get any work done; it's going to be stupid strict again.*

Yeah, I don't feel like I'm getting challenged. *So even though that class is easy and I'm still getting an A regardless what my tests show, I still feel like I need that challenge, invigorate and stuff like that. Normal teachers, well not normal teachers, not every teacher but my old teachers they used just to be, "You should know that." I was, "Well I don't. Can you help me?" And they're, "Well, you should know that. You should've learned that last year. You should've learned that the year before." And I was, "Well I didn't." But there are certain things that I did not; I don't comprehend when it comes to maths or certain subjects. I felt down the other day because I fell asleep during my test because I didn't have any other time to sleep and I got 16 per cent because I answered three questions instead of answering the whole forty and I felt like crap.*

The teachers still don't make the time actually to sit and talk to you*. They just, I don't know, it feels as though they've got better things to do. That's the impression I got from the teacher. I love education, but sometimes I hate the schooling and the way they put it because it's just, they teach us stuff that we may not need to use in the future, and they act like we need to use it every day. We all have different abilities, interests*

and needs and stuff like that, but why is a class full of individuals tested by the same means? You understand what I'm trying to say?

That's the impression I got from teachers, and when I got the opportunity to join the Big Picture program I saw a different side of learning, *and it was just, I actually got the attention from the teachers. So it made me realise that the key was actually sitting down and speaking to them instead of just sitting in a classroom getting booklets and just filling them out and if I just don't know a question I'd just skip it instead of just asking. Oh, it's hard to explain.*

The welcoming feeling you get when you come in here is different to another classroom*. Getting the help I need, so when I say that I mean one-on-one. I figured that if I have more one-on-one time with the teacher I understand things a lot better than sitting in a classroom with them. So being in an isolated classroom with only sixteen students is completely different to being in a classroom with thirty rowdy kids. In here they have better things to do, well better things to do, but they are constantly doing you need this, do you need that, asking us what we need instead of what we want. So they tell us what we need even if we don't want it, so if we need to focus more on our work, they focus on us more, if that makes sense.*

They direct you in a place where you feel like you're needed, where you're wanted there. *They give us options; they don't tell us we have to go to university or tell us to get apprenticeships, get internships, working in the field that we want to work in before we work in there if that makes sense. I've got more work done than I have throughout the last year and a half of being in here because my project is also more hands on now. I'm doing a project, a project; I'm doing it on architecture and interior design, and at the moment I'm living on a wrecked boat. I've sat and reflected a lot on myself, this term also being more hands on with my project and stuff to realise where I went wrong the last six terms, yeah, the last six or seven terms. So it's more,*

145

being in here is more hands on for me than being out there with teachers and education wise.

And I think Big Picture helps people find who they need to be. *You have your down days where everyone's picking on you, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you've got to journal, you've got to do all the silly stuff that you need to pass, but it's also helping you discover who you need to be. I used to journal so much last year without having to do my work; I'd just journal and this year it's been so hard to journal because the most things that are in my mind to journal about are our home life, and I don't want to talk about that. I mean I can journal, but I don't want to express that to the teachers because that's my stuff to deal with, it's not anybody else's nightmare to deal with if that makes sense. And it's getting better, and things do get better, and that's also what Big Picture has taught me, is you can't just sit in your hole and think that life's going to get better. You can't just say there's a light at the end of the tunnel, and it's not going just to appear. You've got to search for it, and in life, it doesn't just, you can't just sit on your hands and knees and pray for something to someone, you've got to go out and get it, and I think Big Picture helps people realise that.*

5.2.2   Discussion

Four themes emerged from Beyoncé's interview data. First, Beyoncé felt unwelcomed and alienated by her experience of mainstream school at WHS. In the words of Aronowitz (2008), she struggles against schooling or against the grammar of schooling, as Tyack and Tobin (1994) describe it. Second, Beyoncé's learning was limited by inflexible school structures and irrelevant curriculum, which she was expected to know and perform as a matter of course. She experienced a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 1991) where her teachers defended themselves by putting the onus of learning such academic details from previous years on Beyoncé. Third, Beyoncé was seen to be the problem, not the system (Valencia, 2010). Like Farrell (2008) details, Beyoncé found the inflexible structure and authoritarian pedagogy inhibited her efforts to learn and progress through the high school day. As a consequence, and

146

similar to Toch's (2003) findings, she felt powerless and disconnected and started to question the single-mindedness of the teachers and her place in the traditional school organisation (Smyth & Hattam, 2004). Finally, through a more personalised curriculum, where Beyoncé is consulted in creating authentic learning tasks with Miss Mae and her peers (Littky & Grabelle, 2004) Beyoncé had begun to consider new possibilities; she developed hope for herself in her community (Zyngier, 2012).

Beyoncé shared her experience of mainstream school at WHS as an unwelcoming and alienating environment. Beyoncé told me she felt judged in a very narrow and limited way by her school teachers and peers. As McMahon and Portelli (2004) explain, Beyoncé does not identify or perform well "with a certain conception of academic achievement or a process identifiable by behavioural traits and observable psychological dispositions" (p. 65). Similar to Fredericks' (2014) description, Beyoncé does not display or champion the typical behavioural, emotional or cognitive traits expected of academically capable students. She understood that she was perceived as "*having an attitude*", but for Beyonce these psychological definitions were external measures and objective to her. For Beyonce, these rules were "*stupid strict*"; they did not measure or did not include the lifeworld of individuals. Van Manen (2016) explains this as one's internal and lived world, which for many students is more valuable than an externally set number or rank. In other words, as Polesel et al. (2012) remark, lifeworld exclusion has a damaging influence on students' self-esteem (p. 14).

Beyoncé was clear about her struggles against schooling (Aronowitz, 2008) and the grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). Aronowitz (2008) and Gatto (2009) explain how students like Beyoncé reject the bureaucratic vastness of traditional schools. Students frequently resist harsh school environments which were overwhelmingly large and challenging to navigate or understand. In Beyoncé's world, this rejection is displayed by herself and peers by being inert, by disengaging and by sabotaging learning processes, as she commented: "*and the other thing is being in a classroom full of people that don't want to learn anything when you're at school, to me that's pointless*". Similar to what Smyth and Wrigley (2013) argue, Beyonce pointed out that mainstream schooling at WHS did not work very well for her or many of her peers.

Likewise, Toch (2003) and Farrell (2008) both assert that large anonymous schools are detrimental to students and their teachers, students realised there is little choice in how to spend their time or their young lives. Beyoncé provided evidence for these views: "*The class just sits there and does nothing, and they step all over the teacher, and I'm not for that. You give a teacher respect.*" Further evidence is provided by Smyth and Hattam (2004), who reported that many high school students find large, impersonal high school structures and cultures hostile. Such hostile environments result in particular individuals and groups feeling disrespected and unrecognised in a high school community. Beyonce explained how this hostility and disrespect works:

> *I've tried to explain it to teachers in the nicest way possible but they just kick you out of class, and I'm just, well, sitting out here! I'm still not going to get any work done; it's going to be stupid strict again.*

Beyoncé's comments add weight to Gatto's (2002) argument that schools have both explicit and implicit control agendas in operation at the same time, these agendas acted to institutionalise and reproduce the social order through a hidden curriculum (see section 3.3.3).

Beyoncé felt powerless and disconnected in mainstream schooling, and she questioned the single-mindedness of teachers at school. Beyoncé offered evidence supporting Steinberg and Kincheloe's (2006) point that authoritarian and exclusionary models of education silence minority groups and create an environment where some students or groups do not feel safe or belong. Beyonce told me that:

> *when you come into a mainstream classroom, and it's just, you don't want to talk to anybody. It gets you down. I'd feel like everyone was judging me because that's why I didn't ask the questions. I didn't want a judgement for asking a stupid question.*

Beyonce struggled to access the CAC and she was dismissed quickly by teachers if she did ask a question:

> *So even though that class is easy and I'm still getting an A regardless what my tests show, I still feel like I need that challenge, invigorate and stuff like that. Normal teachers, well not normal teachers, not every teacher but my old teachers they used just to be, "You should know that."*

Her comments fit well with Apple's (2013) argument that the corporate structures in today's schools not only alienate students, but fashion a formal curriculum that isolates and positions students disproportionately within high schools networks of power and value. Beyoncé was perceptive in understanding her place in the school hierarchy. In traditional school systems, as Thiessen and Cook-Sather (2007) note, there are often prevailing notions that "children must be seen and not heard" which tend to position youth as "empty vessels" that must be filled with knowledge from specific and authoritative sources (p. 607). Beyoncé said of her teachers and the schooling system:

> *They just, I don't know, it feels as though they've got better things to do. That's the impression I got from the teacher. I love education, but sometimes I hate the schooling and the way they put it because it's just, they teach us stuff that we may not need to use in the future, and they act like we need to use it every day.*

Similar to Smyth and Hattam's (2004) findings, students like Beyoncé resent such traditional thinking. Students recall that a focus on the abstract academic curriculum makes them feel unfairly judged and excluded from the academic high school community. Beyonce spoke of her frustration at having to catch up on specific curriculum content, saying: "*Well I don't [know]. Can you help me?' And they're, 'Well, you should know that. You should've learned that last year. You should've learned that the year before.' And I was, 'Well I didn't.'*" As Savage et al. (2013) argue large urban high schools are stratified so that individuals are grouped and split into smaller groups of like qualities for bureaucratic efficiency and specific curriculum dissemination. Beyoncé challenged this kind of streaming, commenting that "*we all have different abilities, interests and needs and stuff like that, but why is a class full of individuals tested by the same means? You understand what I'm trying to say?*" Beyoncé remarked that she "*feels betrayed by school, how the **** are they expected to get ahead if the system is stacked against her?*" Her aspirations were stymied.

Further to this, Beyoncé was critical of standardised testing and statistics. Beyoncé questioned why high schools relentlessly evaluated students by asking them to reiterate prescribed knowledge through examination (Farrell, 2008). Roberts et al. (2014) reinforce Beyoncé's criticism of the bureaucratic school system, suggesting that

149

standardised testing and statistics were problematic, as social ordering, sorting and ranking can sometimes lead to objectifying and labelling of individuals within capitalist frameworks of value and accountability (Gemici et al., 2014; Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014; Teese & Polesel, 2003). As Wyn (2009) indicates, standardised testing and statistics were often be based on an assumption that young people are economic and systemic problems and they essentially position individuals as commercial units which are required to be more productive.

Beyoncé began to engage with learning through a student-centred, personalised curriculum, granting her greater autonomy and reciprocity. Beyoncé's view of high school education shifted when she entered and felt welcome in the Advisory. She indicated that the philosophy of the school, "one student at a time in a community of learners", helped shape the Advisory. This was a significant factor in re-engaging Beyoncé, as the teachers were attentive, sitting down and speaking to her about learning (Littky & Grabelle, 2004). She remarked: "*I actually got the attention from the teachers. So it made me realise that the key was actually sitting down and speaking to them.*" This more personalised approach to education mean't that Beyoncé created meaningful relationships with the school and others in the school community. Her comments reflect Blum's (2005) finding that when high school students feel connected to school life they are more likely to succeed. Beyoncé remarked: "*In here they have better things to do, they are constantly saying you need to do this, do you need that? asking us what we need instead of what we want.*"

Beyoncé went on to compare the rowdy atmosphere and purposelessness of a classroom of 30 students with a focus on bureaucracy and teacher performance with the smaller Advisory group of 16 students in which students receive one-on-one attention based on their needs and interests (Sliwka, 2008). Similar to Farrell's (2008) point about the benefits of smaller alternative schools, Beyoncé sees that low teacher–student ratios of 15–20 students per class facilitate her learning relationships (Farrell, 2008). As Dewey (1938) argues, when learning is grounded in an environment in which students are socially and emotionally engaged academic learning is more likely to occur. As Beyonce remarks: "*so if we need to focus more on our work they focus on us more if that makes sense*". Beyonce's reflection suggests that the Advisory was able to more effectively prioritise the individual before the institution (Reid & McCallum, 2014). She explained how this worked

> *And it's getting better, and things do get better, and that's also what*
> *Big Picture has taught me, is you can't just sit in your hole and think*
> *that life's going to get better.*

Beyoncé reported she was consulted in creating authentic learning tasks with Miss Mae and her peers. Beyoncé shared that the Advisory directed her to where her learning was needed based on her interests (Zyngier, 2012). Similar to Meier's (1995) self-governing students in Harlem, Advisory participants were given relative freedom to choose what, how and with whom they learn. They could engage in individual and/or collaborative work depending on their circumstances; whatever works best for students in order to succeed (Meier, 1995). For Beyoncé, the Advisory allowed her to pursue authentic project-based learning in her surrounding community (Farrell, 2008). As she was living on a "*wrecked boat*", in her words, she finds relevance in architecture and interior design: "*They give us options; they don't tell us we have to go to university or tell us to get apprenticeships, get internships, working in the field that we want to work in before we work in there if that makes sense.*" This approach, as Holtermann-DeLong (2009) suggested, enables Beyoncé to engage in creative, holistic learning, connecting new learning to prior knowledge, incorporating authentic self-assessment and reflection, thus helping to instil lifelong learning patterns. She mentioned how the hands-on aspects of this project stimulated multiple realisations about her life and learning. Beyonce finished her interview with some reflections on how she was discovering her identity and a measure of authenticity and agency in life (Goodman & Eren, 2013). Beyoncé remarked:

> *you can't just say there's a light at the end of the tunnel, and it's not*
> *going just to appear. You've got to search for it, and in life, it doesn't*
> *just, you can't just sit on your hands and knees and pray for something*
> *to someone, you've got to go out and get it, and I think Big Picture*
> *helps people realise that.*

Beyoncé felt she could begin to consider new possibilities. Beyonce spoke of how in the last three years, through her relationships formed in the Advisory, she felt more empowered and more in control of her life (Zyngier, 2012). Beyonce has a better understood herself, others and her community (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a). Even though she has "*down days*" and her home life is a "*nightmare*", Beyoncé appeared to

be making a shift, as Bingham et al. (2004) state, from "struggling against something to struggling for something" (p. 6). Beyoncé felt a renewed sense of hope and agency in schooling and life, and, as Goodman and Eren (2013) found, when individuals have a sense of agency in regard to their learning, they are more likely to engage with the learning process. The Advisory played a crucial role in letting Beyoncé develop a greater sense of self and possibility in the world (Smyth et al., 2014). Lysaker and Furuness (2011) found that when students search for identity in life, and when schools elicited the voices of young people like Beyoncé, there becomes an opportunity to generate an "openness to transformation" (p. 188). As the Advisor gets to know the student, "a shared set of subjectivities characterised by a sense of space for reciprocity and afforded by care" can be articulated by all in the learning community (p. 188). In short, to use Biesta's (2004) term, Beyoncé is discovering her "own voice" (p. 320).

5.3 Boii's Story: Developing a Sense of Connectedness and Belonging

5.3.1 Introduction

What we hear in Boii's story is a feeling of connectedness and belonging to peers, Advisors, family and community. Four sub-themes emerged from the two interviews with Boii. The first theme identified Boii's separation and fragmentation from mainstream high school. A second theme reflected his interest in basketball as an anchor for much of his studies and a shared point of interest with Miss Mae and his peers. A third theme described Boii's sense of belonging and mattering as an individual in Advisory. Finally, Boii was able to build social networks with the broader world through collaboration with his Advisor (McDonald, 2004; Donsbach, 2008). He connected to other families for support, thus beginning a journey of independence and transformation. This is Boii's story.

> *In the mainstream school, it's just separation, and everybody gets together in another class, then it's separation, and it's just recess and lunch they're together. And then in this class it's different.*
>
> *Ever since I've been at the school, I've had these two teachers in the past Miss Macklemore taught me in maths in Year 9, and Miss Mae*

has been the … sports basketball teacher. I developed friendships with them back then, and then coming into Big Picture, it's just grown from there. And it's just everybody gets together in this class. Because we're together so often, throughout the week, especially last year because most of them, I still didn't have outside subjects besides sport. Faith does maths; Krishna is doing TAFE on Fridays, so is Gemma. And just outside commitments like internships. But we still come together, there are so many friendships that have just been, people have come together just from this classroom.

Well, Miss Mae has contact with basketball, and she coached the woman's SBL team and her assistant coach, she works at the head office and through there she got me – oh, she was doing some talking with Katy and was seeing if I could maybe go along on an internship with the state basketball team. So we went ahead with that, that was awesome. I got to see the other side of the basketball industry, not just the playing side but the training side, what they do in the gyms, what they do in the offices, what they do off the court. Moreover, that was, that opened my eyes to see that, that's not their only job playing on the court. I thought, I thought there was only coaches, players, trainers and that was it. And then in the NBA people get private chefs, I thought that was it.

The Advisory teachers they're always giving us talks now and then just to remind us, "This is where you guys need to be, this is, you've got to stay on track." All this stuff on the board there. "This is, this is what needs to be your evidence. I want to, I want to see it by next week, I want it all together in your portfolio." They're always reminding us of what we need, and that's just awesome, it's preparing us. But because I know them, it's this whole support is behind me, so I can just, I can go for gold and if I, if I fall, they've got my back and this is my safe haven you could say.

We all push each other in this class; somebody might be doing forensics like Beyoncé was doing forensics. Then, somebody like Cory

153

will be doing soccer and then Krishna will be doing personal training. We, we do, we push each other on the tables. Sometimes if stuff gets a bit too noisy, and people are talking, then especially Cory and that, when they're getting a bit too, too loud, we just give them a tap on the shoulder and go, "Come on boys, let's go, let's get some work done." So we're all pushing each other, so we're not settling for second best, and we're all trying to strive, strive for that gold.

So it's like belong, it's like, it's a like belonging, it's real, real belonging. *So it makes you feel comfortable because outside these doors it's like you're getting judged by people, but here everybody understands who they are. They just know; they've all been through the same stuff. And all of us has got a sense; everybody's a sense though it's just getting over it and we all come together. We're just all these strangers just come together and then, well what we call it in basketball, the chemistry just came, it's come together with all of us.*

5.3.2   Discussion

What we hear in Boii's story is a theme of seperation from schooling, that then shifted to a sense of belonging and mattering as an individual in his Advisory at WHS (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). His initial connection with his Advisors Miss Mae and Miss Macklemore emerged from his participation in the Targeted Basketball Program and his need to improve his maths (McDonald, 2004). He described his experience of connecting and belonging in the Advisory community. Biesta (2004) and Hattam (2006) both argue that, when connections to aspirations are created via teacher–student relationships and when student voices, interests and lifeworlds are recognised, aspirational futures become possible. Similar to Mansfield's (2014, p. 44) findings, Boii developed stable relationships with teachers over the last four years in part due to the process of them listening to and integrating his voice, interests and dispositions into his learning.

Boii told me that he likes being in charge of his studies (Watson, 2011). Boii said that his relationships with his Advisory teachers were a long-term arrangement, more like a mentor helping him feel connected to learning and school:

Well, Miss Mae has contact with basketball, and she coached the woman's SBL team and her assistant coach, she works at the head office and through there she got me – oh, she was doing some talking with Katy and was seeing if I could maybe go along on an internship with the state basketball team. So we went ahead with that, that was awesome. I got to see the other side of the basketball industry, not just the playing side but the training side, what they do in the gyms, what they do in the offices, what they do off the court.

Boii enjoyed the steady relationship with his Advisor Miss Mae. She recognised his family circumstances and being in such a supportive environment made him feel safe. Boii's expereince confirms Zipin and Reid's (2008) argument that public education has the potential to instil in young people significant transformational experiences for the creation of democratic and safe societies in Australia. Another tenet relating to supportive environments is, as Harris, Caldwell and Longmuir (2013) claim, the creation of trust grows whereby schools provide safe spaces for students and offer places for students to collaborate and improve on their academic and social successes.

Because he can speak his mind, Boii belongs, he can make decisions, and set the pace, while other Advisory relationships allowed him to be productive and protected (Anderson et al., 2004). The one-on-one attention and high expectations from his Advisor contributed to his sense of being capable of achieving in a positive environment where he can take risks. The positive role modelling and high expectations flowed through to the class group, who collectively pushed for high standards in their learning and behaviour: "*But because I know them, it's this whole support is behind me, so I can just, I can go for gold and if I, if I fall, they've got my back and this is my safe haven you could say.*" Boii's interview revealed the consistency and direction he received from being in the Advisory. In line with Rudduck and McIntyre's (2007) findings on student engagement in high schools, Boii commented:

the Advisory teachers they're always giving us talks now and then just to remind us, This is where you guys need to be, this is, you've got to stay on track. All this stuff on the board there. This is, this is

what needs to be your evidence. I want to, I want to see it by next week, I want it all together in your portfolio.

Miss Mae was demanding but sensitive; Miss Mae was there for him when he experienced difficulties.

Boii's experience of student–teacher relationships provided opportunities for collaborative participation and democratic decision making in the building of healthy peer relationships (Bentley & Cazaly, 2015). Similar to the findings of British researchers Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace's (1996), from Boii's perspective respect, fairness, autonomy, intellectual challenge, social support and security were indispensable in the construction of relationships as well as patterns of confidence and commitment in the Advisory learning culture. For Boii and his Advisory peers, there was a greater sense of togetherness, friendship and achievement anchored by the above principles. Mills and McGregor (2014) argue that these types of collaborative and relational learning communities offer engaging learning options that often work best for disadvantaged students. Boii continued:

> *We all push each other in this class; somebody might be doing forensics like Beyoncé was doing forensics. Then, somebody like Cory will be doing soccer and then Krishna will be doing personal training. We, we do, we push each other on the tables. Sometimes if stuff gets a bit too noisy, and people are talking, then especially Cory and that, when they're getting a bit too, too loud, we just give them a tap on the shoulder and go, Come on boys, let's go, let's get some work done. So, we're all pushing each other, so we're not settling for second best, and we're all trying to strive, strive for that gold.*

Boii's comments suggested that physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual growth occured through small group work, where there was a sence of both individuals and collective ownership of learning (Erwin, 2010). He was fond of exchanging ideas, making plans and proposing solutions with his Advisory peers. Both Kemmis (2005) and Shacklock and Smyth (1998) alluded to the ways in which a more relational pedagogy involved critical consciousness and commentary, as students reflect upon themselves. Boii and the other Advisory participants had the opportunity to experiment, experience, connect and reflect on learning both personally and

collectively more intensely than in a hierarchical mainstream high school structures. In other words, as Zipin et al. (2015) advanced, these learning experiences acted to alleviate the impact of competitive neoliberal determinations around achievement and high school efficiencies, which tend to maintain if not increase the struggles experienced by marginalised youth.

Boii's interest in basketball was the anchor point for much of his studies. He stated that learning for him in the Advisory was engaging because it focused on his interests. Boii said that basketball was a mutual interest with his Advisor, and that basket ball talk helped him to connect schoolwork to the real world of life and labour (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). Of his basketball internship Boii commented:

> *that opened my eyes to see that, that's not their only job playing on the court. I thought, I thought there was only coaches, players, trainers and that was it. And then in the NBA people get private chefs, I thought that was it.*

Gaining basketball industry experience through an internship provided an opportunity for Boii to receive authentic feedback and critical consultations at the point of need, thus facilitating Boii's task perseverance (Keller & McDonald, 2005). His learning was personalised and flexible; a focus on basketball tied into his cognitive style and natural talent to "*play ball*". He spoke about the variety of friendships and "*chemistry*" of the class members and that the diversity in their education contributed to his studies. The psychological benefits, as Fredericks (2004) claims, include robust and efficient networks promoting individual and group belonging, identity, understanding and tolerance. As an outcome of this diversity, students are challenged, and when involved in authentic learning individuals have an opportunity to resolve, represent, share and position themselves as active participants in their chosen knowledge pathways. For Boii the Advisory was based on common understandings and actions:

> *but here everybody understands who they are. They just know; they've all been through the same stuff. And all of us has got a sense; everybody's a sense though it's just getting over it and we all come together. We're just all these strangers just come together and then, well, what we call it in basketball, the chemistry just came, it's come together with all of us.*

Boii's reflections support Hill and Smith's (2005) claim that with diverse and rigorous curriculum students can make relevant connections between student experiences and real-life situations.

Boii was able to build social networks with the broader world (Donsbach, 2008). Boii stated that the Advisory allowed relationships among Advisors and peers to be forged, connecting them to more extensive networks with family and community (McClure et al., 2010). He enjoyed the collaborative and social nature of the Advisory. Being part of a comprehensive system cultivated Boii's multiple capabilities. Boii shared:

> *I developed friendships with them back then, and then coming into Big Picture, it's just grown from there. And it's just everybody gets together in this class. Because we're together so often, throughout the week, especially last year because most of them, I still didn't have outside subjects besides sport. Faith does maths; Krishna is doing TAFE on Fridays, so is Gemma. And just outside commitments like internships. But we still come together, there are so many friendships that have just been, people have come together just from this classroom.*

Over the years, he had new experiences in developing life skills and maintaining unique relationships with his peers, many of whom had seen tragedy in their life. Boii and his friends hung out as a group both in school and out of school. They shared food, clothes, phone credit, homes and bedrooms as they talked about their dreams and fears. As Boii remarked, "*it's come together with all of us*". Together in a group, Boii felt more confident in his ability to survive in a complex world reliant on social and professional interactions (Coleman, 2008). The Advisory was a place where Boii and his peers challenged dominant education discourses. As Bourdieu (1984) explained, Advisory provided a space where students were able to critique their experiences of high school together with the many imposed distinctions that may govern their place in the world and their chances to work with their human capabilities.

Boii's story illustrates a journey towards independence and transformation (Zyngier, 2012). A relational model of schooling such as an Advisory is essential for students in disadvantaged communities, where a sense of school connectedness, belonging and community has been linked to lower internalisation of problems as students transition through the potentially precarious high school experience (Pittman & Richmond,

2007). Boii's narrative suggested that the Advisory at WHS transformed the isolation and self-interest of traditional high school classroom learning by creating a positive student–teacher learning relationships within a culture of connectedness and care for all students (Block, 2008). In Boii's words:

> *I guess, definitely this year, 'cause I used to be really shy and stutter my words all the time and I wasn't really confident with my talking, but definitely this year I've learnt to talk to people more and get myself out there and have conversations with people about what I wanna do, how I could help them or they could help me, just stuff like that.*

Furthermore, it the Advisory provided the opportunity for weekly academic monitoring and connections to physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual support services (Erwin, 2010). Boii explained:

> *Yeah, I've developed good relationships with the manager there and she really likes me and my family and she's good mates with my older cousin, as they're around the same age so their relationships are pretty strong. So that's one, the personal training. Really if worse comes to worst, Dad, cause he's in the mines, he said, "you know I can hook you up with … can go do your tickets and stuff and get into the mines" and that's another option for me. Really, what I'm looking at now is trying to get into a basketball college, so there's one over at Melbourne, a college of basketball. I've been talking with one of the coaches over there, he's called Brett, and he's just [not ascertainable] and seeing how my grades are. We have chats here now and then, chat on the phone, so we're trying to get there.*

Other qualitative research has produced comparable findings on students building self-awareness (Riddell, 2010), academic performance, character development and improving the sense of connectedness in Advisory. Brodie (2014), Brown (2006), Gray and Hackling (2009), Sanzo (2013) and Walloff (2011) have also found student experiences of connection and belonging in Advisory-type learning communities. Boii's narrative provided evidence that the Advisory can be a consistent, stable, safe environment for young people. It was a small learning community culture based on

authentic relationships that helped build connections between a small group of students and one adult (Poliner & Lieber, 2004).

5.4 Krishna's Narrative: Becoming Somebody, Being Yourself

5.4.1 Introduction

Krishna has always struggled to fit into school from the age of five. Since 2014, Krishna has been learning at the WHS Advisory. Krishna's parents tried to combat her resistance to traditional schooling by enrolling her in multiple public and private education options. Krishna was both highly anxious and intelligent; she continued to struggle with body dysmorphia as she worked towards being a personal trainer. She talked about how she was constructing her learning through relational pedagogies and the values that underpinned her learning experiences in the Advisory learning community.

> *In, like, normal classes because I didn't feel welcome and comfortable.* Yeah, out there I didn't really, like, fit in with everyone. That, like, there's no-one there. I don't know, it's hard to explain, like, maybe in the other classes teachers are just there as it's their job. I used to be, like, I had no confidence at all.

> *Well, I got introduced to Miss Mae as soon as I first moved to the school, even when I wasn't in Big Picture because we have the same interests.* And ever since then she, like, pushed forward my application to get into here because she knew it would be a really good thing for me. And ever since then, like, we've always been close, and she's always helped me through everything like she does with every other student. And in here it really feels like you're cared about, but in here it feels like the teachers are here because they care about you and they want you to do well in your life yourself. It's always about the teachers putting us first and help us with our lives, and they want us to get far.

> *And the stress of being able to, the non-stress of being able to be yourself, yeah, even I feel comfortable in here.* But in here I feel so

160

comfortable, and I've grown so much in that way, like, I mix and bond with anyone. I feel like Big Picture suits everyone's learning needs, so it's something where if you're not good at something, you can shine in another area where another student can't.

Like, this is really like a home and we all get along really well and we all have a place in here. *Yeah, well in, what, Year 9, I feel comfortable in here, like it's not, no-one's judged, we're all like individuals, and we get on with our individual work. Like there's no competition between us because we're all doing our own thing. Yeah, it's made me want to come to school now. If it wasn't for this I probably wouldn't be at school at the moment.*

Well, we're all here to support each other, and we all do support each other. *If – we have this thing at the start of each term when we do our maps things for who, what, where, when, why questions on the project we're doing. We all come around and help each other and give each other questions on the topic so they can expand on them and help with their project. And if there's an area where we're strong at, we'll always help each other out to make their work as best as possible. So we're always here to help each other, which is really good. Yeah, we're all brothers and sisters now. We've been through so much together, all of us, and I feel comfortable around every single one of them, and they should feel the same towards me hopefully.*

That it's interest-based learning, that's the thing I love about it. *And we're all in a classroom learning to our strengths and our abilities, not all tested by the same thing. And yeah, it's really good in that way because we're all good at different things. We can show that in here, and we're learning about things we're passionate about. It shows in here. And you can really expand on everything and basically head straight to where you want to be, and you always feel welcome and feel like you belong somewhere.*

Well, I'm currently doing a Cert 3 and 4 in personal training, *which I actually, when I first moved into Big Picture I wanted to be a*

personal trainer. And through the internship-based learning, I went for an internship and didn't like it, but that was because of the gym I went to wasn't very organised and well run. And I've basically done a massive circle, and Miss Mae just always knew I was going to come back to where I first started. I went into all different things like physiotherapy and recovery and AFL, like women's jobs within that, and I've just come back to square one, which I probably knew that I was going to do. And now I'm doing an online cert, and yeah, Miss Mae helped me, like, getting through that and showed me the pathway where I needed to go. Yeah, she just motivates me to, she knows I'll do well. Miss Mae is really positive in that way. Like, I always sit down and have a talk with her when I'm, she just knows me, when I'm stressing out or whatever, she'll just talk to me about it and, yeah, tell me I'm wrong in some ways and put my head frame back in the right spot and just carry on with it.

5.4.2   Discussion

Krishna's narrative tells us how the development of authentic relationships facilitated her ability to be herself in the Advisory. The three sub-themes that emerged from her interview data were marginalisation, building relationships through common interests and learning through experience (Dewey, 1963). Advisory teachers carefully developed a relationship with Krishna over time through trust, care and respect (Smyth et al., 2010). Her narrative showed that Miss Mae valued Krishna and worked with the assets that Krishna brought to class as a starting point for her learning (Hattam, 2006; McGregor 2015; Zyngier, 2012). Miss Mae respected Krishna's competence and integrity (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Krishna indicated that care was a founding value that enabled her to connect with others, the world and learning (Hattam, 2006). Her narrative highlighted the value of a relational pedagogy in creating productive human relationships (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004b, p. 1). These relationships have become the building blocks of Krishna's identity, reality and community.

Krishna described her marginalisation from mainstream classrooms which left her with a feeling of being uncomfortable, a sensation of not fitting in (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). Krishna was aware of but unable to articulate the impact of the grammar of

162

schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) evident in Beyonce's story; like her peers she also struggled against schooling (Aronowitz, 2008). However, she touched upon aspects of what Haberman (1991) describes as a pedagogy of poverty, re-counting:

> *In, like, normal classes because I didn't feel welcome and comfortable. Yeah, out there I didn't really, like, fit in with everyone. That, like, there's no-one there. I don't know, it's hard to explain, like, maybe in the other classes teachers are just there as it's their job. I used to be, like, I had no confidence at all.*

Krishna also mentioned a sense of not fitting in, an all-embracing sensation which Erwin (2010) explains is felt across many dimensions. Unlike Beyoncé, who actively resisted this dominant discourse each day, Krishna was more passive, tolerating what Haberman (2010) describes as mainstream classroom climates of uncomfortable silences, passive-aggressive arrangements and a hidden curriculum of uncertainty and anxiety that slowly eroded her sense of confidence at high school (p. 86). This passive resistence escalated until she refused to attend school at all.

Krishna stated that relationships have built around a common interest in physical education. Mitra and Gross (2009) articulated that democratic teaching and learning occur through constructive and respectful rapport between the participants, considering each student's unique learning style, interests and relevant links to the broader community. Krishna added weight to this view, as she now had a sense that she was welcomed in class, where others recognised her as an individual, conscious of her idiosyncrasies and disposition and without judgement (McDonald et al, 2004). Because of this inclusive feeling, she was more willing to engage with learning (Zyngier, 2012). Institutional trust had been created. Krishna commented on how this trust transformed into care:

> *And in here it really feels like you're cared about, in here it feels like the teachers are here because they care about you and they want you to do well in your life yourself.*

This comment aligns with what Noddings (2005) described as a spirit of care in education. Noddings states that care is sharing, care is reciprocal, and care is related to ethical and communal values. According to Noddings (2005), reception, recognition

and response are what characterise the consciousness of one who is cared for, which makes care especially crucial for educational relationships and endeavours (p. 16). Krishna explained:

the stress of being able to, the non-stress of being able to be yourself, yeah, even I feel comfortable in here. But in here I feel so comfortable, and I've grown so much in that way, like, I mix and bond with anyone. I feel like Big Picture suits everyone's learning needs, so it's something where if you're not good at something, you can shine in another area where another student can't.

Recognition as an individual provided a base for Krishna to engage in learning. It is possible to derive more meaning from Krishna's comments from a sociological learning and social interaction perspective. Willis (2000) explains how symbolic relational bonds develop:

The symbolic realm also operates at another, connected level, where it is involved, viscerally, in the maintenance and differentiated formation of the social whole or whole social formation, including the reproduction of the conditions upon which "self-activity" originally takes place. (p. xvi)

Krishna clarified how students operated within a symbolic and relational realm in the Advisory:

It's interest-based learning, that's the thing I love about it. And we're all in a classroom learning to our strengths and our abilities, not all tested by the same thing. And yeah it's really good in that way because we're all good at different things. We can show that in here, and we're learning about things we're passionate about. It shows in here. And you can really expand on everything and basically head straight to where you want to be, and you always feel welcome and feel like you belong somewhere.

From a psychological point of view, Krishna felt that time and energy were invested in her and her future and accordingly she reciprocated by making an effort to engage

with learning complex ideas and mastering complex skills (Christenson et al., 2012; Fredericks, 2014).

> *Yeah, well in, what, Year 9, I feel really comfortable in here, like it's not, no-one's judged, we're all like individuals, and we get on with our own individual work. Like there's no competition between us because we're all doing our own thing. Yeah, it's made me want to come to school now. If it wasn't for this I probably wouldn't be at school at the moment.*

The Advisory group worked together to resist the dominant discourse of deficit thinking by not criticising or competing against each other. They wanted to help each other. The intention of the Advisory was to create a learning community connecting the student to the world around them without being consumed by that world (Sen, 2009).

Krishna highlighted how personalised learning and learning by experience occurred through Advisory relationships (Bandura, 1977). Krishna learnt from others vicariously, drawing from the external world, absorbing knowledge and experiences, accumulating understanding and constructing her internal world (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978). Through Krishna's relationships with others, she was more autonomous, growing into herself through her interactions with others (Miller & Stiver, 1997). Krishna articulated how BPA relationships facilitated grassroots learning:

> *Well, we're all here to support each other, and we all do support each other. If – we have this thing at the start of each term when we do our maps things for who, what, where, when, why questions on the project we're doing. We all come around and help each other and give each other questions on the topic so they can expand on them and help with their project.*

As Raider-Roth (2005) points out, as students connect with each other and learning, they have a chance to "grow with each other in an ongoing, mutually regulatory web of school relationships" (p. 22). Krishna's identity gradually emerged not just as an individual but as a member of a learning community. She felt comfortable enough to mix and bond with a variety of people. Krishna shared how the Advisory philosophy provided a curriculum and opportunities for all students to experience democracy. Like

Beane (2005), she believed that the Advisory provided an opportunity where everyone was a citizen, and everyone had a right to contribute to the learning community (p. 2). In Krishna's words:

> *if there's an area where we're strong at, we'll always help each other out to make their work as best as possible. So, we're always here to help each other which is really good. Yeah, we're all brothers and sisters now. We've been through so much together, all of us, and I feel comfortable around every single one of them, and they should feel the same towards me hopefully.*

In a democratic learning community (McGregor et al., 2017) such as a BPA environment, there was potential for everyone's learning needs to be met. Krishna shared that everyone in the BPA group made an effort to help each other, that they demonstrated a social consciousness tied to both personal and communal issues as "*brothers and sisters*" would (Beane, 2005).

The Advisory also operated on a principle of what Appadurai (2004) described as "Relationality and dissensus within some framework of consensus and weak boundaries" (p. 62). Krishna remarked that:

> *We're all doing different things and, I don't know, we've always been really open to new people and inviting people to look at our things, and the teachers are really welcoming and are happy to have people in here*".

The door was always open in the Advisory, and a range of stakeholders and supporters flowed in and out, providing a variety of skills, knowledges and services, thus meeting the needs of each student in a holistic manner (Toch, 2003). As Krishna and the world got to know each other, "a shared set of subjectivities characterised by a sense of space for reciprocity and afforded by care" could be articulated by all in the learning community (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011, p. 188). Krishna's experience was similar to Boii's in that being in a relational learning environment sparked a sense of critical consciousness in her learning. Miss Mae without judgement was "doing" and "being" with Krishna on her learning journey (Gergen, 2009, p. 247). Krishna expressed this

"beingness" as "*the stress of being able to, the non-stress of being able to be yourself, yeah, even I feel comfortable in here*".

Krishna highlighted that social interaction was the best context for her engagement in learning. Krishna indicated that the Advisory provided a relational context for the discovery of a relational self. What Krishna experienced in the Advisory was the capacity to co-construct relevant knowledge, skills and understanding within relationships escorted by the languages and experiences of others across contexts, time and space (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011, p. 188; Sen, 2009). For Krishna, this seemed to happen through one-on-one discussions, the internships she experienced, the TAFE she attended and interactions with her family. Krishna explained:

> *Miss Mae just always knew I was going to come back to where I first started. I went into all different things like physiotherapy and recovery and AFL, like women's jobs within that, and I've just come back to square one, which I probably knew that I was going to do. And now I'm doing an online cert, and yeah, Miss Mae helped me, like, getting through that and showed me the pathway where I needed to go. Yeah, she just motivates me to, she knows I'll do well. Miss Mae is really positive in that way. Like, I always sit down and have a talk with her when I'm, she just knows me, when I'm stressing out or whatever, she'll just talk to me about it and, yeah, tell me I'm wrong in some ways and put my head frame back in the right spot and just carry on with it.*

These relationships with the broader world brought Krishna's identity to life by eliciting her own voice to support her autonomy, which again lead to an "openness to transformation" (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011, p. 188). Krishna and the broader community of stakeholders in Krishna's learning operated within a matrix of mutual reciprocity, negotiating educational goals to the benefit of both the individual and the group (Kreisberg, 1992). Krishna told me she knows people cared about her and her education and were willing to support her as she did her best as she engaged in learning and explored the world on her terms.

5.5 Faith's Narrative: Gaining Control and Autonomy

5.5.1 Introduction

Faith started attending the Advisory in Year 10 in 2013. Like her peers, she found mainstream high school unsettling, making her angry and combative. She struggled to establish student–teacher relationships and found it difficult to hold herself together emotionally. Having transferred into the Advisory, Faith had the opportunity to pursue project work organised around her interests and well-structured with scaffolding. She found cross-curriculum learning engaging and was able to link her learning to prior knowledge as well as share her learning in a community. She provided insight into how choice operated in the Advisory and how project work, portfolios and exhibitions enabled her to self-monitor and reflect on her learning.

> *Like, when I was in Year 9 and stuff and had teachers that I didn't like, they always yelled at me or something or was really angry at me all the time.* I didn't work in it [mainstream classroom], and I didn't like working in it [mainstream classroom]. And kids, they don't get it out there, they usually just get told what to do in class, then they get all this homework. Like, I get angry really easy at people when they, like, when I'm trying to work, and then they just talk and talk and talk.

> *I love, like, just being in my own bubble, just being by myself and I love just coming back to this class over and over again.* Not walking across the whole school to different classes, like five times a day. And I just like being surrounded by the same people and not heaps of different types of people. But in this class, like, we have our moments when we, like, goof off and stuff, but when we actually study it's good and they all know to be quiet and, like, respect other people in here.

> *And then, yeah, so at the start of each project, I get my, what I'm doing it on, in the middle of a piece of paper, and I walk around to everyone and I ask them what questions would you like to know about this subject.* And then I'll find out all the information at the end from all the questions, then I'll put it into my exhibition. I usually sit with Miss Mae with our goals matrix. Do you know what those are?

So, in there, there's five different, five different learning goals or something and whatever learning goal you're doing, you write down what you need for them. This one I think is English. It has empirical reasoning, quantitative reasoning and communication already done. This one is for science; this one is for social reasoning and personal qualities. That's like the five learning goals. Yep, each subject. We have to do it at the start of each subject and we fill out whatever we need for the English side all in here, whatever we need for the history side all down here. And then we pull them out and put them into a task list. So, for the English part of my project I'll be writing an essay, that's what I'll be writing down here.

Well, at the start of the term I, like, I go through a bunch of things that I want to research that relate to my topic that I've already done. Like, my first topic was dance. This part is just the stuff that we do outside, like, how I had a sports coaching course and how I was, like, in a dance class teaching that education support kids dances. But we got a professional contemporary dancer to come in to teach us a few ways to connect our hip hop to that. And yeah, she taught us a lot of things about. But in my exhibition for this I got up and showed people stretches that you need to do before you, before you dance, just to prevent injuries and, yeah, just explained the different types of cultural dances there are around the world and stuff like that.

Then I did the human body for physiotherapy and occupational therapist reasons. I then went through the muscular and skeletal system, and then I only grabbed those two because they're like the main systems that you need for physical activity. But then I looked into your circulatory and your respiratory system. But yeah, and then I just broke those down and then explained all of those. And then the next one I did the brain, and like I broke all of that down.

Is interest-based learning better? It is but it isn't. Like, it is because it's our choice, but it isn't because it's our choice, like, if you know what I mean. Like, just having that freedom, I need some boundaries

and the only boundary I have in this is, make sure your work's done by the end of this term. Like, that's what I, the only thing in my head, but even though it's supposed to be like, get this done, get this done before next week, get this done. It's supposed to be like that.

Well, before I came into the class I didn't know what I wanted to do at all, and now it's made me have, like, a clear vision*. It's helped me look at different pathways of different job careers. Like, in here I do studies for being a dance teacher, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist for rehab – like rehabilitation for people who need it.*

5.5.2   Discussion

Faith's story revealed three key sub-themes. First, the experience of frustration and anger in mainstream high school, irrelevant curriculum and peer disruptions leading to disengagement (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Second, the process of re-engagement in the Advisory through a student-centred, relevant, peaceful and engaging learning environment. Finally, the place of trust and respect in the Advisory (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). These themes worked together in an affirming and flexible Advisory structure which allowed her to engage with and manage her own learning while she reflected upon her learning experiences (Klem & Connell, 2004). Faith revealed that she gained greater control over her education and appreciated this emerging sense of autonomy in learning (Rudduck et al., 1996).

Faith began her story with a reflection on her frustrations with school. Faith recalled that:

before in the mainstream class was like – we were confused, we didn't know what we were doing, we stuffed around – and like, and that's what they still do now. And we get angry at it, but then we think we were like that, we can't do this, we need to help, and stuff like that.

Faith had the impression that her mainstream teachers did not like her as an individual; she told me about experiencing verbal violence: "*they always yelled at me or something or was really angry at me all the time. I didn't work in it, and I didn't like working in it.*" Similar to her WHS peers, she perceived that mainstream classes had

an undertow of anger and fear. Faith suggested that the classrooms general and personal safety were fragile and the class quickly dissipated into chaos, including forms of student resistance made up of talking, laughing, and rude, disruptive and antisocial behaviours (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2006). She said: "*Like, I get angry really easy at people when they, like, when I'm trying to work, and then they just talk and talk and talk.*"

Large public high schools such as WHS have both explicit and implicit control agendas in operation at the same time. Gatto (2002) illustrates how inherent in high school routines are measures to confuse students, implicitly sorting individuals through a class position with indifference to individuals' needs and wants. Faith recalled the confusion of school: "*But it's just so hard because they just talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, and like, we sit there and we're just like, 'Please be quiet.' And then they're just like, 'Oh, we're confused, we don't know what we're doing'.*" Gatto (2002) illustrates how daily school routines are fashioned to create the conditions to encourage students' emotional dependency on success, intellectual dependence on formal curriculum, provisional self-esteem and the inability to hide. These were the experiences that Faith expereinced at WHS.

Faith explained that the narrow curriculum content that the teacher failed to deliver in class became homework and then the responsibility of the students. Similar to Reschly and Christenson's (2012, p. 12) findings, such academic responsibility, even if it was pursued and completed by individuals, dilutes the quality of learning given lessons are self-learnt, out of context and without any critical engagement or diversity of opinion from others. Students reported that they find this situation frustrating and hostile and it fragments their daily experience of high school (Smyth & Hattam, 2004). Faith shared that "*in other classes, like, you, there's usually, like, 20 people with their hands up at a time and the teacher doesn't get to you*". Haberman (1991, p. 292) explains that, in retaliation to such frustrations, the students ironically but effectively disable the teacher's authority and goodwill to teach them. These attitudes and behaviours can also become a self-fulfilling cycle, resulting in lower academic development and further marginalisation from positive school experiences for students (Fredericks, 2014). Faith recalled "*that kids, they don't get it out there, they usually just get told what to do in class, then they get all this homework*". These factors lead Faith and her peers to refuse to engage with irrelevant and abstract curriculum and ineffective pedagogies offered by

public high schools through their critical language, disruptive behaviour and frequent absence (Smyth, 2012).

Similar to her peers, when Faith enrolled in the Advisory her re-engagement in learning became more personalised. Faith's experience became one of reception, recognition and response in the Advisory learning community. Because Faith experienced care and believes she felt worthy of consideration, she began to establish educational relationships and endeavours (Noddings, 2005, p. 16). She voiced that she enjoyed her own company and space, and appreciated belonging to one small, constant and safe group (Inlay, 2016). Faith described her emerging mutual admiration for self and others in the school community as part of a culture of respect for life among the BPA participants. In her words, "*And like our class in here is pretty close. We're used to having quiet working time, quiet – like just being quiet and being able to work*". For Faith and her peers, respect included an appreciation of the universal values of human dignity, equality and autonomy (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) (see Section 3.5) As Goodman (2009) explains, respect is what flavours our self-esteem, pride and our sense of self. In her narrative Faith shared that respect for each other was a fundamental Advisory value:

> *I love, like, just being in my own bubble, just being by myself and I love just coming back to this class over and over again. Not walking across the whole school to different classes, like five times a day. And I just like being surrounded by the same people and not heaps of different types of people. But in this class, like, we have our moments when we, like, goof off and stuff, but when we actually study it's good and they all know to be quiet and, like, respect other people in here.*

Faith's described how her social and emotional needs were met in the Advisory through social interactions. Faith garnered prior knowledge from her peers and the other Advisory participants as part of planning documents for both her brain and dance projects. There was also a measure of empathy in this relational process. Faith talked about working with other students:

> *it's very hard for me to do that, as I'm a very empathetic person. I find myself helping other people more than I help myself. And this year I can't really do that with how much work you're getting packed on. So,*

172

throughout the three years I've been in here, well three years by the
end of this year, they've helped me improve that, improve – like they're
not downgrading my empathy, like they're not telling me I can't have
it, like if that makes sense, but they're telling me to use it wisely, rather
than just give it to anybody who's going to listen type of thing.

Experiencing and learning to control her emotions, through exposure to empathy assisted Faith in dealing with her anger issues (Wiseman & O'Gorman, 2017). As Raider-Roth (2005) attests, empathetic relationships provide knowledge and experience that enables people to grow with each other using mutual participation and compassion: "The relational learner is one who initiates actions, makes meaning of his/her experience and develops awareness of this experience in an ongoing, mutually regulatory web of school relationships" (p. 22). Senge (2014) also posits that trust creates a social fabric in which members of the learning community generate and build social supports to improve learning relationships.

Faith also described how she consolidated her primary learning plans which she collaboratively developed with her Advisor Miss Mae. Faith stated that she gained much from autonomous learning, which had a flexible structure that accommodated her cognitive style, natural talents and personal challenges. Likewise, personalised learning allowed for rigorous and specific feedback together with critical dialogue on student progress, thus facilitating student task perseverance (Keller & McDonald, 2005). Faith was explicit and confident about the learning plan she co-constructed with Miss Mae.

Faith articulated:

there's five different, five different learning goals or something and
whatever learning goal you're doing, you write down what you need
for them. So this one I think is English. It has empirical reasoning,
quantitative reasoning and communication already done. This one is
for science; this one is for social reasoning and personal qualities.
That's like the five learning goals. Yep, each subject. We have to do it
at the start of each subject and we fill out whatever we need for the
English side all in here, whatever we need for the history side all down

here. And then we pull them out and put them into a task list. So, for
the English part of my project I'll be writing an essay, that's what I'll
be writing down here.

Faith noted a healthy degree of institutional trust that empowered her to be sociable, safe and self-managed in her high school experiences. Faith reported that when she was engaged in the process of choice in her Advisory environment, she felt legitimate and trusted the good intentions of the school (Smyth et al., 2010). She told me:

this year I think my weekly routine is on Mondays I come to school
and I do – oh, we've got this – okay, in Big Picture instead of doing
individual projects we have a senior thesis project we need to do, and
that's something where we can leave a legacy or just help out
somewhere with all the different types of communities, like sporting
communities, health communities, anything. And our senior thesis
project is to go – a group of mine are going over to Bali.

Thus, in trusting students' good intentions, workplace vulnerability is minimised and, with this sense of control, school community members were more likely to engage in change. Furthermore, as Harris, Caldwell and Longmuir (2013) assert, resilient school trust can improve the likelihood that community, parents, grandparents and mentors more willingly participate in school activities with the students.

Faith spoke about how she established control in her learning. She explained how she was able to facilitate her work with partners outside of school, linking in with social justice and community health agendas (McDonald et al, 2004; Sliwka, 2008). Faith had completed a sports coaching course earlier in the year. As a work experience component of the certificate, she taught other students at WHS aspects of dance in a professional manner: "*This part is just the stuff that we do outside, like, how I had a sports coaching course and how I was, like, in a dance class teaching that education support kids dances.*" Due to the success of this dance experience, she was able to connect with a professional dancer to enhance the teaching and learning of the education support group using a hip hop dance style. Further to this involvement, for her formal Exhibition Faith demonstrated stretches to the audience as well as describing some cultural aspects of dance. Faith revealed how control and autonomy

operated for her in the Advisory, how she invested her learning back into her community felt good (Sliwka, 2008; Zyngier, 2012).

Faith's initial interest in dance helped her gain the confidence and trust to take academic risks (Klem & Connell 2004). After her interest in dance waned, Faith went on to pursue projects on the brain and body systems, a topic that was more relevant to her future career aspirations of working in physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Faith applied the same experiential, social and responsive system of learning as she did with her dance experience. She generated a learning plan that helped focus her prior knowledge. She then presented a task list for future learning with the support of her peers, Advisors, family as well as community input. She recalled:

> *I did the human body for physiotherapy and occupational therapist reasons. So, I then went through the muscular and skeletal system, and then I only grabbed those two because they're like the main systems that you need for physical activity. But then I looked into your circulatory and your respiratory system. But yeah, and then I just broke those down and then explained all of those. And then the next one I did the brain, and like I broke all of that down.*

Faith broke down the learning activities into manageable parts and created learning of benefit to both her and her learning community. In taking this approach, her own and the school's performance was improved. In other words, when young people optimise their potential to become active and contributing members at school and the wider community, they build their social capital, which is beneficial to our society and vital to community renewal (McCallum & Price, 2015; Pendergast et al., 2008).

Like Dewey (1938), Faith's interest-based learning was insightful and reflective of the principles of progressive education, emphasising authentic relationships between education and society. She illustrated how her experience was at the centre of a vocational and democratic form of learning yet the experience was also reliant on meeting the needs of herself and her learners. Faith's story showed how a more relational orientation enabled a consideration of how individuals might work together and that "teaching cannot be separate from learning; without one the other fails to exist" (Gergen, 2009, p. 247).

Faith's story hinted at how she engaged with and managed her learning. This was clear when she reflected upon her dance learning experiences. Faith indicated that learning involved doing, or expereince, thus involving the interests of learners, integrating scientific methods and problem solving together with pragmatic and utilitarian goals and the idea of social responsibility (Shook, 2014). Faith remarked that she experienced such learning through her dance program; although she may not have the *metalanguage* of the institution of education to articulate such actions (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003). But there were fleeting moments when Faith remarked that she goes into deep reflection on her learning by being in her "*bubble*". Perhaps this is where it becomes possible for Faith to critique networks of power by examining faith, belief and authority with reason, because she is now at the centre of her learning (Apple, 2014). Faith demonstrated that she thinks more deeply about such matters. She shared:

> *Is interest-based learning better? It is but it isn't. Like, it is because it's our choice, but it isn't because it's our choice, like, if you know what I mean. Like, just having that freedom, I need some boundaries and the only boundary I have in this is, make sure your work's done by the end of this term. Like, that's what I, the only thing I have in my head, but even though it's supposed to be like, get this done, get this done before next week, get this done. It's supposed to be like that. Well, before I came into the class I didn't know what I wanted to do at all, and now it's made me have, like, a clear vision. It's helped me look at different pathways of different job careers. Like, in here I do studies for being a dance teacher, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist for rehab – like rehabilitation for people.*

Having control and autonomy in her learning relationships meant that Faith was pondering and thinking about "*getting this done*", which is her way of prioritising experience and feeling as ways to understand truth and self. (Apple, 2014) Dewey (1938) believes this type of experiential learning emerges from constant experiences that generate further opportunities for fruitful learning and growth. Faith provided evidence that her dance experience provided her with "*a clear vision. It's helped me look at different pathways of different job careers.*" Faith's experiences and reflections on learning provided the tools for her to discuss, reflect, reconfigure and co-construct further engagement in learning (McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Sen, 2009). Faith also

indicated that she was actively drawing upon what she thought and felt about her aspirations for her future life and career (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 144).

5.6 Cory's Narrative: Learning with Adults in the Real World

5.6.1 Introduction

Cory faced multiple and complex challenges in his life. He has been part of the Advisory since Year 10 in 2013. Family upheaval, poverty and homelessness have been consistent in his life. He lived with his father who had a history of substance abuse while his mother was not part of his life. He was a strapping young fellow who loved all Australian sports and to laugh with his mates; he was part of the cool group and popular with the girls. Cory was intelligent, sensitive, articulate and aware of his growing maturity. He aspired to become a physiotherapist. Since joining the Advisory, he flourished as a mature young man. He had aspirations to join the navy. The following is Cory's story in his words.

> ***When before I got into Big Picture I used to be a little shit. I used to be, like, just a little shit.*** *I used never to go to school. I always used to wag. I didn't have much enthusiasm about school. I used to go still to classes, but I used just to be, like, sit there and just not do anything, sit on my phone. There is just Dad and me. But … I hated school; I thought it was so stupid.*

> ***But now that I got into Big Picture and the very first thing that we ever did in Big Picture was go around the circle and ask what everyone's dreams were***. *And so we all went through what we wanted to do, and I was playing hockey at the time, so I had like a real mindset on hockey and sport. And then over probably three months I learnt that I wanted to do physiotherapy, and if I were still not in Big Picture, I would never have got physiotherapy. To get into university for physiotherapy, like that's what I want to do, is that I've – they're always motivating me. I've got it all planned out. That's just taken so much weight off my shoulders.*

Probably the best thing about having that relationship between Miss Mae and me is that, like, if I ever do have problems, I know no matter what, even if I'm feeling down, Miss Mae knows how to go around, how to talk to me. She knows if I'm off track, she'll come up to me, be like yeah, keep doing this. And then she'll know if I'm focusing on something else but I need to get along with something else but I might be in a bad mood so she just really knows – she just knows us. She knows each of us, how we are. And that's just real good to know that I do have someone like that to support me with my every move that I want to do. And they do know how to get around us, so it is good.

Like most of the people in here, I would've been friends with about three people at the start of – when I first got into Big Picture. And now I'm like a close relationship with all of them, know how everyone is. So probably the best thing about having the peers and like all learning, all doing study, going along the same path but like splitting up with different ends, probably the best thing is that, no matter what, I've always got other people that are going through the same things that can help me through it. So probably having us all in one group and all having sort of the same morals and personalities along certain lines has probably been the best thing. We all get along so easily. So if I do get stressed and, like, do have problems, I know that the other students already been through all of that, and can help me through it. She was like, yeah, you're going to get stressed at this part. If you ever need any help just ask me. I've got the same with Miss Mae. If I get stressed and need help, she's there.

Yeah, a sense of belonging. It's just that when you're learning around people, even all my classmates and stuff, it's just so much easier. You're all going through the same stuff, you've all got to do the same thing. If you do have problems they're all there to talk to. It's just when you're comfortable it makes it that much easier to learn, and that much easier to put your head down and do stuff. Probably the main thing about it would be that I feel comfortable in there. I do feel comfortable in all classes. You feel where you're meant to be, if that makes sense?

5.6.2   Discussion

Cory's narrative revealed a great deal about his resistance to the grammar of schooling and poor pedagogy thus making connections and building learning relationships with others difficult. We gain a sense through Cory's narrative how the mainstream school system denigrated his own cultural experience (Reay & Lucey, 2004, p. 35). Cory's high school journey did not begin positively. He felt that the structures and cultures at WHS rendered him powerless and inert, a rigid system that he fiercely resisted (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 39). His frequent absence, disruptive behaviour, and weak school connectedness were a negative response to mainstream teaching at WHS. He described the regimentation, lack of individualisation, rigid systems of seating, grouping, grading and marking, together with the authoritarian role of the teacher which made school insufferable for him (Rumberger, 2011). Cory recalled:

> *Before I got into Big Picture I used to be a little shit. I used to be, like, just a little shit. I used never to go to school. I always used to wag. I didn't have much enthusiasm about school. I used to go still to classes, but I used just to be, like, sit there and just not do anything, sit on my phone. There is just Dad and me. But … I hated school; I thought it was so stupid.*

Even though Cory did not have much enthusiasm for mainstream school he still attended, spending much of his time browsing on his phone. Perhaps external pressures from his father and community media stereotypes of individuals such as Cory and the realities of unemployment are also what kept him attending high school, even as a disruptive and disengaged student (Wyn, 2009). He mentioned the stupidity of high school, hinting at an awareness (Riddell, 2010) of the "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2007) of mainstream education, an education where opportunities for individuals such as himself were nothing but a false hope for a better life (Di Paolantonio, 2016). Even though he was very disengaged he hung in at school (Smyth et al., 2010) until a better opportunity arose through participating in the Advisory.

Cory's marginalisation from the mainstream school was typical of many young people who experience family breakdown, homelessness, mental health issues, low self-esteem, poor educational experiences, low educational achievement and challenging behaviours (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010).

179

Australian research in low SES communities suggests that "Young people are not inert materials to be prodded, poked and pontificated upon – they are active live agents that have viewpoints, aspirations and design for their futures, which they are not at all reticent in speaking vociferously into existence" (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 408). Cory had dignity.

With his enrolment in BPA, Cory was able to better capitalise on his cultural assets and broaden his aspirations as he engaged with learning (Appadurai, 2004). The Advisory provided an opportunity to build upon the cultural capital Cory brought to school. As Talbot and Hayes (2016) argue, re-engagement programs position students at the centre of their education. They use relational principles and offer students time and space to participate in meaningful and critical dialogues about their instruction. Cory relayed how being in the centre of his education initiated his re-engagement with formal learning:

> *But now that I got into Big Picture and the very first thing that we ever did in Big Picture was go around the circle and ask what everyone's dreams were. And so, we all went through what we wanted to do, and I was playing hockey at the time, so I had like a real mindset on hockey and sport. And then over probably three months I learnt that I wanted to do physiotherapy.*

Cory interacted with like-minded peers and began to relax and relate. Cory could be himself while building a supportive social network around his learning. Through interacting and learning in the Advisory he began to map out his aspirations for learning in the real world of adults. He could be responsible, he had autonomy, was grateful and built high expectations; he was labelled a role model and could value add to his learning community. In his own words:

> *Like most of the people in here, I would've been friends with about three people at the start of – when I first got into Big Picture. And now I'm like a close relationship with all of them, know how everyone is. So probably the best thing about having the peers and like all learning, all doing study, going along the same path but like splitting up with different ends, probably the best thing is that, no matter what,*

> *I've always got other people that are going through the same things*
> *that can help me through it.*

Cory felt he belonged in the Advisory and found himself flourishing as a young man. Sumsion and Wong (2011) define this feeling as belonging, stating that it is pivotal to young people's sense of identity and place in the world. Comparably, the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (AEYLF) described the word "belonging" together with the words "being" and "becoming". It is a process, as I will describe in the next few paragraphs.

Similar to the findings of Smyth and McInerney (2012), Cory relayed that he wanted to be an active agent in his learning; he had a viewpoint, aspirations and designs for his future. Cory was ready for long-term commitment. On Cory's first day in the Advisory he had the opportunity to speak "vociferously into existence" his future educational desires along with his Advisory peers (Smyth & McInerney, 2012, p. 39). He recalled that on the first day he articulated his dreams by linking his passion for hockey and sport to a perceptible and hopeful adult future:

> *So, at the start of every project we have to do a goals matrix that just basically picks out the maths, English, science, society and environment and all that sort of stuff out of the project that we're doing. So Miss Mae, when I first started, no-one got that at all, it was just like completely new to us and I used to spend a lot of time with Miss Mae and she literally just explained the whole thing through to me and she did it with such ease that, like, I just got it and I could explain it to the rest of the class. But if I was in a normal mainstream class, I would've never of had the opportunity to sit down for, like, two hours or so and get that explained to me. There's just too many kids in a mainstream class to do that. So, yeah, it's just, like, simple stuff like that which actually goes the distance that helps out a little more, 'cos now, you would be able to use that, like, how we did, it's just, like, we used to do all my other projects so much.*

For the first time, Cory had the opportunity to formulate in a tangible way his aspirations as a cultural capacity. Engagement in learning was a positive experience

for him as an individual (Appadurai, 2004). This process was evidenced by the way he used Big Picture learning plans and goals, reflected on his experiences, consulted with his Advisor, peers, father and sports club. Eventually he clarified a career goal of physiotherapy. This process of imagining a future (Bland, 2012) links to what Gale and Parker (2015b) argue about marginalised students like Cory. Such individuals have similar aspirations to students from other socioeconomic groups; however, individuals from disadvantaged communities "have reduced capacities to navigate their way around the desires and possibilities of dominant aspirations, given their different specialised knowledge, less valued cultural and material resources and archives of experience" (Gale & Parker, 2015b, p. 141). Cory was quick to fit in with the Advisory participants where he was a popular and respected as an individual.

Cory relaxed within himself and went about building a supportive social network around his learning. He communicated that his next steps towards a possible future had taken "*so much weight off my shoulders*" that he could relax now. Cory communicated that because of the Advisory he participated in and was constructive in his schooling efforts. Cory explained that a supportive social network around his learning was organised by his Advisor Miss Mae:

> *Probably the best thing about having Miss Mae and this Advisory to reach my goals is motivation, and they always help me through. But no matter what question I have, no matter what problem I have, they are always helping me. They can help me through it. So, as I said before, the last six months me and Miss Mae have been planning how I'm going to – what my pathway's going to look like to get into university.*

Cory spoke highly of his relationship with Miss Mae and how she supported his engagement in learning in the Advisory without fail. He said that Miss Mae knows him as an individual, knows how to connect to his personality and encouraged a positive, mature disposition in engagement and learning in Advisory. This finding confirms Reschly and Christenson's (2012) argument that engagement is not just a trait of the student, but more an alterable state of being. It is a state of being that can be influenced by the capacity of school, family and peers to provide consistent expectations of and supports for learning. Cory articulated that Miss Mae had a measure of respect for each student, which was part of the Advisory culture. Part of a

relational pedagogy was the "beingness" of teachers as they teach who they are, and the authenticity of their identity (Inlay, 2016). Cory learned how to be himself from Miss Mae, he learned how to interact with other students, teachers, parents and community members (Inlay, 2016). He shared the following sentiments:

> *the main thing that I noticed in Big Picture would be the whole relationship that me and Miss Mae have. It's not like any relationship I've had with a normal mainstream teacher. Like I know a lot about her, she knows a lot about me, and it just makes it that much easier to learn around her. Like, she can get when I'm like not in the best mood and stuff's going on and then, sort of like backs off a little, but then when I am in a good mood, that's when it's, like, when she knows. So that's sort of like, I guess, seizes the opportunity and then I can really learn a lot more. She can find out a lot more about what I'm wanting to learn.*

Cory's views are consistent with research by Falguni (2012), Inlay (2016), Jordan (2015), Phillippo (2010) and Poliner and Lieber (2004). Their findings suggest that places like the Advisory created a reassuring and mature environment for learning through relational networks which allowed students autonomy to reach their full potential as young citizens.

Cory spoke highly of his peers and the sense of collective consciousness in the Advisory. Cory had a personal relationship with all the individuals in the Advisory. The sense of belonging that comes with a collective of individuals also increased the group's chances of achieving graduation (Smyth et al., 2012). Cory was appreciative and more confident in the Advisory, given the collective and individual efforts that have motivated him to plan a career objective. Sarojini-Hart (2013) makes a similar observation, advancing that the future-orientated concept of aspirations may assist marginalised students to re-connect with school structures, cultures and authentic learning opportunities. Such a collective also optimises the potential for young people to become active and contributing members of the community economy and to develop social capital, which is vital for community renewal (Pendergast et al., 2008). Cory could balance his own interests with Advisory members in a variety of educational situations as they negotiated their imagined futures (Smyth, 2000). Cory recalled:

well, it started off as I wanted to do physiotherapy. That was, that's how it's been since Year 10. And then we were sort of looking around and, like, finding all these ways that you could do physiotherapy because I didn't want to do just hospital based or anything like that. I wanted to do sports based and travel a little and stuff. And then we came up with, we'd seen that you could do it in the army and then because a few of the boys did work placement at the navy base and stuff, and they found out about it. And then we saw that they had the advertisement for, which is like if I do one year of physiotherapy at any university then they'll pay for the rest and then I will go in and just serve four years.

Because the BPA was a collective with common interests, what they shared between and with each other facilitated ethical, social and democratic interactions (McGregor 2017; Noddings, 2005). In knowing the personalities and dispositions of each other and mature adults around them, Advisory participants were more likely to be morally complicit and sensitive to issues of social justice that concerned them (Gee, 2011).

Cory began to map out his aspirations for learning in the real world of adults. Cory spoke about stress and stressful incidents as recurrent issues among the Advisory students. Senior high school is already a stressful environment, and there were vital cognitive, psychosocial and emotional transformations that influenced the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual trajectories of the Advisory adolescents (Erwin, 2010; Hanewald, 2013). Mediating these changes was the Advisory, which played a vital role in engaging students through stable relationships, rigorous expectations and establishing relevant learning experiences (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 144). Advisory participants used their prior skills and personal dispositions, such as being older or more mature, which assisted other Advisory participants in their learning journey. The BPA students in this study were leaders and role models who displayed individual agency and focus in the final years of school, together they focussed on post-secondary life and careers (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 144).

You know, you can study medicine in the navy, and then it just got onto the pathway of "If I go in for six years with medical [inaudible] then I can study to become a doctor, do another six years, then serve

another four on top of that, and that's basically my navy career there." And then after that I was just like real keen on that and just went through all the tests that I had to do, a new session at the start which is just like, um, anyone can do 'em. Um, it's not like a fail or a pass sort of test. It's like, you just do a general medical, um, and the aptitude test, then it went on to do an assessment day. Um, the assessment day I had to go, it's just basically a job interview and you just go for the job that you're applying for. Just say all the stuff and then I had to do a psychiatric streaming which was all like, oh yeah, um, how did it feel like leaving your parents, all that. And then I had to do a full medical as well again. And then I got put on a waiting list and then I'd find out if I got through. Um, then I got a call about a week later saying that they wanted me. And then they said, alright, we've got two job opportunities for ya, 12th of June or the 6th of July, which one do you want? And I was like, alright. So yeah. That's basically it for the navy and then yeah, I've just been waiting since then. But it's been about, I applied last year.

Cory felt a sense of belonging to the Advisory and flourished as a young man. Accordingly, when students were participating at high levels in all engagement dimensions, they were genuinely interested and connected to learning. The opportunity to grasp complex learning skills, knowledge and understandings, as well as to reflect deeply on their learning experiences occurred more frequently. Cory also felt a sense of gratitude and humility due to the group's supportiveness (Christenson et al., 2012). Cory engaged in identity work, he participated in sustained learning. This showed that supportive relationships can foster a sense of identity and belonging to school, which then translated into reduced student disengagement and non-attendance and thus greater academic success (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Rumberger, 2011; Smyth & Hattam, 2004; Teese & Polesel, 2003; Washor & Mojkowski, 2013).

5.7 Gemma's Narrative: Building Capabilities and Navigating the World

5.7.1 Introduction

Gemma was invited to join the Advisory in 2015. She was a quiet achiever and struggled socially and academically with traditional high school expectations at the ATAR level. Before she entered the Advisory program, she had taken six months off school after suffering a nervous breakdown due to overwhelming pressure to achieve a high ATAR. Gemma re-enrolled for Year 11 when another student withdrew from the Advisory. Gemma aspired to study and work in obstetrics, gynaecology and midwifery after graduating from high school. She spoke about how relational pedagogy worked to support her engagement in learning in the Advisory.

> *I guess there's trust, a lot of trust in it because you're trusting them – if you need help and they're always there for you, their support, they'll give you an idea to build on, which is really great for me personally. Because sometimes I don't know where to start and they sort of give you that first, like, level that – and then you just build on from there … because they gave me, like, the help and support I needed and trusting them to help me when I get stuck on certain things really helped me with a lot of that. Yeah, and we did have a lot of time one on one.*

> *If you have a teacher that's sort of, like, you've got a bond with, you seem to be able to understand what they mean just by them saying a couple of words or a sentence. And they'll have more experience so they'll know what you want and how you'd want it done and they'll understand what you mean and you understand what they mean, so I really love that aspect of it. But I learnt to – it – that's one of the other things that Big Picture's helped me with is it's changed my mind a lot … Well, it sort of opened me up to new ideas, whereas in mainstream they sort of say it's either university, TAFE or you just go into a job. There's no really other ways, but just this year I had the discussion with some of my other teachers and they said, "There are plenty of*

different ways." She actually said, "It was – there are different ways to skin a cat" is the expression she said.

And so I found out I could enter university via a – like Certificate 4, which I'm going to do next year, which also Big Picture helped me with me gaining. *And I'm really – I'm really excited about that because I – the minimum ATAR requirement was 99 for one of – there's only two universities, medical universities in WA that I know about that actually offer the courses that I want. Oh, it's obstetrics and gynaecology and midwifery and that. And they were the only real two that actually could branch off of that because I need a Bachelor of Nurse – like a Bachelor of something which I was going to nursing and then I need a Doctor of Medicine. So – but I realised in mainstream I never would have gotten a 99 ATAR. Some of my friends that I reckon geniuses they wouldn't – they don't reckon they're going to get a 90 ATAR at least.*

And I was going to go – I was – there are two options Miss Mae told me I could do. I could go through – I'm still doing the Head Start Program next, yeah. *I could do that then go into the local university and then transfer into other university or even eastern states. Or as a backup plan, I'm using this as, because of that Cert 4, I could easily just – I've emailed the universities but don't accept Certificate 4s, but they did give me a lot of information which was very relevant. But I asked the university if they accept it and they said by the time I finish my Cert 4 I'll meet the minimum age entry requirement, so – but I could use the Cert 4 as a backup option.*

Which I think is great because now I would only have one direct path in the mainstream university system. *In here there's – I've got two that I can get into university with, and that's great to know that I have a backup option just in case things don't work out for one of them. I reckon they do because they encourage you to want to learn more about that. They know, like, where you're at what. They understand you and sort of encourage you and, like, help persuade you to – not just, like,*

sort of draw back a bit, but to keep pushing forward, and so that push forward that you do will make you want to go further in life.

Well, it just makes me feel more like it's a – to be honest, like a home environment and that's a great thing about it. *When I come in here I sort of feel like I'm, like, with all my peers and that, and they can encourage me and if I need something I can just ask them and they'll help me with it. Whereas in the other classrooms I sort of feel a bit anxious to ask anyone for help other than the teacher and sometimes even the teacher.*

Yeah, that's one of the main things, like, they're not seen as teachers. Like, everyone in the class is seen as peers but obviously they're still teachers. But they give us a chance to become the teachers at the exhibition and it really gives you a lot of confidence. *I couldn't speak publicly, like, if you forced me onto a stage and – but in English in just a room full of about eight kids I couldn't do a speech without stuttering. I get up and do my exhibitions and I speak with confidence and pride and that. And it just amazes me how much I know because all of a sudden once I start talking – I start off a bit shaking, but once I start going on it's really like my brain's sort of doing the work and I'm just sitting back and watching and really amazed that I'm actually speaking clearly and – and I include, like, Mrs Snowlee actually taught me to include a bit of humour because she realised I do a bit better with it. Because I include a lot of humour and we found that a bit easier, so I always include a bit of humour in my exhibitions now and that makes it more relaxing. And I just feel so much more confident when I speak now.*

5.7.2   Discussion

Three themes emerged from Gemma's two interviews. First, Gemma shared how her personal interest in learning about nursing and medicine were used to scaffold her education and qualifications through the Advisory support networks. Second, she described how a more relational pedagogy in the Advisory imparted a sense of home

and family and provided diverse opportunities for her to accomplish her aspirational future. Third, she spoke about how trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) and the bond (Willis, 2000) it created were pivotal in developing her navigational capacity (Gale & Parker, 2015b) towards tertiary education.

Trust for Gemma created a social fabric in which members of the BPA generated and built social supports to improve relationships with each other (Senge, 2014). Gemma remarked on how trust enhanced her engagement in learning:

> *I guess there's trust, a lot of trust in it because you're trusting them so if you're – if you need help and they're always there for you, their support, they'll give you an idea to build on, which is really great for me personally. Because sometimes I don't know where to start and they sort of give you that first, like, level that – and then you just build on from there … because they gave me, like, the help and support I needed and trusting them to help me when I get stuck on certain things really helped me with a lot of that. Yeah, and we did have a lot of time one on one.*

Being part of the social structure of the Advisory assisted Gemma by reducing her vulnerability to stress and enabled her to develop her school efforts and forge links to future education options (Senge, 2014).

Gemma described how trust was built through learning and helping people when they "*get stuck*" through a lot of "*one-on-one*" time (Farrell, 2004). Gemma spoke about the bond she had with Miss Mae and how this relationship transcended the ordinary. What Gemma experienced was visceral, an energy and synergy that was both grounded yet tailored for growth for her within the Advisory (Willis, 2000). Gemma worked unobtrusively with Miss Mae; there was an implicit agreement, with symbolic gestures to confirm or disconfirm tasks and activities through the day:

> *I'll say definitely, another thing I've learnt, I'm probably – maturity, being able to talk to them like an adult. You don't have to sort of explain what you're doing and that they understand if you just say, whether it's a sentence or a whole paragraph of writing or that. They can understand what you mean by any part of it because you got that*

189

good bond, that friendship with them, the feeling that you can talk to them about anything.

Gemma and Miss Mae had a symbolic relationship, innate understanding attended by care; they knew this implicitly (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011). Gemma said of her relationship with Miss Mae:

Whereas if you have a teacher that's sort of, like, you've got a bond with, you seem to be able to understand what they mean just by them saying a couple of words or a sentence. And they'll have more experience so they'll know what you want and how you'd want it done and they'll understand what you mean and you understand what they mean, so I really love that aspect of it.

Gemma realised that this understated relationship with Miss Mae had led her to consider options previously concealed from her. Miss Mae provided an opportunity for Gemma to be "open to transformation" (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011, p. 188). Gemma mentioned that through dialogue, internships, work experience mentors and reflection "*new ideas have opened up to me*". Through leaving the school part-time to experiment with her aspirations, she was afforded the opportunity to explore the relational networks where aspirations became an experience (Dewey, 1963, p. 27). Gemma believed:

I'm currently doing top class in Certificate 4, is what my lecturer told me. And I find that, because I'm still doing partial mainstream here in human biology, because it's mostly theory in this Cert 4 course now I understand a lot because of my previous knowledge from human biology that I've got here. So I've really got two aspects of it that I can contribute into the one and that's how it's been easier. And I've also found with, I do a lot of public speaking in there, I find myself more confident and that's definitely come from Big Picture as well, because with the exhibitions and everything. And at first I was really, really nervous but I get up there now and I just I ace it, I think. And it's been really great. And I've actually talked to Mrs Snowlee about some things about how to get into the Certificate 4 because she knows university. So I asked them. And they said they do accept entries so I

190

was hoping to go to the one, hopefully in this community too, because
that will just be closer for me, but I don't mind whether I have to go
to Perth or not.

This experience suggested that ATAR was a dominant discourse and that navigating around dominant constructions and discourses were possible by looking at other pathways to university. For Gemma there was the possibility of participating in outreach programs, scaffolding Universiity entry via participation in TAFE courses, or sitting mature-age entrance as well as moving into preferred degree options after the completion of prerequisite degrees.

Gemma explained how she experienced social contact and communication when she spent time planning and researching her future (Appadurai, 2004). In Appaduraian (2014) terms, the Advisory had aspects of "relationality and dis-census within a framework of consensus and weak boundaries" (Appadurai, 2004, p. 62). Gemma experienced a range of emotions, a type of pushing and pulling, thinking and feeling as Massumi (2008) articulated. As Gemma moved in and out of the Advisory her learning was scaffolded once again after each learning experience (Riordan, 2006; Zygier, 2012). During these learning actions, she engaged in the fields of knowledge she aspired to, not those imposed upon her by ATAR and the CAC ranking systems (Sarojini–Hart, 2013). Gemma stated:

> *But I learnt that's one of the other things that Big Picture's helped me*
> *with is it's changed my mind a lot … Well, it sort of opened me up to*
> *new ideas, whereas in mainstream they sort of say it's either*
> *university, TAFE or you just go into a job. There's no really other*
> *ways, but just this year I had the discussion with some of my other*
> *teachers and they said, "There are plenty of different ways." She*
> *actually said, "there are different ways to skin a cat".*

Gemma shared how her personal interest in learning about nursing and medicine were used to scaffold her education and qualifications through the Advisory support networks. Gemma articulated that she needed her Advisor to be demanding but sensitive to her expectations and to support her as an individual when she experienced difficulties (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007. As Miss Mae was always there for her, Gemma garnered support in her learning, and this worked for her personally (Keller &

McDonald, 2005). Interest-based learning allowed Gemma to focus on nursing and medicine. It provided a flexible structure that accommodated her cognitive style, natural talents and personal challenges. Gemma spoke about how she scaffolded her learning as new knowledge emerged:

> *And so I found out I could enter university via a – like Certificate 4, which I'm going to do next year, which also Big Picture helped me with me gaining. And I'm really – I'm really excited about that because I – the minimum ATAR requirement was 99 for one of – there's only two universities, medical universities in WA that I know about that actually offer the courses that I want. Oh, it's obstetrics and gynaecology and midwifery and that. And they were the only real two that actually could branch off of that because I need a Bachelor of Nurse – like a Bachelor of something which I was going to nursing and then I need a Doctor of Medicine. So – but I realised in mainstream I never would have gotten a 99 ATAR. Some of my friends that I reckon geniuses they wouldn't – they don't reckon they're going to get a 90 ATAR at least.*

Likewise, personalised learning in the field of nursing and medicine allowed for rigorous and specific feedback together with critical dialogue on her progress, thus facilitating Gemma's task perseverance (Keller & McDonald, 2005). During Gemma's time in the Advisory, through getting to know her peers, Advisor, family and community, Gemma's interest in nursing and medicine was respected and developed in an environment of reciprocity and care by Advisory participants (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011, p. 188). Gemma then had enough confidence to talk evenly and confidently with her learning community. Gemma contended that others in the Advisory helped to critically scaffold her engagement and learning over time; thus her aspirations became more of a reality as she progressed with her qualifications (Parker, Stratton, Gale, Rodd & Sealey, 2013).

Like many other participants Gemma described how Advisory imparted a sense of home and family. Gemma believed that the Advisory provided a well-organised school community and culture where family situations were diverse, thus providing the experiences needed for students to function efficiently and live well in society

(Lindstrom et al., 2016). In a mature manner Gemma commented on what the Advisory felt like:

> *Well, it just makes me feel more like it's a – to be honest, like a home environment and that's a great thing about it. When I come in here I sort of feel like I'm, like, with all my peers and that, and they can encourage me and if I need something I can just ask them and they'll help me with it. Whereas in the other classrooms I sort of feel a bit anxious to ask anyone for help other than the teacher and sometimes even the teacher.*

Gemma reflected on the democratic nature of the Exhibitions. She drew my attention to the philosophy of Dewey (1938), who insisted that we learn about the world and each other by sharing experiences and ideas together in a shared educational context. This philosophy was played out in part through Exhibitions, a method of shared learning and evaluating the rigour of educational progress with others. The exhibition panel was made up of an Advisory teacher, family, peers, a mentor and community members who assisted students to demonstrate their progress against goals and who helped discuss, critique and reflect on the student's learning (Littky & Grabelle, 2004).

> *Yeah, that's one of the main things, like, they're not seen as teachers. Like, everyone in the class is seen as peers but obviously they're still teachers. But they give us a chance to become the teachers at the exhibition and it really gives you a lot of confidence. I couldn't speak publicly, like, if you forced me onto a stage and – but in English in just a room full of about eight kids I couldn't do a speech without stuttering. I get up and do my exhibitions and I speak with confidence and pride and that. And it just amazes me how much I know because all of a sudden once I start talking – I start off a bit shaking, but once I start going on it's really like my brain's sort of doing the work and I'm just sitting back and watching and really amazed that I'm actually speaking clearly.*

Even though she initially found this process difficult, over time she embraced the opportunity to speak publicly about her learning experiences. Through this process of

being herself and co-constructing a learning program, Gemma resisted the dominant deficit discourses that limited her engagement and learning in mainstream high school.

Gemma was introduced to alternative opportunities to experience an aspirational future. Gemma described three positive educational experiences with public universities, which she contacted by telephone and visited on two occasions. Wilks and Wilson (2012) indicate that such experiences can play a key role in developing post-compulsory educational aspirations. By recognising Gemma's academic ambition and speaking to others about her aspirations, she was more likely to participate in higher education including university (Eccles, Vida & Barber, 2004; Khoo & Ainley, 2005; Strawiński, 2011). Gemma thought it was:

> *great because now I would only have one direct path in the mainstream university system. In here there's – I've got two that I can get into university with, and that's great to know that I have a backup option just in case things don't work out for one of them. I reckon they do because they encourage you to want to learn more about that. They know, like, where you're at what. They understand you and sort of encourage you and, like, help persuade you to – not just, like, sort of draw back a bit, but to keep pushing forward, and so that push forward that you do will make you want to go further in life.*

As Gemma succeeded she gained confidence in her capabilities, and her willingness to ask questions, find common ground and present Exhibitions. As she shared her knowledge, it was more likely her academic aspirations would be realised (Marsh & Hau, 2003). Gemma pushed forward in creating connections to her aspirations based on her interests and life worlds (Biesta, 2004; Hattam, 2006).

Gemma's aspirations were strengthened through her work with a university preparation program and an internship in an aged care facility, a real-world experience for Gemma (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). Gemma's learning had personal meaning, which justified Gemma efforts. Her testimonial provides evidence that aspirational futures are founded on real experiential networks via authentic relationships, enabling the development of students' capabilities (Dewey, 1963; Appadurai, 2004). Gemma was clear about (Appadurai, 2004, p. 59) a career in gynaecology, obstetrics and midwifery. She developed an imagined future through working with a relational pedagogy in the Advisory (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a).

5.8   Chapter Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has presented and interpreted the key findings of this study. I have described how a relational pedagogy works for each of the Advisory students. Through their relationships with others, new experiences and meanings are generated in ways that assisted them to re-engage in learning in the Advisory. The themes discussed included notions of disengagement, feeling unwelcome, acts of resistance, not belonging or mattering and feeling threatened in some cases. These are balanced by the themes of inclusion and recognition, autonomy and new opportunities together with acceptance of responsibility for engagement in learning and the significance of continuous high expectations.

The students also spoke about the power of common interests in motivating their learning. In growing their sense of belonging to the Advisory, the students actively self-govern, enhancing their ownership of their learning and their identity as a team member. All of the students spoke highly of their interactive, dialogic, continuous and enduring relationship with Miss Mae, their Advisor. There was also talk of how collaborative learning helped students reach their goals through affirmation and the ability to take risks without fear of judgement. There was a focus on strengths and possibilities rather than deficit-style pathologising of individuals. There was much talk about trust, care and respect, and how personalised learning and time to talk in class facilitated engagement in learning. Opportunities to communicate and network scaffolded the students learning, thinking and reflection on what to do next. In turn, slowly and safely they edged towards transformation and a higher awareness of their aspirations and potential futures.

Conversely, there were some cautionary tales to tell of student experiences of the Advisory. Over the research years a number of students, for a variety of reasons, had opted out of the Advisory. Some students left Advisory and moved back into mainstream or on to TAFE to pursue their interests, which no doubt suited their learning styles and future needs. Other students dropped out of school altogether either to work part-time or full time or to link up with welfare agencies. A few students became parents. The limitations of this study in part explain why these student stories have not been told here (see the discussion of limitations in Section 1.9). This chapter has examined how the Advisory functions to build a relational pedagogy with a view to understanding what participants recalled of their high school journey. The narratives included supporting

evidence on how students at WHS understand, experience and responded to a relational pedagogy based on the values of trust, care and respect. Throughout the narratives students described a strong sense of connectedness and belonging which supported their overall well-being. As a consequence of the Advisory attending to the social and emotional needs of marginalised students via a relational pedagogy, individuals re-engaged with learning. Chapter 6 now follows as a conclusion to this research.

Chapter 6   Conclusion

*Teaching is building educational relations. Aims of teaching and
outcomes of learning can both be defined as specific forms of
relations to oneself, people around the students and the larger world.*
(Bingham et al., 2004, p. 7).

6.1   Introduction

This concluding chapter brings together the main arguments presented in this thesis
with a view to addressing the enduring problem of disproportionately high rates of
student disengagement and marginalisation from public high schools, especially in low
socioeconomic localities. To this end, the thesis set out to examine the experience of a
group of students participating in a more relational pedagogy at the WHS Advisory.
The Advisory is designed to be a "school within a school" (Levine, 2002). It is a small
learning community underpinned by a philosophy of experiential interest-based
education, relational pedagogy and responsive student–teacher relationships as central
organisers of student learning (Down & Choules, 2011).

In essence, this thesis contends that traditional high schools are characterised by fragile
student–teacher relationships and dominant pathologising discourses about student
capabilities and personal dispositions, which continue to alienate and ultimately
exclude far too many talented and capable yet marginalised students from the benefits
of education (Smyth et al., 2014). As an alternative, I argue that a socially just public
education system should provide the conditions conducive to creating a relational
pedagogy in which curriculum is co-constructed with students based on their needs
and interests. By recognising and integrating students' life experiences with respectful
and caring student–teacher relationships defined by trust, care and respect for personal
circumstances, it is more likely that students will be engaged in deeper forms of
learning inclusive of traditional subjects. An appreciative philosophy about student
capabilities and personal dispositions can then create more engaging learning
experiences for disengaged youth in disadvantaged socioeconomic locales. Only then,
I argue, will a quality, equitable and engaging high school experience for marginalised

students in Australian public high schools become possible (Lamb et al., 2015; Lingard & Mills, 2007; MacBeath, 2007).

This concluding chapter performs a specific academic and professional function. It begins by recapping the aims, research questions and thesis orientation and then moves on to summarise the key messages and findings of this ethnographic case study. Following this, I address the research questions, drawing on the narratives of the young people described in Chapter 5. Next, I map some of the key elements of a relational pedagogy and its significance for reimagining public high schools in socially just and educative ways. In pursuing this task, I ascertain and describe some possibilities for specific actions to assist marginalised students to re-engage with learning in disadvantaged socioeconomic localities. To finish this chapter, I identify some future research directions and questions and conclude with a final personal reflection as an epilouge.

6.2   Recapping the Aims of this Research

This research explored the enduring problem of the disproportionately high rates of student disengagement and marginalisation from public high schools, in particular a low socioeconomic locality in the outer suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. In addressing this question, I have explored how six high school students understand, experience and responded to a relational pedagogy at WHS BP Advisory. I argued that this kind of qualitative case study work can provide an important counter-narrative (McGregor 2017) to the wider macro-level forces of globalisation and neoliberalism, marketisation, residualisation and widening inequalities (Connell, 2013) which have impacted disproportionately on the most vulnerable and marginalised young people in society (Polesel et al., 2012).

I have argued that all young people have a right to an engaging public education which will enable them to lead a healthy civic life (McGregor, 2015; Reid, 2005a). The student narratives discussed in Chapter 5 provide evidence about how individuals operated within networks of reciprocity, reinforcement and mutuality as the cornerstones of education and personal maturity (Reilly, 2012). What we can take from these narratives is the importance of listening to young people and responding with empathy, care and attention. Nowhere is this work more urgent than in those

communities in which young people are "living on the edge" of high school environments (Smyth & Wrigley, 2013).

A central argument of this thesis is that traditional high schools are simply not working for increasing numbers of students who are "dropping out, drifting off, and being excluded" from school (Smyth & Hattam, 2004). The narratives of the participants presented in Chapter 5 provide a much clearer sense of why schools have become alienating places for so many young people. We heard about the inflexibility, impersonal relationships, didactic teaching, disruptive classrooms, bullying, competition and irrelevant curriculum combined with a set of the dominant pathologising discourses which lead to limiting and harmful pedagogical practices for many students (Smyth et al., 2014; Valencia, 2010).

In response to these prevailing experiences, I have argued for a more progressive student-centred democratic philosophy and practice that views education as a social process based around students' needs and interests (Ball, 2016; Bandura, 1997; Connell, 2013; McGregor et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998). In advancing this argument, I used the term relational pedagogy to describe the practices at the WHS Advisory as a case study of how schools might better reflect the values of trust, care and respect for all students (Noddings, 2005). The collaborative and responsive relationships between peers, Advisors, families and communities encouraged students to understand and function in the world as autonomous and balanced individuals (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004b, p. 3).

6.3   Research Questions

This thesis examined the experiences of students involved in the implementation of an innovative BP Advisory learning community at WHS. The overarching question driving this thesis is:

- How do students experience, understand and respond to the Advisory learning community?

In addressing this question, a series of related sub-questions informed the research:

- What are the experiences of students in an Advisory learning community?
- What are the structural, cultural and pedagogical features of the Advisory learning community?
- How does it assist in the development of the aspirational identities and capabilities of students?
- What are the lessons for education systems, policymakers and educators?

Before I answer these questions, I return to the orientation of this work.

6.4   Thesis Orientation

I addressed these questions by drawing upon on concepts and empirical evidence from the fields of education, psychology and philosophy to explore the centrality of relational pedagogy in re-engaging young people in learning underpinned by the principles of equity. In listening to and reflecting on the narratives of Advisory students (Cook-Sather, 2006; Smyth, 2000; Thiessen, 2006) at WHS, this research moves individual experience and understandings of relational pedagogy from the margins to the centre through a case study ethnography. In doing so, this analysis opened up spaces for students to be heard and for their perspectives to be integrated into school reform efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Down & Choules, 2011). Accordingly, these young people have directed the orientation of this study by, firstly, illuminating the many inequities and injustices of mainstream schooling and, secondly, identifying the pedagogical and cultural conditions necessary to create a relational pedagogy in the Advisory at WHS.

Accordingly, I have gained insight into the ways in which power and control operate in high schools (Apple, 1979; Bernstein, 1971). In providing a space for students to speak, I have challenged traditional neoliberal approaches to education based on hierarchy, individualism and competition. Instead, the focus is on prioritising human experience as a means of understanding social life, whereby the needs and interests of students are at the centre of schooling rather than powerful economic, political and institutional interests (Apple, 2013, p. 137). Such a relational stance acts to develop freedoms and imagined futures rather than excluding marginalised groups

and individuals that are least served by dominant discourses and decision making (Apple, 2013).

In developing this line of argument, I deliberately set out to listen to the stories of the lives of the participants in the BPA at WHS. Through the lens of the scholarly literature, student narratives and personal reflections, I have endeavoured to comprehend the broader landscape of personal interactions and relationships experienced by students at WHS BPA. I have resisted the temptation to airbrush away the vernacular language of students, which can be disturbing and uncomfortable for adults to hear. I wanted to understand the harsh realities of school life which many young people face and the lingering effects on young lives (Kozol, 1991; Noddings, 2005; Smyth, 2000).

Nonetheless, I am also mindful of the ethical and moral dangers around revealing too much about catastrophic events and incidents in the lives of these young people, especially those involving substance abuse, poverty, rejection and suicide. These stories must wait for another time. Whilst acutely aware of the personal and tragic circumstances many young people endure, the overwhelming findings of this research show the power and hope in the stories these young people so bravely shared.

6.5   Summarising Key Messages and Findings

Public education in Australia should promote equity, social justice and social inclusion for all Australian citizens. The official rhetoric suggests that publicly operated schools can offer a nurturing, safe location for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged socioeconomic locales (Seddon, 2001). By encouraging democratic and socially just values, this work argues that a relational pedagogy has the potential to diminish the problems of student disengagement, marginalisation, discrimination, silencing and denunciation felt by so many young people at school today (Cook-Sather, 2006; Smyth, 2000; Thiessen, 2006). In this thesis, I have argued that public schools can create democratic and engaging learning environments through experiential learning, relational pedagogies and strong teacher–student relationships.

When students are placed at the centre of their learning, with a focus on the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals, social connectedness and belonging are fostered (Erwin, 2010; Nodding's, 2005; Waterhouse,

2007). As the WHS Advisory experience showed, smaller learning communities in large impersonal educational institutions can help to re-engage students in ways that better articulate and reflect their lifeworld's and perspectives (Biesta, 2004; Hattam, 2006). These learning communities can also create a better match between the personal learning, cultural and motivational styles of learners while incorporating the support of peers, families and communities (McDonald et al 2004; Sliwka, 2008; Zyngier, 2017). These kinds of relational pedagogies offer a more meaningful and practical experience of learning and school re-engagement, especially for marginalised students.

Relational pedagogy characterised by one-on-one mentoring through role modelling and conversation opens up the opportunity for students to co-construct the curriculum in ways that acknowledge individual abilities, needs, interests and desires (Sen, 2009; McDonald et al, 2004). Providing intellectual and emotional support in an Advisory by scaffolding authentic learning projects helps students to overcome their own individual challenges and obstacles to learning, thus building autonomy, agency and confidence to persevere and invest in their education (Keller & McDonald, 2005). This not only enabled them to survive in a challenging postmodern world but also allowed them to grow and flourish in their education, careers and life (Noddings, 2005).

The values and ethics of the Advisory are founded on the values of trust, care and respect as well as a sense of optimism and hope for the future (Smyth et al., 2010; te Riele, 2010). Drawing on the narratives in this research, we can see evidence that a relational pedagogy provides the pedagogical, structural and cultural conditions to build on each student's strengths and assets, encourage adaptability and flexibility, and foster engaging learning experiences. Furthermore, each of the narratives described in Chapter 5 point to a host of benefits related to student health and well-being.

6.5.1 Experiences of Students in the Advisory Learning Community

Overall the participants in this research expressed a sense of relief and gratitude at having an opportunity to participate in the Advisory learning community at WHS. They enjoyed the sense of engagement in their learning and the flexibility afforded by the Advisory's relational philosophy. As a group, they enjoyed and pursued opportunities to initiate wide-ranging life experiences on their own terms without

being overwhelmed (Sen, 2009). There was a sense of agency and satisfaction in the Advisory. The Advisory presented a socially supportive and relational learning environment which helped students to develop their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual assets in many different ways (Erwin, 2010). In summary, the narratives of students in the Advisory revolved around the students' understanding, experiences and responses to the Advisory program at WHS.

Beyoncé shared her story of feeling misunderstood and alienated in WHS, then her move to a schooling experience that encouraged her to take ownership of her learning through reflection. Beyoncé responded with a renewed sense of agency in her learning. In short, she told of moving from disengagement to engagement. She described how she has gained ownership of her learning and life and is now motivated to graduate from high school. Beyoncé felt welcomed, was included in activities, started to interact positively with peers and once again engaged in learning (Goodman & Eren, 2013).

Boii understood that mainstream WHS may not meet his needs as a talented basketballer together with the demands of his family, who were under considerable stress. He described the Advisory as an anchor point connecting his daily, weekly and monthly study program in a personalised and supportive environment (McClure et al., 2010). What we also heard in Boii's story was the benefit of creating a small learning community culture based on authentic relationships, which helped him to connect with a small group of students and one adult (Hutchison & McCann, 2015). Boii responded by developing a sense of connectedness and belonging with his Advisory peers, thus alleviating his family stress and facilitating his love of basketball.

Krishna's unfulfilling school experiences led her to the Advisory, where she felt trusted, respected and cared for by others. She built her confidence through connecting to others. She endeavoured to become somebody (Wexler, 1992) while being herself on her own terms. Krishna's peers have helped her develop a sense of connectedness and belonging to the Advisory group, which she valued. Krishna described how she could be herself as she explored her future aspirations, knowing she had support and direction from the Advisory group.

Faith went from an isolating and culturally irrelevant high school situation to a learning community where she experienced a more holistic and expressive learning environment. Her response to a more relational pedagogy was to gain control and

autonomy in her daily schooling. Faith had the time and place to recognise and work with her interests, as her Advisor challenged her to implement her interests in real-world contexts (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). She was enthused, driving her learning, which in turn linked to teaching others and building possible future careers.

Cory actively resisted traditional schooling. However, once in the Advisory he saw connections to his future in the adult world. Cory was articulate and grateful for the social and emotional support he received from both Miss Mae and his peers. He responded sensitively to the Advisory while establishing a career in sport physiotherapy in the navy.

Gemma understood that a high-stakes ATAR was not working for her. On experiencing Advisory, she responded by enthusiastically working towards building her capabilities and navigating the world of women's health. Gemma learnt to scaffold her learning and qualifications until she reached her goal. She highlighted how she has intuitively embraced the values of the Advisory, which generated deep and enduring relationships which supported her engagement in learning.

By building confidence and self-reliance, BPA students had the chance to re-invent their more predictable futures as vocational students or "dropouts" within the CAC system at WHS. Student-initiated learning, which values prior knowledge and experiences, was however, sometimes difficult for students to embrace and work with (Klem & Connell, 2004). WHS Advisory leaders told us the students were able to experience learning with adults for a purpose. Such a possibility facilitates students seeing themselves as decision makers, entrepreneurs, participators, co-learners and self-managers who are ready for the real world they will soon enter (Wyn, 2009).

6.5.2   The Structural, Cultural and Pedagogical Features of the Advisory

Students shared the benefits from their participation and engagement in the Advisory via a range of knowledge, skills and understandings due to the way the Advisory organised learning. As evidenced by this case study, when pedagogies and learning activities are based on a relational framework and implemented through an experiential pedagogical approach, an engaging learning context for students to be themselves is created (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a). Structural features included a small learning

community within a larger school so the students can access teacher expertise more easily. Advisories are stable and small, similar to a family network. These features assisted students to settle down, feel safe, protected and known, and be addressed in a personable manner.

Culturally, Advisories are flexible and relaxed, promoting movement and self-management. The Advisory provided flexibility and opportunities to leave school to learn through Internships and other learning options such as TAFE. Other cultural features of the Advisory included student centeredness, recognising students' interests and strengths, and encouraging active participation in learning. Rigorous efforts were made to create, respond to, maintain and adapt personalised learning, thereby developing autonomy in learning. Miss Mae indicated that relationships between Advisors and family and community members based on trust, care and respect were crucial to the day to day operation of the Advisory

In a pedagogical sense, BPA operations are student centred with a focus on active participation and dialogue. The students developed ideas that benefited their community. Students made phone calls, sent texts, and scheduled meetings with partners and stakeholders. They created projects and event plans including contingencies. These experiences raised curiosity, sparked interest and initiated a sense of belonging (Noddings, 2005; Waterhouse, 2007).

Learning tasks in the Advisory were constructed with student needs in mind, thus attending to relevant and rigorous relationships (Bridgeland et al., 2006). There were strong relationships between peers. Both collaborative and individual engagement strategies are in place to assist students to scaffold their learning, taking into account individual needs for connectedness, belonging and overall well-being. In summary, relational, structural, cultural and pedagogical networks direct student engagement in learning in the Advisory.

6.5.3   Advisory and the Aspirational Identities and Capabilities of Students

WHS Advisory students all mentioned a growing understanding of potential pathways to develop their aspirations for further education and training including university pathways. Engaging in a relational environment with personalised curriculum projects

that encouraged dialogue and experience taught students that learning is not linear. Learning involved identifying possible challenges faced by students when identifying and working towards their aspirations (Wright & McLeod, 2015). The Advisory sought to created engaging partnerships with community stakeholders. In doing so, there was a focus on creativity and problem solving in real work contexts, volunteering, service events, local community, teaching and learning with other students, TAFE and experiences with higher education facilities.

Consequently, there was an expectation that students would spend time in their local university community as well (Washor & Mojkowski, 2013). For example, students like Gemma were offered learning opportunities through researching potential pathways, meeting and communicating with university staff and students, plus visiting tertiary campuses. There is an expectation that Advisory participants would learn by leaving school helped generate links with local workplaces, community services, TAFE and university sites as Gemma's story illuminated. Furthermore, interaction with university employees and undergraduate students initiated questions about university life and learning. Many of the Advisory students participated in pre-university courses, thus interacting, experiencing teaching and learning styles and expectations of university. This included interacting with the scope and depth of study units and how university degrees linked to high school, and TAFE (Sarojini-Hart, 2013).

Through the years the BPA students socialised and spoke to small and large audiences on aspects of their Advisory experience. At other times, there were opportunities to engage and relax on various educational campuses, partaking in lectures, exhibitions and sausage sizzles and thus gaining exposure to an assortment of tertiary career paths and opportunities (Appadurai, 2004). These experiences assisted in the development of the aspirational identities and capabilities of students. In the words of Wrench, Hammond, McCallum and Price (2012): "These initiatives challenge the notion that young people get trapped in a vicious cycle of deprivation, educational underachievement and failure. They also challenge traditional relationships between low family income and low academic achievement" (p. 944). Thus, a student's sense of connectedness to school, belonging and well-being in a network of support provided students with opportunities to build their "aspirational capacity" (Appadurai, 2004, p. 59) by extending themselves beyond their existing lifeworld's. The Advisory, through its relational structure, culture, pedagogies and connections encouraged the

development of career aspirations, as shown in the narratives of the six BPA students. Through strong teacher–student relationships and a flexible learning community that recognised and integrated student voices, interests and lifeworlds, students are empowered to explore and experience their imagined futures and aspirations.

6.5.4 Lessons for Education Systems, Policymakers and Educators

Policymakers, education systems and educators can learn a great deal from the WHS Advisory innovation about how to strive for social justice, advance educational quality, equity and opportunity, and improve student engagement in learning. By creating relational spaces students are encouraged to develop stronger relationships with students, teachers, families and communities. At the heart of an Advisory is the commitment to listen to students and to position students at the centre of their education. This action offers students the time and space to participate in meaningful and critical dialogues about their instruction (Talbot & Hayes, 2016). I have argued that qualitative case study research can provide a vital counter-narrative to dominant deficit discourses about young people and schooling (McGregor, 2015). My central argument is that mandated curriculum, performativity and system accountability run counter to nurturing the human dimensions of education and the social relationships that should underpin public schooling (Polesel et al., 2012).

Another lesson for policymakers, education systems and educators is that market-oriented educational developments have shifted funds out of the public school sector and into the private sector, creating widening inequities in the provision of education in Australian schools, particularly in disadvantaged communities ((Bonnor & Caro, 2012; Connell, 2015; Deeming, 2016). The once collective social goals of public education are now somewhat undermined by private sector economic goals in Australia (Deeming, 2016). In addition, neoliberal policy has replaced educational theory as the primary source of guidance for educational change (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Public education should continue to be an open, public good with the potential to instil in young people significant transformational experiences in order to create democratic and safe societies in Australia (Zipin & Reid, 2008). The three critical dimensions of public education in Australian public schooling social equality, democracy and productive communities are essential to attaining these goals (Reid,

2005b). In other words, a public school should be a public good, public education is a collective right of all citizens, and every community should have a well-resourced public school (Reid, 2005b). The WHS BPA is an excellent example of the progress public schools can achieve in disadvantaged communities, creating a more nuturing set of learning relationships.

A further lesson for policymakers, education systems and educators is that a progressive philosophy and approach to public education matters for individuals and communities. A culturally responsive and relational pedagogy is understood to be an environment for learning where students can connect new learning to their prior knowledge and cultural experiences (Bruner, 1996). To be inclusive and provide quality, engaging and relevant learning requires that each student is accepted and valued. When we do school in this way, cognitive levels and learning activities are responsive to the interests and abilities of individual learners. Learning which is interactive, dialogic and relational becomes "the essential foundation of learning" (Dewey, 1963, p. 42). As a dialogic transaction materialises between an individual and the social environment, this relationship becomes a fundamental way of building knowledge. Teaching and learning roles are seen as interdependent, fluid and dynamic so that students and teachers can learn with and from other learners (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). Feedback and feedforward (Reilly, 2012) provide learners with specific information about what has ended well and what needs to be done to achieve more, thereby creating hope, and aspirations for possible future lives and careers. It is crucial that we are consistent in our efforts in public schools from K to 12 and with pre-service teachers in our tertiary sectors.

6.6   Mapping Some Key Elements of a Relational Pedagogy

According to Van Manen (2016, p. 41), relational pedagogy is situational, practical, normative, relational and self-reflective, thus making it a rather elusive idea to investigate. Through this case study research, I set out to investigate how this broader concept actually looks, feels and works from the point of view of the participants. My intention was to get up close to the lives of the students themselves to identify some key elements of a relational pedagogy operating in the WHS BPA and what we can learn more generally about the best ways in which our high schools might be re-imagined. A relational pedagogy has a grounding philosophy based on the idea of

students' engagement in learning in a physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual sense (Erwin, 2010). Relational pedagogy encouraged knowledge to be constructed through experience and reflection and by engaging with multiple contexts and considering multiple perspectives (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a).

Relational pedagogy was a way of engaging in learning through creating a democratic educational context together as a learning community (Dewey, 1963). Everyone in the learning context shared their thoughts and spoke about their learning (Comber, 2015). Relational pedagogy also promoted the idea that all students have a right to quality, equitable and engaging public education that helped them connect to the world around them (Sen, 2009). Their learning community was cohesive, inclusive, collaborative and transformative (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011).

Relational learning communities also integrated a more liberal and student-oriented conception of student engagement using relational ideas focused on the democratic and social roles of public schooling (McMahon & Portelli, 2004). One dimension of student-oriented engagement in learning was listening to student voice to grow confident and autonomous students within the educational process (Smyth, 2006). A relational pedagogy created opportunities for students to question ineffective instructional styles and to develop more effective learning strategies for themselves and others (McDonald, 2010). In asking questions the Advisory students' consciousness grew individually, interdependently and in cognizance with others (Moll et al., 1992).

Relational pedagogy and learning fostered the transfer, translation and transformation of knowledge with a focus on how the student can manoeuvre in the real world (Popkewitz, Diaz & Kirchgasler, 2017). The curriculum was central to individual interests and enabled students to work in the commercial and social world outside of school. This relationality includeed recognising and integrating the strengths and the potential of the student, their families and communities to actively support students in significant learning (Otero et al., 2012).

Relational pedagogy also shifts, translates and converts knowledge into intellectual and social capital to enhance individual and community capabilities (McCallum & Price, 2015; Lysaker & Furuness, 2011; Stone et al., 2012). Explicit self-analysis through one-on-one discussion regarding personal attributes, including social,

emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual dimensions of well-being, encouraged students to explore the relationships between their academic achievement, individual capacities and identity of self (DEEWR, 2009a). There was the potential for students to grow and become resilient. This case study demonstrated that robust student–teacher relationships were central to a relational pedagogy. These relationships can impart a sense of humanity, caring and democracy which many of us have felt dissolve as consumerism inches into our everyday existence (Lindstrom et al., 2016).

Relational pedagogy provides caring and teaching in family-like structures, communities of trust that transcend the bureaucratic character of traditional public high schools (Lindstrom et al., 2016). A relational pedagogy endeavoured to pair students with a community mentor who assists the students with their learning and their character development. Community members appraised the quality of students' work and how their work changed them as a person or individual based on real world standards and relevance.

6.7   Identifying New Insights and Possibilities for Action

Repositioning students at the centre of their education opened up the possibility for individuals to be respected, trusted and cared for through the unique contributions they were capable of making within the school and surrounding community (Smyth et al., 2010). We need to prepare young people to be able to create and sustain places where they can be vocal and understood; to be active in the relational, social and community environments within which they live and contribute to their community. Experiencing relational pedagogy in high school provided a viable mechanism to do just that, particularly for those who feel marginalised from traditional schooling in disadvantaged communities. In a democratic society with a public education system, recognising the diversity of multiple voices is the first step towards co-constructing a shared educational enterprise (Sen, 2009). If schools are to be democratic, students must be consulted, listened to and acknowledged within all areas of the educational enterprise. There needs to be a sensitivity concerning who the student is as an individual with hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future. We also need to understand the implications expressed through their words (Gee, 2011). In listening to students' voices and enacting social practices which are more sensitive to issues of social justice we are better placed to honour individuals' testimonies (Gee, 2011).

There is also a broader need to recognise that relational work is hard work: it demands time and effort to negotiate with the rough, ready and aspirational identities on the margins of our public high schools (Smyth & Wrigley, 2013). Relational pedagogies are an essential way to support young Australians in their education, along with other pedagogical styles. As the student narratives testify, relational pedagogies can frame a socially just education, social and emotional interactions, and an interest-based curriculum, resulting in higher academic accomplishments. It is important to change the lens with which we view education to address educational problems (Ellis, Grant & Haniford, 2007). Progressive education provides a more democratic, kinder and deeper educational experience than that offered by competitive neoliberal policies designed by people far removed from students lives (Apple, 2014). A relational pedagogy provides the opportunity for those students to question, to resist, to dismantle and co-create, thus pointing them in the direction of critical engagement and nurturing the emerging consciousness of individuals and groups (Gergen, 2009; McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Smyth et al., 2010).

Educators must act in good faith, act with a social consciousness tied to both community and personal issues, to communicate and to be active (Beane, 2005, p. 2). In being socially just (Cook-Sather, 2006; Smyth, 2000; Thiessen, 2006) we can critique how people, policies, practices, curriculums and institutions can create freedoms and futures rather than excluding and marginalising the groups and individuals who are least served by dominant decision making (Apple, 2013; Smyth et al., 2014). We can achieve these aims by expanding the definition of educational outcomes to include creativity, communication, collaboration and higher order thinking skills (Fredericks, 2014) by championing the value of student social-emotional and physical health and promoting resilient relationships between young people (Harris et al., 2013). We can improve equity, not just in curriculum and pedagogy but also and perhaps more importantly in resources and access, by challenging meritocratic traditions and by creating new possibilities (Nielson, 1985). We can loosen central control and grant more autonomy in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. There is little evidence from this research that this is happening, even though implementing IPS processes may be a move in the right direction. There is a similar need to ease testing, as we know the negative impact on students of continual high-stakes testing (Polesel et al, 2012).

Progressive schools can pursue a more relational pedagogy by moving away from knowledge transmission and towards inquiry-based and constructivist approaches that are more student-centred. There are also opportunities to capitalise on technology to improve education and develop digital literacies. The students at the WHS Advisory used a range of technologies such as iPhones, iPads, the internet and Netflix to support their engagement in learning or sometimes to distract themselves. Broadening the curriculum is a good idea so it is possible to tap into students' education experiences beyond the traditional academic subjects, while strengthening the core subjects. We need to take time to co-construct a common vision for educational excellence, one that is relevant and doable (Sen, 2009). We also need to recognise the importance of local circumstances and ideals. Ignoring unique community contexts will undermine our best efforts to improve public high school effectiveness and to create places where all students can succeed to their full potential (Wilson et al., 2011). Qualitative case studies such as this one illuminate the insights of a few unacknowledged bystanders. In essence, they revealed how and why (Yin, 1993) young people resist ed the imposition of dominant discourses and do not engage in learning in public high schooling, especially in low socioeconomic locales (Apple, 2013).

The importance of relationships and their contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in public schooling should not fall by the wayside. Relationships should be a central point of investment in disadvantaged public high schools. Any policy or practice that aims to increase students' engagement in learning in low socioeconomic locales should plan to improve students' relationships with schools, teachers and each other. Standardised educational systems and policies will always exclude specific individuals and are not designed to cater to all students. We must also recognise the importance and complexity of relationships, the value of students' experiences and the assets they bring to school (Hattam, 2006; Moll et al., 1992). Providing learning choices together with trusting, caring and respectful relational experiences and time for reflection will provide a space for all students to make informed decisions about the future (Dewey, 1963).

6.8   Ascertaining Limitations and Future Research Directions

All research studies have limitations. In this section I discuss the limitations of the current study and the need for further research to fill exisiting gaps and silences.

There is a need for more research that focuses on students' perspectives in BP learning environments and how relational pedagogy enhances or inhibits student engagement in learning and to what effect. This study has not explored how other BP schools in Australia are implementing the BP model and to what effect. The building of relationships is a significant aspect of engagement in learning for WHS Advisory students, so the question of how other BP schools and Australian Advisory designs create relationships in their learning communities is important to know. I have mentioned a few initiatives but, as te Riele (2014) states, there is still much work to be done.

Learning communities are not the only concern. How can the myriad of lived experiences and individual voices radiating from BPA family members, specialist teachers, community mentors and other individuals actively supporting and contributing to the operation of Advisory be explored? Furthermore, how can the principles and values of the BPEA approach be integrated into traditional public schools with disproportionality large numbers of disengaged students to improve engagement in learning? There are many ways to discover and view the perspectives touched upon in this research.

Statistics tell us one story and students' voices tell us another. The fundamntal question is how can the philosophical, political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions and arguments be addressed and critiqued in more depth, and what is their impact on Advisory relationships, engagement and learning? More work on reviewing and understanding international literature on the topic of BPS and Advisories can act as a base to compare and contrast new research findings and to discover possibilities and links for disengaged and marginalised youth in low socioeconomic communities. The focus is to listen to and reveal the often-silenced student voices and experiences of high school to improve engagement in learning (Burbules & Berk, 1999).

The generalisability of this research is limited due to its single ethnographic case study design. However, the research does provide a rich descriptive account of what individual students are experiencing at WHS Advisory learning community. There are descriptions of the structural, cultural and pedagogical features of the Advisory learning community as well as information about how the Advisory assists in the development of the aspirational identities and capabilities of Advisory students.

However, this research is orientated by students' accounts of their lived experiences (Van Manen, 2016). The intention of this research was to provide a glimpse into students' relational learning and re-engagement experiences in the Advisory (Willis, 2000). So, even in this single-site case study, the findings are, as I have argued relevant to other sites.

In this research, it is up to the reader to decide which specifics of this study are or are not applicable to his or her situation. The theoretical and methodological arguments and the minutiae of student experiences in this exploration are not linear. It is perhaps difficult to read at times. I ask you to be flexible, make connections, understand, re-read, and reflect on the complexities of the individual narratives. I am not apologetic that I have broken the cardinal, linear, rule of thesis writing (White, 2011). This is my story as much as it is the students'. My voice weaves through the research and I own my experiences and voice. This story has verisimilitude for the Advisory participants and WHS in general. This story has a purpose and a heartbeat that characterises the participants and their experiences, as they care for themselves and grow into the world, just as I have. The outcome casts an exploratory light on the educative issues raised by the participants so the reader can consider the educative space they have previously or currently or desire to inhabit. This story contributes in some way to a growing understanding of the relationships that govern educative spaces.

But there is still a feeling that there is something missing from these student narratives. I want more from these voices; I want these texts of despair and hope (Greene, 1991) to challenge undemocratic, inequitable and marginalising experiences facing disadvantaged young people in public high schools. We must challenge those dominant discourses and school practices which continue to position students in unfair ways (Smyth et al., 2014). We need to challenge the notion that marginalised young people's aspirations are uniformly low (Gale & Parker, 2015b). The narratives in this thesis and their interpretations are just one opportunity for the students to speak back to pathologising discourses (Smyth et al., 2010, p. 2). But what else can be done to continue these interactions to keep the communication going for all of our public high school students and their unique locales? The evidence presented in this thesis indicates that, when we change the way high schools work, high school experiences of that work change (Tyack & Tobin, 1994, p. 476).

When we imagine education with students in mind and create relational schools, there is a shift in the way our values orient us. If we decide that our schooling is deeply unsatisfying, we should be moved to fill the emptiness with something more valuable, more humane (hooks, 1994). We need to make space to articulate our consciousness that we are all morally alive and every student is physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and spiritually connected to others (Erwin, 2010; Greene, 1991). The Advisory offers opportunities and strategies for individual students to develop their capabilities by suggesting ways to mitigate the unequal educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes often played out in low socioeconomic localities (Perry, 2017). It is one way to alleviate some of the systemic issues within traditional high schools that marginalise and ultimately exclude many talented and capable students from the benefits of public high school education.

6.9   Epilogue, A Personal Reflection: A Fractured Fairy Tale Concluding this Thesis

Don't let the bastards wear you down. (Roy Stone, my Father)

The end was swift; a colleague suggested we say farewell to one participant of our research circle whom we enjoyed working with by commenting on why we enjoyed working with them. I thought, "This is no end. I am just beginning." Abruptly, we received news that our local university campus was closing. No more classes, no future university employment, no students, no water coolers nor internet service. Holding back tears, red faced but proud, gritting our teeth, we watched as our campus library was closed. No more books or book service, QWERTY codes or delightful smiles from the library staff. The surveying was complete; the database was overflowing. The postgraduate students were graduating, parties and ceremonies guaranteed to entertain, providing a clear end, a certain space for reflecting on old and new journeys. The action was over. There was no ambiguity.

I could not even eat a curried egg triangle sandwich with lettuce, my favourite party snack, at the farewell party. Nothing cheered me up; I felt gutted. I imposed a suck-it-up-princess attitude on myself and continued day in and day out writing, editing, planning, re-reading, aiming for clarity and logical argument, flow and simplicity (White, 2011). Winter came and went. Someone turned the light out in the corridor,

permanently, so to let myself in each day, to find my office door, I pretended I was a blind mole, or a hedgehog. If they can navigate and survive in the dark, so could I.

At work, at university, I saw and felt the dissipation of neoliberalism sidle into my everyday life (Lindstrom et al., 2016). The pigs got caught (once again) with their snouts in the higher education trough to the detriment of us all. That is the us on the fringes and margins. This regional university campus had to finish up. Ironically, the reason why this regional campus was opened is because people in this area do not go to university; the reason why this regional campus was closed is because people in this area do not go to university. So, colleagues started shifting away; deadlines loomed, funding disappeared, ethics approvals expired, we wrote reports and submitted them. Contracts matured and the crowd dissipated. There was a focus on accountability and transparency surrounding the ever-shrinking team and resources. The carpetbaggers slipped into the building, wheeling out computers, rehoming furniture, locking doors and producing viability reports; we raced towards unsustainability. A key member of staff died, then another, then another after that. I felt hollow.

Midnight our beloved cat had a stroke. We took her to the vet to administer the green dream.

The three boys acquired apprenticeships, their licences, cars and girlfriends. The boys, once so loud and hungry, now silently spirited themselves away at night and returned in the early morning with bruised necks and a glint in their eye. "Hey Helen, got any food? I gotta to go to work in 10 minutes." "Egg and bacon burger?" "Yeah", they said, "extra bacon". Our two girls turned 17. Were they ever 12? They were full of activity, studying for their ATAR. They now drove their own car and had a disposable income from their part-time jobs. "Shhh …", they would snap at me, "I am busy, leave me alone, I have to study. I have to go to work in half an hour. There is nothing to eat in the house!" They glared at me as I point to the sweet lushness of the fruit bowl. They accused me of gender discrimination. They wanted egg and bacon burgers as well, on wholemeal bread, and yeah, the organic bread, with tomato, mayonnaise, capers and a touch of lemon. No salt but pepper please. In ten minutes.

I wondered if they got that attitude about study, work and food from me. I know and love these young people. Only a few years ago they depended on Dave and me. Now they communicate with us via a huh, nah or yeah. Just as Bingham et al. (2004) define,

"relations are complex; they may not be described in single utterances. To describe a relation is to produce a multi-voiced text" (p. 7). Dave and I are not in their text. We cannot compete with the ding dings, swoosh, zhu-zhu vibration or those white earbuds. The five kids block us on every platform. "Rejection much?", they say to us. I see neat squares and corporate symbols; I do not understand the relationships. Are there any? Tell me, am I mistaken? This is their life now.

I went to one last conference in Nepal. I travelled from Kathmandu over the pass to Dhulikhel and up the mountain to Sunrise Inn, to the Himalayas just under heaven. I was incredulous each morning, noon and night with the shifting vista of the valley, the sun on the Himalayan peaks mixing with shimmering glows of snow, ice, cloud, mist and pure air. The air was full of the subtle smells of organic coffee, masala tea, basmati rice and dahl bhat tar kari. The back streets of Kathmandu pulled me into an other-worldly context of tinkers, tailors, gypsies and pashmina makers. My contribution at the Nepal Conference on Transformative Education, Research and Development for a Sustainable Future (2016) was a philosophical paper on verisimilitude. So, academic, rare and obscure and so thought provoking. And so stupidly preposterous. I felt deeply ashamed of my ignorance once again, embarrassingly aware that there was more need for shelter, clean water, food, education, health and sanitary systems. Much of Nepal's infrastructure a year after the 2015 earthquake was still propped up by bamboo poles and cable ties. It was in this context of a real reality that I fell to earth again. There is nothing like going local to ground you. However, in my defence, I defer to Harrison (2011) who articulates my learning better than I:

> What I'm trying to suggest is that realism itself is doomed to a kind of
> fecklessness in the world of reality, while the real power – the real
> virtuous power – seems to be aligned with the faculty which

Machiavelli held most in contempt, namely the imagination. It's the human imagination that in the long run proves itself the truly efficacious and revolutionary force. (p. 1)

For a year after that lesson in humility, I concealed myself in facilities management at the local university to write my thesis. Sometimes I would reminisce on my family upbringing. I remembered each morning at breakfast eating vegemite on toast with a glass of milk as our father lectured us to *not let the bastards wear us down,* particularly from now on as the bastards had become Bastards Incorporated. Dad told us that power is exercised in silent increments, subtle, almost unperceivable shifts that we could sense yet not grasp. He taught us to always make decisions on gut instinct, to be aware of those in fur coats with no knickers (O'Loughlin, MacPhail & Msetfi, 2015). And if you listen and look closely enough, you will sometimes find they have snouts and teeth or sometimes tails and whiskers. My childhood imagination ran wild at breakfast. Are people animals? I discovered Aesop's fables later in life.

We knew it was going to be a long day when we were allowed to have two sardines each to spread out on our toast at breakfast. Our parents told us we needed brain food. There was one sardine for each piece of toast. We knew that there was only one can of sardines, 10 sardines, five people, so two sardines each. Dad got the biggest sardines because he was the biggest, then Mum the next two sardines, then the oldest, middle then youngest daughters. The breakfast rules were, you had to take the whole fish, head and all, on the blade of the butter knife and if you dropped it on the kitchen tablecloth you would get a clip over the ear for being careless. It was considered disrespectful if you damaged the oily sheen of the sardine skins for the next person or took less or more than was silently agreed. Dishing out the precious sardines was proportionate, impartial, symbolic and democratic. We could be as liberal as we wanted with the vinegar and salt and pepper. But we had to go easy on the butter. I did not understand the meaning of Dad's words or actions then, but I do now, having more experience in the world.

I became the last one at university, the project was audited and closed. I struggled again to survive on the margins in facilities management. First, the phone went, and then access to the staff toilets. All the photocopier paper and then the printer disappeared. The air conditioning and heating were turned off. Then Endnote, my bibliographic

reference system, was disabled, and finally my email was high-jacked by Information Technology (IT). I told the IT girl at the main campus that I was not very good at syncing my Exchange with my Outlook, and I was not sure where my settings were, but I had excellent face-to-face communication skills and could cook a mean chicken Andalusia. She had no idea what I was saying. She frowned at me, not amused. I was just trying for a little humour. Despite the resting bitch face of the IT girl, I secured a month's extension to my IT facilities. In my isolation, I defied the economic rationalists to take the facilities office over, furiously working the words into compliant paragraphs and chapters. I take full ownerships of my dissertation. This is my Big Picture portfolio. I was grasping for completion; this research is my Big Picture Exhibition. The task often felt beyond my reach but I told myself, I will finish, I will submit my thesis. This internal motivation is a constant in my thinking and life.

What could I do? I tried creating a future. Wonderful colleagues prepared me for opportunities for teaching and learning at universities. I applied for so many jobs but there were few interviews, no work at a university for me in an age of austerity and neoliberalism. Yoga sounded good; yoga helps me think about new ways of learning and doing. Reflecting on the study years, I visited old friends and living quarters (Kemmis, 2005). I realised when my dissertation was with the editor that my study years would be over. I finally understood that educational relation is different from any other; its nature is transitional. Educational relations exist to include me, the student, in a wider web of relations beyond the limits of education relation (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004a). And that for me has been achieved. I find that only the memory of a past life exists, and my memory of the past is on the blink. There has been transformation. Even the years of being learned and teaching in prison have been snuffed out. I have grown up. I finally got a job, full-time in a lovely high school 10 minutes up the road, but only because I knew some-one. That job was also transitional.

Where did everyone go? I realised I was living in the end times (Zizek & Zizek, 2011). I visited the precious quiet space of the local university for one last moment. The brown lawns crunched underfoot, no longer irrigated, the cupboards and walls bare and pitted, the shitty mouldy smell of the old fridge that romanced each cup of coffee, tea and snack even took delivery of a pardon. The southern and northern wings of the university campus had been mothballed. The nameless, uninhabited pigeonholes were begging open-mouthed for some import from the paper era; beseeching a collegial

postcard from exotic Mongolia to mystify us all. Each pigeonhole, naked and hungry, pleaded for one of those free cardboard mini calendars for the New Year. Even an overdue library notice would have been a suitable morsel to pick upon. There was no us anymore. Only Skype, Facebook and podcasts. I wished for a thick hardcover book to finger through, releasing the smell of blanched, recycled fibre, or perhaps even a payment advice to fill the emptiness.

No, there was nothing left, not a scrap of paper, not even me.

My father died this morning. He said to me, "Helen, rise above it …"

Be kind …

Appendix A   Murdoch University Ethics Approval

Division of Research & Development
Research Ethics and Integrity Office

Chancellery Building
South Street
MURDOCH WA 6150
Telephone: (08) 9360 6677
Facsimile: (08) 9360 6686
human.ethics@murdoch.edu.au
animal.ethics@murdoch.edu.au

www.murdoch.edu.au

Friday, 20 June 2014

Prof Barry Down
School of Education
Murdoch University

Dear Barry,

Project No.	2013/177
Project Title	Big Picture Academy Project

AMENDMENT: **Approval to contract expert transcribing service to confidentially transcribe participants recorded interviews**
Approval to interview School Principals at Big Picture Academy Project schools

Your application for an amendment to the above project, received on 19/06/2014 was reviewed by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee and was;

APPROVED

Approval is granted on the understanding that research will be conducted according the standards of the **National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)**, the **Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)** and **Murdoch University** policies at all times. You must also abide by the **Human Research Ethics Committee's standard conditions of approval.** All reporting forms are available on the Research Ethics and Integrity web-site.

I wish you every success for your research.

Please quote your ethics project number in all correspondence.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Erich von Dietze
Manager
Research Ethics and Integrity

cc: John Hogan, Dr Kathryn Choules, Lynette Vernon, Sam Prodonovich, Donna Carr and Helen Stone

CRICOS Provider Code: 00125J
ABN 61 616 369 313

221

Appendix B   Department of Education, Western Australia Ethics Approval

Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Your ref   :
Our ref   :   D13/0637888
Enquiries   :

Professor Barry Down
City of Rockingham Chair in Education
Murdoch University
Rockingham Campus
Dixon Road
ROCKINGHAM WA   6168

Dear Professor Down

Thank you for your completed application received 31 October 2013 to conduct research on Department of Education sites.

The focus and outcomes of your research project, *Big Picture Academy Project,* are of interest to the Department. I give permission for you to approach principals to invite their participation in the project as outlined in your application. It is a condition of approval, however, that upon conclusion the results of this study are forwarded to the Department at the email address below.

Consistent with Department policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the schools invited to participate, individual staff members, the students in those schools and their parents. A copy of this letter must be provided to principals when requesting their participation in the research. Researchers are required to sign a confidential declaration and provide a current Working with Children Check upon arrival at Department of Education schools.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. The Department notes a copy of a letter confirming that you have received ethical approval of your research protocol from the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Any proposed changes to the research project will need to be submitted for Department approval prior to implementation.

Please contact Ms Beverley Vickers, Principal Evaluation Officer, on (08) 9264 4649 or researchandpolicy@education.wa.edu.au if you have further enquiries.

Very best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely

ALAN DODSON
DIRECTOR
EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

29 November 2013

151 Royal Street, East Perth Western Australia 6004

Appendix C   Human Research Ethics Committee

Outright Approval

Murdoch
UNIVERSITY

Monday, 28 October 2013

Prof Barry Down
School of Education
Murdoch University

Dear Barry,

Project No.	2013/177
Project Title	Big Picture Academy Project

Thank you for addressing the conditions placed on the above application to the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee. On behalf of the Sub-Committee, I am pleased to advise the application now has:

OUTRIGHT APPROVAL

Please ensure copies of the Approval Letter from the Department of Education and the schools involved are forwarded to the Research Ethics Office, once received.

Approval is granted on the understanding that research will be conducted according the standards of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007), the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007) and Murdoch University policies at all times. You must also abide by the Human Research Ethics Committee's standard conditions of approval (see attached). All reporting forms are available on the Research Ethics web-site.

I wish you every success for your research.

Please quote your ethics project number in all correspondence.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Erich von Dietze
Manager of Research Ethics

cc: John Hogan and Dr Kathryn Choules and Helen Stone

Human Research Ethics Committee: Standard Conditions of Approval

a) The project must be conducted in accordance with the approved application, including any conditions and amendments that have been approved. You must comply with all of the conditions imposed by the HREC, and any subsequent conditions that the HREC may require.

b) You must report immediately anything which might affect ethical acceptance of your project, including:

- *Adverse effects on participants*
- *Significant unforeseen events*
- *Other matters that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.*

c) Where approval has been given pending copies of documents such as letters of support / consent from other organisations or approvals from third parties, these must be provided to the Research Ethics Office before the research may commence at each relevant location.

d) Proposed changes or amendments to the research must be applied for, using an Amendment Application form, and approved by the HREC before these may be implemented.

e) An annual Report must be provided by the due date specified each year (usually the anniversary of approval) for the project to have continuing approval.

f) A closure report must be provided at the conclusion of the project.

g) If, for any reason, the project does not proceed or is discontinued, you must advise the committee in writing, using a Closure Report form.

h) If an extension is required beyond the approved end date of the project, an extension application should be made allowing sufficient time for its consideration by the committee. Extensions cannot be granted retrospectively.

i) You must advise the HREC immediately, in writing, if any complaint is made about the conduct of the project.

j) Any equipment used must meet current safety standards. Purpose built equipment must be tested and certified by independent experts for compliance with safety standards.

k) Higher degree students must have both Candidacy and Program of Study approved prior to commencing data collection.

l) You must notify the Research Ethics Office of any changes in contact details including address, phone number and email address.

m) The HREC may conduct random audits and / or require additional reports concerning the research project.

Failure to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and with the conditions of approval may result in the suspension or withdrawal of approval for the project.

The HREC seeks to support researchers in achieving strong results and positive outcomes.

The HREC promotes a research culture in which ethics is considered and discussed at all stages of the research.

If you have any issues you wish to raise, please contact the Research Ethics Office in the first instance.

Appendix D Transcription Confidentiality Non-disclosure Agreement

sharyn taylor transcribing & secretarial

Transcribing from | Tapes | Audio Digital files | Ipads | Video Files

| Online Transcribing – Australia Wide | 6 Thunderbird Drive, Bokarina Qld 4575

| m: 0412 086 650 | e: stts@westnet.com.au | www.sharyntaylortranscribing.com

Transcription Confidentiality Non-disclosure Agreement

Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial will maintain strict confidentiality of the information contained within the audio-recorded interviews transcribed for a research study conducted by x.

Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial agrees to take reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of interviews audio-recorded by x and in pursuit thereof will communicate to all of its contractors and/or employees, both present and in the future, in writing, the confidentiality and non-disclosure that must be maintained with respect to all interviews audio-recorded by x.

Confidential information includes all information contained in any audio-recorded interviews provided to Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial for transcription including, but not limited to, the identity of research study interview participants, the identity of their organisation, the nature of their work, the subject-matter or content of the transcription and any other incidental information relating to any third party so contained therein.

Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial agrees:

1. Not to duplicate or transmit or permit the duplication or transmission of any confidential information except as may be necessary for the purpose of supplying word-processed transcriptions to x;

2. To take all reasonable security precautions to keep the information confidential and to exercise a sufficient degree of control over all confidential information provided to Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial to assume full responsibility to protect the confidential nature of the data and to institute any necessary procedures to protect its confidential nature, and to ensure employees and/or contractors of Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial do not:
   (i) discuss the confidential data with any other person not also bound by the terms of this Agreement; or
   (ii) remove the confidential information from secure data housing where the data is maintained on the premises of Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial other than to return or make available transcription of the confidential data to x; or
   (iii) produce any additional copy, image and/or recording of the confidential information other than as required by x; and
   (iv) following completion of transcription, will return all confidential hard copy data supplied by x.

3. All transcribed work will be held on file by Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial, unless otherwise advised by x in writing or via email to be deleted.

4. Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial will notify x immediately upon discovery of any unauthorised use or disclosure of the confidential data or any other breach of this Agreement by Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial or its employees or contractors and will cooperate with x in any reasonable way to help x regain possession of the confidential information and prevent any further breach.

5. All Confidential Information will remain the property of x including any transcription of the confidential information prepared by Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial.

Accepted and agreed for and on behalf of Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial:

Signed: Sharyn Taylor   ....   Date: /   /

Registered Business name: Sharyn Taylor Transcribing & Secretarial   ABN 80 479 089 626

Appendix E   Participant Information Statement, School Principal/Organisation CEO

1st September 2014

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
School Principal/Organisation CEO

1. What is the study about?

   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) is part of a bigger research project funded by the federal government under the direction of Professor Andrew Taggart of Murdoch University and called "MAP4U" or Murdoch's Aspiration and Pathways for University project. As the name suggests, the bigger project seeks to increase the numbers of students moving into tertiary education in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area.

   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) involves the setting up of Big Picture Academies or programs in five schools/organisation in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area. Also included are two schools which have been following a Big Picture Education approach for a number of years. The research will investigate the implementation of this project. We will look at three main aspects: the process and consequences of establishing a Big Picture Academy in an existing school; how students' engagement, learning and aspirations are formed in a Big Picture Education environment; and teacher professional development in the Big Picture Education environment.

   Participants involved in this study include: school leaders; school teachers; Big Picture Education coaches; students who are enrolled in Big Picture programs; parents/guardians of such students; and mentors of such students.

2. Who is carrying out the research?

   Chief Investigator Prof Barry Down is conducting the study in collaboration with co-researchers, Mr John Hogan, Dr Kathryn Choules and student researcher Ms Helen Stone. This research will only proceed with the consent of the Department of Education of Western Australia.

   All persons in the research team have completed a Confidential Declaration with the Department of Education. They have also undergone a Working with Children Check. Evidence that these checks are current for each member of the research team has been provided to you.

3. How has my school/organisation been selected to be involved?
   Your school/organisation has been selected because it is in the Kwinana/Rockingham/ Peel area and has chosen to establish a Big Picture Academy or adopt a Big Picture Education approach. All schools/organisations that fit this description have been invited to participate.

4. What does the research involve?
   If you consent to your school participating, your school staff, students, parents of students, mentors of students and Big Picture coaches will be asked to take part in the following processes during 2014 and 2015:

   Data collection that relates to the school, students, parents, mentors:
   Observations: Researchers will observe the range of activities associated with Big Picture Education, including advisories (classrooms), exhibitions (presentations of student work), school environment, students working with mentors, Research Circles, and interaction with Big Picture coaches. A number of student documents will be assessed during observations including Individual Learning Plans and portfolios of student work.

   Student Surveys: All students participating in the Big Picture Academy/program who consent will be surveyed during 2014-2015 through an Enrolment Survey, Annual Survey (in Term 4) and Exit Survey. These surveys will be administered by the relevant school staff/research team member. The Enrolment Survey will be administered as soon as practicable in Term 1 or if the student enrols after the school year has commenced, as soon as practicable after the student enrols. The Annual Survey will be administered at a time convenient to the school/students in Term 4. Where possible the Exit Survey will be administered as part of the annual Term 4 Survey. If the student leaves before that date the Exit Survey will be administered as close as practicable to the time the student leaves the Big Picture program.

   Student subject selection, results and attendance: At the end of each semester you or your nominee will provide the research team with a print out or other written information on each Big Picture student's subject selection, attendance record and a copy of the student's school report.

   Student interviews/focus groups: Four students will be selected for interview/focus group (see below) to be held at the school. Indicative interview questions for all participant groups are attached.

   Parents interviews/focus groups: The parents of the selected students will be invited to participate in interviews/focus groups to be held at the school.

   Mentor interviews/focus groups: The mentors of the selected students will be invited to participate in interviews/focus groups to be held at the school or other location convenient to the mentor.

   Big Picture coach interviews/focus groups: The Big Picture coach assigned to your school will be invited to participate in interviews/focus groups to be held at a location convenient to the Big Picture coach.

   Data collection that relates specifically to staff at your school/organisation:
   Interviews/Focus Groups/Research Circle: Interviews and focus groups of the school leader most involved in the establishment of the Big Picture program and teacher of the Big Picture class commencing in 2014 will be held at your school in 2014 and 2015. They will be invited to participate in Research Circles each term (or semester).

5. How much time will the research take?
    The research is for a two year period: 2014-2015. Interviews and focus groups for staff, parents and mentors will take approximately 45 – 60 min and will be held annually. Interviews and focus groups for students will take approximately 45 – 60 min and will be held twice a year. Participant observation will occur over a 2-3 day period twice a year. The Research Circles will be held 2-4 times per year. They will take 1-2 days.

    We will keep the school/organisation's involvement in the administration of the research procedures to a minimum. However, it will be necessary for the school/organisation to assist in providing a private space for the interviews/focus groups to be held at the school. Further, in consultation with you the research team will organise the administration of the student surveys at enrolment, in term 4 and when a student exits before the end of the school year. These surveys will take 30-40 minutes to complete. All materials will be provided by the research team. The school will also assist in identifying the 4 students to be interviewed/focus group according to the date of birth of the student in the Year 10 Big Picture cohort commencing 2014 (oldest, youngest and the 2 students closest to the median age). It will be necessary for the paper work (Information Statements and Consent Forms) for all staff, mentors, students and their parents participating in the research to be sent in the first instance through the school administration.

    Note: there is no payment for participation in this research project.

6. Can my school and participants withdraw from the research?
    Being in this study is completely voluntary – your school is not under any obligation to consent. Written consent is a prerequisite for participating in this research. If you do consent – you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with Murdoch University, the researchers or Big Picture Education Australia. Withdrawal of your school/organisation will mean that your school/organisation will not be included as a case study in the research and no further data will be collected from staff, students, parents, mentors or other associated with your school. However, the data collected from individuals prior to your withdrawal will still be included for analysis where relevant.

7. Will anyone else know the results?
    All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Data will be securely stored at Murdoch University, Rockingham Campus under the control of Prof Down. Only the research team will have access to the data. Data derived from the study may be published in books, journals, reports and conferences, but individual participants and schools/organisations will not be identified. You will be given the opportunity to review any transcripts, quotes for publication and portraits and provide additional information if you see fit. Individual participant's identity will not be disclosed and pseudonyms will be used. No school or organisations will be named.

    The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from you. All data will be kept for 5 years after the research ends and then destroyed in accordance with Murdoch University Human Research Ethical guidelines.

8. Will the research benefit me?
    While the study will not benefit you directly, the research should provide information about many aspects of teaching and learning, student engagement/learning/aspirations, and school

reform along the Big Picture model. Data from a number of educational institutions will be included enabling comparison of experience.

9. Can I tell other people about the research?
   Yes. Please feel free to discuss the research.

10. What if I want further information about the research or my involvement in it?
    Please feel free to contact Prof Barry Down, 9360 7020, b.down@murdoch.edu.au if you would like to discuss this further.

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2013/177) and has met the requirements of the Department of Education. If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Professor Barry Down
BSocSc, GradDipEd, BEd, MEd, PhD Murd.
City of Rockingham Chair in Education
Murdoch University
Email: b.down@murdoch.edu.au

229

Appendix F Participant Consent Form,
School Principal/Organisation CEO

1st September 2014

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
School Principal/Organisation CEO

I, …………………………………………………… [PRINT NAME], Principal/CEO of

…………………………………………………………………………………….
[PRINT NAME OF SCHOOL/ORGANISATION]

☐ DO give consent for research to be carried out in my school/organisation for the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

☐ DO NOT give consent for research to be carried out in my school/organisation for the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the research project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the research project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the copy given to me of the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the research project with the researcher(s). I understand the aims, procedures and risks of this project.

3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

4. I understand that any information provided by me is strictly confidential and will not be released by the researchers to a third party unless required to do so by law. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about the school or participants will be used in a way that is identifiable.

5. I understand that I can withdraw my school/organisation from the study at any time, without providing a reason, and that this will not affect my relationship with the researchers, Murdoch University or Big Picture Education Australia now or in the future. If I do not withdraw, the school will participate for the period 2014 and 2015. If the school/organisation

withdraws its consent, the school/organisation will not be included in the research as one of the case studies. However, individual data from participants may be used.

6. I understand that I will be provided with a copy of the findings of this research upon its completion.

7. I would like to receive updates about the research: Yes □   No □
    If you answered yes to receiving feedback, please provide your details:

    Address: _____

                    _____

    E-mail: _____

_____
Signature of Principal/CEO

_____
Please PRINT name

_____
Date

Appendix G   Participant Information Statement, School/Organisation Leaders

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
School/Organisation Leaders

1. **What is the study about**?
   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) is part of a bigger research project funded by the federal government under the direction of Professor Andrew Taggart of Murdoch University and called "MAP4U" or Murdoch's Aspiration and Pathways for University project. As the name suggests, the bigger project seeks to increase the numbers of students moving into tertiary education in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area.

   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) involves the setting up of Big Picture Academies or programs in five schools/organisation in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area. Also included are two schools which have been following a Big Picture Education approach for a number of years. The research will investigate the implementation of this project. We will look at three main aspects: the process and consequences of establishing a Big Picture Academy in an existing school; how students' engagement, learning and aspirations are formed in a Big Picture Education environment; and teacher professional development in the Big Picture Education environment.

   Participants involved in this study include: school leaders; school teachers; Big Picture Education coaches; students who are enrolled in Big Picture programs; parents/guardians of such students; and mentors of such students.

2. **Who is carrying out the research?**
   Chief Investigator Prof Barry Down is conducting the study in collaboration with co-researchers, Mr John Hogan, Dr Kathryn Choules, Ms Lynette Vernon, Ms Helen Stone, Mr Sam Prodonovich and Ms Donna Carr. This research will only proceed with the consent of the Department of Education of Western Australia.

   All persons in the research team have completed a Confidential Declaration with the Department of Education. They have also undergone a Working with Children Check. Evidence that these checks are current for each member of the research team has been provided you.

3. **How have I been selected to be involved?**
   You have been selected because your school is in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area; your school/organisation has chosen to establish a Big Picture Academy or adopt a Big Picture Education approach; and you are the School Principal. All School Principals who fit this description have been invited to participate.

4. **What does the research involve?**

   You will be asked to take part in the following processes during 2014 and 2015, or such shorter period should you stop working in a Big Picture environment:

   Data collection that relates to the school and students:

   Observations: Researchers will observe the range of activities associated with Big Picture Education, including advisories (classrooms), exhibitions (presentations of student work), school environment, students working with mentors, Research Circles, and interaction with Big Picture coaches. A number of documents relating to the students chosen for interview will be assessed during observations including Individual Learning Plans and portfolios of student work.

   Student Surveys: Student surveys will be administered by the relevant staff/research team member on enrolment and annually in term 4. An exit survey will be administered either as part of the annual term 4 survey or other time the student is leaving the Big Picture program.

   Data collection that relates specifically to you:

   Interviews: Interviews will take place at your school. We would like to interview you before implementation of the Big Picture Academy/approach if possible and then annually after that. You will be asked to describe your experience and role in Big Picture Education. You will be asked questions such as: Why did you decide to establish a Big Picture Academy/approach in your school? What have been some of the challenges in this process? How is the experience affecting the culture of the broader school? What does the Big Picture Academy/approach offer students, the broader school community, teachers, parents etc? What are you learning through the experience of establishing a Big Picture Academy?

   Focus Groups: As well as the interviews, you may be invited to participate in a Focus Group that will be audio recorded. The focus group enables the researchers to gather the experiences of people in a particular group, and to explore similarities and differences in these experiences. You will be asked similar questions to those in the interview but you will have the opportunity to hear other people's experiences. You do not have to participate in such a group. If you choose to take part, you may withdraw at any time. Participants in the focus group will be asked to treat what is shared in the group as confidential.

   Interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. Information that might identify participants will be removed before inclusion in any publication. We will arrange times to talk with you that are mutually convenient and do not interrupt your responsibilities.

5. **How much time will the research take?**

   The research is for a two year period: 2014-2015. Each interview and focus group will take approximately 45 – 60 min and will be held annually. Participant observation will occur over a 2-3 day period twice a year. Note: there is no payment for participation in this research project.

6. **Can I withdraw from the research?**
   Being in this study is completely voluntary – you are not under any obligation to consent. Written consent is a prerequisite for participating in this research. If you do consent – you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with Murdoch University, the researchers, or your relevant school. Withdrawal from the research will mean that no further data will be collected from you. You may stop an interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. The audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study should this occur. If you take part in a focus group and wished to withdraw, as this is a group process it will not be possible to exclude the actual data once the session has commenced.

7. **Will anyone else know the results?**
   All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Data will be securely stored at Murdoch University, Rockingham Campus under the control of Prof Down. Only the research team will have access to the data. It is possible that transcription of the interview/focus group data will be undertaken by a professional transcription service pursuant to a confidentiality agreement. Data derived from the study may be published in books, journals, reports and conferences, but individual participants and schools/organisations will not be identified. You will be given the opportunity to review any transcripts, quotes for publication and portraits and provide additional information if you see fit. Individual participant's identity will not be disclosed and pseudonyms will be used.

   The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from you. All data will be kept for 5 years after the research ends and then destroyed in accordance with Murdoch University Human Research Ethical Guidelines.

8. **Will the research benefit me?**
   While the study will not benefit you directly, the research should provide information about many aspects of teaching and learning, student engagement/learning/aspirations, and school reform along the Big Picture model. Data from a number of educational institutions will be included enabling comparison of experience.

9. **Can I tell other people about the research?**
   Yes. Please feel free to discuss the research.

10. **What if I want further information about the research or my involvement in it?**
    Please feel free to contact Prof Barry Down, 9360 7020, b.down@murdoch.edu.au if you would like to discuss this further.

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2013/177) and has met the requirements of the Department of Education. If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix H Participant Consent Form, School/Organisation Leaders

School of Education
Dixon Road, Rockingham
Western Australia 6168
Telephone: +61 8 9360 7020
Facsimile: +61 8 9360 7091
b.down@murdoch.edu.au

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Teacher/School Leader/ Mentor/Big Picture Coach

I, ……………………………………… [PRINT NAME],

☐ DO give consent to my participation in the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

☐ DO NOT give consent to my participation in the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the research project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the research project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the copy given to me of the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the research project with the researcher(s). I understand the aims, procedures and risks of this project.

3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.

4. I understand that any information provided by me is strictly confidential and will not be released by the researchers to a third party unless required to do so by law. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in a way that is identifiable.

5. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without providing a reason, and that this will not affect my relationship with the school, the researchers, or Murdoch University now or in the future. If I do not withdraw, I consent to participate during 2014 and 2015. I know that if I leave the Big Picture program my participation in this research finishes.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue and that the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. I can also stop my participation in a focus group if I do not wish to continue. However, as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point.

7. I freely consent to:
   - a. Audio-recording   Yes ☐   No ☐
   - b. Interview   Yes ☐   No ☐
   - c. Focus Group   Yes ☐   No ☐
   - d. Observation   Yes ☐   No ☐

8. I would like to receive feedback about the research: Yes ☐   No ☐
   If you answered yes to receiving feedback, please provide your details:

Address: _____

               _____

E-mail: _____

_____

Signature

_____

Please PRINT name

_____

Date

Appendix I   Participant Information Statement, Parent/Guardian Interview

School of Education
Dixon Road, Rockingham
Western Australia 6168
Telephone: +61 8 9360 7020
Facsimile: +61 8 9360 7091
b.down@murdoch.edu.au

1st September 2014

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
Parents/guardians Interview

1. What is the study about?
   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) is part of a bigger research project funded by the federal government under the direction of Professor Andrew Taggart of Murdoch University and called "MAP4U" or Murdoch's Aspiration and Pathways for University project. As the name suggests, the bigger project seeks to increase the numbers of students moving into tertiary education in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area.

   The Big Picture Academy research (this research) involves the setting up of Big Picture Academies or orientations in five schools/organisation in the Kwinana/Rockingham/Peel area. Also included are two schools which have been following a Big Picture Education approach for a number of years. The research will investigate the implementation of this project. We will look at three main aspects: the process and consequences of establishing a Big Picture Academy in an existing school; how students' engagement, learning and aspirations are formed in a Big Picture Education environment; and teacher professional development in the Big Picture Education environment.

   Participants involved in this study include: school leaders; school teachers; Big Picture Education coaches; students who are enrolled in Big Picture programs; parents/guardians of such students; and mentors of such students.

2. Who is carrying out the research?
   Chief Investigator Prof Barry Down is conducting the study in collaboration with co-researchers, Mr John Hogan, Dr Kathryn Choules and student researcher Ms Helen Stone. This research will only proceed with the consent of the Department of Education of Western Australia.

   All persons in the research team have completed a Confidential Declaration with the Department of Education. They have also undergone a Working with Children Check. Evidence that these checks are current for each member of the research team has been provided to the Principal of your school.

CRICOS Provider Code: 00125J
ABN 61 616 369 313

237

3. How has my child been selected to be involved?

Your child has been selected to be involved in the research because he/she is in a Big Picture Academy or Big Picture program. His/her selection is based on date of birth. To ensure a good cross-section of students from your child's class/advisory we are inviting the oldest student, youngest student and two students closest to the average to participate.

4. What does the research involve?

Your child will only be involved if both of you consent to this. Should you both consent, your child will be invited to participate in interviews, observations and possibly focus groups. The research is for a two year period: 2014-2015.

Interviews: Interviews of your child will take place at her/his school. He/she will be asked to describe his/her experience and role in Big Picture Education. He/she will be asked questions such as: How long have you attended a Big Picture Academy/institution? What were your previous experiences of school? Why do you choose a Big Picture Academy/institution? Are you happy with the choice? Have you experienced any differences between Big Picture learning and your previous schooling experiences? What is it like to be a student in a Big Picture school? Has your role as a student/ a learner changed in the Big Picture Academy?

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Information that might identify participants will be removed before inclusion in any publication.

Observations: Researchers will observe the range of activities associated with Big Picture Education, including advisories (classrooms), exhibitions (presentations of student work), school environment and students working with mentors. A number of documents will be collected during observations including your child's Individual Learning Plans and portfolios of his/her work.

Should you both consent to your child's participation, you are also invited to be a research participant in your own right.

The parents/guardians and mentors of the students selected are also being invited to participate in interviews and focus groups to provide their experience of Big Picture Education. *You* will be asked to take part in an interview and possibly a focus group each year your child is enrolled in the Big Picture Academy/institution or 2014 and 2015 – whichever is the shorter period.

Interviews: Interviews will take place at your child's school. You will be asked to describe your experience and role in Big Picture Education. You will be asked questions such as: Why did you choose to send your child to a Big Picture Academy/institution? Are you happy with this choice? Have you experience any differences between Big Picture learning and your child's previous schooling experiences? Is your role different in a Big Picture school?

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Information that might identify participants will be removed before inclusion in any publication.

You and your child may be invited to participate in a focus group:

Focus Groups: The focus group enables the researchers to gather the experiences of people in a particular group, and to explore similarities and differences in these experiences. Participants will be asked similar questions to those in the interview and will have the opportunity to hear other people's experiences. You and your child do not have to participate in such a group. You may decide to participate in a focus group of parents but your child

may decide not to participate in a focus group of students, or vice versa. If you choose to take part, you may withdraw at any time. Participants in the focus group will be asked to treat what is shared in the group as confidential.

NOTE: Your child has also been invited to participate in student surveys as part of this research. You will have received a separate Information Statement and Consent Form for participation in the student surveys. His/her involvement in the survey research is additional to the involvement described here.

5. How much time will the research take?
The research continues through 2014 and 2015. Each student interview and focus group will take approximately 45 – 60 min. They will be held annually. Participant observation will occur over a 2-3 day period twice a year.

Each interview and focus group that you are personally involved in will take approximately 45 – 60 min. They will be held once a year.

If you child leaves the Big Picture Academy/program her/his participation and your participation in the research will cease.

Note: there is no payment for participation in this research project.

6. Can my child and/or I withdraw from the research?
Being in this study is completely voluntary. You and your child are not under any obligation to consent. Written consent is needed from both of you. Your child has also been provided with an Information Statement and Consent Form. Please discuss participation with your child before consenting to their involvement.

Your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate will not prejudice you or your child's future relations with Murdoch University, the researchers, your child's teacher or school/organisation. If you decide to permit your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your child's participation at any time without affecting your relationship with Murdoch University or your child's school. In the same way, if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any time without affecting your relationship with Murdoch University or your child's school. Withdrawal from the research will mean that no further data will be collected from you.

Participants may stop an interview at any time if they do not wish to continue. The audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study, if this occurs.

Participants in focus groups may withdraw at any stage. However, as this is a group discussion, it will not be possible to exclude individual data once the session has commenced.

7. Will anyone else know the results?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Data will be securely stored at Murdoch University, Rockingham Campus under the control of Prof Down. Only the research team will have access to the data. Data derived from the study may be published in books, journals, reports and conferences, but individual participants and schools/organisations will not be identified. You and your child will be given the opportunity

to review the transcripts, quotes for publication and portraits that relate to you and provide additional information if you see fit. Individual participant's identity will not be disclosed and pseudonyms will be used.

The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from you and your child. All data will be kept for 5 years after the research ends and then destroyed in accordance with Murdoch University Human Research Ethical Guidelines.

8. Will the research benefit me?
   While the study will not benefit you directly, the research should provide information about many aspects of teaching and learning, student engagement/learning/aspirations, and school reform along the Big Picture model. Data from a number of educational institutions will be included enabling comparison of experience.

9. Can I tell other people about the research?
   Yes. Please feel free to discuss the research.

10. What if I want further information about the research or my involvement in it?
    Please feel free to contact Prof Barry Down, 9360 7020, b.down@murdoch.edu.au if you would like to discuss this further.

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2013/177) and has met the requirements of the Department of Education. If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Professor Barry Down
BSocSc, GradDipEd, BEd, MEd, PhD Murd.
City of Rockingham Chair in Education
Murdoch University
Email: b.down@murdoch.edu.au

Appendix J Participant Consent Form, Parent/Guardian Interview

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Parents/Guardians Interview

1st September 2014

I, ……………………………………… [PRINT NAME],

☐ DO give consent to **my** participation in the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

☐ DO NOT give consent to **my** participation in the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

I am the parent/guardian of ……………………………………… [NAME OF CHILD] and

☐ DO give consent to **my child's** participation in the interview/observation/focus group component of the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

☐ DO NOT give consent to **my child's** participation in the interview/observation/focus group component of the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the research project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the research project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the copy given to me of the Participant Information Statement (Parents/Guardians of Interview Students) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the research project with the researcher(s). I understand the aims, procedures and risks of this project

3. I have spoken with my child about her/his participation in the research and she/he has explicitly agreed to participate.

4. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – neither my child nor I am under any obligation to consent.

5. I understand that any information provided by me or my child is strictly confidential and will not be released by the researchers to a third party unless required to do so by law. I

understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about my child or me will be used in a way that is identifiable.

6. I understand that my child and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without providing a reason, and that this will not affect my relationship with the school, the researchers, or Murdoch University now or in the future. If my child does not withdraw, I consent both to him/her participating during 2014 and 2015 and myself participating during that period. I know that if my child leaves the Big Picture program our participation in this research finishes.

7. I understand that my child and I can stop an interview at any time if we do not wish to continue and that the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. We can also stop participating in any focus group if we do not wish to continue. However, as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point. If my child withdraws any student work collected and observations unique to my child will not be included in the research.

8. In relation to my child's participation I freely consent to:
   a. Audio-recording   Yes ☐   No ☐
   b. Observation   Yes ☐   No ☐
   c. Interview   Yes ☐   No ☐
   d. Focus Group   Yes ☐   No ☐
   e. Provision of work samples   Yes ☐   No ☐
   f. Provision of Individual Learning Plan   Yes ☐   No ☐

9. In relation to my own participation I freely consent to:
   a. Audio-recording   Yes ☐   No ☐
   b. Interview   Yes ☐   No ☐
   c. Focus Group   Yes ☐   No ☐

10. I would like a summary of the research: Yes ☐   No ☐
    If you answered yes to receiving a summary, please provide your details:

Address: _____

                      _____

E-mail: _____

_____
Signature

_____
Please PRINT name

_____
Date

Appendix K   Participant Information Statement, Student Interview

1st September 2014

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
Students for Interview/Focus Group/Observation (young people under 18 years)

1. What is the study about?
   This three year research project aims to:
   (a) describe the type of teaching and learning in Big Picture Academies and programs
   (b) assess how Big Picture supports you to succeed in school and in life
   (c) describes the process and consequences of establishing a Big Picture Academy in an existing school.

   The research will help us understand how to improve schools and make them places where all young people can learn well.

   School leaders, teachers, Big Picture coaches, students, mentors and parents/guardians are being invited to participate in the research.

2. Who is carrying out the research?
   Chief Investigator Prof Barry Down is conducting the study with co-researchers, Mr John Hogan, Dr Kathryn Choules and student researcher Ms Helen Stone. This research has to have the consent of the Department of Education of Western Australia.

   Everyone in the research team has completed a Confidential Declaration with the Department of Education. They have also undergone a Working with Children Check and shown it to your Principal.

3. How have I been selected to be involved?
   You have been selected to be involved in the research because you are a student in a Big Picture Academy or Big Picture program enrolled in 2014. Your selection is based on your date of birth. To ensure a good cross-section of students from your class/advisory we are inviting the oldest student, youngest student and two students closest to the average age to participate.

4. What does the research involve?
   We would like to interview you and observe you and your Advisory class as you move through the years at the Big Picture Academy/institution. You might also be asked to talk

with us in a group with other students. We would also like to collect some examples of your school work. The research will continue in 2014 and 2015.

Interviews: Interviews will take place at your school. You will be asked to describe your experience and role in Big Picture Education. You will be asked questions such as: How long have you attended a Big Picture Academy/institution? What were your previous experiences of school? Why do you choose a Big Picture Academy/institution? Are you happy with the choice? Have you experienced any differences between Big Picture learning and your previous schooling experiences? What is it like to be a student in a Big Picture school? Has your role as a student/ a learner changed in the Big Picture Academy?

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Information that might identify participants will be removed before inclusion in any publication.

Observations: Researchers will observe the range of activities associated with Big Picture Education, including advisories (classrooms), exhibitions (presentations of student work), school environment, and students working with mentors. During observations, we will ask to look at documents such as your Individual Learning Plans and portfolio.

Focus Groups: As well as the interview, you may be invited to participate in a focus group with other students. You will be asked similar questions to those in the interview but you will have the opportunity to hear other students' experiences. You are not required to participate in such a group. If you choose to take part, you may withdraw at any time. Students in the focus group will be asked to treat what is shared in the group as private and to not talk about it outside the group.

NOTE: You have also been invited to participate in student surveys as part of this research. You will have received a separate Information Statement and Consent Form for participation in the student surveys. Your involvement in the survey research is additional to the involvement described here.

5. How much time will the research take?
   Each interview and focus group will take approximately 45 – 60 min. They will be held twice a year in 2014 and 2015 so long as you are still at Big Picture Academy/institution. Participant observation will occur over a 2-3 day period twice a year. The research will take place over a three year period so long as you are still a student in the Big Picture Academy/program. Note: there is no payment for participation in this research project.

6. Do I have to be involved in the research?
   It is fully your choice to take part or not to take part in the research. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Murdoch University, the researchers, your teacher or school. It will not affect your grades. If you would like to participate you and your parent/guardian need to agree in writing. If you decide to take part, you can later choose to pull out if you wish. Just tell your teacher or one of the researchers. If you pull out you will have no more involvement with the research. You can also stop an interview at any time and any information you have given the researchers will not be used in the study. If you are taking part in a focus group and you wish to pull out, because you have been part of the group the information you have given up to that point will still be included in the study.

   As you are under 18, your parent/guardian/caregiver must give permission for you to participate in the research. This permission must be in writing. However, even if they give permission, you do not have to take part and you may withdraw at any time.

244

7. Will anyone else know the results?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. All the information will be securely stored at Murdoch University, Rockingham Campus under the control of Prof Down. Only the research team will have access to the data. The researchers may write a report, article, book or conference paper for publication about this research. You will not be named neither will your school/organisation – a pseudonym (false name) will be used. Only the researchers will know your answers. You will be given the opportunity to review any transcripts, quotes for publication and portraits and provide additional information if you see fit.

The data will be used only for this project and will not be used for other research without obtaining your additional written consent. All data will be kept for 5 years after the research ends and then destroyed in accordance with Murdoch University Human Research Ethical Guidelines.

What you tell us is private and confidential unless you tell us something that we need to tell someone else because the law requires us to do so. An example of this is if we think you have been mistreated by someone. If this happens we will make sure that someone will come and talk with you about it.

8. Will the research benefit me?
While the study will not benefit you directly, we are interested in describing your experiences in a Big Picture Academy/institution and how these compare with your previous experiences in other types of schools.

9. Can I tell other people about the research?
Yes. Please feel free to discuss the research.

10. What if I want further information about the research or my involvement in it?
Please feel free to contact Prof Barry Down, 9360 7020, b.down@murdoch.edu.au if you would like to discuss this further.

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2013/177) and has met the requirements of the Department of Education. If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Professor Barry Down
BSocSc, GradDipEd, BEd, MEd, PhD Murd.
City of Rockingham Chair in Education
Murdoch University
Email: b.down@murdoch.edu.au

This information sheet is for you to keep   Page 3

Appendix L   Participant Consent Form, Student Interview

Big Picture Academy Research
PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM
Students (Interview/Observation/Focus Group)

1st September 2014

I, …………………………………………………………………… [PRINT NAME],

☐ DO give consent to my participation in the interview/observation/focus group part of the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

☐ DO NOT give consent to my participation in the interview/observation/focus group part of the Big Picture Academy Research Project.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the research project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the research project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the copy given to me of the Participant Information Statement (Student – Interview) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the research project with the researcher(s). I understand the aims, procedures and risks of this project.

3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent. I have been encouraged to discuss my participation with my parents.

4. I understand that any information provided by me is strictly confidential and will not be passed on to anyone else unless required to do so by law. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in a way that is identifiable.

5. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without providing a reason, and that this will not affect my relationship with my school, the researchers, or Murdoch University now or in the future. If I do not withdraw, I consent to participate during 2014 and 2015. I know that if I leave the Big Picture program my participation in this research finishes.
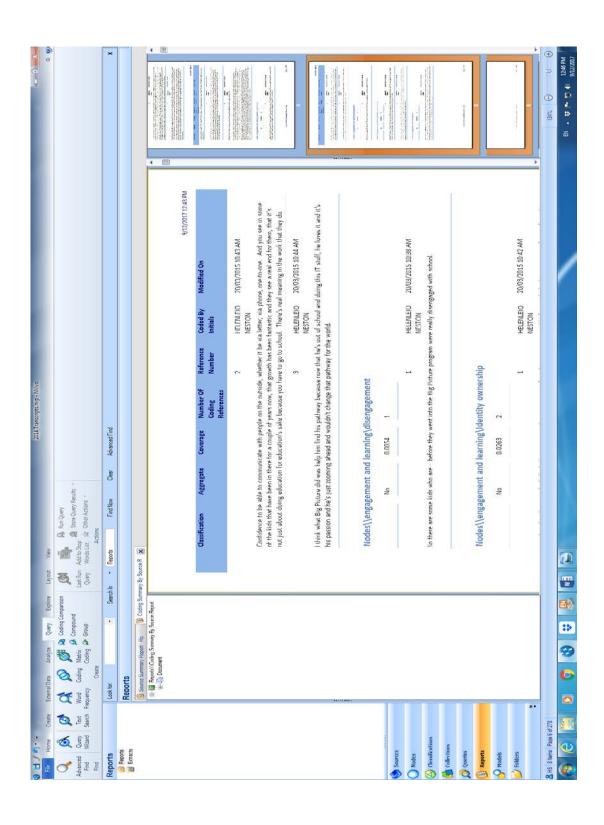
6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue and that the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. I can also stop my participation in any focus group if I do not wish to continue. However, as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point. If I withdraw, my work samples and observations about me will not be included in the research.

7. I freely consent to:
   a. Audio-recording   Yes ☐   No ☐
   b. Observation   Yes ☐   No ☐
   c. Interview   Yes ☐   No ☐
   d. Focus Group   Yes ☐   No ☐
   e. Provision of work samples   Yes ☐   No ☐
   f. Provision of Individual Learning Plan   Yes ☐   No ☐

8. I would like to receive feedback about the research: Yes ☐   No ☐
   If you answered yes to receiving feedback, please provide your details:

   Address: _____

                     _____

   E-mail: _____

_____
Signature of student

_____
Please PRINT name

_____
Date of birth

_____
Date signing this document

Appendix M   Participant Thank You Note

School of Education, Professor Barry Down
City of Rockingham Chair in Education

Dixon Road, Rockingham W. A. 6168
b.down@murdoch.edu.au
http://www.murdoch.edu.au

Dear _____

This letter is to thank you and acknowledge your valuable contribution to educational research. You have volunteered your time, and provided clear insights, understandings and interpretations of your experiences of Big Picture Education and Advisory at your Community College.

Your personal and professional manner and your honest and dignified approach are skills that will hold you in good stead for your future. On behalf of myself and the School of Education, I wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Helen Stone, PhD Student,

Murdoch University, October, 2015.

Appendix N   Coding Summary Report for Select Words in Individual Dialogue

Appendix O   Nodes of Key Concepts Emerging from the Data

Name	Sources	References
Advisory	12	59
Alternative learning	3	3
aspirations	13	36
Belonging Comfort	8	27
Big Picture	11	40
Care	7	9
Certificate VET	8	11
Curriculum	12	27
Dropping out	7	9
engagement and learning	13	84
Exhibitions	3	11
expereince	9	20
Family	8	22
help	7	17
Internship	5	9
Judgement	4	5
Mainstream	13	44
Paid Work	6	8
Peers	9	35
personalised learning	13	69
projects	9	23
respect	1	2
stress	5	8
student teacher relationship	13	63
student voice	2	4
support	11	39
Talk	11	32
Trust Honesty	4	4
University	8	17
Whole school	8	17

Appendix P   Diagram of Word Frequency
and Cluster Analysis

Appendix Q   Word Tree Analysis

with the Word *Care*

References

Adam, B. (1995). *Time watch: the social analysis of time*. Cambridge, MA; Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Adams, S., Freeman, A., Giesinger, C., Cummins, M. & Yuhnke, B. (2016). *NMC/CoSN horizon report: 2016 K–12 edition*. Austin, TX: New Media Consortium. Retrieved December 22, 2017 from https://www.learntechlib.org/p/173568/

Alger, A. L. (2016). *The Big Picture school model: understanding the student experience.* PhD thesis, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

al-Ghazālī, A. H. M. (1983). *Alchemy of happiness*. London: Octagon.

Alverman, D., & Ealkle, J. (2007). Dissolving learning boundaries: the doing, re-doing, and un doing of school. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school* (pp. 143–166). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Amorim, C. (2015). Friendly writer, friendly reader: a reflection about academic style. *NU Ideas, 4*(2), 17–28.

Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (Eds.) (2009). *Collaborative learning* (Vol. 1). Detroit, MI: Macmillan.

Anderman, L. H. (2003). Academic and social perceptions as predictors of change in middle school students' sense of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education, 72*(1), 5–22. Doi: 10.1080/00220970309600877

Anderson, A., Hamilton, R. J., & Hattie, J. (2004). Classroom climate and motivated behaviour in secondary schools. *Learning Environments Research, 7*(3), 211–225. Doi: 10.1007/s10 984-004-3292-9

Anderson, C., Turner, A. C., Heath, R. D., & Payne, C. M. (2016). On the meaning of grit and hope and fate control and alienation and locus of control and self-efficacy and effort optimism. *Urban Review, 48*(2), 198–219. Doi: 10.1007/s11256-016-0351-3

Angus, L. (2015). School choice: neoliberal education policy and imagined futures. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36*(3), 395–413. Doi:10.1080/01425692.2013.823835

Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: culture and the terms of recognition. In Y. Rao, & M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and public action* (pp. 59–84)*.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Apple, M. W. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange*, *2*(4), 27-40.

Apple, M. W. (1979). What correspondence theories of the hidden curriculum miss. *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies, 5*(2), 101–112.

Apple, M. W. (2000). Away with all teachers: the cultural politics of home schooling. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 10*(1), 61–80. Doi: 10.1080/09620210000200049

Apple, M. W. (2007). Whose markets, whose knowledge? In A. R. Sadovnik (Ed.), *Sociology of education: a critical reader* (pp. 177–194). New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2012). *Education and power*. New York. Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2013). *Educating the right way: markets, standards, God, and inequality*. New York. Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2014). *Official knowledge: democratic education in a conservative age*. New York: Routledge.

Aronowitz, S. (2008). *Against schooling: toward an education that matters*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers Routledge.

Atkinson, P., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., Lofland, L, H., & Coffey, A. (2007). *Handbook of ethnography*. London: Sage.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)*. Canberra: ABS.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2013). *Guide to understanding ICSEA*. Retrieved from http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Guide_to_understanding_ICSEA.pdf

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2014). *About My School*. Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About_My_School_2014.pdf

Ayers, W., Klonsky, M., & Lyon, G. (Eds.) (2000). *A simple justice: the challenge of small schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Ball, S. J. (2000). Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: towards the performative society? *Australian Educational Researcher*, *27*(2), 1–23.

Ball, S. J. (2016). Education, justice and democracy: the struggle over ignorance and opportunity. In A. Montgomery & I. Kehoe (Eds.), *Re-imagining the purpose of schools and educational organisations* (pp. 189–205). New York: Springer International Publishing.

Bambara, L. M., & Kern, L. (Eds.) (2005). *Individualized supports for students with problem behaviours: designing positive behaviour plans*. New York: Guilford Press.

Bandura, A. M. (1977) *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bassot, B. (2016). *The reflective journal*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. London: McKinsey & Company.

Bartik, T. J., & Hershbein, B. J. (2016). Degrees of poverty: family income background and the college earnings premium. *Employment Research Newsletter*, *23*(3): 1–3. Doi: 10.17848/1075-8445.23 (3)-1

Baroutsis, A., McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2016). Pedagogic voice: student voice in teaching and engagement pedagogies. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 24*(1), 123–140. Doi: 10.1080/14681366.2015.1087044

Barrett, J. H. (2003). Culture contact in Viking Age Scotland. In J. H. Barrett (Ed.), *Contact, continuity and collapse: the Norse colonization of the North Atlantic* (pp. 73–111). Begijnhof, Belgium: Brepols Publishers.

Beane, J. A. (2005). *A reason to teach: creating classrooms of dignity and hope: the power of the democratic way*. Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books.

Bennett, K. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1990). *How Schools Work: Sociological Analysis of Education*. Longman Publishing Group, 95 Church Street, White Plains, NY 10601.

Bentley, T., & Cazaly, C. (2015). *The shared work of learning: lifting educational achievement through collaboration.* Mitchell Institute research report No. 03/2015. Melbourne: Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy and Centre for Strategic Education. Available from: http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au

Berger, A. A. (1996). *Manufacturing desire: media, popular culture, and everyday life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Berger, R. (2003). *An ethic of excellence: building a culture of craftsmanship with students*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Berlant, L. (2007). Cruel optimism: on Marx, loss and the senses. *New Formations*, *63*(1), 33–51.

Bernstein, B. (1971). On the classification and framing of educational knowledge. In M. F. D. Young (Ed.), *Knowledge and control: new directions for the sociology of education* (pp. 47–69). London: Collier-Macmillan.

Bhopal, K., & Shain, F. (2014). Educational inclusion: towards a social justice agenda? *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 35*(5), 645–649. Doi: 10.1080/01425692.2014.938937

Bhopal, K., & Shain, F. (Eds.) (2017). *Neoliberalism and education: rearticulating social justice and inclusion.* New York: Taylor and Francis.

Biesta, G. (2004). The community of those who have nothing in common: education and the language of responsibility. *Interchange, 35*(3), 307–324. Doi: 10.1007/BF02698880

Big Picture Education Australia (2005a). *The advisory guide.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2005b). *A guide to exhibitions.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2005c) *A guide to mentoring.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2005d). *Learning goals.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2005e). *Learning through internship guide.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2010). *The design principles of a Big Picture high school.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2014). *Design distinguishers.* Strawberry Hills, NSW: BPEA.

Big Picture Education Australia (2017). *Our history.* https://www.bigpicture.org.au/about-us/our-history

Big Picture Learning (2017). *Our story.* https://www.bigpicture.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=389353&type=d&pREC_ID=882353

Billett, S., Thomas, S., Sim, C., Johnson, G., Hay, S., & Ryan, J. (2010). Constructing productive post-school transitions: an analysis of Australian schooling policies. *Journal of Education and Work, 23*(5), 471–489. Doi: 10.1080/13639080.2010.526596

Bingham, C. W., & Sidorkin, A. M. (Eds.) (2004a). *No education without relation*. New York: Peter Lang.

Bingham, C. W., & Sidorkin, A. M. (2004b). The pedagogy of relation: an introduction. In C. W. Bingham & A. M. Sidorkin (Eds.) (2004). *No education without relation* (pp. 1–4). New York: Peter Lang.

Bingham, C. W. et al. (2004). Manifesto of relational pedagogy: meeting to learn, learning to meet. In C. W. Bingham & A. M. Sidorkin (Eds.) (2004). *No education without relation* (pp. 5–7). New York: Peter Lang.

Bland, D. (2012). Imagination for re-engagement from the margins of education. *Australian Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 75–89. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-012-0050-3

Bland, D., Carrington, S., & Brady, K. (2009). Young people, imagination and re-engagement in the middle years. *Improving Schools, 12*(3), 237–248. Doi: 10.1177/1365480209342655

Block, P. (2008). *Community: the structure of belonging*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Blossfeld, H. P., Buchholz, S., Skopek, J., & Triventi, M. (Eds.) (2016). *Models of secondary education and social inequality: an international comparison*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Blum, R. (2005). A case for school connectedness. *Educational Leadership*, *62*(7), 16–20.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Bok, J. (2010). The capacity to aspire to higher education: "it's like making them do a play without a script". *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(2), 163–178. Doi: 10.1080/17508481003731042

Bonnor, C., & Caro, J. (2012). *What makes a good school?* Sydney: New South Publishing.

Borgeson, P. D. (2009). *Student and teacher perspectives of the effectiveness of a high school Advisory program on sense of belonging.* PhD thesis, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN.

Bottrell, D. (2007). Resistance, resilience and social identities: reframing "problem youth" and the problem of schooling. *Journal of Youth Studies, 10*(5), 597–616. Doi: 10.1080/13676260701602662

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (trans. R. Nice). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state nobility: elite schools in the field of power.* Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H., & Scales, B. (2008). *Review of Australian higher education: final report* (Bradley Review). Canberra: DEEWR.

Breakspear, S. (2012). *The policy impact of PISA: an exploration of the normative effects of international benchmarking in school system performance.* OECD Education Working Paper No. 71. Paris: OECD.

Brennan, M. (2014). A necessary thought experiment: changing the secondary school template. In G. Susanne & S. Wayne (Eds.), *Contemporary issues of equity in education* (pp. 231–244.). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Bridgeland, M., DiIulio, J., & Morison, K. (2006). *The silent epidemic: perspectives of high school dropouts.* Washington, DC: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Brodie, B. (2014). *Perceptions of the impact of high school Advisory on academic success, connectedness and personalization of education.* PhD thesis, University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, Burlington, VT.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, B. (2006). Shame resilience theory: a grounded theory study on women and shame. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, *87*(1), 43–52. Doi: 10.1606/1044-3894.3483

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bryk, A., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: a core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40–45.

Burbules, N. C., & Berk, R. (1999). Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: relations, differences, and limits. In L. Fendler & T. S. Popkewitz (1999). *Critical theories in education: changing terrains of knowledge and politics* (pp. 45–65). New York: Routledge.

Burr, V. (2015). *Social constructionism* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Butler, R. (2015). Schools, "ferals", stigma and boundary work: parents managing education and uncertainty in regional Australia. *Ethnography and Education, 10*(3), 340–355. Doi: 10.1080/17457823.2015.1051071

Caldwell, R. (2012). Leadership and learning: a critical reexamination of Senge's learning organization. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, *25*(1), 39–55. Doi: 10.1007/s11213-011-9201-0

Callingham, M. (2017). From discrete intervention to engage marginalised students to a whole-school initiative to engage all students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 21*(2), 131–145. Doi: 10.1080/13603116.2016.1218947

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: a theoretical and practical guide*. New York: Routledge.

Carter-Wall, C., & Whitfield, G. (2012). *The role of aspirations, attitudes and behaviour in closing the educational attainment gap.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Christenson, S., Reschly, A. L., & Wylie, C. (Eds.) (2012). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. New York: Springer.

Clair, R., & Benjamin, A. (2011). Performing desires: the dilemma of aspirations and educational attainment. *British Educational Research Journal*, *37*(3), 501–517.

Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Clark, L. (2016). *Beautiful failures: how the quest for success is harming our kids*. Sydney: Penguin Random House.

Coalition of Essential Schools. (2017). *Vision*. http://essentialschools.org/vision/

Coleman, J. S. (2008). *Student voice and the American high school experience: a paradigm shift towards democratic high schools.* PhD thesis, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA.

Comber, B. (2015). Critical literacy and social justice. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 58*(5), 362–367. Doi: 10.1002/jaal.370

Connell, R. W. (1985). *Teachers' work*. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R. (1993). *Schools and social justice*. Toronto: Temple University Press.

Connell, R. (1994). Poverty and education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 125–149. Doi: 10.17763/haer.64.2.m14947g30k1x5781

Connell, R. (2007). *Southern theory: the global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R. (2013). Why do market "reforms" persistently increase inequality? *Discourse, 34*(2), 279–285. Doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770253.

Connell, R. (2015). Markets all around: defending education in a neoliberal time. In H. Proctor, P. Brownlee & P. Freebody (Eds.), *Controversies in education: orthodoxy and heresy in policy and practice* (pp. 181–197). Cham: Springer.

Connell, R., White, V., & Johnston, K. (1992). An experiment in justice: the disadvantaged schools program and the question of poverty, 1974–1990. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 13*(4), 447–464.

Connors, L., & McMorrow, J. (1988). National policy development: the significance of the national policy for the education of girls. *Unicorn, 14*(4), 256–265.

Connors, L., & McMorrow, J. (2015). *Imperatives in schools funding: equity, sustainability and achievement.* Australian Education Review No. 60. Camberwell, Vict: ACER Press.

Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, presence and power: student voice in educational research and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359–390. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00363.x

Cranston, J. (2011). Relational trust: the glue that binds a professional learning community. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 57*(1), 59–72.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, *39*(3), 124–130. Doi:10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2

Cronin, D. (2013). *College aspirations and preparation: how AVID students beat the odds.* PhD thesis, University of St Thomas, St Paul, MN.

Cuban, L. (2001). *How can I fix it? Finding solutions and managing dilemmas: an educator's road map.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Cupitt, C., Costello, D., Raciti, M., & Eagle, L. (2016). *Social marketing strategy for low SES communities: position paper.* Canberra: Department of Education and Training.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). *The flat world and education: how America's commitment to equity will determine our future.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Davis, K., & Dupper, S. (2004). Student–teacher relationships. *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment, 9*(1–2), 179–193.

Day, C., & Hong, J. (2016). Influences on the capacities for emotional resilience of teachers in schools serving disadvantaged urban communities: challenges of living on the edge. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 59*, 115–125. Doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.015

Deeming, C. (2016). Rethinking social policy and society. *Social Policy and Society, 15*(2), 159–175. Doi: 10.1017/S1474746415000147

de Laine, M. (2000). *Fieldwork, participation and practice: ethics and dilemmas in qualitative research*. London: Sage.

deMarrais, K. B., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *The way schools work: a sociological analysis of education* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: ethnographic practices for the 21st century*: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (Vol. 4). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). *The landscape of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2010). *Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options: a policy direction for consultation*. Melbourne: DEECD.

Department of Education and Training. (2014). *Undergraduate applications, offers and acceptances 2014*. Canberra: Department of Education. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/undergraduate_applications _offers_and_acceptances_2014_0.pdf

Department of Education and Training, Western Australia. (2014). *Middle schooling in Western Australia*. (2014). Perth: Department of Education and Training.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009a). *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009b). *Compact with young Australians*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Department of Education, Western Australia (2012–13). *Annual report.* Perth: Department of Education.

Department of Education, Western Australia. (2015). *Aboriginal cultural standards framework: first strategy*. Perth: Department of Education.

Department of Education, Western Australia. (n.d.). *Independent public schools*. https://www.education.wa.edu.au/independent-public-schools

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books.

Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education: an introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Free Press.

De Witte, K., Cabus, S., Thyssen, G., Groot, W., & van den Brink, H. M. (2013). A critical review of the literature on school dropout. *Educational Research Review, 10*, 13–28. Doi: 10.1016/j.edurev.2013.05.002

Di Paolantonio, M. (2016). The cruel optimism of education and education's implication with "passing-on". *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 50*(2), 147–159.

Ditchburn, G. (2012). An Australian national curriculum: in whose interests? *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 32*(3), 259–269. Doi: 10.1080/02188791.2012.711243

Dodge, R., Daly, A. P., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. D. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 2*(3), 222–235.

Donsbach, W. (2008). *The international encyclopaedia of communication* (Vol. 2). Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Down, B. (2011). *Research in Big Picture schools*. Paper presented at Big Picture Education Conference Workshop 2011, Newport, Victoria, 19–21 October.

Down, B., & Choules, K. (2011). *The secondary engagement evaluation project in low SES schools*. Perth: Centre for Learning Change and Development, Murdoch University.

Dreyer, A., Keiller, L., Wolvaardt, J., & Frantz, J. (2016). Using critical friends to build writing success. *Medical Education*, *50*(11), 1170–1171. Doi: 10.1111/medu.13167

Eccles, J., Midgley, C., & Adler, T. (1984). Grade-related changes in the school environment: effects on achievement motivation. In J. G. Nicholls (Ed.), *The development of achievement motivation* (pp. 238–331). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Eccles, J. S., Vida, M. N., & Barber, B. (2004). The relation of early adolescents' college plans and both academic ability and task-value beliefs to subsequent college enrollment. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 24*(1), 63–77. Doi: 10.1177/0272431603260919

Edgerton, J. D., & Roberts, L. W. (2014). Cultural capital or habitus? Bourdieu and beyond in the explanation of enduring educational inequality. *Theory and Research in Education, 12*(2), 193–220. Doi: 10.1177/1477878514530231

Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging crystallisation in qualitative research: an introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ellis, M. W., Grant, M., & Haniford, L. (2007). Reframing problems in secondary education: alternative perspectives, new insights, and possibilities for action. *High School Journal*, *91*(1), 1–5.

Erwin, J. C. (2010). *Inspiring the best in students*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Falguni, P. V. (2012). *Advisory Programs in Middle and High Schools*. PhD thesis, Central State University, New Britain, CT.

Faragher, R., Broadbent, C., Brown, R., & Burgess, J. (2014). Applying the principles of quality of life to education. *International Public Health Journal*, 6(2), 119–132.

Farrell, J. P. (2004). Alternative pedagogies and learning in alternative schooling systems in developing nations. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Salt Lake City, UT, March.

Farrell, J. P. (2008). Teaching and learning to teach: successful radical alternatives from the developing world. In K. Mundy, K. Bickmore, R. Hayhoe, M. Madden & K. Madjidi (Eds.), *Comparative and international education: issues for teachers* (pp. 107–133). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Fielding, M. P. (2012). *"No sense of borders"? The internationalisation of education in Australian schooling*. PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, Perth.

Fielding, M., & Moss, P. (2011). *Radical education and the common school: a democratic alternative*. London: Routledge.

Fine, M., & Rosenberg, P. (1983). Dropping out of high school: the ideology of school and work. *Journal of Education, 165*(3), 257–272.

Fine, M, & Weis, L. (2003). *Silenced voices and extraordinary conversations ... re-imagining schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97–131). New York: Springer.

Fivush, R. (1991). The social construction of personal narratives. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *37*(1), 59–81.

Fletcher, A. (2012). Convenient or inconvenient student voice? *Connect*, 197, 18.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: why social enquiry fails and how it might succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Flutter, J., & Rudduck, J. (2004). *Consulting pupils: what's in it for schools?* New York: Routledge Falmer.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power-knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press.

Fraillon, J. (2004). *Measuring student well-being in the context of Australian schooling*. Discussion paper 12-2004. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Francis, B., Mills, M., & Lupton, R. (2017). Towards social justice in education: contradictions and dilemmas. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(4), 414–431. Doi: 10.1080/02680939.2016.1276218

Fredericks, J. A. (2014). *Eight myths of student disengagement: creating classrooms of deep learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(1), 59–109.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Frymier, A. B., & Houser, M. L. (2000). The teacher–student relationship as an interpersonal relationship. *Communication Education, 49*(3), 207–219. Doi: 10.1080/03634520009379209.

Gable, A., & Lingard, B. (2016). NAPLAN data: a new policy assemblage and mode of governance in Australian schooling. *Policy Studies, 37*(6), 568–582. Doi: 10.1080/01442872.2015.1115830

Galassi, J. P., Gulledge, S. A., & Cox, N. D. (1997). Middle school Advisories: retrospect and prospect. *Review of Educational Research, 67*(3), 301–338. Doi: 10.2307/1170567

Gale, T., & Densmore, K. M. (2003). *Engaging teachers: towards a radical democratic agenda for schooling*. Philadelphia, PN; Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gale, T., Hattam, R., Comber, B., Tranter, D., Bills, D., Sellar, S., & Parker, S. (2010). *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged students*: Adelaide: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education.

Gale, T., & Parker, S. (2015a). Calculating student aspiration: Bourdieu, spatiality and the politics of recognition. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 45*(1), 81–96. Doi: 10.1080/0305764X.2014.988685

Gale, T., & Parker, S. (2015b). To aspire: a systematic reflection on understanding aspirations in higher education. *Australian Educational Researcher, 42*(2), 139–153. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-014-0165-9

Gale, T. & Parker, S. (2015c). Widening and expanding participation in Australian higher education: in the absence of sociological imagination. *Australian Educational Researcher, 42*(2), 257–271. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-014-0167-7

Gale, T., Parker, S., Rodd, P., Stratton, G., & Sealey, T. (2013). *Student aspirations for higher education in Central Queensland: a survey of school students' navigational capacities in Central Queensland.* Melbourne: Centre for Research in Educational Futures and Innovation.

Gannon, S., & Sawyer, W. (2014). *Contemporary issues of equity in education.* Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Garman, N. B. (1994). Beyond the reflective practitioner and toward discursive practice. *Teaching and Teachers Work, 2*(4), 1–7.

Garman, N. B., & Piantanida, M. (2006). *The authority to imagine: the struggle toward representation in dissertation writing.* New York: Peter Lang.

Gatto, J. T. (2002). *Dumbing us down: the hidden curriculum of compulsory schooling.* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Gatto, J. T. (2009). *Weapons of mass instruction: a schoolteacher's journey through the dark world of compulsory schooling.* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Gazaway, R. (1970). *The longest mile: the forgotten people of an Appalachian hollow.* Allen Lane the Penguin Press.

Gee, J. P. (2011). *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method.* New York: Routledge.

Gemici, S., Bednarz, A., Karmel, T., & Lim, P. (2014). *The factors affecting the educational and occupational aspirations of young Australians*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

George, P., & Alexander, W. (1993). *The exemplary middle school* (2nd ed.). Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Gergen, K. J. (2003). Action research and orders of democracy. *Action Research, 1*(1), 39–56. Doi: 10.1177/14767503030011004

Gergen, K. J. (2009). *Relational being: beyond self and community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. (2007). Social construction and research methodology. In W. Outhwaite & S. Turner (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social science methodology* (pp. 461–478). London: Sage.

Gilbert, R., Keddie, A., Lingard, B., Mills, M., & Renshaw, P. (2013). *Equity and education research, policy and practice: a review*. Carlton, Vict: Australian College of Educators.

Gillies, D., & Mifsud, D. (2016). Policy in transition: the emergence of tackling early school leaving (ESL) as EU policy priority. *Journal of Education Policy, 31*(6), 819–832.

Giroux, H. A. (2005). *Border crossings: cultural workers and the politics of education* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (2011). *Education and the crisis of public values: challenging the assault on teachers, students, and public education.* New York: Peter Lang.

Giroux, H. A. (2015). *Schooling and the struggle for public life: democracy's promise and education's challenge*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Gonski, D., Boston, K., Greiner, K., Lawrence, C., Scales, B., & Tannock, P. (2011). *Review of funding for schooling: final report*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Goodman, J. F. (2009). Respect-due and respect-earned: negotiating student–teacher relationships. *Ethics and Education, 4*(1), 3–17. Doi: 10.1080/17449640902781356

Goodman, J. F., & Eren, N. S. (2013). Student agency: success, failure, and lessons learned. *Ethics and Education, 8*(2), 123–139. Doi: 10.1080/17449642.2013.843360

Goodson, I., & Hargreaves, A. (1996). *Teachers' professional lives*. London; Washington: Falmer Press.

Gorski, P. C. (2011). Unlearning deficit ideology and the scornful gaze: thoughts on authenticating the class discourse in education. *Counterpoints, 402*, 152–173.

Gorur, R. (2016). Seeing like PISA: a cautionary tale about the performativity of international assessments. *European Educational Research Journal, 15*(5), 598–616.

Graham, A., Powell, M. A., Thomas, N., & Anderson, D. (2017). Reframing "well-being" in schools: the potential of recognition. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *47*, 439–455. Doi: 10.1080/0305764X.2016.1192104

Gray, J., & Hackling, M. (2009). Wellbeing and retention: a senior secondary student perspective. *Australian Educational Researcher, 36*(2), 119–145. Doi: 10.1007/BF03216902

Greene, M. (1991). Values education in the contemporary moment. *Clearing House, 64*(5), 301–304. doi:10.1080/00098655.1991.9955875

Griffin, D. (2014). What do we expect of education? In D. Griffin (Ed.), *Education reform: the unwinding of intelligence and creativity* (pp. 1–14). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Gross, P. A. (2012). *Joint curriculum design: facilitating learner ownership and active participation in secondary classrooms*. New York: Routledge.

Groves, R., & Welsh, B. (2010). The high school experience: what students say. *Issues in Educational Research, 20*(2), 87–104.

Haberman, M. (1991). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 73*(4), 290–294.

Haberman, M. (2010). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(2), 81–87. Doi: 10.1177/003172171009200223

Hanewald, R. (2013). The transition between primary and secondary school: why it is important and how it can be supported. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(1), 62–74. Doi: 10.14221/ajte.2013v38n1.7

Harris, J., Caldwell, B., & Longmuir, F. (2013). *Literature review: a culture of trust enhances performance*., Melbourne: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Harris, J., Spina, N., Ehrich, L. C., & Smeed, J. (2013). *Literature review: student-centred schools make the difference*. Brisbane: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Harrison, R. P. (2011). What can you learn from Machiavelli? *Yale Insights*, 1 January. https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/what-can-you-learn-machiavelli

Hattam, R. (2006). Easier said than done: "strong connectedness" in the middle years. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Adelaide, November.

Hattam, R., McInerney, P., Smyth, J., & Lawson, M. (1999). *Promoting student voices*. Adelaide: Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching.

Hattam, R., & Prosser, B. (2008). Unsettling deficit views of students and their communities. *Australian Educational Researcher, 35*(2), 89–106. Doi: 10.1007/bf03216885

Hattam, R., & Smyth, J. (2003). "Not everyone has a perfect life": becoming somebody without school. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 11*(3), 379–398. Doi: 10.1080/14681360300200180

Hayes, D., Connell, R., Welch, A., Vickers, M., Foley, D., Bagnall, N., Proctor, H., Sriprakash, A., & Campbell, C. (2013). *Education, change and society* (3rd ed.). South Melbourne, Vict: Oxford University Press.

Hill, A. M., & Smith, H. A. (2005). Research in purpose and value for the study of technology in secondary schools: a theory of authentic learning. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education, 15*(1), 19–32. Doi: 10.1007/s10798-004-6195-2

Hill, V. C., & Turner, H. (2016). Educational psychologists' perspectives on the medicalisation of childhood behaviour: A focus on Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). *Educational & Child Psychology*, *33*(2), 12-29.

Hofstetter, R., & Schneuwly, B. (2013). Changes in mass schooling: school form and grammar of schooling as reagents. *European Educational Research Journal, 12*(2), 166–175. Doi: 10.2304/eerj.2013.12.2.166

Hogan, A. (2016). NAPLAN and the role of edu-business: new governance, new privatisations and new partnerships in Australian education policy. *Australian Educational Researcher, 43*(1), 93–110. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-014-0162-z

Holtermann-DeLong, E. B. (2009). *Listening to the voices of four at-risk learners in one alternative environment.* PhD Dissertation, University of Western Australia, Perth.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Hutchison, K., & McCann, T. (2015). *Somebody knows, somebody cares: re-engaging students through relationship*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Inlay, L. T. (2016). Creating a culture of respect through the implicit curriculum. *Middle School Journal, 47*(2), 23–31. Doi: 10.1080/00940771.2016.1102600

Jackson, A. W., & Davis, G. A. (2000). *Turning points 2000.* New York & Westerville, Ohio: Teachers College Press & National Middle School Association.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (2016). Cooperative learning and teaching citizenship in democracies. *International Journal of Educational Research, 76*, 162–177. Doi: 10.1016/j.ijer.2015.11.009

Jordan, B. A. (2015). *An evaluation of a secondary student advisement program*, PhD thesis, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1973). On the psychology of prediction. *Psychological Review, 80*(4), 237–251. Doi: 10.1037/h0034747

Kearney, S., Gleeson, C., Leung, L., Ollis, D., & Joyce, A. (2016). *Respectful relationships education in schools: the beginnings of change*. Melbourne: Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Education and Training.

Keddie, A. (2016). Maintaining the integrity of public education: a comparative analysis of school autonomy in the United States and Australia. *Comparative Education Review, 60*(2), 249–270. Doi: 10.1086/685556

Keeffe, M. (2014). *Building relationships: teacher Advisor programs in the BEP schools*. In V. Prain et al. (Eds.), *Adapting to teaching and learning in open-plan schools* (pp. 159–172). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers,

Keller, L., & McDonald, T. (2005). *Model secondary schools project: a new lens on learning*. Providence, RI: Brown University

Kemmis, S. (2005). Knowing practice: searching for saliences. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 13*(3), 391–426. Doi: 10.1080/14681360500200235

Kemp, S. D. (2011). *Academic self-efficacy and middle school students: a study of Advisory class teaching strategies and academic self-efficacy.* PhD thesis, La Sierra University, Riverside, CA.

Kenway, J. (2013). Challenging inequality in Australian schools: Gonski and beyond. *Discourse, 34*(2), 286–308. Doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770254

Khoo, S., & Ainley, J. (2005). *Attitudes, intentions and participation*. LSAY Research Report No. 41. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research. https://www.lsay.edu.au/publications/search-for-lsay-publications/1847

Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy primer*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kinney, D. A. (1993). From nerds to normal: the recovery of identity among adolescents from middle school to high school. *Sociology of Education, 66*(1), 21–40. Doi: 10.2307/2112783

Kintrea, K. (2009). *Aspirations, attainment and social mobility in disadvantaged areas*. Prague, Czech Republic: European Network for Housing Research.

Klein, E. J. (2007). Rethinking professional development: building a culture of teacher learning. *New Educator, 3*(3), 179–197. Doi: 10.1080/15476880701484048

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health, 74*(7), 262–273. Doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.

Kohl, H. (1994). *I won't learn from you: And other thoughts on creative maladjustment.* New York: New Press.

Kohn, A. (2004). *What does it mean to be well educated? And more essays on standards, grading, and other follies*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2016). *Reconceptualizing qualitative research: methodologies without methodology*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: children in America's schools*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Kozol, J. (2007). *Letters to a young teacher*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power: domination, empowerment, and education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lamb, S., & Huo, S. (2017). *Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education.* Mitchell Institute Report No. 02/2017. Melbourne: Mitchell Institute. Available from www.mitchellinstitute.org.au.

Lamb, S., Jackson, J., Walstab, A., & Huo, S. (2015). *Educational opportunity in Australia 2015: who succeeds and who misses out*. Melbourne: Mitchell Institute.

Lamb, S., Walstab, A., Teese, R., Vickers, M., & Rumberger, R. (2004). *Staying on at school: improving student retention in Australia.* Brisbane: Department of Education and the Arts.

Lambert, M. B., & Lowry, L. K. (2004). *Knowing & being known: personalization as a foundation for improving student learning.* Washington, DC: ERIC Online. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED505515

Langenkamp, A. G. (2010). Academic vulnerability and resilience during the transition to high school: the role of social relationships and district context. *Sociology of Education, 83*(1), 1–19. Doi: 10.1177/0038040709356563

Lawson, M. A., & Lawson, H. A. (2013). New conceptual frameworks for student engagement research, policy, and practice. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 432–479. Doi: 10.3102/0034654313480891

Lee, C. D. (2012). Conceptual and methodological challenges to a cultural and ecological framework for studying human learning and development. In W. F. Tate (Ed.), *Research on schools, neighbourhoods, and communities: toward civic responsibility* (pp. 173–202). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lee, V. E., & Ready, D. D. (2007). *Schools within schools: possibilities and pitfalls of high school reform.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lehr, C. A., Johnson, D. R., Bremer, C. D., Cosio, A., & Thompson, M. (2004). *Essential tools: increasing rates of school completion: moving from policy and research to practice.* Minneapolis, MN: Institute on Community Integration, National Centre on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota.

Levine, E. (2002). *One kid at a time: big lessons from a small school.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Liamputtong, P., & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Lichtman, M. (2006). *Qualitative research in education: a user's guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lindstrom, S., Pas, E., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2016). Understanding the association between school climate and future orientation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45*(8), 1575–1586. Doi: 10.1007/s10964-015-0321-1

Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(2), 129–147. Doi: 10.1080/17508481003731026

Lingard, B. (2015). Rearticulating and contesting equity in educational policy. Paper presented at Resisting Educational Inequity Conference, Sydney, October.

Lingard, B., Hayes, D., & Mills, M. (2003). Teachers and productive pedagogies: contextualising, conceptualising, utilising. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 11*(3), 399–424. Doi: 10.1080/14681360300200181

Lingard, B., & McGregor, G. (2014). Two contrasting Australian Curriculum responses to globalisation: what students should learn or become. *Curriculum Journal, 25*(1), 90–110. Doi: 10.1080/09585176.2013.872048

Lingard, B., & Mills, M. (2007). Pedagogies making a difference: issues of social justice and inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 11*(3), 233–244. Doi: 10.1080/13603110701237472

Littky, D., & Grabelle, S. (2004). *The big picture: education is everyone's business.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Long, M., & Curtain, R. (2005). *How young people are faring.* Glebe, NSW: Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

Lopez, D. (2014). *Unwinding the body and decoding the messages of pain: an in-depth look into the world of osteopathic physicians and how they "magically" use their hands for healing.* Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press.

Lowenthal, P. R. & Muth, R. (2009). Constructivism. In E. F. Provenzo, Jr. (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the social and cultural foundations of education* (pp. 177–179). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lyon-McDaniel, B. (2004). Between strangers and soul mates: care and moral dialogue. In C. W. Bingham & A. M. Sidorkin (Eds.) (2004). *No education without relation* (pp. 91–102). New York: Peter Lang.

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lysaker, J. T., & Furuness, S. (2011). Space for transformation: relational, dialogic pedagogy. *Journal of Transformative Education, 9*(3), 183–197. Doi: 10.1177/1541344612439939

MacBeath, J. (2007). Leadership as a subversive activity. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(3), 242–264. Doi: 10.1108/09578230710747794

Mackellar, D. (1908). 'My country'.

Madison, D. S. (2012). *Critical ethnography: method, ethics, and performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mansfield, C. F. (2010). Motivating adolescents: goals for Australian students in secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology, 10*, 44–55.

Mansfield, K. C. (2014). How listening to student voices informs and strengthens social justice research and practice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(3), 392–430. Doi: 10.1177/0013161X13505288

Marsh, H., & Hau, K. (2003). Big-fish-little-pond effect on academic self-concept – a cross-cultural (26-country) test of the negative effects of academically selective schools. *American Psychologist, 58*(5), 364–376. Doi: 10.1037/0003-006X.58.5.364

Marsh, J. A., & Wohlstetter, P. (2013). Recent trends in intergovernmental relations: the resurgence of local actors in education policy. *Educational Researcher, 42*(5), 276–283. Doi: 10.3102/0013189X13492193

Massumi, B. (2008). The thinking-feeling of what happens. *Inflexions, 1(1)* http://inflexions.org/n1_The-Thinking-Feeling-of-What-Happens-by-Brian-Massumi.pdf

McCallum, F., & Price, D. (2015). *Nurturing wellbeing development in education: from little things, big things grow.* NewYork: Routledge.

McClure, L. V., Yonezawa, S., & Jones, M. (2010). Can school structures improve teacher–student relationships? The relationship between Advisory programs, personalization and students' academic achievement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 18*(17). Doi: 10.14507/epaa.v18n17.2010

McDonald, J. P., & Cities and Schools Research Group. (2014). *American school reform: What works, what fails, and why*. University of Chicago Press.

McDonald, J.P., Klein, E.J. & Riordan, M., & Broun, S. (2004). *Scaling up the Big Picture. Monograph 3, Scaling-Up Study*. New York: Steinhardt School of Education, New York University.

McDonald, J.P., Klein, E.J. & Riordan, M., & Broun, S. (2004). *Scaling up the Big Picture. Monograph 4, Scaling-Up Study*. New York: Steinhardt School of Education, New York University.

McDonald, J.P. & Klein, E.J. (2003). Networking for teacher learning: Toward a theory of effective design. *Teachers College Record*, 105 (8), 1606-1621.

McDonald, T. (2010). *Classroom management: engaging students in learning*. South Melbourne, Vict: Oxford University Press.

McGregor, G. (2009). Educating for (whose) success? Schooling in an age of neo-liberalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 30*(3), 345–358. Doi: 10.1080/01425690902812620

Glenda McGregor (2015): Counter-narratives that challenge neo-liberal discourses of schooling 'disengagement': youth professionals informing the work of teachers, British Journal of Sociology of Education, DOI: 10.1080/01425692.2015.1113859

McGregor, G. (2017). Counter-narratives that challenge neo-liberal discourses of schooling "disengagement": youth professionals informing the work of teachers. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(4), 551–565.

McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2014). Teaching in the "margins": rekindling a passion for teaching. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *35*(1), 1–18. Doi: 10.1080/01425692.2012.740813

McGregor, G., Mills, M., te Riele, K., & Hayes, D. (2015). Excluded from school: getting a second chance at a "meaningful" education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 19*(6), 608–625. Doi: 10.1080/13603116.2014.961684

McGregor, G., Mills, M., Te Riele, K., Baroutsis, A., & Hayes, D. (2017). Re-Imagining Schooling for Education. In *Re-imagining Schooling for Education* (pp. 161-183). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

McLachlan, R. (2013). *Deep and persistent disadvantage in Australia.* Productivity Commission staff working paper. Melbourne: Productivity Commission. http://www.pc.gov.au/research/supporting/deep-persistent-disadvantage

McMahon, B., & Portelli, J. P. (2004). Engagement for what? Beyond popular discourses of student engagement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 3*(1), 59–76. Doi: 10.1076/lpos.3.1.59.27841

Meier, D. (1995). *The power of their ideas: lessons for America from a small school in Harlem*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Mertens, D. M. (2014). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mertens, D. M., & Ginsberg, P. E. (2009). *The handbook of social research ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, J. B., & Stiver, I. P. (1997). *The healing connection*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Mills, M., & McGregor, G. (2014). *Re-engaging young people in education: learning from alternative schools*. Portland, OR: Ringgold.

Mills, M., McGregor, G., Hayes, D., & te Riele, K. (2014). "Schools are for us": the importance of distribution, recognition and representation to creating socially just school's mainstreams, margins and the spaces in-between. In K Trimmer, A Black and S Riddle (Eds.), *New possibilities for education research* (pp. 152–169). London: Routledge.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.* Melbourne: MCEETYA.

Mitra, D. L. (2003). Student voice in school reform: reframing student–teacher relationships. *McGill Journal of Education, 38*(2), 289–304.

Mitra, D. L. (2014). *Student voice in school reform: building youth–adult partnerships that strengthen schools and empower youth*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Mitra, D. L., & Gross, S. J. (2009). Increasing student voice in high school reform: building partnerships, improving outcomes. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 37*(4), 522–543. Doi: 10.1177/1741143209334577

Mockler, N., & Groundwater-Smith, S. (2015). *Engaging with student voice in research, education and community: beyond legitimation and guardianship.* New York: Springer.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132–141. Doi: 10.1080/00405849209543534

Moustakas, C. E. (1995). *Being-in, being-for, being-with*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

Nayler, J. (2014). *Enacting Australian Curriculum: making connections for quality learning*. Brisbane: Queensland Studies Authority.

New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (2015). *The wellbeing framework for schools.* https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools_Acessible.pdf

Nguyen, N., & Blomberg, D. (2014). *The role of aspirations in the educational and occupational choices of young people*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Nielson, S. (1985) Meritocracy and education.

Niemi, H., Toom, A., & Kallioniemi, A. (2012). *The miracle of education: the principles and practices of teaching and learning in Finnish schools*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Nishiyama, K. (2000). *Doing business with Japan: successful strategies for intercultural communication*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Noble, T., Wyatt, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S., & Rowling, L. (2008). *Scoping study into approaches to student wellbeing*: *final report*. Brisbane, Queensland: Australian Catholic University and Erebus International.

Nodding's, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

North, C. E. (2009). The promise and perils of developing democratic literacy for social justice. *Curriculum Inquiry, 39*(4), 555–579. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-873X.2009.00457

Office of the Auditor General. (2014). *Moving on: the transition of Year 7 to secondary school.* Perth: Office of the Auditor General.

Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track*. Yale University Press.

O'Loughlin, D., MacPhail, A., & Msetfi, R. (2015). The rhetoric and reality of research reputation: "fur coat and no knickers". *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(5), 806–820. Doi: 10.1080/03075079.2013.842224

Olsen, K. (2009). *Wounded by school: recapturing the joy in learning and standing up to old school culture*. New York: Teachers College Press.

O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Key concepts in ethnography*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2010). *Education at a glance 2010: OECD indicators*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2011). *Equity and quality in education-supporting disadvantaged students and schools*. Paris: OECD.http://www.oecd.org/

Otero, G. G., & Otero, G. G. (2000). *Relational Learning: Education for mind, body and spirit*. Cheltenham, Victoria: Hawker Brownlow Education.

Otero, G., Csoti, R., & Rothstadt, D. (2012). *Creating powerful learning relationships: a whole school community approach*. Cheltenham, Victoria: Hawker Brownlow Education.

Oxford English Dictionary. (2017) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parcel, T. L., & Bixby, M. S. (2016). The ties that bind: social capital, families, and children's well-being. *Child Development Perspectives, 10*(2), 87–92. Doi: 10.1111/cdep.12165

Parker, S., Stratton, G., Gale, T., Rodd, P., & Sealey, T. (2013). *Higher education and student aspirations: a survey of the adaptive preferences of Year 9 students in Corio, Victoria.* Adelaide: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education.

Parlett, M., & Hamilton, D. (1972). *Evaluation as illumination: a new approach to the study of innovatory programs*. Occasional Paper. Edinburgh: Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, Edinburgh University.

Pearlman, B. (n.d.). *Big Picture learning goals*. Student form. http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/BLC%202006/learning%20goals.pdf

Peers, C., & Fleer, M. (2014). The theory of "belonging": defining concepts used within Belonging, being and becoming – The Australian Early Years Learning Framework. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 46*(8), 914–928. Doi: 10.1080/00131857.2013.781495

Pendergast, D., Chadbourne, R., & Danby, S. J. (2008). Early and middle years of schooling. In A. Ashman & J. Elkins (Eds.), *Education for inclusion and diversity* (pp. 271–304). French's Forest, NSW: Pearson Education Australia.

Perry, L. B. (2017). Educational disadvantage is a huge problem in Australia, we can't just carry on the same. *The Conversation* (Sydney, Australia), 15 March.

Perry, L. B., & Lubienski, C. (2014). *Australian schools: engines of inequality. The Conversation*, 13 May.

Perry, L. B., & McConney, A. (2010). Does the SES of the school matter? An examination of socioeconomic status and student achievement using PISA 2003. *Teachers College Record, 112*(4), 1137–1162.

Phillippo, K. (2010). Teachers providing social and emotional support: a study of Advisor role enactment in small high schools. *Teachers College Record, 112*(8), 2258–2293.

Pieratt, J. R. (2011). *Teacher–student relationships in project based learning: a case study of high tech middle north county.* PhD thesis, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.

Pittman, L. D., & Richmond, A. (2007). Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: the importance of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education, 75*(4), 270–290. Doi: 10.3200/JEXE.75.4.270-292

Pole, C. J., & Morrison, M. (2003). *Ethnography for education*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.

Polesel, J., Dulfer, N., & Turnbull, M. (2012). *The experience of education: the impacts of high stakes testing on school students and their families*. Parramatta, NSW: Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

Poliner, R. A., & Lieber, C. M. (2004). *The Advisory guide: designing and implementing effective Advisory programs in secondary schools*. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility.

Pope, D. C. (2001). *Doing school: how we are creating a generation of stressed-out, materialistic, and miseducated students*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Popkewitz, T. A., Diaz, J., & Kirchgasler, C. (Eds.) (2017). *A political sociology of educational knowledge: studies of exclusions and difference*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Prain, V., Cox, P., Deed, C., Edwards, D., Farrelly, C., Keeffe, M., … Waldrip, B. (2015). *Personalising learning in open-plan schools*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Springer.

Prosser, B. J., Lucas, B., & Reid, A. (2010). *Connecting lives and learning: renewing pedagogy in the middle years*. Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press.

Raider-Roth, M. B. (2005). *Trusting what you know: the high stakes of classroom relationships*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: how testing and choice are undermining education*. New York: Basic Books.

Ravitch, D. (2016). *The death and life of the great American school system: how testing and choice are undermining education*: New York: Basic Books.

Raywid, M. A. (1997). Small schools: a reform that works. *Educational Leadership*, *55*(4), 34–39.

Ream, R. K., & Rumberger, R. W. (2008). Student engagement, peer social capital, and school dropout among Mexican American and non-Latino white students. *Sociology of Education*, *81*(2), 109–139.

Reay, D., & Lucey, H. (2004). Stigmatised choices: social class, social exclusion and secondary school markets in the inner city. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 12*(1), 35–51. Doi: 10.1080/14681360400200188

Reeves, J., & Le Mare, L. (2017). Supporting teachers in relational pedagogy and social emotional education: a qualitative exploration. *International Journal of Emotional Education, 9*(1), 85–98.

Reid, A. (2005a). The regulated education market has a past. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 26*(1), 79–94. Doi: 10.1080/01596300500040573

Reid, A. (2005b). *Rethinking the national curriculum collaboration: towards an Australian curriculum*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Reid, A., & McCallum, F. (2014). "Becoming your best": student perspectives on community in the pursuit of aspirations. *Australian Educational Researcher, 41*(2), 195–207. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-013-0133-9

Reilly, J. L. (2012). *Mutuality as a means of overcoming student resistance*. PhD thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA.

Reschly, A. L., & Christenson, S. L. (2012). Jingle, jangle, and conceptual haziness: evolution and future directions of the engagement construct. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 3–20). New York: Springer.

Riddell, R. (Ed.) (2010). *Aspiration, identity and self belief: snapshots of social structure at work*. London: Trentham Books.

Riordan, M. A. (2006). *Discovering the core of experiential education: how Big Picture school students learn through internships*. PhD thesis, New York University, New York.

Rizvi, F. (2007). Postcolonialism and globalization in education. *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies, 7*(3), 256–263. Doi: 10.1177/1532708607303606

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing education policy*. London; New York: Routledge.

Roberts, B. W., Lejuez, C., Krueger, R. F., Richards, J. M., & Hill, P. L. (2014). What is conscientiousness and how can it be assessed? *Developmental Psychology, 50*(5), 1315–1330. Doi: 10.1037/a0031109

Robinson, C., & Taylor, C. (2013). Student voice as a contested practice: power and participation in two student voice projects. *Improving Schools, 16*(1), 32–46. Doi: 10.1177/1365480212469713

Robinson, J., Smyth, J., Down, B., & McInerney, P. (2012). Pushed out, shutout: addressing unjust geographies of schooling and work. *International Journal on School Disaffection, 9*(2), 7–24.

Rodgers, C. R. (2006). "The turning of one's soul" learning to teach for social justice: the Putney graduate school of teacher education (1950–1964). *Teachers College Record, 108*(7), 1266–1295. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00693.x

Roffey, S. (2011). Enhancing connectedness in Australian children and young people. *Asian Journal of Counselling, 18*(1), 15–39. Doi: 10.1007/978-9-007-2147-0

Rose, M.(1989). *Lives on the boundary: the struggles and achievements of America's underprepared*. New York: Free Press, Macmillan.

Roth, A., Buchowski, M., Clifford, J., Herzfeld, M., Sangren, S., Sapire, D., & Tyler, A. (1989). Ethnography without tears. *Current Anthropology*, *30*(5), 555–569. Doi: 10.1086/203784

Roy, J. C. (2008). *Meaning-making in an urban middle school: a study of relational trust and social capital*. Boston, MA: Boston College.

Rudduck, J., Chaplain, R., & Wallace, G. (1996). *School improvement: what can pupils tell us?* London: D. Fulton Publishers.

Rudduck, J., & McIntyre, D. (2007). *Improving learning through consulting pupils*. London: Routledge.

Rumberger, R. W. (2011). *Dropping out: why students drop out of high school and what can be done about it*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rumberger, R. W., & Lamb, S. P. (2003). The early employment and further education experiences of high school dropouts: a comparative study of the United States and Australia. *Economics of Education Review, 22*(4), 353–366. Doi: 10.1016/S0272-7757(02)00038-9

Saegert, S., Thompson, J. P., & Warren, M. R.(Eds.) (2001). *Social capital and poor communities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Sanzo, R. J. (2013). *The influence of typology on school connectedness as measured by the social supports received through a suburban high school Advisory*. PhD thesis, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT.

Sarojini-Hart, C. (2013). *Aspirations, education and social justice: applying education and social justice.* London: Bloomsbury.

Savage, G. C., Sellar, S., & Gorur, R. (2013). Equity and marketisation: emerging policies and practices in Australian education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 34*(2), 161–169. Doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770244

Schlecker, M., & Fleischer, F. (2013). *Ethnographies of social support*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schunk, D. H. (2012). *Learning theories: an educational perspective*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Seddon, T. (2001). National curriculum in Australia? A matter of politics, powerful knowledge and the regulation of learning. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, *9*(3), 307–331. Doi: 10.1080/14681360100200127

Sellar, S. (2013). Equity, markets and the politics of aspiration in Australian higher education. *Discourse, 34*(2), 245–258. Doi: 10.1080/01596306.2013.770250

Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Senge, P. M. (2014). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. London: Crown Business.

Sensoy, Ö., & Diangelo, R. (2009). Developing social justice literacy: an open letter to our faculty colleagues. *Phi Delta Kappan, 90*(5), 345–352. Doi: 10.1177/003172170909000508

Shacklock, G., & Smyth, J. (1998). *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Psychology Press.

Shook, J. (2014). *Dewey's social philosophy: democracy as education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Short, T. M. (2011). *Teachers and students in alternative schools: narratives from the margins of public education*. Bedford Park, SA: Flinders University.

Shulkind, S. B. (2007). *Fostering connectedness through middle school Advisory programs.* PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.

Singh, P., Heimans, S., & Glasswell, K. (2014). Policy enactment, context and performativity: ontological politics and researching Australian national partnership policies. *Journal of Education Policy, 29*(6), 826–844. Doi: 10.1080/02680939.2014.891763

Sizer, T. R. (1997). *Horace's hope: what works for the American high school*? Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Sizer, T. R. (2013). *The new American high school*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Wiley.

Skiba, R. J. (2014). The failure of zero tolerance. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 22*(4), 27–33.

Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2013). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: questions of equity and effectiveness. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 1063–1089). New York: Routledge.

Skinner, E. A., & Pitzer, J. R. (2012). Developmental dynamics of student engagement, coping, and everyday resilience. In S. Christenson, A. Reschly & C. Wiley (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 21–44). Boston, MA: Springer.

Sliwka, A. (2008). The contribution of alternative education. In OECD, *Innovating to learn – learning to innovate* (pp. 93–112). Paris: OECD Publishing.

Smith, A. (1982 [1723–1790]). *The wealth of nations: Books I–III* (ed. A. S. Skinner). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Smith, B. O., Stanley, W. O., & Shores, J. H. (1957). *Fundamentals of curriculum development* (rev. ed.). New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Smith, M. L. (2015). A generation at risk: the ties between zero tolerance policies and the school-to-prison pipeline. *McNair Scholars Research Journal, 8*(1), 125–141.

Smyth, J. (2000). *Listen to me I'm leaving: early school leaving in South Australian secondary schools*. Adelaide, SA: Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching.

Smyth, J. (2004). Social capital and the "socially just school". *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 25*(1), 19–33. Doi: 10.1080/0142569032000155917

Smyth, J. (2006). "When students have power": student engagement, student voice, and the possibilities for school reform around "dropping out" of school. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 285–298. Doi: 10.1080/13603120600894232

Smyth, J. (2009). Coming to critical engagement in disadvantaged contexts: an editorial introduction. *Critical Studies in Education, 50*(1), 1–7. Doi: 10.1080/1750848080252661

Smyth, J. (2012). Researching student voice in Australia. *Management in Education, 26*(3), 153–154. Doi: 10.1177/0892020612445695

Smyth, J., & Down, B. (2008). *Critically engaged learning: connecting to young lives*. New York: Peter Lang.

Smyth, J., Down, B., & McInerney, P. (2010). *"Hanging in with kids" in tough times: engagement in contexts of educational disadvantage in the relational school*: New York: Peter Lang.

Smyth, J., Down, B., & McInerney, P. (2014). *The socially just school: making space for youth to speak back*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Smyth, J., & Fasoli, L. (2007). Climbing over the rocks in the road to student engagement and learning in a challenging high school in Australia. *Educational Research, 49*(3), 273–295. Doi: 10.1080/00131880701550565

Smyth, J., & Hattam, R. (2001). "Voiced" research as a sociology for understanding "dropping out" of school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22*(3), 401–415. Doi: 10.1080/01425690120068006

Smyth, J., & Hattam, R. (2004). *Dropping out, drifting off, being excluded: becoming somebody without school*. New York: Peter Lang.

Smyth, J., & McInerney, P. (2012). Making "space": young people put at a disadvantage re-engaging with learning. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 34*(1), 39–55. Doi: 10.1080/01425692.2012.744735.

Smyth, J., & McInerney, P. (2014). *Becoming educated: young people's narratives of disadvantage, class, place and identity*. New York: Peter Lang.

Smyth, J., McInerney, P., & Hattam, R. (2003). Tackling school leaving at its source: a case of reform in the middle years of schooling. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 24*(2), 177–193. Doi: 10.1080/0142569032000052560

Smyth, J., & Wrigley, P. (2013). *Living on the edge: re-thinking poverty, class and schooling*. New York: Peter Lang.

Søndergaard, D. M. (2012). Bullying and social exclusion anxiety in schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *33*(3), 355–372. Doi: 10.1080/01425692.2012.662824

Soucek, V. (1995). Public education and the post-Fordist accumulation regime: a case study of Australia. Parts one and two. *Interchange, 26*(2), 127–159.

Spilt, J. L., Hughes, J. N., Wu, J., & Kwok, O. (2012). Dynamics of teacher–student relationships: stability and change across elementary school and the influence on children's academic success. *Child Development, 83*(4), 1180–1195. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01761.x

Squires, M. E. (2011). *Educational leadership at Lyon Big Picture school, a non-traditional high school: a case study*. Binghamton, NY State University of New York at Binghamton.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Steinberg, S. R., & Kincheloe, J. L. (2006). *What you don't know about schools*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2013). *The price of inequality*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Stone, L. D., Underwood, C., & Hotchkiss, J. (2012). The relational habitus: intersubjective processes in learning settings. *Human Development, 55*(2), 65–91. Doi: 10.1159/000337150

Stover, M. W. (2009). *A case study of the impact of a high school Advisory program on student behaviours and relationships*. PhD thesis, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC.

Strawiński, P. (2011). *Educational aspirations* (No. 2011-10). Warsaw: Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Warsaw.

Suchman, S. P. (2012). *Negotiating dual accountability systems: strategic responses of Big Picture schools to state-mandated standards and assessment.* EdD thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Sullivan, K., Perry, L. B., & McConney, A. (2013). How do school resources and academic performance differ across Australia's rural, regional and metropolitan communities? *Australian Educational Researcher, 40*(3), 353–372. Doi: 10.1007/s13384-013-0100-5

Summers, A. (1994). *Damned whores and God's police* (Updated ed.). Ringwood, Vic: Penguin.

Sumsion, J., & Wong, S. (2011). Interrogating "belonging" in belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 12*(1), 28–45. Doi: 10.2304/ciec.2011.12.1.28

Swadener, B. B., & Lubeck, S. (1995). *Children and families "at promise": deconstructing the discourse of risk*. Albany, NY:State University of New York Press.

Talbot, D., & Hayes, D. (2016). Teachers' experiences of re-engaging young people in learning through inquiry-based pedagogies: a phenomenographic study. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies, 7*(2), 257–274.

Tate, N. (2012). Challenges and pitfalls facing international education in a post-international world. *Journal of Research in International Education*, *11*(3), 205–217. Doi: 10.1177/1475240912461219

Taylor, S. (2004). Researching educational policy and change in "new times": using critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, *19*(4), 433–451. Doi: 10.1080/0268093042000227483

Teese, R., & Polesel, J. (2003). *Undemocratic schooling: equity and quality in mass secondary education in Australia*. Carlton, Vict: Melbourne University Press.

te Riele, K. (2006). Youth at risk: further marginalising the marginalised? *Journal of Education Policy, 21*(2), 129–145. Doi: 10.1080/02680930500499968

te Riele, K. (2010). Philosophy of hope: concepts and applications for working with marginalised youth. *Journal of Youth Studies, 13*(1), 35–46. Doi: 10.1080/13676260903173496

te Riele, K. (2014). *Putting the jigsaw together: flexible learning programs in Australia: final report.* Footscray, Vict: Victoria University.

te Riele, K., & Gorur, R. (Eds.) (2015). *Interrogating conceptions of "vulnerable youth" in theory, policy and practice*. London: Springer.

Tertiary Institutions Service Center (2016). *Access and participation in higher education 2016*. Perth: TISC.

Thiessen, D. (2006). Student knowledge, engagement, and voice in educational reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 345–358. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00362.x

Thiessen, D., & Cook-Sather, A. (2007). *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Toch, T. (2003). *High schools on a human scale: how small schools can transform American education.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering towards utopia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tyack, D., & Tobin, W. (1994). The grammar of schooling: why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, *31*(3), 453–479. Doi: 10.2307/1163222

Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: educational thought and practice*. New York: Routledge.

Vandenburge, R. (2009). *Australia*. Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography*: Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Manen, M. (2016). *The tone of teaching: the language of pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.

Van Ornum, J. W. (2014). *Evaluation and improvement of an Advisory program*. PhD thesis, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN.

Voelkl, K. E. (2012). School identification. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 193–218). Boston, MA: Springer.

Vygotskiĭ, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wallach, C., Ramsey, B., Lowry, L., & Copland, M. (2006). *Student voice: tapping the potential of relationships, relevance, and rigor*. Washington, DC: Coalition of Essential Schools.

Walloff, A. M. (2011). *The perceived impact of a high school Advisory program on academic performance, character development, sense of connectedness, and school climate*. PhD thesis, Widener University, Chester, PA.

Walsh, L., & Black, R. (2009). *Overcoming the barriers to engagement and equity for all students*. Canberra: Foundation for Young Australians.

Walta, C., & Hutchison, K. (2015). Running in quicksand. In K. Hutchison & T. McCann (Eds.), *Somebody knows, somebody cares: reengaging students through relationship* (pp. 69–82). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Wang, M. T., & Eccles, J. S. (2012). Social support matters: longitudinal effects of social support on three dimensions of school engagement from middle to high school. *Child Development*, *83*(3), 877–895.

Washor, E., & Mojkowski, C. (2013). *Leaving to learn: how out-of-school learning increases student engagement and reduces dropout rates*. Portland, OR: Book News.

Waterhouse, T. A. (2007). *Giving voice: exploring the school-based care experiences of at-risk youth.* PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

Watson, S. L. (2011). Somebody's gotta fight for them: a disadvantaged and marginalised alternative school's learner-centred culture of learning. *Urban Education, 46*(6), 1496–1525. Doi: 10.1177/0042085911413148

Watt, H. M., Richardson, P. W., Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Beyer, B., Trautwein, U., & Baumert, J. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: An international comparison using the FIT-Choice scale. *Teaching and teacher education*, *28*(6), 791-805.

Weis, L., & Dolby, N. (2012). *Social class and education: global perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization, 7*(2), 225–246. Doi: 10.1177/135050840072002

Wexler, P. (1992). *Becoming somebody: toward a social psychology of school*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

White, B. (2011). *Mapping your thesis: the comprehensive manual of theory and techniques for masters and doctoral research*. Camberwell, Vict: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Wilkins, J. (2006). *An examination of the student and teacher behaviours that contribute to good student–teacher relationships in large urban high schools.* PhD thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY.

Wilkinson, R. G., & Pickett, K. (2010). *The spirit level: why equality is better for everyone*. London: Penguin Books.

Wilks, J., & Wilson, K. (2012). Going on to uni? Access and participation in university for students from backgrounds of disadvantage. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 34*(1), 79–90. Doi: 10.1080/1360080X.2012.642335

Williams, P. J. (2008). Emergent themes. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods, vol. 1* (pp. 248–249). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Willibe High School Board (2015). *Willibe High School Business Plan (2015–2017).* Willibe: Willibe High School.

Willis, P. E. (1977/1993). *Learning to labor: how working-class kids get working-class jobs*. London: Saxon House.

Willis, P. E. (2000). *The ethnographic imagination*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Willms, J. D. (2003). *Student engagement at school: a sense of belonging and participation: results from PISA 2000*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Wilson, K., Stemp, K., & McGinty, S. (2011). Re-engaging young people with education and training: what are the alternatives? *Youth Studies Australia, 30*(4), 32–39.

Wiseman, M., & O'Gorman, S. (2017). First things first: anger management group work in a mainstream high school setting. *Pastoral Care in Education, 35*(2), 124–113. Doi: 10.1080/02643944.2017.1306875

Woodhead, M., & Brooker, L. (2008). A sense of belonging. *Early Childhood Matters, 111*, 3–6.

Wrench, A., Hammond, C., McCallum, F., & Price, D. (2012). Inspire to aspire: raising aspirational outcomes through a student well-being curricular focus. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 17*(9), 932–947. Doi: 10.1080/13603116.2012.718804

Wright, K., & McLeod, J. (2015). *Rethinking youth wellbeing: critical perspectives*. Singapore: Springer.

Wrigley, T., Thompson, P., & Lingard, B. (2012). *Changing schools: alternative ways to make a difference.* New York: Routledge.

Wylie, C., & Hodgen, E. (2012). Trajectories and patterns of student engagement: evidence from a longitudinal study. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 585–599). New York: Springer.

Wyn, J. (2009). *Touching the future: building skills for life and work.* Camberwell, Vict: ACER Press.

Wyn, J. (2015). Youth policy and the problematic nexus between education and employment. In K. te Riele & R. Gorur (Eds.), *Interrogating Conceptions of "Vulnerable Youth" in Theory, Policy and Practice* (pp. 49–61). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Wyn, J., & White, R. (1997). *Rethinking youth*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Wyn, J., & White, R. (2013). *Rethinking youth*. London: Sage Publications.

Yin, R. K. (1993). *Applications of case study research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Zandvliet, D., Den Brok, P., & Mainhard, T. (Eds.) (2014). *Interpersonal relationships in education: from theory to practice*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Springer.

Zipin, L., & Reid, A. (2008). A justice-oriented curriculum: making community curricular. In J. Arthur, I. Davies & C. Hahn (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy* (pp. 533–544). London: Sage.

Zipin, L., Sellar, S., Brennan, M., & Gale, T. (2015). Educating for futures in marginalized regions: a sociological framework for rethinking and researching aspirations. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 47*(3), 227–246. Doi: 10.1080/00131857.2013.839376

Zizek, S., & Žižek, S. (2011). *Living in the end times*. London: Verso.

Zubrick, S. (2014). School attendance: equities and inequities in growth trajectories of academic performance. Paper presented at Quality and Equality: What Does Research Tell Us? Australian Council for Educational Research Conference, Adelaide, South Australia, 4 August.

Zyngier, D. (2012). Transformative student engagement - An empowering pedagogy: An Australian experience in the classroom. In B. J. McMahon, & J. P. Portelli (Eds.), *Student Engagement in Urban Schools: Beyond Neoliberal Discourses* (pp. 111 - 131). United States: Information Age Publishing.

Zyngier, D. (2013). Raising engagement and enhancing learning: school community partnerships that work for students "at-promise". In A. Cohan, & A. Honigsfeld (Eds.), *Breaking the Mold of Education: Innovative and Successful Practices for Student Engagement, Empowerment, and Motivation* (pp. 143 - 150). United States / United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zyngier, D. (2015). 'Elegant subversion': beyond deficit and compensation to education for 'communities of promise'. In P. Kelly, & A. Kamp (Eds.), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century* (1 ed., pp. 444 - 459). Leiden Netherlands: Brill.

Zyngier, D., Black, R., Brubaker, N., & Pruyn, M. (2016). Stickability, transformability and transmittability: alternative, pull-out programs with schools - what the literature says about effective practice and provision for disenfranchised young people. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, *7*(2), 178 - 197. DOI: 10.18357/ijcyfs72201615717

Zyngier, D. (2017). How experiential learning in an informal setting promotes class equity and social and economic justice for children from ''communities at promise'': An Australian perspective. *International Review of Education*, *63*, 9-28. DOI: 10.1007/s11159-017-9621-x